

Mains Master

He who rules the sea

Context:



- India's Economic Zenith: During the first millennium, India thrived as the world's largest economy (33% of global GDP), enjoying robust trade networks facilitated by its control over surrounding oceans. This prosperous era saw the rise of powerful Hindu kingdoms like the Cholas, who established trade with the Arab world and ventured into Southeast Asia.

Background:

- Ancient Maritime Prowess:** From the early seafaring traders of south India to empires like the Mauryas, India displayed a deep understanding of maritime affairs. Kautilya's Arthashastra highlighted the importance of maritime activity, with dedicated departments managing ports and harbors. This dominance is evident in Fa-Hien's account of a 200-merchant ship carrying Hindu pilgrims across the seas.
- Decline and Domination:** The second millennium witnessed a shift as European powers like the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and finally the British, rose to naval prominence. This maritime dominance contributed to India's economic decline, particularly after the British declaration of "Lords of the Sea" in the 14th century.
- Limited British Legacy:** Despite ruling India for two centuries, the British surprisingly neglected to develop a strong Indian navy. The Royal Indian Navy established in the 19th century remained inconsequential, leaving India at a disadvantage in terms of naval power.

Importance of Indian Ocean for India:

- Economic Lifeline:** The Indian Ocean serves as a crucial artery for India's economic well-being. 80% of its external trade and 90% of its energy imports transit through these waters. Additionally, the Indian Ocean maritime routes handle a staggering 70% of the world's container traffic, highlighting its significance for global trade.
- Geopolitical & Civilizational Significance:** The Indian Ocean is more than just a geographical entity; it holds immense geopolitical and civilizational importance for India. The name itself reflects historical ties, and millennia of cultural exchange fostered a vast sphere of Indic influence around its shores.
- Regional Leadership:** As the only ocean named after a country, the Indian Ocean presents a unique opportunity for India to exert regional leadership. Recognizing this natural goodwill, India has taken proactive steps to engage with neighboring nations.

Position of India in Indian Ocean:

- Lagging Behind in Maritime Power:** Despite its historical legacy and strategic location, India currently lags behind in maritime power. It ranks 15th in global shipping tonnage and possesses less than 200 combat vessels compared to China's 500 and America's 400, highlighting the need for modernization.
- Shifting Strategies:** While the Indian Navy and initiatives like IORA aim to address security concerns, India is increasingly focusing on non-traditional challenges like climate change, natural disasters, and supply chain disruptions.

Changing Dynamics:

- Power Shift to Indo-Pacific:** The global power axis is shifting from the Pacific-Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific, placing the Indian Ocean at the center of geostrategic competition. This necessitates increased attention to the region's security and stability.
- New Challenges:** Beyond traditional security concerns, India needs to address emerging challenges like climate change, rising sea levels, and potential disruptions to global supply chains. These issues require international cooperation and proactive measures.

Challenges for India:

- Overcoming Historical Neglect:** Decades of underinvestment in its navy and maritime infrastructure pose a significant challenge. Modernizing shipbuilding and naval capabilities is crucial for India to assert its rightful place in the Indian Ocean.
- Balancing Security and Non-Traditional Challenges:** Navigating the complex interplay between traditional security concerns, piracy, and non-traditional challenges like climate change demands a nuanced and multifaceted approach.
- Maintaining Regional Leadership:** As other powers vie for influence in the Indian Ocean, India needs to maintain its position as a leading regional player by fostering cooperation and leveraging its historical ties with neighboring nations.

Strategic Path Ahead for India:

- Modernize Naval Capabilities:** Investing in a modern, blue-water navy equipped with advanced technology and vessels is essential for securing India's interests in the Indian Ocean.
- Proactive Regional Engagement:** India can strengthen its leadership role by actively engaging with regional partners on shared concerns, promoting economic cooperation, and building trust through initiatives like IORA.
- Leverage Civilizational Influence:** India's rich cultural heritage and historical ties can be valuable assets in fostering regional cooperation and stability. By promoting cultural exchange and dialogue, India can build goodwill and partnerships across the Indian Ocean.

LET THEM LIVE

Context:



- Uttarakhand recently passed a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) bill, sparking debate due to its controversial approach to personal laws.
- The article argues that while some aspects of the UCC are positive, its treatment of live-in relationships is deeply problematic.

Background:

- UCC aims to establish a common set of personal laws for all citizens, regardless of religion.
- This is a complex issue in a diverse country like India, and balancing different needs is crucial.

1. Moralistic intrusion:

- The requirement for mandatory registration of live-in relationships implies a judgmental stance by the state.
- It assumes all such relationships have "bad intentions" and need monitoring, even though most are based on personal choice and commitment.
- This moralistic approach disregards the diverse reasons people choose cohabitation, including economic independence, religious differences, or simply exploring commitment before marriage.

2. Potential for misuse:

- Criminalizing non-registration of live-in relationships creates a powerful tool for misuse in the hands of authorities.
- It opens doors for harassment, extortion, and discrimination against couples, particularly from conservative factions or prejudiced officials.
- Fear of punishment could coerce individuals into unwanted marriages or force them to hide their relationships entirely, hindering their freedom and safety.

3. Restriction on freedom:

- The UCC essentially denies consenting adults the right to choose cohabitation outside of marriage.
- This restricts individual autonomy and freedom of choice in personal matters, which is a fundamental principle in a democratic society.
- It assumes a one-size-fits-all model for relationships, ignoring the diverse needs and preferences of individuals who may prefer cohabitation for various reasons.

4. Dissonance with central government:

- The Uttarakhand UCC's approach to live-in relationships stands in stark contrast to the central government's stated priorities.
- Prime Minister Modi's focus on youth and women's empowerment emphasizes individual freedom and choice, including aspects of personal life.
- The UCC, by dictating relationship choices, contradicts this vision and undermines the central government's broader message of individual agency and societal transformation.







5. Lack of inclusivity:







- The UCC, instead of fostering unity, excludes communities and individuals who may choose non-traditional family structures.
- This lack of inclusivity alienates sections of society and reinforces discriminatory attitudes towards marginalized groups who might opt for cohabitation due to social stigma or legal constraints.







6. Unnecessary complexities:

- The registration process itself adds bureaucratic hurdles and potential delays, creating unnecessary complications for individuals who choose to cohabit.
- It burdens the state machinery with tasks better suited for private life, diverting resources from more pressing concerns.
- Overall:

The Uttarakhand UCC, while attempting to introduce uniformity in some aspects, raises serious concerns through its treatment of live-in relationships. This approach infringes on individual freedom, opens doors for potential misuse, and contradicts broader notions of inclusivity and personal choice. A more nuanced and sensitive approach, respecting individual autonomy and recognizing diverse family structures, is crucial for a truly progressive and just society.

-  In 1991, **Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao** led India towards economic liberalization during a challenging period.
-  Faced with a balance of payment crisis and depleted foreign exchange reserves, the government initiated a two-step devaluation of the Rupee in July 1991.
-  To manage liquidity, the Reserve Bank of India transferred over 46 tonnes of gold from its reserves to the Bank of England for borrowing forex.
-  The introduction of a landmark industrial policy abolished industrial licensing for most projects and opened avenues for foreign direct investment.
-  Prime Minister Rao strategically delegated credit for the reforms to his team, including Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, who received Rao's full political backing.
-  The team, including individuals like Amar Nath Varma, Naresh Chandra, and Montek Singh Ahluwalia, played a crucial role in implementing the economic measures.
-  Despite challenges, Rao's commitment to economic liberalization and his team's proactive approach successfully transformed India's economic landscape.

-  The Centre announced the posthumous award of the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, to former Prime Minister and farmer leader **Chaudhary Charan Singh**, recognizing his significant contributions to the nation.
-  PM Narendra Modi emphasized Singh's unwavering dedication to nation building, his steadfast opposition to the Emergency, and his commitment to democracy during challenging times, underscoring his inspirational leadership qualities.
-  The selection of Chaudhary Charan Singh and Dr. M S Swaminathan for the Bharat Ratna reflects the Modi government's strong commitment to the agricultural sector and the recognition of individuals who have significantly championed the cause of agriculture in India.
-  The award to Singh comes at a time when there are ongoing talks of the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) joining the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), indicating potential political implications and alliances in the current landscape.
-  Chaudhary Charan Singh, born in a family of farmers, was a prominent leader in Uttar Pradesh, where he formed the first non-Congress government and later became involved in national politics, leaving a lasting impact on the political scenario of the time.
-  Singh served as Union Home Minister and briefly as Prime Minister, emphasizing the need to eliminate poverty and provide basic necessities of life during his tenure, reflecting his focus on addressing critical societal issues.

-  **M. S. Swaminathan**, known as the 'Father of the Green Revolution,' played a crucial role in transforming Indian farming in the 1960s and '70s, significantly contributing to achieving food security.
-  Swaminathan's interest in agriculture was sparked by the Bengal famine and Gandhi's Quit India Movement in 1942, leading him to focus on genetics and breeding to develop high-yielding crop varieties.
-  In 1954, he began working at the Central Rice Research Institute, Cuttack, transferring genes for fertilizer response from Japonica to Indica varieties, aiming to enhance productivity through better soil fertility and water management.
-  Swaminathan's research expanded to wheat crops, where his collaboration with American scientist Norman Borlaug led to the development of semi-dwarf wheat varieties, initiating the 'Wheat Revolution' in India.
-  Despite challenges, Swaminathan's collaboration resulted in the development of the 'Gaines' dwarf wheat variety, significantly increasing yields and marking a transformative period acknowledged by then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
-  Swaminathan's strategic vision played a pivotal role in the Green Revolution in India, addressing challenges posed by traditional tall and slender wheat and rice varieties prone to lodging, highlighting the significant impact of agricultural research and technology on food security and production in India.

