

## The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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**Page 01 : GS 2 : International Relations – Regional and global groupings**

Leaders of the Quad countries gathered for their sixth summit to enhance collaboration on security, health, and education initiatives.

- The meeting also aimed to tackle regional challenges, including maritime aggression in the Indo-Pacific and the ongoing war in Ukraine.
- They announced various projects aimed at strengthening mutual support and cooperation.

## Quad meet launches maritime and health initiatives

**Sriram Lakshman**  
WILMINGTON (DELAWARE)

Leaders of the Quad group of countries – Prime Minister Narendra Modi, U.S. President Joe Biden, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida – met at their sixth summit-level meeting at Archmere Academy, Mr. Biden's former school in Claymont, Delaware, to announce a broad range of outcomes. These included the launch of a new coast guard exercise, a logistics network, expansion of maritime surveillance, and a project to combat cervical cancer.

In terms of positions, the Quad strongly condemned aggression in the East and South China Sea and expressed alarm over the war in Ukraine, noting that all four leaders had vi-

sited the country.

The 'Quad Cancer Moonshot' will involve contributions from all four countries to combat cervical cancer. India will commit \$10 million towards screening for the disease. Vaccine manufacturer Serum Institute of India and Gavi will provide up to 40 million vaccines for the region, "subject to approvals".

The countries announced the Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission in 2025 to improve interoperability and maritime safety. Future coast guard missions are planned for after 2025. A logistics network pilot project was also launched, which will involve Quad countries sharing airlift capacity to support disaster response.

A Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI) to train Quad



(From left) Anthony Albanese, Narendra Modi, Joe Biden, and Fumio Kishida at the 'Cancer Moonshot' event in Delaware. ANI

partners "to monitor and secure their waters, enforce their laws, and deter unlawful behaviour" was also announced. India will host the first MAITRI workshop in 2025.

A maritime legal dialogue has been launched to support actions to uphold the rules-based order, the statement said.

Quad members con-

demned maritime aggression, with pointed references to situations involving China, which is currently embroiled in tensions with the Philippines, most recently over the latter's coast guard presence on the Sabina shoal, 150 km off its west coast.

"We are seriously concerned about the situation in the East and South Chi-

na Seas," they said, as they expressed concern about the militarisation of disputed features and intimidation in the South China Sea.

The statement condemns the dangerous use of coast guard and maritime militia vessels and opposes the disruption of other countries' offshore resource exploitation activities.

### War in Ukraine

While there was no direct mention of Russia, presumably out of consideration for India, which shares a close relationship with Moscow, the joint statement had references that have been associated with a condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, such as Quad countries offering their "unwavering" support for the United Nations Charter. The countries ex-

pressed their "deepest concern" for the war in Ukraine and its consequences.

"Each of us has visited Ukraine since the war began and seen this firsthand; we reiterate the need for a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in line with international law, consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity," the statement says. It also notes the impact the war has had on food and energy security, especially for developing countries.

The Quad fellowship, to promote STEM education, has been expanded to include 50 scholarships worth \$5,00,000 for students from the region to study at government-funded technical institutions in India.

### Analysis of News:

#### ➤ What is Quad?

- The grouping of four democracies –India, Australia, US and Japan– is known as the quadrilateral security dialogue or quad.
- The aim of this grouping is to ensure a free and open international order based on the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific.

#### ➤ Objectives: The group's primary objectives include

- **maritime security,**
  - combating the Covid-19 crisis, especially vis-à-vis vaccine diplomacy,
  - addressing the risks of climate change,
  - creating an ecosystem for investment in the region and
  - boosting technological innovation.

### Initiatives from the Quad Summit

- **New Coast Guard Exercise:** The launch of the Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission in 2025 aims to enhance interoperability and maritime safety among member nations.
- **Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI):** A training program to assist Quad partners in monitoring and securing their waters, with India set to host the inaugural workshop in 2025.
- **Logistics Network Pilot Project:** Quad countries will share airlift capacity to bolster disaster response efforts.
- **Cervical Cancer Combat:** The 'Quad Cancer Moonshot' initiative will involve a \$10 million commitment from India for cervical cancer screening, with Serum Institute of India and Gavi providing up to 40 million vaccines for the region.
- **Maritime Legal Dialogue:** A dialogue has been initiated to support actions aimed at upholding the rules-based order in maritime issues.
- **Condemnation of Maritime Aggression:** The Quad leaders expressed strong concerns over maritime aggression in the East and South China Seas, highlighting issues of militarization and intimidation.
- **Ukraine and Gaza Conflicts:** The declaration touched on the global impact of the Ukraine war, particularly on food and energy security, and called for increased humanitarian aid to Gaza.
- **Quad Fellowship Expansion:** The fellowship for STEM education has been expanded to include 50 scholarships worth \$500,000 for students from the region to pursue studies in government-funded technical institutions in India.

### Significance of Quad for India

- **Countering China's economic and military rise**
  - As a member of the Quad, in the event of rise in the Chinese hostilities on its borders, India can take the support of the other Quad nations to counter it.
  - In addition, India can even take the help of its naval front and conduct strategic explorations in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **For a free and open Indo-Pacific**
  - The summit vowed to strive for an Indo-Pacific region, that is free, open, inclusive, and unconstrained by coercion.
  - This aspect becomes important for India, in the wake of China's aggressiveness and coercive nature in the strategic Indo-Pacific region.
- **India as a Net Security provider**
  - For India to assert this role as a Region, its dominance in the Indian Ocean Region needs to be maintained and sustained.
  - In this perspective, QUAD provides India a platform to enhance security through partnership in the region.
- **Multipolar World**
  - India has supported a rule based multipolar world and QUAD can help it in achieving its ambition of becoming a regional superpower.

➔ **Post COVID Diplomacy**

- There have been disruptions of supply chain across the world due to the Pandemic, and this might result in an over dependence on China for Global Value chains.
- Under such a situation, India should use its diplomacy with QUAD group to establish a base for its expertise in manufacturing sector.

**UPSC Mains PYQ : 2020**

**Ques : 'Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)' is transforming itself into a trade block from a military alliance, in present times – Discuss.**



A recent report reveals a significant concentration of atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India, particularly in 13 states.

It underscores declining conviction rates and emphasises the urgent need for targeted interventions to protect vulnerable communities.

# U.P., Rajasthan, M.P. top in cases of atrocities on Dalits: report

Of the 51,656 cases registered under the law for SCs in 2022, Uttar Pradesh accounts for 23.78%, followed by Rajasthan, 16.75%, and Madhya Pradesh, 14.97%. Similarly, of the 9,735 cases filed for STs, Madhya Pradesh reports the highest 30.61%

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

Nearly 97.7% of all cases of atrocities against Scheduled Castes in 2022 were reported from 13 States, with Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh recording the highest number of such crimes, according to a new government report.

According to the latest report under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act by the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry, the majority of atrocities against Scheduled Tribes (STs) were also concentrated in 13 states, which reported 98.91% of all cases in 2022.

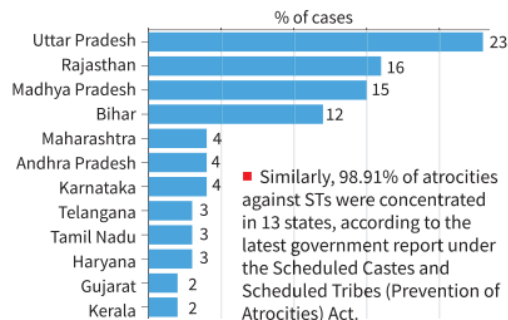
Of the 51,656 cases registered under the law for Scheduled Castes (SCs) in 2022, Uttar Pradesh accounted for 23.78% of the total cases with 12,287, followed by Rajasthan with 8,651 (16.75%) and Madhya Pradesh with 7,732 (14.97%). Other States with a significant number of cases of atrocities against SCs were Bihar with 6,799 (13.16%), Odisha with 3,576 (6.93%), and Maharashtra

### Atrocities on Dalits, tribal people

The chart shows the States accounting for 97.7% of total cases of atrocities against members of Scheduled Castes during the year 2022.



Source: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment



Similarly, 98.91% of atrocities against STs were concentrated in 13 states, according to the latest government report under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

with 2,706 (5.24%). These six States accounted for nearly 81% of the cases.

“Thirteen states, cumulatively accounting for 97.7% (51,656) of the total cases (52,866) relating to offences of atrocities against members of SCs, registered under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, in conjunction with the Indian Penal Code, during the year 2022,” the report said.

Similarly, the majority of cases of atrocities against STs were concentrated in 13 states. Of the 9,735 cases registered under the law for STs, Mad-

hya Pradesh reported the highest number at 2,979 (30.61%), the report said.

Rajasthan had the second highest number of cases at 2,498 (25.66%) while Odisha recorded 773 (7.94%). Other States with a significant number of cases included Maharashtra with 691 (7.10%) and Andhra Pradesh with 499 (5.13%). The data also provided insight into the status of investigations and charge-sheeting under the Act.

Among the SC-related cases, 60.38% led to chargesheets being filed while 14.78% were concluded with final reports due to reasons such as false

claims or lack of evidence. By the end of 2022, investigation was pending in 17,166 cases.

For ST-related cases, 63.32% resulted in charge sheets being filed while 14.71% ended with final reports. At the end of the period under review, 2,702 cases involving atrocities against STs were still under investigation.

One of the most concerning trends highlighted in the report is the declining conviction rate for cases under the Act. In 2022, the conviction rate dropped to 32.4% from 39.2% in 2020. Moreover, of 498 districts in 14 States,

only 194 had established special courts to expedite trials in these cases.

The report also identified specific districts particularly prone to atrocities with only 10 States and Union Territories declaring such districts. It emphasised the need for targeted interventions in these districts to curb the caste-based violence and ensure stronger protection for vulnerable communities.

SC/ST protection cells had been set up in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, NCT of Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and Puducherry, according to the report.

Special police stations for registration of complaints of offences against SCs and STs have been set up by Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh.

### Analysis of the news:

- In 2022, 97.7% of reported atrocities against Scheduled Castes (SCs) occurred in 13 states, with Uttar Pradesh accounting for 23.78% of the total cases.
- A total of 51,656 cases related to atrocities against SCs were registered under the Prevention of Atrocities Act.
- Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest number of atrocities against Scheduled Tribes (STs), with 30.61% of cases.
- The conviction rate for SC/ST cases declined to 32.4% in 2022.
- Special courts to expedite trials exist in only 194 out of 498 districts.
- Several states have established SC/ST protection cells and special police stations to address complaints related to atrocities against these communities.

### UPSC Prelims PYQ : 2019

**Ques : Under which Schedule of the Constitution of India can the transfer of tribal land to private parties for mining be declared null and void?**

- (a) Third Schedule
- (b) Fifth Schedule
- (c) Ninth Schedule
- (d) Twelfth Schedule

**Ans: (b)**

The article discusses the upcoming revision of India's GDP series, proposing 2020-21 as the new base year while considering the use of GST data for estimating value addition. It highlights concerns about the integrity of GDP estimates and the need for validation of new datasets.

# On the pitfalls of estimating GDP

The ongoing GDP series is due for revision. The official agency is considering using GST data to estimate value addition. However, the agency should be careful to not apply unverified datasets and shaky methodologies without adequate testing and validations for GDP estimation

### ECONOMIC NOTES

R. Nagaraj

**G**ross Domestic Product, or GDP, is the most significant measure of a country's economic size. It is also a universal denominator for comparing indicators across countries and regions or for sizing up tax burdens or welfare expenditures. GDP is usually more meaningful at "constant" prices or in "real" terms – netting out the effect of price changes. The real GDP is estimated for the "base year", requiring a variety of datasets on output, prices, and employment. Every 5-10 years, the GDP base year is revised to account for changes in relative prices and output composition. The National Statistical Office (NSO) is tasked with "revising" the GDP series, usually drawing upon expertise from many fields.

The ongoing GDP series with the base year 2011-12 is due for revision. 2020-21 is the proposed new base year. All required major datasets are said to be available except for Census data. The NSO is considering using the goods and services tax (GST) data to estimate value addition, replacing the currently used Ministry of Corporate Affairs' MCA-21 database for the Private Corporate Sector (PCS), which accounts for about 38% of GDP.

#### Why the change?

After all, the MCA-21 database was brought in only in the last revision, with 2011-12 as the base year. Previous to that, the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) was the long-standing workhorse for estimating factory manufacturing value-added. The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) small sample of large companies, with the majority paid-up capital of PCS, was used to estimate the non-financial corporate sector output. The statistical agency changed it to the MCA-21 database as the ASI claimed to miss out on value addition outside of factory premises in a corporate entity. Likewise, reportedly, the



GETTY IMAGES

RBI sample was inadequate to account for the rapidly growing PCS. Moreover, the availability of the extensive and up-to-date MCA-21 data, obtained from the mandatory filing of corporate annual returns and quarterly corporate results – it was contended – would enable fuller capturing of the corporate output.

The 2011-12 base year GDP (replacing the 2004-05 base year series) showed a marginally smaller absolute GDP size and a faster growth rate. But for the manufacturing sector in 2013-14 at constant prices, the annual growth rate was (+) 5.4% in the new series, compared to (-) 1.90% in the earlier series. Such a sharp divergence in the rate and direction of industrial growth by the two GDP series was a surprise. Moreover, the upward revision of the industrial growth rate didn't square with related macro aggregates, such as bank credit growth or industrial capacity utilisation, leading to

widespread scepticism of the new GDP estimates. Statistical investigations zeroed in on an untested or inadequately vetted MCA database as the source of the overestimation problem.

The official agency, however, defended its new estimates, claiming they capture value addition more completely, using a much more extensive database, improved estimation methods, and following the latest template of international best practices. Critics, however, wondered if a bigger dataset is necessarily a better data set. And if the new estimates were better or overestimates. The statistical dispute remained unresolved as the government refused to make the MCA data available for independent scrutiny or reveal its estimation methodology for verification.

#### Systematic overestimation

With time, however, it has been possible to compare estimates of Gross Value

Added (GVA) in the manufacturing sector as per GDP series (in the National Accounts Statistics) and by the ASI – based on production accounts of registered factories – for a reasonably long period. We compared (i) GVA and (ii) Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) (fixed investment) at constant prices for 2012-13 to 2019-20 as reported by the NAS and ASI. The results were startling. The average annual growth rate of GVA in NAS was 6.2%, while it was only 3.2% in ASI. The difference was much sharper in GFCF: 4.5% by NAS and 0.3% by ASI, respectively. These comparisons show a systematic overestimation in NAS estimates (based on the MCA-21 database) compared to the ASI-based estimates, vindicating the doubts raised about the integrity of the GDP estimates.

The evidence presented here is a cautionary tale for the proposed use of GST data for GDP estimation. It's a stark reminder of the need for the official agency to guard against the hasty application of unverified datasets and shaky methodologies without adequate testing and validations for GDP estimation. NSO must initiate pilot studies to verify the GST dataset's suitability for value addition estimation of specific industries, sectors, and States. Such validation is crucial to ensure the estimation's truthfulness and instil confidence in the integrity of the GST data. Alternatively, NSO could explore reverting to ASI to estimate GDP manufacturing, as the database is now available with a shorter time lag.

GST data can be a game-changer for GDP estimation in the proposed revision. It is a large and up-to-date database, however, its details are in a black box, as it has not been open for policy research. Without systematic analyses and cross-validation disaggregated by production and institutional sectors and regions by independent agencies, the validity of GDP estimates on GST data will be hard to establish.

R. Nagaraj is with the Centre for Liberal Education, IIT Bombay.

### THE GIST

▼ Gross Domestic Product, or GDP, is the most significant measure of a country's economic size. It is also a universal denominator for comparing indicators across countries and regions or for sizing up tax burdens or welfare expenditures.

▼ For the manufacturing sector in 2013-14 at constant prices, the annual growth rate was (+) 5.4% in the new series, compared to (-) 1.90% in the earlier series. Such a sharp divergence in the rate and direction of industrial growth by the two GDP series was a surprise.

▼ The evidence presented here is a cautionary tale for the proposed use of GST data for GDP estimation.

### Importance of GDP

- ➔ Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a crucial measure of a country's economic size and serves as a universal benchmark for comparing economic indicators across different regions.
- ➔ Real GDP, adjusted for price changes, is often preferred for accurate economic assessment. It is calculated based on datasets related to output, prices, and employment.

### Base Year Revision

- The current GDP series, with a base year of 2011-12, is due for revision, proposing 2020-21 as the new base year.
- Major datasets for this revision are mostly available, except for Census data.
- The National Statistical Office (NSO) plans to use Goods and Services Tax (GST) data to estimate value addition, replacing the previous Ministry of Corporate Affairs' (MCA-21) database for the Private Corporate Sector (PCS).

### **Rationale for the Change**

- The MCA-21 database was introduced during the last revision for the 2011-12 base year, while the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) was previously the main source for estimating manufacturing value-added.
- The switch to MCA-21 was justified by claims that it provided a more comprehensive view of value addition beyond factory premises, capturing the rapidly growing PCS better.

### **Defence of New Estimates**

- The NSO defended its new estimates by claiming that they utilised a more extensive database and improved estimation methods that align with international best practices.
- Critics remained concerned about whether a larger dataset inherently leads to more accurate estimates, as the government did not make the MCA data available for independent verification.

### **Evidence of Overestimation**

- Comparisons between Gross Value Added (GVA) and Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) based on the National Accounts Statistics (NAS) and ASI from 2012-13 to 2019-20 revealed significant discrepancies.
- The average annual growth rate of GVA was 6.2% per NAS but only 3.2% per ASI, indicating systematic overestimation in NAS estimates.

### **Caution for GST Data Utilisation**

- The evidence highlights the need for caution in using GST data for GDP estimation.
- It serves as a warning against hastily applying unverified datasets and methodologies without rigorous testing.
- The NSO should conduct pilot studies to assess the GST dataset's reliability for estimating value addition across various sectors and regions.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

- While GST data has the potential to enhance GDP estimation due to its comprehensiveness, its lack of transparency poses challenges for validating GDP estimates.
- Systematic analysis and cross-validation by independent agencies are essential to establish the validity of GDP estimates based on GST data.
- Alternatively, the NSO may consider reverting to the ASI for estimating GDP in the manufacturing sector, as it is now more timely and available for use.



UPSC Mains PYQ : 2021

**Ques : Explain the difference between computing methodology of India's gross domestic product (GDP) before the year 2015 and after the year 2015.**



The article discusses the importance of judicial independence in India and critiques the collegium system for judicial appointments, advocating for a transparent and accountable selection process.

➔ It emphasises the need for reforms to ensure the judiciary's integrity and public trust.

## Judicial appointments and disappointments

Judges are the ultimate authority in the interpretation of the Constitution, and so must be learned in the law. But who will select the judges, and ascertain their qualifications and class character?

**V. R. Krishna Iyer**

On September 20, the Supreme Court asked the Attorney General for India why the names reiterated by the Supreme Court Collegium for appointment as judges were not yet cleared, as Collegium reiterates are binding on the Union government.

Following the remark, the Union government processed the appointment of eight new High Court Chief Justices. In this article dated December 4, 2021, V. R. Krishna Iyer talks about the importance of upholding the judiciary's independence.

The Constitution of India operates in happy harmony with the instrumentalities of the executive and the legislature. But to be truly great, the judiciary exercising democratic power must enjoy independence of a high order. But independence could become dangerous and undemocratic unless there is a constitutional discipline with rules of good conduct and accountability: without these, the robes may prove arrogant.

It is in this context that Chief Justice S.H. Kapadia's observations, at an event at the Supreme Court of India on Independence Day, underlining the need for the government to balance judicial accountability with judicial independence, have to be reconciled with what Law Minister Salman Khurshid observed about judicial propriety. It is this reconciliation of the trinity of instrumentality in their functionalism that does justice to the Constitution. A great and grand chapter on judicial sublime behaviour to forbid the "robes" becoming unruly or rude and to remain ever sober is obligatory.

The Constitution has three instrumentalities – executive, legislative and judicial. The implementation of the state's laws and policies is the responsibility of the executive. The Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister at the Centre and the Cabinet led by the Chief Minister in the States, are its principal agencies. The rule of law governs the administration.

Parliament consisting of two Houses and legislatures at the State level make law. When the executive and the legislature do anything that is arbitrary, or contrary to the constitutional provisions, the judiciary has the power to correct them by issuing directions under Article 143. The Constitution lays down the fundamental rights, and if the States do not safeguard them, any citizen can approach the Supreme Court for the issue of a writ to defend his or her fundamental rights. Thus, among the three instrumentalities, the judiciary has pre-eminence. But the judiciary itself has to act according to the Constitution and work within the framework of the Constitution.

Felix Frankfurter pointed out thus: "Judges as persons, or courts as institutions, are entitled to no greater immunity from criticism than other persons or institutions, just because the holders of judicial office are identified with the interests of justice they may forget their common human frailties and fallibilities. There have sometimes been martinetts upon the bench as there have also been pompous wielders of authority



ISTOCKPHOTO

who have used the paraphernalia of power in support of what they called their dignity. Therefore judges must be kept mindful of their limitations and of their ultimate public responsibility by a vigorous stream of criticism expressed with candour however blunt."

### Ultimate authority

Judges are the ultimate authority in the interpretation of the Constitution, and so must be learned in the law and in the cultural wealth of the world. They play a vital role in the working of the Constitution and the laws. But how judges are appointed is a matter of concern. Simply put, the President appoints them, but in this the President only carries out the Cabinet's decisions.

The Preamble to the Constitution lays down as the fundamentals of the paramount law that India shall be a socialist, secular democratic republic which shall enforce justice – social, economic and political – and ensure

liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and of opportunity, and promote among them fraternity, ensuring the individual's dignity and the nation's unity and integrity.

### Need for clarity

But who will select the judges, and ascertain their qualifications and class character? Unless there is a clear statement of the principles of selection, the required character and conduct of judges in a democracy may fail since they will often belong to a class of the proprietariat, and the proletariat will have no voice in the governance: the proprietariat will remain the ruling class.

Winston Churchill made this position clear with respect to Britain thus: "The courts hold justly a high, and I think, unequalled pre-eminence in the respect of the world in criminal cases, and in civil cases between man and man, no doubt, they deserve and command the respect

and admiration of all classes of the community, but where class issues are involved, it is impossible to pretend that the courts command the same degree of general confidence. On the contrary, they do not, and a very large number of our population have been led to the opinion that they are, unconsciously, no doubt, biased."

We in India have under the Constitution the same weaknesses pointed out by Churchill, with the result that socialism and social justice remain a promise on paper. Then came a new creation called collegiums. The concept was brought in by a narrow majority of one in a 5-4 decision of the Supreme Court for the selection of judges. It was binding on the executive, the decisions of which in turn were bound to be implemented by the President.

Thus, today we have a curious creation with no backing under the Constitution, except a ruling of the Supreme Court, and that too based on a very thin majority in a single ruling. Today, the collegium on its own makes the selection. There is no structure to hear the public in the process of selection. No principle is laid down, no investigation is made, and a sort of anarchy prevails.

In a minimal sense, the selection of judges of the highest court is done in an unprincipled manner, without investigation or study of the class character by the members of the collegium. There has been criticism of the judges so selected, but the collegium is not answerable to anyone.

In these circumstances, the Union Law Minister has stated that the government proposes to change the collegium system and substitute it with a commission. But, how should the commission be constituted? To whom will it be answerable? What are the guiding principles to be followed by the Commission? These issues remain to be publicly discussed. A constitutional amendment, with a special chapter of the judiciary, is needed. Such an amendment can come about only through parliamentary action.

Surely a commission to select judges for the Supreme Court has to be of high standing. It must be of the highest order, of a status equal to that of the Prime Minister or a Supreme Court judge. The commission's chairman should be the Chief Justice of India.

In the process of selection, an investigation into the character, class bias, communal leanings and any other imputations that members of the public may make, may have to be investigated. This has to be done not by the police, which function under the government, but by an independent secret investigation agency functioning under the commission's control. These and other views expressed by outstanding critics may have to be considered.

The commission has to be totally independent and its ideology should be broadly in accord with the values of the Constitution. It should naturally uphold the sovereignty of the Constitution beyond pressures from political parties and powerful corporations, and be prepared to act without fear or favour, affection or ill-will. It should act independently – such should be its composition and operation. The commission should be immune to legal proceedings, civil and criminal. It should be removed only by a high tribunal consisting of the Chief Justice of India and the Chief Justice of all the High Courts sitting together and deciding on any charges publicly made. We, the people of India, should have a free expression in the commission's process.

V.R. Krishna Iyer, eminent jurist, is a former Judge of the Supreme Court of India.

## The Harmony of Constitutional Powers

➔ The Indian Constitution ensures a harmonious operation among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

- For the judiciary to function effectively, it must possess a high degree of independence.
- However, this independence must be tempered with constitutional discipline to prevent potential abuses of power.

### **Balancing Accountability and Independence**

- Chief Justice S.H. Kapadia emphasised the need for the government to find a balance between judicial accountability and independence.
- The interplay among the three branches of government must align with constitutional principles to maintain judicial decorum.

### **Roles of the Three Instrumentalities**

- The executive is responsible for implementing laws and policies, with the Cabinet led by the Prime Minister and Chief Minister serving as primary agencies.
- The legislature, consisting of Parliament and State assemblies, creates laws.
- The judiciary serves as the guardian of fundamental rights, correcting arbitrary actions by the executive and legislature.

### **Judicial Authority and Criticism**

- Judges hold the ultimate authority in interpreting the Constitution and must possess knowledge of law and culture.
- The appointment of judges remains a concern; while the President appoints judges, this is done at the Cabinet's direction.
- Clarity in the principles governing judicial selection is essential to prevent class bias and ensure that diverse voices are represented.

### **The Emergence of the Collegium System**

- The collegium system for judicial selection was introduced by a narrow majority decision in the Supreme Court.
- This system operates without constitutional backing, leading to a lack of transparency and accountability in judicial appointments.

### **Need for Reform**

- The Union Law Minister's proposal to replace the collegium system with a commission has raised questions about its structure and accountability.
- A constitutional amendment is necessary to establish a clear framework for judicial selection.

### **Proposal for a Judicial Selection Commission**

- A new commission must possess high standing, comparable to the Prime Minister or a Supreme Court judge, with the Chief Justice of India as its chairman.
- Investigations into the character and biases of judicial candidates should be conducted by an independent agency rather than government-affiliated police.

### **Ensuring Independence and Integrity**

- The proposed commission should operate independently, upholding constitutional values and resisting external pressures from political entities and corporations.
- It should be immune from legal proceedings, with removal only possible through a high tribunal comprising the Chief Justice of India and all High Court Chief Justices.

### **Importance of Public Involvement**

- The commission's processes must allow for public input, ensuring transparency and accountability in judicial appointments.
- Such reforms aim to fortify the independence of the judiciary while ensuring it remains accountable to the public it serves.

### UPSC Prelims PYQ : 2019

**Ques : Consider the following statements:**

1. The 44th Amendment to the Constitution of India introduced an Article placing the election of the Prime Minister beyond judicial review.
2. The Supreme Court of India struck down the 99th Amendment to the Constitution of India as being violative of the independence of judiciary.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: (b)**

## Temple In News : Tirupati Balaji Temple

Amid the escalating controversy surrounding the Tirupati Laddu, AR Dairy, a company that supplied ghee to the famous Lord Balaji temple, defended the quality of its products.



### About Tirupati Balaji Temple:

- The Tirumala Venkateswara Temple, also known as the Tirupati Balaji Temple, is a hindu temple situated in the hill town of Tirumala at Tirupati in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh.
- The temple is situated at a height of 853 m above sea level and is positioned on Venkata Hill, which is one of the saptagiri (seven hills) of Tirumala Hills.
- It is dedicated to Lord Sri Venkateswara, an incarnation of Vishnu.
- It has been mentioned in holy scriptures such as the Garuda Purana, Brahma Purana and many others.
- **History:**
  - The temple's ancient roots can be traced to the Pallava dynasty, which had a strong influence on the region during the 9th century.

## Daily News Analysis

- Subsequently, the Chola dynasty played a crucial role in further developing and patronizing the temple.
- Later on, during the reign of the Vijayanagara Empire, the temple received significant contributions and endowments, solidifying its place in the religious landscape of South India.
- One of the defining moments in the temple's history was when the famous saint, Ramanuja, played a pivotal role in reviving the temple and its rituals in the 12th century.
- It is one of the richest temples in the world in terms of donations received and wealth.
- A popular practice in the temple is the donation of hair and various riches in order to please the god.
- **Tirupati Laddu:** The renowned sweet, Tirupati Laddu, given as a prasada at the temple, has the Geographical indication (GI) tag.

### ➔ **Architecture:**

- The Temple is constructed in Dravidian architecture and is believed to be constructed over a period of time starting from 300 AD.
- Three entrances lead to the sanctum sanctorum - the first is called Mahadwaram.
- A gopuram (gateway), measuring 50 ft, is placed in front of the entrance.
- There are two circumambulation (parikrama) paths.
- The main shrine houses a gold-plated tower that is called Ananda Nilayam, and a temple inside the tower houses the main deity.
- The temple's vast courtyards, pillars, and halls are adorned with exquisite sculptures and designs that capture the essence of Hindu spirituality.

# India needs a 'National Security Strategy'

**T**he demand for a national security strategy is again under public discussion as the neighbourhood gets into a flux, old enemies muscle up, and new friends are yet to commit themselves. India's economic ambitions to be a \$4 trillion economy, is also likely to also face strong headwinds as the wars in Ukraine and Gaza continue, dragging down global growth. The economy is really the key to everything else. After all, everyone wants a slice of the economic pie, from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Defence. That means prioritisation within rather scarce resources, and that is the key to national security strategy making.

## Interpreting the term

For such an exercise, one has to first decide what comes under the umbrella term of 'national security'. The problem is it means different things to different states, at different times.

For the United States, it once centred around a 'union of our values and national interests'. That means you can stand up as the most powerful democracy, even while supporting a clutch of dictators for economic gain. After all, while Joe Biden's National Security Strategy (NSS) mentions 'values' 29 times, it is centred around the need to maintain America's leadership role. That means money. The U.S. NSS is the starting point for a host of other documents such as the Defence Department's National Defense Strategy, and thereafter, the 'Posture' document of each service. Then comes budgeting, where funds are sanctioned by Congress. Here is what else it is.

Across administrations, it is part of a power projection exercise, internally and externally. Externally, it is aimed to put the fear of god into such newly rising upstarts as China, and, internally, to project strength and determination to voters. Its public documents, therefore, showcase its capabilities, and sometimes exaggerate it. The United Kingdom which still sees itself as a global power, used an Integrated Review in 2021 that stressed working together with allies for a global role. It can hardly afford aircraft for its carriers, but it still helps to project oneself as a "European power with global interests". For President Emmanuel Macron of France, the 2022 review arose from the break out of the Ukraine war, and a restatement of French nuclear deterrent. It was a political document in a bid for European leadership. It did not quite work, but the point was that it was issued for a specific purpose. There are no two opinions on the fact that India needs an NSS, that will bring together diverse aspects such as defence, finance,



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It needs to bring together diverse aspects such as defence and finance into a coherent whole; however, this is an exercise that needs to be conducted quietly

investments and climate change into one coherent whole, and then set a direction for the country. However this exercise needs to be done within the realm of top secrecy for some very good reasons. Consider that it will demand a clear statement of threat.

## Now, multi-alignment

Budget speeches make no reference at all to the 'enemy' outside or within. Indeed, they hardly even mention defence. While it is accepted that the protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity lies at the heart of national security, every Finance Minister is well aware that a strong economy is also aimed at an ability to retain sovereignty in international relations. Poor nations have to trail after the powerful ones, or form their own groupings. For India, that was once the Non-Aligned movement. That once 'core value' has been jettisoned given the need to defend itself against a belligerent eastern neighbour of highly unequal economic strength, even while not appearing to do so. Thus, it is "multialignment", which means making friends with whoever is capable and willing to provide a possible back up in a crisis, and perhaps defence technology. Hence the Quad (Australia, India, Japan and the U.S.), which discusses security bilaterally even while the grouping backs the freedom of the seas. On the other hand is BRICS, a China-led economic grouping together with Brazil and Russia, because you are not quite sure of putting all your eggs in one western basket. Besides, India's \$85 billion trade deficit with Beijing rather complicates things, given its frequent forays into and claims of Indian territory. Imagine how all of this would be described in a public national security document. No amount of good English can hide the fact that we cannot defend against China on our own, or that we have so little to do it with. Neither can we talk glibly about 'allies' like the U.K. does. We do not believe in alliances.

From threat prioritisation, the next level is the allocation of tasks to each service and the equipment that it needs to fulfil its mandate. True, defence budgeting is a relatively transparent exercise. However, a 'strategy' will need to decide which equipment or service one has to lean towards, and where it falls short. For instance, if the 'Indo-Pacific' is part of a strategy, then a hard exercise has to be on how to quickly upgrade your submarine- and ship-building capabilities. India's submarine strength is about a fourth of China's, while the picture is even worse in ship-building. Neither is the lag in the commissioning of warships something that you

would want to advertise. A clever drafter could get round the details, but then without a clear identification of where our priorities and weaknesses lie, it is hardly a worthwhile exercise. Transparency is for the strong and not for those struggling to catch up. That is also why Pakistan's defence budget is so opaque. A secret document on the other hand needs to highlight serious weaknesses, not just project 'can do' bravery. That is not strategy. That is hopeful optimism.

Now, consider what the central message needed for the voting public should be in an open document. The current trajectory of social media opinion demands a fair bit of chest thumping. Some of this is valid. After all, India is not prone to 'adventuring'. But when it went to the defence of another country, it delivered results and withdrew speedily unlike global hegemonies who got bogged down in places such as Afghanistan. These are values to be proud of. But neighbours would hardly appreciate one's tom-tomming this as a virtue – at least not in the current dispensation. Besides, a rapacious public wants more. It wants a declaration of might and more. This kind of bravado would have the Opposition on your neck. So, internally, it has little value for political gain. Externally, a written National Security document would hardly allow the dexterous foreign policy flexibility apparent from our careful balancing on the Russia-Ukraine and Gaza wars, for instance. Backing democracy strongly in a written NS document would then be an exercise in hypocrisy. The U.S. can be as hypocritical as it pleases. It is a world power. India is not.

## A full thread running through the economy

In sum, a national security document is an urgent need. It is not just about defence. Linked closely to it are priorities within the economy that will give a direction to industry, to financial institutions, and all the other tentacles that make up the lifeblood pulsing through the economy. That exercise is generally done piecemeal through various annual reports and surveys. The trick is to integrate it all together and set a direction for the country to reach where it wants to go, and fast. Therefore, the exercise is one best kept close to one's chest, even as directives are issued separately to ministries and others. The National Security Council Secretariat is more than up to the task. Similar exercises have been done before, though in a voluminous style so beloved of bureaucracy. Here is some advice: keep it simple, keep it short, and keep it specific. And, above all, keep it well under wraps. Your enemies would be dying to know its contents.

## **GS Paper 02 : Governance – Government Policies**

**PYQ : (UPSC CSE (M) GS-3 2023) : Winning of 'Hearts and Minds' in terrorism-affected areas is an essential step in restoring the trust of the population. Discuss the measures adopted by the Government in this respect as part of the conflict resolution in Jammu and Kashmir. (150 words/10m)**

**UPSC Mains Practice Question** Discuss the importance of a National Security Strategy (NSS) for India in the context of current geopolitical challenges and economic ambitions. How should India balance secrecy, defence prioritisation, and economic resilience in crafting such a strategy? (250 w /15 m)

### **Context :**

- The article emphasises the need for India to develop a comprehensive National Security Strategy (NSS) amidst growing geopolitical challenges, including tensions with neighbouring countries and global conflicts.
- It highlights the importance of balancing defence priorities, economic resilience, and diplomatic flexibility, while maintaining strategic secrecy.

### **Demand for a National Security Strategy**

- The need for a National Security Strategy (NSS) is back in public discourse due to India's evolving geopolitical environment.
- Old adversaries like China are strengthening, while new alliances, such as with the U.S., are still uncertain.
- India's economic ambitions, such as becoming a \$4 trillion economy, face challenges from the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Gaza, affecting global growth.
- A strong economy is crucial to national security, as every ministry, from health to defence, relies on a share of the economic resources.

### **Defining National Security**

- The term 'national security' varies based on time and the state in question.
- In the U.S., it once meant a union of values and national interests, allowing for the support of dictators when necessary for economic gain.
- U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) documents outline objectives for power projection, both domestically and internationally.



- Countries like the U.K. and France use their security strategies to emphasise their global roles despite economic or military limitations.

### India's Need for an NSS

- India needs a coherent NSS that integrates various sectors such as defence, finance, investments, and climate change.
- The creation of an NSS requires a top-secret process, given that it would necessitate a clear identification of threats, such as the economic and military challenges posed by China.
- Such an exercise is needed to prioritise within limited resources and to set strategic directions.

### Multi-Alignment as India's Approach

- India's current strategy of "multi-alignment" involves forming alliances with nations that could provide defence technology and support in times of crisis.
- The Quad (Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S.) and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) illustrate this flexible approach, as India balances relations with both Western powers and China.
- India's \$85 billion trade deficit with China complicates the relationship, given China's frequent territorial incursions.

### Challenges in Public Transparency

- Public national security documents, like those of the U.S. or U.K., often exaggerate or highlight strengths for political and diplomatic purposes.
- In India's case, transparency in a public NSS could expose military and economic vulnerabilities, particularly in areas like shipbuilding or submarine capabilities, where India lags far behind China.
- A public NSS could also reduce India's flexibility in foreign policy, as seen in its careful balancing on issues like the Russia-Ukraine and Gaza conflicts.

### Budgeting and Prioritization

- National security is closely linked with economic strength, which in turn impacts defence capabilities.
- While India's defence budget is somewhat transparent, an NSS would require clear prioritisation of resources, especially in areas like the Indo-Pacific, where India needs to upgrade its naval capabilities.
- Pakistan's opaque defence budget highlights how secrecy is sometimes necessary, especially for nations with vulnerabilities.

### Internal and External Messaging

- A public NSS would need to balance the demands of social media-fueled nationalism with the realities of India's military and economic limitations.
- India's foreign policy approach avoids the chest-thumping seen in other countries and emphasises results-oriented action, as demonstrated by its swift, effective interventions in foreign conflicts.

- Any display of bravado in a public NSS would face criticism from political opponents and might hinder India's diplomatic flexibility.

### **The Economy as a Central Component**

- An NSS must integrate economic goals with national security priorities, as a strong economy is the foundation of sovereignty and defence capabilities.
- Such an exercise would involve setting priorities for industries, financial institutions, and other sectors that support national security.

### **Conclusion: A Discreet but Urgent Need**

- India urgently needs an NSS, but it should be kept secret to avoid revealing vulnerabilities to adversaries.
- The NSS should be concise, focused, and linked to economic and defence priorities, with directives issued to individual ministries as needed.
- The National Security Council Secretariat can lead this effort, ensuring a cohesive strategy that guides India toward its long-term national goals.