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GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

1. A note for New Delhi on dealing with 'Trumperica'

Context: India has seen a year-on-year improvement in ties with the U.S. for the past quarter-century — the visible signs from the Trump administration have been positive, given India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to the Trump inauguration, the meeting of the Quad Foreign Ministers and the bilateral with his counterpart Marco Rubio — which was Mr. Rubio, the new U.S. Secretary of State's first — followed by the Trump-Modi call. As New Delhi prepares for a visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Washington, and Mr. Trump's visit to India later this year, a detailed analysis over the issues that will most affect India, with the duopoly of immigration and taxes at the forefront, is necessary.

Key points

- **Overview:** The Trump administration's executive actions on immigration, trade, and AI will impact India's workforce, economy, and diplomatic ties, necessitating strategic adjustments in India's policies.
- **Trump's Executive Actions and Initial Signals:** Donald Trump signed multiple executive orders (EOs) immediately after taking office, including revocation orders of Biden-era policies and exit orders from multilateral agreements. The White House described these actions as "100s of Executive actions in the first 100 hours to kick off America's Golden Age."
- **Immigration Crackdown and Its Impact on India:** Trump's policies focus on border security, stopping illegal migration, and strict visa screening. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency has increased raids and arrests, affecting undocumented Indian migrants. Over 7.25 lakh Indians are undocumented in the U.S., and 18,000 Indians are in detention for deportation. The economic impact of deportations includes-
 - *Loss of remittances* - If deportations increase, India will face economic losses and rising unemployment.
 - *Trade pressure* - Trump may use tariffs to force India to accept deported migrants, as seen with Colombia.
 - *Tighter visa rules* - Restrictions on H-1B visa holders and work permits for spouses will reduce opportunities for Indian professionals.
- **Trade Policy and Tariff Weaponization:** Trump's "America First Trade Policy" will likely bring more tariff-based pressures on trade partners, including India. In his first term, Trump withdrew India's Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) status and stopped oil imports from Iran and Venezuela. India may face tougher trade negotiations as Trump prioritizes U.S. economic interests.
- **U.S. Withdrawals from Global Agreements and Their Effect on India:** Trump exited organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and OECD Global Tax Deal and rolled back commitments on climate change and green energy. These actions could reduce U.S. funding and support for India's energy transition and development projects.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Its Economic Consequences for India:** Trump's administration prioritizes AI investments, with a \$500 billion StarGate AI Infrastructure project launched. AI advancements aim to keep the U.S. ahead in technology and reduce reliance on foreign tech workers. AI job replacement risks-
 - Tech leaders like Google's Sundar Pichai say over 25% of new code is AI-generated.
 - Meta's Mark Zuckerberg predicts AI will replace mid-level engineers.
 - These changes may reduce demand for Indian tech professionals seeking U.S. jobs.
- **India's Response and Future Strategy:** India must rethink its education and skilling policies to absorb impacted STEM graduates. New Delhi must factor in Trump's trade, tech, and immigration policies while engaging diplomatically with the U.S. India's reliance on the IT-BPM sector, which contributes 55% of GDP and 40% of exports, means it must adapt to global shifts in AI and digital industries.
- **Conclusion:** The Trump administration's policies on immigration, trade, and AI will significantly impact India's economy and workforce. India must proactively adjust its diplomatic and economic strategies to navigate these changes effectively.

Q. How will I2U2 (India, Israel, UAE and USA) grouping transform India's position in global politics? (আইইউ২ (ভারত, ইজরাইল, ইউএই আৰু আমেৰিকা যুক্তৰাষ্ট্ৰ) গোটটোৱে বিশ্ব ৰাজনীতিত ভাৰতৰ স্থিতি কেনেদৰে সলনি কৰিব?)

2. 'Hostile work culture, long hours in the office affecting mental health'

Context: Overexposure to social media, lack of exercise, not spending enough time with one's family and overwork (hours exceeding 55-60 per week) have all worsened mental well-being among Indians according to the Economic Survey 2024-25. Hostile work cultures and excessive hours spent working at the desk can adversely affect mental well-being and ultimately put the brakes on the pace of economic growth, states the Survey while highlighting that lifestyle choices, workplace culture and family situations are critical for productivity.

Key points

- **Overview:** According to the recent study of International Labour Organisation, India ranks among the most overworked countries globally, with workers averaging 46.7 hours per week.
- **Key Issues in India's Workplace Culture:** Toxic Work Environment - Long working hours and stress have become normalised in many corporations, driven by a relentless focus on profit margins and bottom lines. The practice of overworking employees while cutting costs often leads to burnout, as companies justify exploitation with terms like "organisational stretch" and "variable pay." Responses to Work Culture Issues - Corporate initiatives like codes of conduct and work-life balance policies often lack depth, failing to address the root causes of workplace toxicity effectively.
- **Public Sector vs. Private Sector Dynamics:** Public sector organisations typically offer stronger job security and a more supportive work environment, aided by unions that help address employee grievances. This difference raises questions about the need for improved practices within the private sector to foster a healthier work culture.
- **Constitutional Framework:** Under the Constitution, Labour as a subject is in the Concurrent List and, therefore, both the Central and the State governments are competent to enact legislations subject to certain matters being reserved for the Centre.
- **Judicial Interpretation:** In the case of *Randhir Singh vs Union of India*, 1982, the Supreme Court stated that "Even though the principle of 'Equal pay for Equal work' is not defined in the Constitution, it is a goal which is to be achieved through Articles 14, 16 and 39 (c).
 - *Article 14* - It provides for equality before the law or equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.
 - *Article 16* - It talks about the right of equal opportunity in the matters of public employment.
 - *Article 39(c)* - It specifies that the economic system should not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the detriment of the entire society.
- **Way forward:** *Cultural Shift in Corporations* - Companies should actively promote a culture of respect and fairness, where employee contributions are acknowledged and rewarded appropriately.

Awareness and Advocacy - Increased awareness and discourse on workplace culture issues can empower employees to voice their concerns and advocate for their rights. Learning from international standards where employees have the right to sue for mental stress could prompt similar protections in India.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) - Corporations must integrate a commitment to improving workplace culture into their CSR strategies, recognizing that employee well-being is integral to long-term success.

3. Domestic growth, global risks

Context: Unlike the last fiscal year, when India's GDP estimates exceeded the Economic Survey's projection, this year's first advance growth estimate at 6.4% trails the forecast of 6.5-7%, which is a little slower than the pre-pandemic average of 6.6%. Alongside this, nominal GDP, which absorbs the impact of inflation, grew at 9.7%, lower than the 10.5% estimated in this year's budget. The nature of risks is evolving with Donald Trump threatening to impose tariffs. India, which has a trade surplus with the US, will keep a close watch on these developments.

Key points

- **Overview:** India's economic growth is moderating amid global uncertainties, requiring strategic investments, policy reforms, and a balanced fiscal approach to sustain momentum.
- **Global Economic Uncertainties and Risks:** The global economic outlook remains uncertain, with major economies displaying divergent growth trajectories. The US is projected to grow near its long-term trend rate of 2% in 2025 following a strong 2024. China's economy continues to decelerate, while Europe remains below its trend growth despite slight improvements.
- **Challenges for Sustained Growth:** Key engines of GDP showing sluggish growth-
 - *Private consumption* - Slow CAGR of 4.8% since FY20 hinders growth.
 - *Government spending* - Limited fiscal expansion since 2019 (CAGR of 3.1%).
 - *Investments* - Stagnation in private and public sector capex since 2014 (CAGR of 5.3%).
 - *Net exports* - Persistent trade deficit, although narrowing in FY25.
- **Multilateral Growth Projections and India's Standing:** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts India's GDP growth at 6.5% for both this fiscal year and the next, while the World Bank projects 6.7% for the upcoming year.
- **Public vs. Private Investment:** The post-pandemic recovery has been largely driven by public and household investments, whereas private corporate investments have yet to exhibit sustained growth.
- **Capital Expenditure and Fiscal Policy:** The current fiscal year's budget had anticipated a slowdown in capital expenditure (capex) growth to 17.1%, down from 28.2% in 2023-24, reflecting a normalization of government-led spending.
- **Need for a Predictable Tariff Regime:** A long-term tariff policy for raw materials, intermediates, and final products is essential for creating a stable business environment.
- **Inflation and Monetary Policy Constraints:** The Economic Survey anticipates a decline in headline consumer inflation, led by easing food prices. However, food inflation remains sticky, with December 2024 figures at 8.4%, keeping overall inflation high and delaying potential interest rate cuts.
- **Strengthening Agricultural Resilience:** Although weather conditions are beyond human control, agricultural resilience can be enhanced through investments in food processing, climate-resilient crop varieties, and cold-chain logistics.
- **Energy Transition and Industrial Growth:** The Economic Survey advocates a calibrated approach to energy transition, balancing economic growth, energy security, and sustainability.
- **Reforms needed:** Further reforms are needed to improve India's ease of doing business, particularly in areas such as labour laws, land acquisition, tax regulations, and dispute resolution.

4. India's tiger population rose 30% over two decades

Context: A study highlights India's tiger population growth by 30% over 20 years, driven by effective conservation strategies, legislative support, and socio-economic factors. Despite high human densities and economic challenges, India achieved remarkable success in tiger conservation. Protected areas and land-sparing strategies have allowed 85% of breeding populations to thrive. Tigers now coexist with over 66 million people, demonstrating successful coexistence.

Key points

- **Overview:** India is home to 70% of the world's wild tiger population. Government data from July 2024 reports 2,226 tigers in 2024, up from 1,411 in 2006.
- **Recent increase in tiger population:** India since 2006 has been conducting scientific tiger population estimation once every four years. According to the latest report, the number of tigers has recorded a 6.74% increase from 2,967 in the last census in 2018 to 3,167 in 2022. The only landscape in India where the tiger population has gone down is the Western Ghats, where declaring of an ecologically sensitive zone has been hanging since 2010.
- **Significance of conserving the tiger population:**
 - Ecological importance* - Tigers are apex predators in their ecosystem, and their presence helps maintain a balance in the food chain. Their conservation ensures the protection of other species and their habitats, contributing to overall ecosystem health.
 - Economic benefits* - The presence of tigers in protected areas attracts tourists from around the world, generating significant revenue for local communities and governments. Tiger conservation can also create employment opportunities in ecotourism and related industries.
 - Genetic diversity* - Tigers are a genetically diverse species, with distinct subspecies found in different regions of the world. Conserving tiger populations helps preserve this genetic diversity, which can be important for the long-term survival of the species.
- **Related government initiatives:**
 - Project Tiger* - The 'Project Tiger' is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, providing funding support to tiger range States for in-situ conservation of tigers in designated tiger reserves, and has put the endangered tiger on an assured path of recovery by saving it from extinction, as revealed by the recent findings of the All India tiger estimation using the refined methodology.
 - National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)* - It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change constituted under enabling provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, as amended in 2006, for strengthening tiger conservation, as per powers and functions assigned to it under the said Act.
- **Way forward:**
 - Habitat Restoration* - Restoration of the remaining tiger habitat with a prey base is essential before tigers can occupy it. Prey base in the habitats of states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Northeastern States of Arunachal, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Assam should be restored.
 - Conflict Management* - Managing the man-animal conflict is easier to achieve in India, where religious and cultural values permit some of the highest levels of tolerance amongst human societies. Sharing revenues from tiger reserves with communities residing in the buffer zone and corridor habitats, compensating for all damage at market rates, and removing problem tigers immediately would prevent a backlash against the species.

5. FDA approves non-opioid painkiller suzetrigine

Context: The US Food and Drug Administration on Thursday approved a new type of non-opioid painkiller. Although it is currently quite expensive, costing \$15.50 per pill, the medicine is not addictive, unlike commonly used opioid painkillers. The drug, suzetrigine, will be sold under the brand name Journavx, and manufactured by US-based Vertex Pharmaceuticals. According to experts the drug does produce any sensation of pleasure or euphoria, hence could not create addiction or dependence among users.

Key points

- **Opioids:** Opioids are drugs derived from or mimicking substances in the opium poppy plant, used for pain relief but highly addictive. Examples- morphine, oxycodone, and fentanyl.
- **Various types of analgesics:** *Non-narcotic (non-addictive) analgesics* - The skeleton pain that can arise due to arthritis may be relieved with this type of medication. The most prescribed drugs, in this case, are aspirin and paracetamol. To stop the production of prostaglandins by chemical reactions, aspirin inhibits the absorption of a substance known as prostaglandin. As a result, pain is felt in the tissues.
Narcotic analgesics - A prescription analgesic drug relieves pain in a patient and produces sleep at the same time. It is possible for this drug to cause coma, convulsions, and finally death when taken in excessive amounts.
- **Some other Analgesics:** *Paracetamol (acetaminophen)* - Paracetamol is an analgesic that is also known as acetaminophen. The medication treats pain and fever.
Alcohol - Alcohol is an organic compound containing a hydroxyl functional group (-OH) such as ethanol. The impacts of using alcohol for pain are diverse, including biological, mental, and social effects.
- **Suzetrigine:** It is a 50-milligram prescription pill that is consumed every 12 hours after a larger starter dose. The pill is given in two dosages. In trials, participants got an initial dose of 100 milligrams, followed by 50 milligrams every 12 hours.
Features of Suzetrigine - Non-addictive and does not induce euphoria. Targets pain signals at the source, preventing them from reaching the brain. Prescription-based, taken in two doses: an initial 100 mg dose followed by 50 mg every 12 hours.
How it Works - Activates nociceptors (nerve endings) in response to tissue damage. Interrupts pain signal transmission through the spinal cord to the brain, preventing pain perception.
Significance - Addresses the opioid crisis, which caused 82,000 overdose deaths in the US. Offers a safer alternative to opioids, reducing addiction risks. Potential to transform pain management globally.
- **Conclusion:** It is important to understand the difference between narcotic and non-narcotic drugs, its various side effects, and the important points to consider before consuming such medicines. For a simple and interesting way to learn about other topics of chemistry, please register at vedantu.com or download our app.