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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

NHRC ACCREDITATION STATUS FACES REVIEW IN GENEVA THIS WEEK

CONTEXT: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India faces a crucial review in Geneva this week, where its accreditation status, particularly its "A status," is under scrutiny due to concerns about its composition, investigative procedures, and representation of gender and minority groups.



NHRC ACCREDITATION REVIEW IN GENEVA

- The NHRC faces a crucial review in Geneva this week to defend its human rights processes.
- The decision on retaining the "A status" will impact its voting rights at the UN Human Rights Council and UNGA bodies.

Concerns Leading to Review

- NHRC's ratings were paused in 2023 due to issues like composition, police involvement in investigations, and lack of gender and minority representation.

Review Process

- The meeting of the GANHRI SCA on May 1 will determine NHRC's accreditation.
- The Ministry of External Affairs is engaging diplomatically to support NHRC's case.

Past Accreditation History

- India has faced a listing downgrade before, retaining "A ranking" in 2006 and 2011 but being deferred in 2016.

Issues Highlighted by SCA

- SCA criticized NHRC for police involvement, lack of pluralism, gender representation, and diversity in committee composition.

Stakeholder Perspectives

- Civil society groups and international bodies have raised concerns about human rights restrictions and discrimination in India, urging a reconsideration of NHRC's "A rating."

CONCLUSION: The NHRC of India is under review in Geneva for its "A status" accreditation, facing scrutiny over composition and investigative processes. Concerns include police involvement, lack of diversity, and representation issues. Civil society and international bodies advocate for reconsidering NHRC's rating amid human rights concerns

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

TURNOUT AND TROPES

CONTEXT: The voter turnout trends observed in the second phase of the general election, highlight variations across states and potential factors influencing voter participation, including past election outcomes, communal rhetoric, and party strategies, with implications for the ongoing election phases.



Voter Turnout Trends:

- Comparative analysis of the second phase of the general election shows varying turnout rates across states, with high turnout in the East and North East and lower turnout in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
- Lower turnout is also observed in Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan compared to 2019, prompting post-poll surveys to understand the reasons.

Factors Influencing Turnout:

- Heat-wave conditions in several states during the first phase have raised questions about their impact on voter participation.
- Voters' level of enthusiasm and engagement with the electoral process is being debated as a potential factor in lower turnout this time.

Political Dynamics and Strategies:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's campaign strategy, including communal rhetoric and criticism of the Congress manifesto, reflects efforts to mobilize support and discredit opposition.
- Shifts in political alliances and strategies, especially concerning Hindutva, social justice agendas, and welfare policies, are influencing voter sentiments and choices.

Historical Context and Electoral Dynamics:

- Historical trends in voter turnout and party strategies, particularly in the context of BJP's previous successes and current challenges, are shaping the electoral landscape.
- The resurgence of Mandal politics and the Congress's efforts to regain ground in alliance with Mandal parties are notable aspects impacting voter behaviour.

Outlook and Future Phases:

- The ongoing electoral narrative, characterized by rhetorical exchanges and ideological positioning, will likely impact voter decisions in the upcoming phases.
- The electorate's response to these narratives, balancing emotional appeals with expectations of governance and development, will determine the election's trajectory in subsequent phases.

ECONOMICS**TOWARDS GREEN GROWTH**

CONTEXT: The Reserve Bank of India's recent focus on climate change in its Monetary Policy Report reflects a growing recognition of the economic and financial impacts of extreme weather events, prompting calls for a comprehensive assessment and the development of sustainable finance strategies to mitigate risks and promote green growth.

**1. Monetary Policy Report Emphasis**

- Highlights the importance of addressing "extreme weather events" and "climate shocks" in the context of economic stability.
- Discusses the influence of these factors on food inflation and the broader natural rate of interest, impacting financial stability.

2. Economic Impact Analysis

- Utilizes a "New-Keynesian model" with a climate risk damage function to assess the macroeconomic effects of climate change scenarios.
- Warns of potential long-term economic output reduction by 9% by 2050 without climate mitigation policies, with implications for inflation expectations and interest rate adjustments.

3. Progress towards Green Economy

- Traces RBI's efforts since July 2022 to address climate risks and promote sustainable finance.
- Acknowledges India's substantial investment needs (over \$17 trillion) for achieving net zero emissions by 2070.

4. Green Taxonomy and Sustainable Finance

- Considers the development of a green taxonomy, inspired by global peers like the European Central Bank, to evaluate economic activities' sustainability.
- Encourages collaboration between RBI and the Finance Ministry to establish a comprehensive green taxonomy reflective of India's diverse developmental paths.

5. Policy Measures

- Appreciates initiatives like Sovereign Green Bonds issuance and expanding participation in green government securities.
- Emphasizes the need for a detailed assessment of climate change's economic and financial impacts, alongside administrative consultations for a robust green taxonomy.

CONCLUSION: The Reserve Bank of India's proactive stance on climate change underscores the imperative for integrating sustainability into financial policies. Collaborative efforts, comprehensive assessments, and innovative measures are vital for steering India towards a resilient and green economic future.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**The significance of carrier aviation**

CONTEXT: INS Vikrant, India's first domestically built aircraft carrier, marks a milestone in its naval development.



India's first domestically built aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant, marks a leap in its naval power. The technical aspects and historical significance of Vikrant, along with its role in India's strategy to have a strong three-carrier fleet for regional dominance is an important aspect of India naval strategy in Indian Ocean and beyond. Experts have commented on global trends in carrier development and the ongoing debate between carriers and submarines in naval warfare.

THE GIST

The design work on the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC)-I, later christened Vikrant, began in 1999. One of the crucial decisions with respect to Vikrant was on the warship grade steel, which till then was procured from Russia. After much brainstorming, it was decided that it would be developed and produced in India.

Vikrant can operate an air wing of 30 aircraft comprising MiG-29K fighter jets, Kamov-31, MH-60R multi-role helicopters, in addition to indigenous Advanced Light Helicopters and Light Combat Aircraft (Navy).

The Navy has already moved a case for a second Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC-II), a repeat of a Vikrant-like carrier.



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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

Escalating Ethnic Conflict in Manipur

CONTEXT: In Manipur, the longstanding ethnic conflict between the valley-based Meitei community and the hills-based Kuki-Zo communities has once again erupted into violence. The recent events include fatal gunfights and attacks on security forces, highlighting the fragile security situation in the region.



Recent Incidents:

- **Gunfights:** In the early hours of Sunday, a clash along the Kangpokpi-Imphal West district boundary resulted in one death and three injuries. This incident follows a pattern of recurring violence between these communities.
- **CRPF Camp Attack:** Just within 24 hours prior, unidentified militants attacked a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) camp in Bishnupur district, killing two personnel and injuring two others.

Government Response: Manipur's Security Advisor, Kuldiep Singh, has vowed to take strong action against those responsible for the violence. Immediate security measures were deployed to quell the clashes and restore order.

Current Situation: The clashes involved exchanges of gunfire between groups from the valley and hill areas, prompting security operations to bring the situation under control. However, the exact origins of the violence remain unclear.

Impact and Fallout: As a result of the clashes, a shutdown was called in Kangpokpi district. The violence has not only claimed lives but has also led to widespread displacement and disruption in the affected areas.

Continued Unrest: Despite brief periods of calm, the ethnic conflict has persisted, claiming over 220 lives since its onset last year. The recent escalation underscores the ongoing challenges in achieving lasting peace and stability in Manipur.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

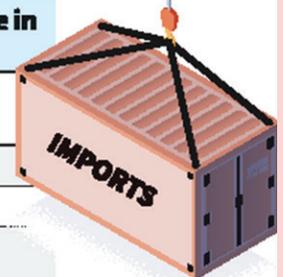
INDIA'S CHINESE IMPORT BILL UP 2.3 TIMES IN 15 YEARS

CONTEXT: A report by the Global Trade Research Initiative highlights India's growing dependence on China for industrial goods, with a widening trade deficit and strategic concerns.

Lion's share

The table lists commodities imported by India, where China accounts for the largest share in total imports

| | Commodity | China's share in imports |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | Electronics/ telecom/ electrical products | 43.9% |
| 2 | Machinery | 39.7% |
| 3 | Textile and clothing | 38.2% |
| 4 | Chemicals and pharmaceuticals | 26.8% |
| 5 | Automobiles | 26% |



Source: GTRI Data as of 2022

INDIA'S GROWING DEPENDENCE ON CHINA FOR INDUSTRIAL GOODS (GTRI REPORT)

Sharp Increase in Imports:

- From \$70 billion in 2018-19 to \$101 billion in 2023-24.
- China's share of India's industrial goods imports rose from 21% to 30% over 15 years.

Dominant Supplier Across Sectors:

- China is the top supplier in eight major industrial sectors, including machinery, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and textiles.
- Almost 42% of India's textile and clothing imports come from China.
- Similar dominance is seen in machinery (40%) and electronics (38.4%).

Widening Trade Deficit:

- India's exports to China stagnated around \$16 billion annually.
- Imports surged, resulting in a cumulative trade deficit exceeding \$387 billion over six years.

Reliance Across Sectors:

China is a major source for a wide range of Indian imports, with a significant share across various sectors:

- Textiles and clothing (42%)
- Machinery (40%)
- Electronics, telecom, and electrical products (38.4%)
- Chemicals and pharmaceuticals (29.2%)
- Plastics (25.8%)
- Automobiles (23.3%)

Strategic Concerns:

- The report highlights the "profound" strategic implications of dependence on China.
- Concerns extend beyond economic risks to national security dimensions.

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Recommendations:

- GTRI calls for a reassessment of India's import strategies.
- The goal is to mitigate economic risks and bolster domestic industries.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Indian Navy aids Panama tanker after Houthi attack

CONTEXT: The Indian Navy successfully guided a crude oil tanker under missile attack by Houthi militants to safety, ensuring the well-being of 30 crew members, including 22 Indians.



MAJOR POINTS

1. Indian Navy guides Panama-flagged crude oil tanker, MV Andromeda Star, with 30 crew members, including 22 Indians, to safety.
2. The vessel was attacked by Houthi militants and responded to by Indian Navy destroyer INS Kochi on April 26.
3. All crew members of MV Andromeda Star were reported safe following the attack.
4. The U.S. Central Command confirms militants launched three missiles near merchant vessels Maisha and Andromeda Star, resulting in minor damage to the latter.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Seizure of Pakistani Boat with Drugs off Gujarat Coast

CONTEXT: A collaborative operation between the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) resulted in the seizure of a Pakistani boat carrying 14 crew members and 86 kg of drugs worth ₹602 crore off the Porbandar coast in Gujarat.



Details of the Operation:

- **Seizure:** The authorities apprehended the entire crew of 14 individuals, all of whom are Pakistani nationals.
- **Drug Consignment:** The intercepted drugs were intended for delivery to unidentified handlers in Tamil Nadu, with a subsequent plan to smuggle them to Sri Lanka for final distribution.

Government Action: The Gujarat Director-General of Police, Vikas Sahai, has transferred the case to the NCB for further investigation into the drug smuggling network.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Understanding the Impact of Global Warming on Local Weather

CONTEXT: The interplay between global warming and local weather phenomena is complex and crucial, highlighting the necessity of global modeling for accurate local predictions. As the strong El Niño of 2023 transitions into a waning phase, global temperatures remain warm, but specific regional variations, such as cooler temperatures in parts of India, emphasize the intricate nature of climate dynamics.



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Manifestation of Global Warming in Local Weather:

- **Heat Waves and Global Warming:** The relationship between heat waves and global warming is significant, as global warming introduces unique local features that influence heat wave patterns alongside existing temperature trends.
- **Anticyclonic Circulations:** Anticyclones, particularly over the North Indian Ocean, contribute to unusual weather phenomena like historic floods in Dubai. Understanding the link between anticyclones and heat waves is crucial in predicting extreme weather events.

Role of Anticyclones and Weather Patterns:

- **Anticyclones and Heat:** During the pre-monsoon season, anticyclones can bring dry, hot weather to India, impacting the intensity and duration of heat waves.
- **Anticyclones and Climate Change:** The persistence and strength of anticyclones, influenced by climate change, play a role in amplifying heat waves, posing challenges for weather predictions.

Early Warning Systems and Disaster Management:

- **Three-Step Approach:** Early warning systems follow a 'ready-set-go' approach, integrating seasonal outlooks, subseasonal predictions, and short to medium-range forecasts to prepare for and manage extreme weather events.
- **NDMA and Disaster Preparedness:** The National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) utilizes location-specific information and resource allocation strategies to enhance disaster preparedness and response.

Challenges and Future Outlook:

- **Building Resilience:** Improving predictions at various timescales, from weeks to years, is critical for building resilience and effectively managing climate-related disasters.
- **Sustained Success:** Continued coordination and engagement at all levels, from national to local, are essential for achieving sustained success in disaster preparedness and climate resilience efforts.

Conclusion: Efforts to understand the interplay between global warming, local weather patterns, and disaster management are essential for mitigating the impacts of climate change and ensuring sustainable development in India and globally.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ISRAEL'S THREAT TO ATTACK RAFAH, ABBAS CALLS FOR US INTERVENTION, HAMAS RESPONSE FOR NEGOTIATIONS

CONTEXT: Concerned about the escalating tensions in Gaza, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas calls on the United States to prevent Israel from attacking Rafah. This comes amid threats of an all-out assault by Israel on the neighbourhood to eliminate Hamas's remaining forces. Hamas is set to respond to Israel's ceasefire proposal, while international efforts, including Egypt's mediation, aim to find a path toward lasting calm in the region.



1. Abbas Calls on US to Halt Attack on Rafah

- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas states that only the US can prevent Israel from attacking Rafah in Gaza.
- He emphasizes that the assault could lead to a significant displacement of the Palestinian population.
- Western countries, including the US, urge Israel to refrain from attacking Rafah.

2. Israel's Threat of All-Out Assault on Rafah

- Israel has been threatening for weeks to launch a full-scale assault on Rafah to eliminate Hamas's remaining forces.
- Recent weeks have seen increased air strikes on Rafah by Israel.

3. Hamas's Response and Negotiations

- Hamas plans to respond to Israel's ceasefire proposal, aiming for a permanent ceasefire, return of displaced people, prisoner exchange, and ending the Gaza siege.
- Egypt mediates negotiations between Israel and Hamas to restore sustainable calm in Gaza.

4. Israeli Protesters Pressure Netanyahu

- Thousands of Israeli protesters demand Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to strike a deal for freeing remaining hostages in Gaza.

5. Hostages Situation in Gaza

- The Israeli army reports that 129 hostages, including 34 presumed dead, are still held captive in Gaza.

CONCLUSION: Given the escalating tensions and the complex negotiations involving multiple parties, the situation in Gaza remains volatile. International efforts and diplomatic interventions are crucial to finding a peaceful resolution and ensuring the safety and well-being of the people in the region.





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New Delhi, Delhi-110022

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