

GOVERNANCE

Economic Impact of Judicial Decisions

Recently, the NITI Aayog has asked research organisation ‘Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) International’ to conduct a study on the “economic impact” of various judgments delivered by courts and tribunals and the ‘judicial activism’ of such courts and tribunals.

- **Judicial Activism:** It implies the assertive role played by the judiciary to force the other two organs of the government (legislature and executive) to discharge their constitutional duties. It is also known as “judicial dynamism”. It is the antithesis of “judicial restraint”, which means the self-control exercised by the judiciary.

Key Points

- The study is to be undertaken by the Jaipur-headquartered CUTS (Consumer Unity and Trust Society) Centre for Competition, Investment and Economic Regulation, that also has an international presence.
- It is a registered, recognised, non-profit, non-partisan, non-government organisation (NGO) pursuing social justice and economic equity both within and across borders.

Objective:

- The objective of the study aims a “narrative building for sensitising the judiciary on the economic impact of their decisions”.
- It is to do an objective cost-benefit analysis of the economic impact of the decisions.

Significance:

- The findings will be used as a training input for judges of commercial courts, NGT, High Courts and SC.
- It would contribute to public discourse among policymakers for promoting an “economically responsible approach by judiciary” in its decisions.
- The study is also a part of the larger umbrella project undertaken by NITI Aayog under which it wants to establish a judicial performance index, which would measure the performance of judges at district courts and subordinate levels.

Previous Study:

- In 2017, the same CUTS International had also conducted an assessment study on the economic impact of the SC’s decision to impose a ban on the presence of liquor shops within 500 m of any highway.
- The study showed that cases which involve substantial social and economic dimensions need to be studied in detail to assess whether they are implementable in the first place and whether the loss to the economy outweighs the gains envisaged.
- This could be done if Courts set up expert committees to study these aspects which can also engage economists to analyse the cost/benefits before a judgment is pronounced.
- The Supreme Court had established such expert group committees for cases in the past like the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety under the Chairmanship of Justice K.S. Radhakrishnan in 2014 and Justice Lodha Committee set up in 2015 for reforms within the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), amongst others.

INDIAN ECONOMY

The Central Bank of Sri Lanka settled a \$400 million currency swap facility from the RBI

The Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) settled a \$400 million currency swap facility from the RBI. The two countries had agreed upon meeting the terms.

Currency Swaps

Typically, a company should have a comparative advantage in borrowing locally



Key Points

- The CBSL obtained the swap facility on July 31, 2020, for an initial period of three months, to cope with the severe economic impact of the pandemic.

- Subsequently, the RBI provided a three-month rollover at CBSL's request, until February 1, 2021.
- A further extension would require Sri Lanka to have a successfully negotiated staff-level agreement for an IMF programme, which Sri Lanka does not have at present.

Important value additions

Currency swap agreements involve trade in local currencies, where countries pay for imports and exports at pre-determined rates of exchange without the involvement of a third country currency like the US dollar.

It reduces the risk of volatility against the third currency and does away with the charges involved in multiple currency exchanges.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

1st India-EU High-Level Dialogue On Trade And Investment

The 1st High-Level Dialogue (HLD), co-chaired by the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry and the European Union Executive Vice-President & Trade Commissioner was held recently.



Key Points

- Commitment to the establishment of this Dialogue was a major outcome of the 15th India-EU Leader's Summit held in July 2020, with an objective for Ministerial level guidance towards the bilateral trade and investment relations.
- The Ministers also agreed to meet within the next three months, with an objective for reaching consensus on a host of bilateral trade & investment cooperation issues viz. a bilateral Regulatory Dialogue; an India-EU Multilateral Dialogue to explore further possibilities of cooperation; etc.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Clean Fuel Hydrogen

Recently, researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (IIT-D) have come up with a way to generate clean fuel hydrogen from water at a low-cost.

- It is a significant step towards efforts across the globe that are being made to look for cleaner and greener energy sources.
- Hydrogen gas is a viable choice as a renewable substitute for fossil fuels, and can help mitigate emissions to reduce pollution.

Key Points

- The researchers at IIT-D have successfully split water by a process known as Sulphur-Iodine (SI) thermochemical hydrogen cycle (SI Cycle) to generate low-cost, clean hydrogen fuel for industrial consumption.
- Generally in SI Cycle, the separation of Hydrogen from oxygen requires a high amount of heat (generally from non-renewable sources such as coal, oil and natural gas). This makes the large-scale production of hydrogen gas economically non viable and non environment friendly.
- The main achievement has been designing a suitable catalyst for the energy intensive, corrosive step of sulphuric acid conversion to sulphur-dioxide and oxygen.

Significance of the Discovery:

Enhancing Hydrogen Fuel Cell Technology:

- Enabling availability of low cost hydrogen through this discovery will enhance and improve the application of Hydrogen fuel cell technology which offers the advantages of a clean and reliable alternative energy source to applications such as – electric vehicles, primary and backup

power for a variety of commercial, industrial, and residential buildings; and more futuristic-sounding applications like air taxis.

- A hydrogen fuel cell is an electrochemical power generator that combines hydrogen and oxygen to produce electricity, with water and heat as by-products.

Help Adhering Emission Targets:

- It could help India to adhere to its commitment in the Paris Climate Agreement and its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) Targets and ensure that its mobility in the future is with zero emissions.

Complements FAME India Scheme:

- It will complement the implementation of the FAME India Scheme launched with the objective to support hybrid/electric vehicles market development and manufacturing ecosystem.

DEFENCE AND SECURITY**The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) Defence Ministers' Conclave**

The Indian Navy received three "made in India" Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) from the state-run Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL).

The helicopters are customised for coastal security.

**Key Points**

- The naval version of ALH is fitted with an array of advanced sensors that can detect Mumbai terror attacks like intrusions on Indian waters.
- These helicopters have the latest-generation avionics, indigenous low-frequency dunking sonar, a full glass cockpit with an integrated architecture display system, and powerful Shakti engines.
- It also has a nose-mounted surveillance radar with 270-degree coverage that can detect and track multiple marine targets.
- Its synthetic aperture radar and inverse synthetic aperture radar can detect targets on the sea.

INFRASTRUCTURE**Guidelines For Floating Structures issued**

Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways has issued the guidelines for floating structures with a vision to set up world-class floating infrastructure all along the coastline in the upcoming projects.

Key Points

- The guidelines set out technical aspects for implementation of Floating Jetties or Platforms for Marinas, Minor Harbors, Fishing Harbours, etc. in coastal areas, estuaries, waterways, rivers, and reservoirs.
- These guidelines may also be suitably utilized for floating platforms in various waterborne systems.
- Floating structure because of its inherent advantages is an attractive solution.
- The benefits of floating jetties include their cost-effectiveness, faster implementation, easily expandable, and have minimal environmental impacts.

Do you know?

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has successfully implemented a few projects including setting up of passenger floating jetties in Goa, water-aerodromes at Sabarmati River and at Sardar Sarovar Dam for the seaplane services which are working satisfactorily.

BIODIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENT**Uttarakhand Flash Flood**

Recently, a glacial break in the Tapovan-Reni area of Chamoli District of Uttarakhand led to massive Flash Flood in Dhaul Ganga and Alaknanda Rivers, damaging houses and the nearby Rishiganga power project.

In June 2013, flash floods in Uttarakhand wiped out settlements and took lives.

Key Points

Cause of Flash Flood in Uttarakhand:

- It occurred in river Rishi Ganga due to the falling of a portion of Nanda Devi glacier in the river which exponentially increased the volume of water.
- Rishiganga meets Dhaulti Ganga near Raini. So Dhaulti Ganga also got flooded.

Major Power Projects Affected:

Rishi Ganga Power Project:

- It is a privately owned 130MW project.

Tapovan Vishnugad Hydropower Project on the Dhaultiganga:

- It was a 520 MW run-of-river hydroelectric project being constructed on Dhaultiganga River.
- Several other projects on the Alaknanda and Bhagirathi river basins in northwestern Uttarakhand have also been impacted by the flood.

Flash Floods:

- These are sudden surges in water levels generally during or following an intense spell of rain.
- These are highly localised events of short duration with a very high peak and usually have less than six hours between the occurrence of the rainfall and peak flood.
- The flood situation worsens in the presence of choked drainage lines or encroachments obstructing the natural flow of water.

Causes:

- It may be caused by heavy rain associated with a severe thunderstorm, hurricane, tropical storm, or meltwater from ice or snow flowing over ice sheets or snowfields.
- Flash Floods can also occur due to Dam or Levee Breaks, and/or Mudslides (Debris Flow).

Impact of Climate Change:

Climate change has driven erratic weather patterns like increased snowfall and rainfall, warmer winters has led to the melting of a lot of snow.

According to the latest assessment reports of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, glacier retreat and permafrost thaw are projected to decrease the stability of mountain slopes and increase the number and area of glacier lakes.

ODISHA DEVELOPMENT

Odisha's Border Disputes

Recently, a border dispute between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh once again resurfaced when Andhra Pradesh announced panchayat polls in three villages of Kotia panchayat in Koraput district of Odisha.



Key Points

Border Disputes of Odisha:

- Odisha was carved out of the Bengal-Bihar-Odisha province on 1st April, 1936, but the inter-state border disputes continue even today.

- Odisha continues to have unresolved border disputes with four neighbouring States in its 8 out of 30 districts.
- 14 of the 30 districts share borders with Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. However, the disputes over Kotia villages in Koraput district bordering Andhra Pradesh is the only major border conflict.

About the Kotia Dispute:

- Odisha and Andhra Pradesh are locked in a territorial dispute over Kotia gram panchayat since 1960. Disputes pertain over 21 villages in Kotia gram panchayat.
- Residents of Kotia panchayat receive benefits from both Pottangi block in Koraput and Salur in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh. They depend on both the blocks for their day to day activities.

Water Dispute with Andhra Pradesh:

- In 2006, Odisha sent a complaint to the Central Government under Section 3 of the Inter-State River Water Disputes (ISRWD) Act, 1956 regarding its water disputes with Andhra Pradesh pertaining to Inter-State River Vamsadhara.

Disputes with Other States:**West Bengal:**

- Odisha and West Bengal have disputes over 27 plots in Balasore District and some areas in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha.
- Mayurbhanj district is known for its iron ore reserves and Chhau dance (a tribal dance in which dancers wear colorful masks).

Jharkhand:

- The border dispute between Odisha and Jharkhand arises due to change in course of river Baitarani.
- The Baitarani river originates from the hill ranges of Keonjhar district of Odisha.
- It is an east flowing river of peninsular India, flowing eastward and joining the Bay of Bengal.
- Major portion of its catchment lies in the state of Odisha and a small patch of the upper reach falls in Jharkhand.

Chhattisgarh:

- With Chhattisgarh, Odisha has disputes relating to villages in Nabarangpur and Jharsuguda district.
- The Central Government constituted Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal in 2018.

Way Forward

- Inter state dialogues, deliberations in Inter State councils and Tribunals and sticking the spirit of Cooperative federalism should be adopted to resolve such disputes.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**KA-226T Utility Helicopters**

KA-226T Utility Helicopters were in news recently.

The total indigenous content of the Ka-226T utility helicopters, to be jointly manufactured locally by India and Russia with Transfer of Technology (ToT), is between 27%-33%.

**Key Points**

The Ka-226T is meant to replace the aging and obsolete Cheetah and Chetak fleet of the Army and Air Force and the total technical life of these will start finishing from 2023 onwards.

The helicopters would be manufactured by India Russia Helicopters Limited (IRHL) — a joint venture between HAL and Russian Helicopters.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. India being a responsible regional power, should invest in regional frameworks for disaster management. Discuss the statement in light of the increasing vulnerability of the South Asia region. (250 words)

Ans:

South Asia is exposed to a variety of hazards due to the geo-climatic characteristics of the region.

- From a development perspective disaster management is vital for building a more equitable and sustainable future. Making investments in prevention and preparedness is a necessary part of systematic efforts to increase resilience to disaster.
- A regional framework can help India and other regional countries to lift the social-economic conditions of their people. It can also help India build good relations with its neighbours.

Vulnerability of the South Asia region to various disasters

- South Asia's geo-climatic conditions as well as its high degree of socio-economic vulnerability, makes it one of the most disaster prone regions in the world.
- South Asian countries are typically marked by large populations, high poverty, low literacy and poor indicators of human development.
- Poverty is widespread especially in the rural areas of Indian sub-continent.
- Climate Change: The monsoon carries more than 70% of South Asia's annual precipitation in a brief four-month period.
- A poorly timed monsoon, can result in human suffering and economic loss due to either flooding or drought.
- Cyclones are the second most commonly occurring hazard in the region.
- Climate change has a direct effect on the monsoon pattern and cyclones occurrences in the region.
- Active Seismic Zones: The world's youngest mountain belt, the Himalaya and Hindu Kush, envelopes South Asia all along its northern fringe, from Afghanistan in the west to Bangladesh in the east.
- With over 600 million people living along the fault line across the Himalayan belt, where the earthquake exposure is very high.
- Tsunami Challenge: In the South Asia Seas region, major population centers live on key fault lines and in coastal areas that are exposed to hazards like Tsunami in 2004.
- Lack of Coordination: Ineffective regional disaster relief mechanisms result in an uncoordinated relief effort which hampers disaster recovery process.

Way Forward

- Utilising existing Regional Disaster Relief Mechanisms in the South Asia region.
- Institutions such as SAARC institutions (SAARC Disaster Management Centre, South Asia Rapid Response to Natural Disasters), Bimstec Centre for Weather and Climate can be utilised effectively.
- Risk Identification: Any effective strategy to manage disaster risk must begin with an identification of the factors that cause disasters.
- Hazard mapping of the region will serve as the base layer of information and provides data on the probability of occurrence and intensity of a hazard event.
- Risk Mitigation: Reducing disaster risk calls for all stakeholders to alter their perceptions and prioritize resilience in a country's planning and development efforts.
- In this context, SAR should devise and implement a regional disaster risk reduction mechanism based on Sendai Framework.

Conclusion

- With climate uncertainty, humanitarian emergencies in the South Asia region are poised to grow. India must invest in regional frameworks for disaster management and take the lead in setting up a road map for greater cooperation.

- Building capacities through training and joint exercises and coordinating comparative advantages for collective action will help India leverage goodwill among its neighbours through its disaster relief programmes.

DAILY QUIZ

1. The point of confluence where the two rivers – Dhauliganga and Alaknanda – joins is known as –
 - a) Vishnuprayag
 - b) Nandprayag
 - c) Karnaprayag
 - d) Rudraprayag
2. Which of the following statements are correct about ‘Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF)’?
 - a) The acronym GLOF is used for glacier floods caused by the drainage of naturally dammed lakes in the glacier, on or at the margin of glaciers.**
 - b) GLOF is a flood caused due to sudden ablation of glacier ice due to anthropogenic source.
 - c) GLOF is the name given to sudden floods caused by excessive rainfall in mountains.
 - d) None of the above
3. The unmanned space probe — named “Al-Amal”, Arabic for “Hope” — blasted off from Japan last year is an ambitious space programme of which of the following country?
 - a) Bahrain
 - b) Qatar
 - c) Saudi Arabia
 - d) United Arab Emirates**
4. Supreme Court had declared in January 2020 that the right to access the Internet is one of our fundamental rights, under –
 - a) Article 21
 - b) Article 19**
 - c) Article 20
 - d) Article 16
5. The Kiran (mental health rehabilitation) helpline service was set up by the –
 - a) Health and Family Welfare Ministry
 - b) Ministry of Women & Child Development
 - c) Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry**
 - d) None of the above



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