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Editorial Discussion & Analysis (EDA)

29th & 30th September 2021

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Note -

- The Newspaper clippings pasted in PDF are important from Mains point of view as it contains the fodder material for Mains Answer Writing.
- Also watch DND video lectures everyday @ 4 PM on Sleepy's YouTube channel in order to understand how to get the most out of everyday's Newspaper .

Click [here](#) to watch the following topics on YouTube

1. International Relations

1.1. Enlarging a Window

Author - Shyam Saran

- Context- Opportunity for India amidst Global Developments

Withdrawal of US and NATO forces from Afghanistan

- Political capital and economic presence India had built up in the country over the past two decades has been substantially eroded.
- Unlikely that Taliban will give up its extremist agenda.
- Apprehensions of revival of International terrorism from Afghanistan
- **India must watch the situation patiently, yet must not abandon the Afghan people at this juncture.**

China's regulatory assault against its dynamic private high-tech Companies

- The country's vibrant private sector is being reined in while the State Owned Enterprises (SOE) are back in a central role.
- Deepening concern among foreign investors, including those who have long been champions of long-term engagement with China.
- **Significant Capital & technology inflows can be diverted from China and enter into India from USA, Japan and EU.**
- **India Must Consider joining multilateral trade blocs such as RCEP to become the fulcrum of Asia's economic growth.**

Announcement of AUKUS & Coming together of QUAD

- China becomes more preoccupied with threats (Due to Australia) on its eastern flank.
- This could move to reduce tensions on its western flank, chiefly with India.
- Quad now represents, from the Chinese perspective, a second order threat.
- Leverage for India to engage with China on one side to avoid a full scale war with China & support AUKUS from the outside.
- **Indo Pacific seems to face uncertainty in the time to come, however India must rise to the occasion to advance its economic interests.**

2. Environment

2.1. Make Hydrogen In India

Author - Somit Dasgupta

- Context- Green Hydrogen must be a Priority

What is Green Hydrogen?

- ‘Green hydrogen’, is a zero-carbon fuel made by electrolysis using renewable power from wind and solar to split water into hydrogen and oxygen.
- It can be utilised for the generation of power from natural sources – wind or solar systems.
- **Today, less than 1 per cent of the world’s hydrogen is “green”**
- Hydrogen from fossil fuels- called as brown or grey obtained from coal or gas, respectively is produced worldwide.
- Hydrogen from fossil fuels costs between \$1 to \$2 per kg whereas “green” hydrogen today costs between \$4 to \$6 per kg
- **Green hydrogen will become competitive to fossil fuel-based hydrogen by about 2030**

Challenges

- **Converting electricity to hydrogen, shipping it, storing it, and then converting back to electricity, the delivered energy can be below 30 per cent of what was the initial electricity input.**
- **Transportation- Hydrogen has a very high energy content per unit of mass compared to natural gas, huge containers would be needed having for transportation having equivalent energy content.**
- Convert hydrogen to liquid form to facilitate transportation, but then it has to be cooled to minus 253 degrees Celsius.
- Not all countries will find it economically viable to produce “green” hydrogen at home.
- **Production is most suited for those countries which have high gas prices and low cost of renewable generation. India is ideally placed for making green hydrogen domestically.**

Way forward

- Advantage of producing cheap electricity from renewable sources and thus, India has the potential of becoming hydrogen exporters.
- **We have to make huge investments in research and development to lower the cost of electrolyzers and make India a manufacturing hub.**
- Incentivise the private sector to move towards “green” hydrogen

Polity & Governance

2.2. NEET fails the multidimensional construct of merit

Author - Faizan Mustafa

- Context- NEET needs to be reviewed

Judicial Journey of NEET

- **Idea of NEET found some support in the judgment of the Supreme Court in T.M.A. Pai Foundation (2002).**
- NEET was notified by the Medical Council of India (MCI) in 2010
- 2013, a three-judge majority decision in Christian Medical College Vellore Association vs Union of India and Others had struck down NEET
- **Eventually, Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 was amended and Section 10D was inserted to empower the MCI to conduct NEET.**
- Review Judgment of the 2013 case done in 2016 whereby, the Supreme Court ordered the conduct of NEET from 2016 itself.
- Interestingly, the GOI had Government of India's requested to permit State governments to conduct their tests at least in 2016.

Findings of A.K Ranjan Committee

- A majority of the 86,342 people the panel spoke to were opposed to NEET
- **Diversity in Tamil medical institutions has been affected with the introduction of NEET.**
- Students from rural areas has dropped from 61.45% to 50.81%.
- Candidates from government schools has gone down from 1.12% to 0.6%
- **English medium students – already dominating medical education – went up from 85.12% to 98.01%**
- **Post NEET, Tamil students constitute just 2%.**

Observations

- With just one national test, commercial coaching institutes are bound to prosper.
- **Poorer students from a rural background, and who have studied in the vernacular medium, would always be at a disadvantage in any 'one nation-one test' policy.**
- If unequals are tested on the basis of one test, i.e. NEET, the mandate of equality is violated as Article 14 demands.

- Idea of Merit based admission is flawed as **many private colleges even after NEET do admit students under Non Resident Indian and management quota on extremely low score.**
- **NEET does not satisfactorily meet this fundamental criterion, competition cannot be termed as fair and just.**

2.3.A Fund without a care for the RTI

Author - M. Sridhar Acharyulu

- Context- PM CARES should be declared a Public Authority under RTI

Concerns

- Delhi High Court was informed that “the PM CARES Fund is not a Government of India fund.
- **Justification given** was that the amount collected by it does not go to the Consolidated Fund of India.
- **Also, it does not undergo any scrutiny by the CAG since the fund not declared as a “Public Authority”**
- **Government states that** This Trust is neither intended to be or is in fact owned, controlled or substantially financed by any Central Government or State Government.
- Composition of PM CARE Fund
 - ✓ The Prime Minister is the ex-officio Chairman.
 - ✓ 3 cabinet Ministers (Defence, Home and Finance) are ex-officio members.
 - ✓ Direct Involvement of PMO officials in the operability of this fund contradicts the stand of Government that it is a Charitable Trust

Constitutional Provisions

- The PM CARES Fund was neither created by the Constitution of India nor by any statute.
- **PM CARES Fund centralises the collection of donations and its utility, which is against the federal character.**
- There is already a National Disaster Response Fund under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and there is also a Provision for a Disaster Response Fund at the state and District level also.

Strong Reasons for Incorporating it as a Public Authority

- An ordinance was promulgated to amend Income Tax Act, 1961 and declare that the donations to the PM CARES Fund “would qualify for 80G benefits for 100% exemption,
- Donations to PM CARES Fund will also qualify to be counted as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure under the Companies Act, 2013

- Fund has also got exemption under the FCRA [Foreign Contribution Regulation Act] and a separate account for receiving foreign donations has been opened.
- **Substantial Funding is being received by the Fund and however noble the intentions of the Fund are, it must come under public scrutiny.**

3. Judicial Reforms

3.1. How to grease Wheels of Justice

Author - Shailesh Gandhi & Arun Gandhi

- Context- Pendency of Cases in Courts

Concerns

- More than 40% of cases are decided after three years in India, while in many other countries less than 1% of cases are decided after three year
- The rich, the powerful and the wrongdoers have a field day by getting their cases expedited or delayed as they wish
- For the Poor, the judicial process itself becomes a punishment.
- Data show that about 70% of prisoners in India are undertrials and are mostly poor citizens

THE HINDU

An increasing backlog

Date	Total pending cases	Increase in pendency	Increase
January 1, 2006	292 lakh	-	-
January 1, 2020	375 lakh	83 lakh	Average 5.7 lakh/year in 14 years
January 1, 2021	426 lakh	51 lakh	51 lakh in one year
July 1, 2021	449 lakh	23 lakh	23 lakh in half a year

Pendency data for 2006 are from the Supreme Court's website. Data for the other years are from the National Judicial Data Grid



Way Forward

- Filling sanctioned judicial positions
 - ✓ We need to add about 20% of judges in addition to the present sanctioned numbers to address the pendency in cases.
 - ✓ Responsibility of ensuring near-zero vacancies should be with the Chief Justices of the High Courts and the Chief Justice of India and they should be held accountable for the same.

Use Of Technology

- Computer algorithms should decide on case listing, case allocation and adjournments with only a 5% override given to judges.
- This will be a big step in reducing arbitrariness and the unfair advantage that the powerful enjoy.
- Courts should focus on e filing-** Petitions and affidavits can be filed and payment of fees can be done electronically without lawyers or litigants having to travel to the courts or use paper.

- **Hybrid Virtual Mode hearings-** In pre-COVID-19 years, the increase in the pendency of cases in all courts used to be about 5.7 lakh cases a year.
- In 2020 alone, it increased to an astonishing 51 lakh
- If a hybrid virtual hearing model is not adopted, the backlog of cases could cross 5 crore in 2022.

4. Economy

4.1. The Rural Debt Trap

Author - Sonal ANN D'Souza & Sunit Arora

- Context- Inadequate access to affordable credit to Rural Market

Findings of the All India Debt & Investment Surveys (AIDIS) by NSO

- **Average debt per household in rural India is Rs 59,748, nearly half the average debt per household in urban India.**
- Incidence of indebtedness (IOI) is 35% in rural India.
- 17.8 per cent of rural households are indebted to institutional credit agencies, 10.2 per cent to non-institutional agencies and 7 per cent to both.
- **Dependence on institutional sources is often seen as a positive development, signifying broadening financial inclusion.**
- Reliance on non-institutional sources denotes vulnerability and backwardness
- **The share of debt from institutional credit agencies in total outstanding debt in rural India is 66% as compared to 87% in urban India.**

Socio Economic Inequality

- In non-institutionalised debt, professional and agricultural moneylenders remain the primary sources of credit
- Rate of Interest charged on Non Institutional credit is much higher than charged by Institutional sources.
- Significant portion of debt from non-institutional sources is used for other household expenditure .
- Top 10% of asset-owning households have borrowed 80 per cent of their total debt from institutional sources.
- The average asset ownership of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe households in rural areas is one-third as compared to upper-caste households.
- Inadequate access to affordable credit lies at the heart of the rural distress.
- Credit policy needs to be revamped to accommodate the consumption needs of the rural poor