

Mains Master

Maldives row: 3 key issues

The article explores the multifaceted relationship between India and the Maldives, covering strategic significance, economic interdependence, and resilience aspects. It emphasizes the need for de-escalating tensions, recognizing mutual interdependence, and strengthening communication for a stable future in bilateral ties.

Understanding India-Maldives Ties: A Closer Look Strategic Significance:

- **Location:** Maldives' proximity to India and its position on key shipping lanes offer strategic advantages for Indian maritime security.
- **Defense Cooperation:** India trains Maldivian forces and supplies equipment, bolstering their maritime capabilities.
- **Countering China's influence:** India seeks to balance China's growing economic and political presence in Maldives.

Economic Interdependence:

- **Essential supplies:** India provides Maldives with everyday necessities like food, medicine, and construction materials.
- **Trading partnership:** India ranks as Maldives' second largest trading partner, vital to its economic stability.
- **Education:** Indian universities attract Maldivian students, fostering cultural and academic exchange.

Resilience and Support:

- **Disaster relief:** India has consistently provided aid to Maldives during natural disasters and emergencies.
- **Security cooperation:** India has intervened militarily to protect Maldives and conducts joint exercises with its Navy.
- **Longstanding partnership:** Diplomatic and political ties dating back six decades form a strong foundation for cooperation.

Moving Forward:

- **De-escalating tensions:** Both nations need to address concerns and cooperate on areas of mutual benefit.
- **Recognizing interdependence:** Understanding the multifaceted ties is crucial for a stable future.
- **Strengthening communication:** Open dialogue and diplomacy are key to navigating diplomatic turbulence.

Missing a maritime doctrine

The article addresses recent tensions between India and Maldives, emphasizing the strategic importance of the Maldives for India's maritime security and advocating for improved diplomatic strategies and enhanced maritime diplomacy. Additionally, it suggests the development of SAGAR as a comprehensive maritime doctrine.

Tensions Between India and Maldives: Lessons Learned

Strategic Implications:

- Maldives, strategically located in the Indian Ocean, is vital to India's maritime security.
- Despite the Indian Navy's awareness of its significance, a lack of a comprehensive national security strategy has led to sporadic maritime initiatives.

Diplomatic Scrutiny:

- Diplomatic relations with Maldives influenced by hyper-nationalism, religious fervor, and the India-China rivalry.
- Early signs of strain emerged in 2011, notably with the cancellation of a GMR contract; questions raised about warnings and preventive measures.

Challenges in Diplomacy:

- Diplomatic approach criticized for potential condescension and emphasis on India's cultural dominance.
- China's economic seduction and Pakistan's religious influence contribute to Maldives' alienation.

Shift in Focus:

- Need to shift focus from border disputes to broader geopolitical competition in the Indo-Pacific region.
- India and China vie for influence, with China facing the "tyranny of distance" in the Indian Ocean Region.

Importance of Friendly Neighbors:

- Demonstrated advantages of having a friendly neighbor during crises such as the 1988 coup attempt, the 2004 tsunami, and the 2014 drinking-water crisis.
- India's good-neighbourly attitude expected to endure despite diplomatic challenges.

China's Compulsions:

- China's economy heavily dependent on uninterrupted seaborne trade, making Indian Ocean sea lanes crucial.

- Beijing develops maritime footholds in the Indian Ocean Region to protect its maritime interests.
- Maritime Diplomacy as a Solution:
- Urges better exploitation of maritime diplomacy as a vital instrument of conventional diplomacy.
 - Calls for fleshing out SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) as a comprehensive maritime doctrine to guide regional diplomacy.

Income vs price support: price deficiency payment option for MSP

Challenges Faced by Farmers:

- Farmers operate in a buyer's market, making them price takers rather than price makers.
- Bulk harvesting leads to sudden supply increases relative to demand, putting downward pressure on prices.
- Farmers pay retail prices for inputs but sell crops wholesale, resulting in financial disparities.

Demand for Minimum Support Prices (MSP):

- Farmers demand MSP to ensure a minimum guaranteed price for their crops.
- As Lok Sabha elections approach, parties might face calls for a "legal guarantee for MSP" in their manifestos.

Economists' Perspective:

- Many economists oppose government-fixed MSPs based on cost-plus pricing, favoring market-driven planting decisions.
- Prefer providing farmers with income support over price support to avoid distorting production decisions.

Concerns about Income Support:

- Income support schemes benefit all farmers equally, raising concerns about rewarding real producers investing more resources, time, and effort.

Need for Price Assurance:

- Some farmers, particularly those heavily invested in agriculture, may justify seeking price assurance for their crops.

Guaranteeing MSP:

- Conventional methods include forcing buyers to pay MSP or government agencies buying entire marketable produce at MSP.
- A third option is Price Deficiency Payments (PDP), paying farmers the difference between market price and MSP without physical procurement.

Example of PDP Implementation:








- Madhya Pradesh's Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana, where farmers received payments based on the difference between market price and MSP.
- Despite initial success, lack of Central support led to discontinuation of the scheme.

Haryana's Bhavantar Bharpai Yojana (BBY):








- Haryana's PDP scheme covering crops like bajra, mustard, and sunflower seed.
 - Combines physical procurement and PDP based on the gap between MSP and market price.
 - Farmers register on the 'Meri Fasal, Mera Byaura' portal, and eligibility is determined through girdwari and satellite imaging.
- Feasibility and Road Ahead:
- Madhya Pradesh and Haryana showcase the feasibility of delivering MSP in crops beyond rice, wheat, and sugarcane.
 - A nationwide PDP scheme with Central funding could incentivize other states to build market infrastructure and systems for effective MSP implementation.

Prelims Booster






How a superenergetic particle from outer space could help physics

-  **Amaterasu Cosmic Ray Discovery:** Discovered by Japanese scientist Toshihiro Fujii in May 2021, the Amaterasu cosmic ray is the second-highest-energy cosmic ray identified to date, exhibiting an extraordinary energy level of 240 exa-electron-volt (EeV).
-  **Telescope Array Project's Role:** The Telescope Array Project in the U.S. played a crucial role in capturing and analyzing the data related to the Amaterasu cosmic ray, focusing on the study of cosmic rays and their properties to unravel mysteries of the universe.
-  **Challenges and Unanswered Questions:** The exceptionally high energy of the Amaterasu cosmic ray challenges existing models and theories, prompting scientists to consider potential unknown sources or phenomena, and reevaluate aspects of high-energy particle physics.
-  **Cosmic Rays and Energy Scale:** Cosmic rays exhibit a wide range of energy levels, and understanding their energies significantly contributes to the comprehension of the universe's subatomic building blocks.
-  **Scientific Implications:** The discovery of the Amaterasu cosmic ray aids in ongoing efforts to detect more high-energy cosmic events, provides crucial data for refining theories and models in particle physics, and enhances our understanding of the properties and origins of cosmic rays.
-  **Solar vs. Galactic Cosmic Rays:** Distinguishing between solar cosmic rays and galactic cosmic rays provides insights into different cosmic processes, influenced by magnetic fields, interactions, and energy levels.
-  **Contribution to Scientific Theories:** The discovery of the Amaterasu cosmic ray poses challenges to existing models and theories, necessitating a reevaluation of certain aspects of particle physics, contributing to the ongoing evolution of our understanding of the universe.






The laws around remission policy

-  Supreme Court Decision (January 8): Overturned Gujarat government's remission order for 11 convicts in the Bilkis Bano gang rape and murder case during the 2002 Gujarat riots, emphasizing proper legal scrutiny and adherence to constitutional principles in remission decisions.
-  Clemency Powers in Constitution: Article 72 and 161 grant clemency powers to President and Governor, exercised on the advice of the council of ministers.
-  Legal Framework for Remission: Section 432 of CrPC allows state governments to remit part or whole of a convict's sentence, with a 14-year requirement for life imprisonment under Section 433A.
-  Bilkis Bano Case Background: Crimes occurred during 2002 Gujarat riots, cases shifted to Maharashtra for a fair trial, resulting in life imprisonment in 2008.
-  Controversial Remission and Legal Issues: Gujarat's remission faced jurisdiction concerns, violated Supreme Court guidelines, and contradicted the 1992 policy under which remission was granted, prompting legal and moral scrutiny.
-  Supreme Court's Ruling: Nullified May 2022 remission order, declared obtained through fraud, emphasized the appropriate government for considering the remission petition was Maharashtra, and ordered the surrender of convicts within two weeks.
-  Impact on Judicial System and Rule of Law: Seen as reinforcing the rule of law, setting a precedent for considering jurisdiction, judicial guidelines, and constitutional provisions in similar cases, avoiding arbitrary or politically motivated remission decisions.






Tshering Tobgay to become Bhutan PM for second time as poll body confirms results

-  Tshering Tobgay's Re-election: Bhutanese voters have elected Tshering Tobgay for a second term as prime minister after his People's Democratic Party (PDP) secured nearly two-thirds of the seats, winning 30 out of 47.
-  Election Results and Challenges: Tobgay led the PDP to victory amid serious economic challenges, with the election dominated by economic concerns and strategic contested border zones between China and India being closely watched.
-  Strategic Importance: Bhutan's election was of interest to both China and India, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulating Tobgay, emphasizing India's close ties with Bhutan.
-  Tobgay's Background: A 58-year-old former civil servant, Tobgay is a passionate conservation advocate with a degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Pittsburgh and a Master's in public administration from Harvard.
-  Gratitude and Cooperation: Tobgay expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Modi and expressed eagerness to work closely to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation between Bhutan and India.

CAUCUS SYSTEM IN US ELECTIONS

-  Iowa Republicans and 2024 Elections: Iowa Republicans are set to hold caucuses, marking the beginning of the 2024 presidential election process.
-  Caucus Process: Unlike primaries, caucuses are overseen by the state party and involve voters selecting their preferred presidential nominee through small group gatherings, speeches by representatives for candidates, secret ballot voting, and selection of delegates to the county convention.
-  Iowa's Significance: Iowa traditionally holds the first caucus, dating back to 1968, making it a crucial starting point for the nomination process and attracting substantial campaign investments and efforts.
-  Media and Candidate Attention: Candidates and the media consistently pay attention to Iowa, given its first-in-the-nation status, leading to significant campaign investments and efforts.
-  Maintaining First Position: Iowa has taken measures to ensure it retains its first-in-the-nation status, emphasizing its role in shaping the presidential nomination process.

India to be a \$5 trn economy by FY28; pushing for sunrise sectors'

-  Sunrise Industry Definition: A sunrise industry refers to a nascent business sector in its early stages, exhibiting the potential for rapid growth, characterized by high growth rates, numerous startups, and substantial venture capital funding.
-  Characteristics of Sunrise Industries: Key features include high growth rates, the presence of startups, and significant venture capital investment, making them appealing to investors due to their long-term growth prospects.
-  Examples of Sunrise Industries: Notable examples encompass alternative energy, social media and cloud computing, blockchain, information technology, and clean energy, with industries evolving through stages from infancy to maturity and potentially entering the sunset phase.
-  Success Factors for Sunrise Industries: Viability and long-term sustainability are crucial, with successful sunrise industries demonstrating stability and growth over time, beyond initial speculative excitement.
-  Comparison with Sunset Industries: A sunrise industry is emerging and innovative, while a sunset industry is in decline, often due to technological changes or automation, such as the transition from traditional energy sources to alternative energy.