



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

19th February 2025



CONTEXT: Elevated relations to the level of a strategic partnership.

Significance of Qatar

- **Goeconomic**
 - Bilateral trade - \$14 bn
 - Trade imbalance
 - Export destination for Qatar
 - 48% of LNG imports - 3rd largest NG reserves
- **Geostrategic**
 - Defence cooperation agreement in 2008
 - DIMDEX Conference
 - Zair Al Bahr
- **Geopolitical**
 - GCC member
 - Doha agreement
 - Israel Hamas mediation talks
- **Diaspora**
 - Largest expatriate community: >8 lac

Significance of Gulf

- **Historical**
 - Civilizational ties
 - Arabs as conduits to the West
- **Diaspora**
 - Remittances - 40%
 - 9 mn in GCC
- **Energy security**
 - Geographical proximity
 - Established buyer-seller networks
 - 60% ONG
- **Economic Relations**
 - Gulf Investments
 - i. \$24 bn since 2000
 - ii. Energy sector
 - 18% of foreign trade

Challenges wrt Qatar

- Arrest of ex-Navy personnel in Espionage case
- Islamic Conservatism & Derogatory references to Prophet
- Harboursing Terrorism
- Using Soft Power against India - Financing Al-Jazeera

Challenges wrt Gulf

- Iran US Tensions
- Balancing Iran and Saudi Arabia
- Israel Palestine
- Proxy conflicts
- Religious & Sectarian Divides

Updates

- Strategic Partnership with a security component - already Kuwait, Oman, UAE, Saudi Arabia
- Signed DTAA
- Cooperation Areas: trade, investment, energy, security, regional and international fora
- Exploring FTA
- India strategically ambiguous on Trump's proposal on Gaza
- Repatriation of Commander Purnendu Tiwary
- Joint Business Forum



CONTEXT: Elevated relations to the level of a strategic partnership.

Suggestions

- Link and Act West Policy
- Economic Diplomacy
- Diversify Energy sources
- Neutral Diplomacy - Balancing Regional Ties
- Promoting Stability - peace initiatives, regional dialogues
- Leverage Soft Power - diaspora, cultural ties

UPSC PYQs 2016

Which of the following is not a member of 'Gulf Cooperation Council'?

- (a) Iran
- (c) Oman
- (b) Saudi Arabia
- (d) Kuwait

2017

The question of India's Energy Security constitutes the most important part of India's economic progress. Analyze India's energy policy cooperation with West Asian Countries.



MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Discuss the significance of the strategic partnership between India and Qatar. What are the key challenges in this bilateral relationship, and what measures can be taken to further strengthen these ties?



CONTEXT: Protests in Nepal's Parliament over the alleges suicide by a student of KIIT

Significance of India for Nepal

- **Trade** Partner, 1/3rd FDI
- **Defence**
 - Equipment & Training
 - Joint Exercise – Surya Kiran
 - Gorkha Regiment
- **Connectivity**
 - Border Infra, Rail Links, ICPs
- **Energy**
 - Agreement on Power Trade, Cross-border Transmission Interconnection & Grid Connectivity
 - Hydroelectric projects – Arun-3 run of the river, Western Gandak, Devighat, Trisuli
 - Petro Pipeline – Motihari to Amlekhgunj
- **Cultural**
 - Treaty of Peace & Friendship 1950
 - Sister City Agreements – Kathmandu Varanasi, Lumbini Bodhgaya
- **Developmental Assistance**
 - 2015 Nepal EQ
 - Financial Aid

Significance of Nepal for India

- **Geopolitical**
 - Strategic position – buffer state
 - Natural barrier
- **Goeconomic**
 - Duty free access to market – India-Nepal Treaty of Trade, SAFTA
 - Energy – hydro potential
- **Geostrategic**
 - Regional stability
 - Law enforcement, counter terrorism

Challenges

Trade Imbalance

- Border Disputes (Treaty of Sugauli 1816)
 - Kali & Mechi – 'tri-junction' & Susta
 - New Map by Nepal in 2019
- 2015 New constitution
- Madhesi Rights
- Economic Blockade Impact
- Calls for revision of Friendship Treaty 1950
- Accusation of Big brotherly attitude, interference
- Delays in projects – Mahakali Treaty 1996
- Open Border concerns – trafficking, fake currency, drugs, arms
- Chinese influence
 - Trans-Himalayan Multidimensional Connectivity Network
 - Sino-Nepal military exercises



CONTEXT: Protests in Nepal's Parliament over the alleged suicide by a student of KIIT

Suggestions

- Backdoor diplomacy/ Track II diplomacy
- Joint Technical Boundary Committee
- Not losing the Perception Battle - mutual respect, sovereignty, non-interference
- High Impact Community Development Projects
- Timely completion of projects
- Economic diplomacy
- Leveraging cultural ties & soft power

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

India-Nepal relations have historically been marked by strong cultural, economic, and geopolitical ties. However, recent tensions have affected this bilateral relationship. Analyze the significance of India-Nepal relations, identify the key challenges faced, and suggest measures to enhance cooperation and resolve existing issues.



Rarest of Rare Doctrine

SYLLABUS:

GS

Paper

2:

Governance

Newspaper : The Hindu **Page No:** 8

seminar room at Kolkata's R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital. Sanjay Roy, a civic volunteer, was arrested and convicted on January 20, based on forensic evidence linking him to the crime. During sentencing, the Additional district and sessions judge said, "this doesn't fall into the category of rarest of rare" crimes, and Roy was sentenced to life imprisonment with a fine.

In contrast, the Sharon murder case, did invite the death penalty, the courts decided. Sharon Raj, a 23-year-old student from Kerala, was poisoned on October 14, 2022 by his partner, Greeshma, who mixed poison in an Ayurvedic concoction that she offered him to drink. Eleven days later, Sharon succumbed to multiple organ failures. The Neyyattinkara Additional Sessions Court, imposed the death penalty, and classified it as one of the "rarest of rare" cases.

What are the origins of the doctrine?

The debate on the discretion given to judges to award the death sentence dates back to 1972, when the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the death penalty in *Jagmohan Singh versus State of U.P.* The petitioner argued that the death



In rage: Junior doctors raise slogans in protest against the R.G Kar Medical College and Hospital, in Kolkata.

sentence puts an end to all fundamental rights guaranteed under Article 19 and, therefore, the law with regard to the capital sentence is unreasonable and not in the interest of the general public. He also pointed out that judges have no clear guidelines for deciding between the death penalty and life imprisonment, which he believes is an unfair delegation of power. Lastly, he argued that the lack of clear rules for judges violates Article 14 of the Constitution, which guarantees equality before the law.

However, the court disagreed, explaining that the accused is aware of the potential for a death sentence, and during the trial, all relevant facts, including mitigating circumstances, are considered. The court dismissed the appeal and affirmed the death sentence was constitutional under Article 21. At this

stage, there were no clear guidelines on when the death penalty should be used, which meant judges had wide discretion to decide.

In 1980, the Supreme Court in *Bachan Singh versus State of Punjab*, established the 'rarest of rare' doctrine, marking a turning point. A five-judge Bench heard the case, and held that the death penalty should be used only in exceptional cases. However, it did not embellish what the 'rarest of rare' meant, leading to further confusion. It was finally in *Machhi Singh versus State of Punjab* (1983), that the Supreme Court provided a framework for the 'rarest of rare' doctrine.

The court identified five categories of crimes where such a punishment is justified.

The criteria are – a) manner of committing the murder; when the murder



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Newspaper : The Hindu **Page No:** 8

- Debate of Rarest of Rare
- Kolkata Murder case vs Sharon Murder case

Origins of the Doctrine

- **1972 (Jagmohan Singh v. State of U.P.)**
 - a. upheld death penalty's constitutionality
 - b. no clear guidelines for its application
- **Rajendra Prasad vs. State of UP, 1979**
 - a. 2 things must – record special reason, only in extraordinary circumstances
- **1980 (Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab)**
 - a. introduced 'rarest of rare' doctrine
 - b. didn't define it clearly
- **1983 (Machhi Singh v. State of Punjab)**
 - a. framework with 5 categories

is committed in an extremely brutal and dastardly manner so as to arouse extreme indignation within the community, b) motive of the murder; when the murder is committed for a motive which reveals total depravity, c) socially abhorrent nature of the crime; that is when a murder occurs of someone belonging to a minority community and is committed not for personal reasons but in circumstances which arouse social wrath, d) magnitude of the crime, and e) personality of the offender; when the victim of murder is a child, a helpless woman, a person rendered helpless by old age or infirmity etc.

Were there any revisions?

Despite the framework set in *Machhi Singh versus State of Punjab*, the Supreme Court in 1983, in *Mithu versus State of Punjab*, struck down Section 303 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which prescribed mandatory death penalty for anyone who commits murder while serving a life sentence. The court ruled

Categories for Rarest of Rare

- **Manner of committing the murder:** Brutal and dastardly crimes
- **Motive of the murder:** Committed with total depravity
- **Socially abhorrent nature:** Hate or bias crimes
- **Magnitude of the crime:** Large-scale impact
- **Personality of the offender:** Crimes against vulnerable victims (children, elderly, etc.)

Revisions to Death Penalty Application

- **Mithu v. State of Punjab (1983):**
 - a. Struck down Section 303 of IPC – Violated Articles 14 and 21
- **September 2022:**
 - a. referred to a **Constitution Bench** – application of mitigating circumstances before declaring a crime as "rarest of rare."



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Newspaper : Indian Express Page No: 18

APURVA VISHWANATH

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 18

THE SUPREME Court on Tuesday granted interim protection from arrest in the FIRs registered against podcaster-influencer Ranveer Allahbadia for his comments on a YouTube show.

However, a Bench of Justices Surya Kant and N K Singh imposed crucial conditions, including that Allahbadia or his associates cannot air any content on social media until further orders.

The SC also sought the assistance of the Attorney General for India in the next hearing to tackle the "vacuum" in the regulation of online content.

While Allahbadia was granted relief, the gag order raises some questions of free speech. The order also flies in the face of an

SC judgment that said such a condition could have a "chilling effect on the freedom of speech".

Petitioner's plea

The petitioner had moved the SC seeking clubbing of FIRs against him, and an interim order preventing his arrest.

Essentially, the relief would be akin to granting anticipatory bail. Such pleas are routinely entertained under Article 32 of the Constitution for the enforcement of fundamental rights as a safeguard against arbitrary police action.

The pattern of filing multiple FIRs in different jurisdictions for the same cause of action or alleged offence has been noted in several cases as restricting liberty.

Courts club the FIRs or allow investigation in one FIR, while the others are stayed so the petitioner does not have to appear in

multiple courts. Ultimately, even if convicted, the accused would serve a common sentence, and not consecutive sentences.

SC's gag order

The court stayed the FIRs registered in Jaipur and Guwahati, and also any future FIRs on the same set of allegations. It allowed Allahbadia to approach the police for protection in the event of any threat.

But the SC imposed two conditions: that Allahbadia deposit his passport so he does not leave the country, and that he "or his associates shall not air any show on Youtube or any other audio/video visual mode of communication till further orders".

Bail conditions

Section 438(2) of the CrPC stipulates that the High Court or the Court of Sessions can

- **Interim Protection** from arrest
- **Conditions Imposed:**
 - a. cannot air any content on social media until further orders
 - b. Passport Deposit
- **Vacuum in online content regulation**

Petitioner's Plea

- **Request for Clubbing of FIRs**
- **Article 32:** safeguarding against arbitrary police action
- **Pattern of Multiple FIRs:** different jurisdictions for the same offence, restrictions on liberty

SC's Gag Order

- **FIRs Stayed:** any future FIRs on similar allegations
- Allowed to approach the police for protection against threats.
- **Unusual Condition:** prohibiting speech before it occurs



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direct a person to be released on conditional bail. The court shall impose conditions in the context of the facts of a particular case.

For example, the condition of depositing a passport is to address situations where the accused could be a flight risk. Bail could be set for a high monetary value to ensure the accused joins the investigation. Another common condition is that the accused should periodically present himself before a police officer.

In other cases, courts have imposed onerous bail conditions like sharing a Google map PIN or residing in a particular locality. In a 2023 case in which the accused was asked to deposit a huge amount with the court for grant of bail, the SC had observed that setting such onerous bail conditions amounted to "selling bail".

"How many times have you stood in the

Supreme Court and High Court objecting to such onerous conditions? How can we start selling bail like this?" a Bench headed by Justice Ravindra Bhat had said.

However, a gag order, while granting protection from arrest, is an unusual condition because it is in the nature of a prior restraint — when speech or any other expression is prohibited before it can take place.

A body of jurisprudence in India bars the state from making prior restraint laws. In hate speech cases, the court could observe that the accused cannot make similar statements, essentially tailoring the gag order narrowly to not interfere with speech entirely.

Past SC ruling

In 2022, while granting bail to Alt News co-founder Mohammed Zubair, a three-judge Bench headed by Justice D Y Chandrachud rejected the Uttar Pradesh

government's plea that the accused must be barred from tweeting while on bail.

"Merely because the complaints... arise from posts that were made by him on a social media platform, a blanket anticipatory order preventing him from tweeting cannot be made. A blanket order directing the petitioner to not express his opinion — an opinion that he is rightfully entitled to hold... — would be disproportionate to the purpose of imposing conditions on bail. The imposition of such a condition would tantamount to a gag order against the petitioner. Gag orders have a chilling effect on the freedom of speech," the court said.

The court noted that Zubair would need to use social media as a medium of communication for his work, and said that a gag order would "amount to an unjustified violation of the freedom of speech and expression, and the freedom to practice his profession".

Bail Conditions

- **Section 438(2) CrPC:** Allows conditional bail
- **Common Bail Conditions:** passport deposit, monetary value, periodic appearances
- **Onerous Conditions:** SC earlier criticisms – excessive, "selling bail"
- **Gag Order:** restricts free speech, considered a prior restraint

Previous SC Ruling on Free Speech

- **2022 Zubair Case:**
 - rejected an order preventing social media use while granting bail
 - blanket gag order violates **FoSE**
 - **disproportionate** and unjustified for bail conditions



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Economy:

Newspaper : Indian Express Page No: 17

be obtained by accessing a link that directed users to a website called *vivalalibertadproject.com*, referring to the well-known phrase with which Milei closes speeches and messages on his social media. Milei, who claims to have no connection with the coin or its promoters, joins the list of world leaders like Donald Trump to get associated with promoting meme coins.

Meme coins are highly volatile cryptocurrency inspired by popular internet or cultural trends. They carry no intrinsic value but can soar, or plummet, in price. They are generally seen as indicators of retail investors' interest in cryptocurrency. It is usually a marker of investors' risk appetite at any given point in time.

The implosion of Libra and its aftermath

As per industry analysis, the

Libra meme coin hit a peak market cap of \$4.5 billion, but within three hours of launch, insiders who may have promoted the coin are believed to have cashed out more than \$87 million. A few hours later, Libra erased more than \$4.4 billion in value, effectively pulling the rug off unsuspecting retail investors. The rapid implosion led Milei to clear himself of any association with the project.



"A few hours ago I posted a tweet, as I have so many other times, supporting a supposed private enterprise with which I obviously have no connection whatsoever," Milei wrote on X. "I was not aware of the details of the project and after having become aware of it I decided not to continue spreading the word (that is why I deleted the tweet)." Lawyers in Argentina have filed

fraud complaints against Milei for his involvement in promoting the Libra meme coin, the *Associated Press* reported. Jonatan Baldiviezo, a lawyer and one of the plaintiffs, told the *AP* that they saw an illicit association to commit "an indeterminate number of frauds" in the episode. "Within this illicit association, the crime of fraud was committed, in which the president's actions were essential," he said.

Crypto on the move

Since the victory of Trump in the United States Presidential elections, the crypto market has picked up, responding to signals that Trump could go easy on the virtual currency.

Investors had predicted that Bitcoin could hit that mark if Trump were to be elected, since his entire campaign featured pro-crypto messaging, among other things. It was also anticipated that

having Elon Musk — who has been a long time advocate for cryptocurrency — as a key adviser could further bolster investors' belief in bitcoin, and other digital virtual assets, even if concerns around conflict of interest remain.

Some of Trump's key picks for his administration, including Paul Atkins, to lead the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and is widely considered a cryptocurrency advocate, also signalled a largely pro-crypto regulatory environment for the currency under the new administration.

Earlier this year, crypto markets were rocked by the launch of two new his and her 'meme coins', by new United States President Donald Trump, and his wife Melania — coinciding with the administration's signal towards a favourable regulatory environment for cryptocurrencies, while raising ethical concerns.

- **Promotion of Libra Coin:**
 - a. Javier Milei promoted **Libra**, a crypto meme coin, on social media
 - b. linked to a **Solana contract address**
 - c. later **deleted** after backlash
- **Meme Coin Characteristics:**
 - a. **Highly volatile**, inspired by internet/cultural trends
 - b. **No intrinsic value** but dramatic price changes
 - c. Indicator of **retail investors' risk appetite** in crypto markets

Implosion of Libra Coin

- **Initial Success:**
 - Market cap \$4.5 billion shortly after launch
- **Rapid Decline:**
 - Within hours, \$87 million cashed out by insiders
 - \$4.4 billion erased in value — retail
- **Legal Action:**
 - Lawyers filed fraud complaints
 - Alleged illicit association and fraud in the promotion

Global Crypto Landscape and Prominent Figures

- Crypto market surged after Trump win
- Trump and Melania meme coins, raising regulatory concerns
- SEC lead Paul Atkins, Advisor Elon Musk also supporters
- signals towards a favorable crypto regulatory environment



Marriages in China: Learning for India

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 1: Social Issues
Newspaper : The Hindu **Page No:** 8

Gunjan Singh

The story so far:

There has been a major decline in the number of couples who are registering to marry in China. As per the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs, in 2024, across China, only 6.1 million couples registered, a drop of 20.3% compared to 2023 figures. This is the lowest number of registrations since 1986. As the general cost of living and urban unemployment has risen, with almost 44% of urban women not wanting to marry, marriages in China are declining.

What is the problem?

While stand-alone this may not appear as a very pertinent challenge, coupled with the consistent decline in population, it gets compounded. China's population has been declining consistently for the last

three years and in 2022 the number of deaths exceeded birthrates. The primary reason for this is the one-child policy, introduced in the 1980s and implemented with great zeal. Chinese President Xi Jinping has tried to reverse the trend by introducing the two-child policy in 2016, which was later modified to a three-child policy in 2021. However, the policy shift has failed to have any major impact. Furthermore, the desire for a male child has led to an unbalanced sex-ratio as well.

Does China have an ageing people?

The declining population has now become a demographic challenge for Mr. Xi. As a result of these policies, China has witnessed a steady decline in the number of working age people (19-59 years). People above 60 years make up 22% of the Chinese population today and maybe 50% by 2050. This has also intensified the pension pressure, as the Chinese

- **Marriage Registrations Drop:** 20% from 2023
- Lowest Since 1986
- High living costs, rising urban unemployment
- **Women's Reluctance:** 44% of urban women choosing not to marry

Demographic Challenge

- **Declining Population:** last 3 years, deaths > births (2022)
- **One-Child Policy:** 1980s, long-term population imbalances
- **Policy Changes:**
 - 2-child policy (2016) 3-child policy (2021)
 - failed to increase birth rates
- **Sex Ratio Imbalance:** Desire for male children



Marriages in China: Learning for India

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of China? How has the Communist

Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) predicts that the pension fund may run out by 2035. In order to postpone such reality, the government has increased the retirement age from 60 to 63 for men and to 55 for women. This would be a temporary solution because if the gap continues to rise, it will provide only a limited respite. The falling birthrates have also increased the demand for care giving and healthcare, while a lot of kindergartens have been shutting down.

The reducing population and the challenges which this leads to directly impacts the economic future and stability of the Chinese government. Even though the government has been attempting to lure people with financial support, the cost of raising a child is proving an insurmountable deterrent to the people.

What is Chinese government doing?
Rather than accepting the reality of the

such an approach showcases that the government is still looking for ways to change ground realities with the help of top-down processes without acknowledging that these issues need to be accepted as social reality, and thus need people-centric solutions which echo with Chinese society today.

For example, while delivering a speech at the Women's Federation of China, Mr. Xi called on the women to, "actively cultivate a new culture of marriage and childbearing and strengthen guidance on young people's view on marriage, childbirth and family". This statement underscores the gap between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and society in China today. The CPC has a long history of interfering in the lives of Chinese women, with the most prominent example being the one-child policy. The CPC under Mr. Xi is still looking at ways to control and command society. It strongly believes that the people should undertake tasks which are commanded by the party with the premise that it knows what is best for the nation. These policies seem to be directed towards safeguarding the power of the party, and not to the needs of the larger society.

Gunjan Singh is Associate Professor at OP Jindal Global University.

Aging Population

- 22% over 60, expected 50% by 2050
- Declining Working Age Population
- Pension fund may deplete by 2035
- Retirement Age: 60 to 63 for men, 55 for women

Social and Economic Impact

- Economic future and government stability
- Child Rearing Costs: deterrent
- Decreased Care Services: kindergartens shutting down

Government Response

- Top-Down Policies
- Xi Jinping's Call: women to actively cultivate a culture of marriage and childbearing
- Disconnect with Society: Policies serving party interests



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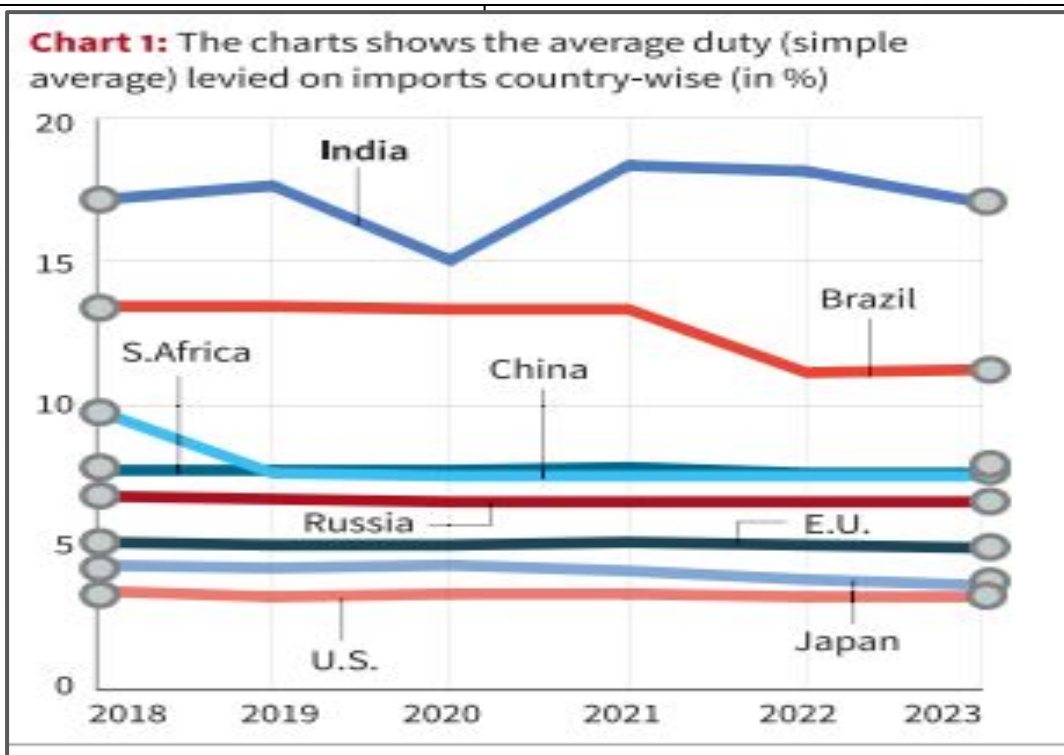
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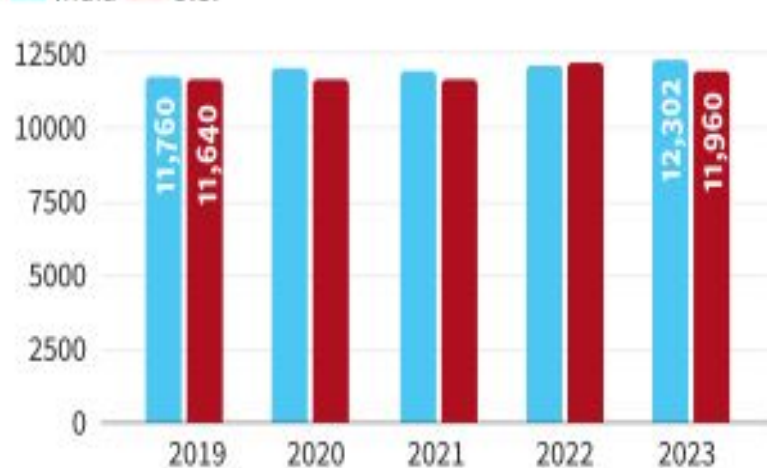
Economy

Newspaper : The Hindu Page No: 7



- **India's Import Tariffs:**
 - Average duty** in India: 17% (2023) – U.S. 3.3%
 - Highest among comparable – BRICS**
- **Tariff Comparison:**
 - Comparable number of products**
 - High tariffs** largely on agricultural products – protect domestic producers
- **Reasons for High Agricultural Tariffs:**
 - Protects food security and livelihoods
 - Low investment in agriculture (6% of total investment in India)
 - Difficulty in reducing tariffs due to subsidized U.S. agricultural products flooding the market

Chart 2: The chart shows the number of applied tariff lines



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Product-Specific Tariffs

- **High Tariffs:**
 - Agricultural products, dairy, beverages, and tobacco: Duty > 30%.
- **Decreasing Tariffs:**
 - Transport equipment, cotton, and textiles
- **Increasing Tariffs:**
 - Electrical machinery, leather/footwear, some manufactured goods

U.S. Response to Tariffs

- **Trump's Comments:**
 - Unclear details on the reciprocal tariffs, causing unease in India.
- **India's Counteraction:**
 - Reduced tariffs on bourbon whiskey from 150% to 100%

India-U.S. Trade Dynamics

- **India's Exports to the U.S.:**
 - \$53 billion in FY25 (April-November)
 - 18% of India's total exports (15% in '15)
- **Impact of Reciprocal Tariffs:**
 - Pressure on India to reduce agricultural tariffs
 - push India to import more from US
- **India's Position:**
 - India opposes tariff negotiations on agricultural products for FTAs..

Chart 3: The chart shows the average duty (simple average) levied category-wise on imports into India (in %)

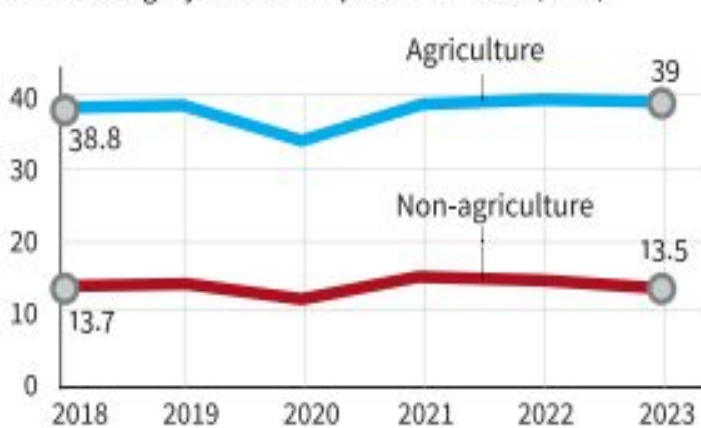


Table 4: The chart shows the average duty levied product category wise on imports into India (in %)

	2018	2023
Beverages and tobacco	74.7	74.5
Oilseeds, fats and oils	54.1	60.1
Sugars and confectionery	51.5	51.5
Coffee, tea	56.3	47.6
Cereals and preparations	37.1	37.8
Dairy products	34.8	35.2
Fruits, vegetables, plants	32.4	34.6
Animal products	32.5	32.5
Fish and fish products	30	30
Transport equipment	31.1	28.2
Other agricultural products	29	28.1
Clothing	20.5	20.7
Textiles	20.7	16
Leather, footwear, etc	12.1	15.1
Manufactures n.e.s.	11.1	12.4
Minerals and metals	11	11.9
Electrical machinery	8.8	11.2
Wood, paper, etc	10	10.6
Chemicals	10.2	10.3
Cotton	26	9.4
Petroleum	9.2	9.2
Non-electrical machinery	7.8	7.9



Q1. Consider the following statements regarding India-Qatar relations:

1. The bilateral trade is primarily driven by India's exports of crude oil and natural gas to Qatar.
2. The two countries have signed a defence cooperation agreement that allows the deployment of Indian military forces in Qatar during regional conflicts.
3. Qatar is a major supplier of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to India, and the two nations have a long-term LNG supply agreement.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: a

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding India-Nepal relations:

1. India is Nepal's largest trading partner, and Nepal imports the majority of its petroleum products from India.
2. Both nations conduct the joint military exercise '**Surya Kiran**' regularly.
3. The Treaty of Peace and Friendship (1950) between India and Nepal facilitates free movement of people and trade between the two countries.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: c

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding Libra Coin, the digital currency project initially proposed by Meta (formerly Facebook):

1. Libra was designed as a global stablecoin backed by a basket of fiat currencies to minimize volatility.
2. The project faced regulatory opposition from multiple governments, leading to its rebranding as Diem before being ultimately discontinued.
3. Libra was officially launched in 2022 and is currently used in cross-border transactions across multiple countries.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: a

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding the demographic challenges faced by China:

1. China's population has been declining due to a falling birth rate and an aging population, leading to concerns over economic growth and labor shortages.
2. The Chinese government has completely abolished all restrictions on family size, allowing families to have as many children as they wish.
3. More than 22% of China's population is aged 60 and above, creating challenges for healthcare, pensions, and workforce sustainability.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: a

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding India-U.S. trade dynamics :

1. India's exports to the U.S. stood at **\$53 billion** in FY25 (April–November), accounting for **18% of India's total exports**.
2. India has agreed to include agricultural tariff reductions in Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with the U.S. to boost trade relations.

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

Answer: a





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