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MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



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DTE Feb 2

CERVICAL CANCER

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

Union Budget 2024-25 encourages vaccination against cervical cancer, provides insurance to frontline health workers

Context: The Department of Health and Family Welfare was allocated Rs 87,656.90 crore in the interim Union Budget 2024-2025 tabled by Finance Minister in Parliament.

Cervical Cancer

- **About:** It is s a growth of cells that starts in the cervix. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus that connects to the vagina.
- HPV is a common infection that's passed through sexual contact.
- **Symptoms**: When it starts, cervical cancer might not cause symptoms. As it grows, cervical cancer might cause signs and symptoms, such as:
  - Vaginal bleeding after intercourse, between periods or after menopause.
  - Menstrual bleeding that is heavier and lasts longer than usual.
  - Watery, bloody vaginal discharge that may be heavy and have a foul odor.
- **Causes**: when healthy cells in the cervix develop changes in their DNA. A cell's DNA contains the instructions that tell a cell what to do. The changes tell the cells to multiply quickly.
- **Treatment**: Surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy as well as secondary care for pain management.
- **Types of cervical cancer**
  - **Squamous cell carcinoma**: This type of cervical cancer begins in thin, flat cells, called squamous cells. The squamous cells line the outer part of the cervix. Most cervical cancers are squamous cell carcinomas.
  - **Adenocarcinom:**. This type of cervical cancer begins in the column-shaped gland cells that line the cervical canal.
- **Vaccine:** Cervarix (bivalent), Gardasil (quadrivalent), and
  - Cervavac (quadrivalent) - This is India's first indigenous HPV vaccine, launched in January 2023, It has been developed and manufactured by Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII). It targets the same four HPV types as Gardasil.

INDIAN EXPRESS Explained

MULTIDIMENTIONAL POVERTY INDEX

Syllabus GS Paper 3 – Economy)

Multidimensional poverty: meaning, numbers

25 cr Indians have been raised from poverty since 2013-14, says Govt. MPI uses indicators covering three main areas: health, education, and standard of living

UDIT MISRA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

IN HER Interim Budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said 25 crore Indians had been pulled out of poverty over the past decade. "With the pursuit of 'Sabka ka Saath' in these 10 years, the Government has assisted 25 crore people to get freedom from multidimensional poverty," she said.

What is the basis for this assessment?

This number appeared in a discussion paper, *Multidimensional Poverty in India Since 2005-06*, published by NITI Aayog on Jan 15.

The paper, written by Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog, and Yogesh Suri, Senior Adviser, NITI Aayog, with technical inputs from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Policy and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), says: "Multidimensional poverty in India was found to decline from 29.17% in 2013-14 to 11.28% in 2022-23 with about 24.82 crore people escaping poverty during this period. At the States' level, Uttar Pradesh topped the list with 5.94 crore people escaping poverty followed by Bihar at 3.77 crore and Madhya Pradesh at 2.30 crore."

The table on the right, sourced from the same paper, shows poverty estimates for selected states in the last nine years (from 2013-14 to 2022-23). This period broadly coincides with the 10 years of the BJP-led government.

What is the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)?

Traditionally, poverty is calculated based either on income levels or, if income data are not available, on expenditure levels. The so-called "poverty lines" are actually expenditure levels that are considered minimum enough for someone to be called poor.

The MPI approaches poverty differently. Globally, the MPI uses 10 indicators covering three main areas: (i) health, (ii) education, and (iii) standard of living. These three dimensions have one-third weight each in the final index.

The health dimension includes nutrition and child & adolescent mortality indicators. The education dimension includes years of schooling and school attendance indicators. The standard of living dimension includes six household-specific indicators: housing, household assets, type of cooking fuel, access to sanitation, drinking water, and electricity.

The Indian MPI has two additional indicators: maternal health (under the health dimension) and bank accounts (under the standard of living dimension). This has been done, according to the NITI Aayog, to align the MPI with India's national priorities.

How is MPI calculated?

According to the MPI method, if a person is deprived in a third or more of 10 (weighted) indicators, they are identified as "MPI poor".

However, to calculate the index value, three separate calculations are needed.

■ The first calculation involves finding out the "incidence of multidimensional poverty" (denoted by the symbol H). The incidence essentially refers to the proportion of multidimensionally poor in the population, and it is arrived at by dividing the number of multidimensionally poor persons by total population. More simply, it answers the question: How many are poor?

■ The second calculation involves finding out the "intensity" of poverty (it is demoted by the symbol A). This answers the question: How poor are they?

More technically, this refers to the average proportion of deprivation that is experienced by multidimensionally poor individuals. To compute intensity, the weighted deprivation scores of all poor people are summed and then divided by the total number of poor people.

■ Finally, the MPI is arrived at by multiplying the incidence of multidimensional poverty (H) and the intensity of poverty (A).

"The MPI value for a given population, therefore, is the share of weighted deprivations faced by multidimensionally poor individuals divided by the total population," states the paper.

How were the data for 2013-14 and 2022-23 arrived at?

Typically, the health metrics depend on data from the different rounds of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS). The NFHS is conducted every five years; the last round refers to the 2019-21 period.

How then were the MPI for 2012-13 and 2022-23 calculated?

According to the paper, this required interpolation of estimates for the year 2013-14, and extrapolation for the year 2022-23.

"A better understanding of the impact of various initiatives launched during the previous decade on poverty and deprivation can be obtained by comparing the estimates of poverty and deprivation in year 2013-14 with year 2022-23 even though the actual estimates for 2015-16 and 2019-21 clearly point to acceleration in rate of reduction in MPI after 2015-16 compared to 2005-06 to 2015-16," it states.

LONGER VERSION, indianexpress.com/explained

Escaped Multidimensional Poverty (2013-14-2022-23)

	Estimated in lakh
Bihar	377.09
Madhya Pradesh	230.00
Maharashtra	159.07
Odisha	102.78
Rajasthan	187.12
Uttar Pradesh	593.69
West Bengal	172.18
INDIA	2,412.16

Context: Finance Minister, in her Interim Budget speech, recently declared that 25 crore Indians had been lifted out of poverty over the past decade, emphasizing the government's commitment to the inclusive principle of 'Sabka ka Saath'.

Multidimensional Poverty Index

- **About**: The index is a key international resource that measures acute multidimensional poverty across more than 100 developing countries.
- **Produced by**: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI)
- **Calculation of MPI**: Multiplying the incidence of poverty and the average intensity of poverty.
- **MPI Ranges**: From 0 to 1, and higher values imply higher poverty.
- **10 Indicators**: covering three main areas: (i) health, (ii) education, and (iii) standard of living. These three dimensions have one-third weight each in the final index.
- **The Indian MPI has two additional indicators**: maternal health (under the health dimension) and bank accounts (under the standard of living dimension).
  - This has been done, according to the NITI Aayog, to align the MPI with India's national priorities.

How is MPI calculated?

- **According to the MPI method**, if a person is deprived in a third or more of 10 (weighted) indicators, they are identified as "MPI poor".
- **The first calculation** involves finding out the "incidence of multidimensional poverty" (denoted by the symbol H). The incidence essentially refers to the proportion of multidimensionally poor in the population, and it is arrived at by dividing the number of multidimensionally poor persons by total population. More simply, it answers the question: How many are poor?
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- **Finally,** the MPI is arrived at by multiplying the incidence of multidimensional poverty (H) and the intensity of poverty (A).

PIB

Feb 2

3 NEW CORRIDOR UNDER GATISHAKTI

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

PM GatiShakti utilized for three new major railway corridors announced under Interim Budget 2024-25

Context: The Interim Budget for 2024-25 announcement for implementation of three Economic Railway Corridor identified under the PM GatiShakti for enabling multi-modal connectivity, including (i) energy, mineral, and cement corridors, (ii) port connectivity corridors, and (iii) high traffic density corridors.

PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan framework

- **Background:** It was announced by the Prime minister of India in August 2021 and was launched in October 2021.
- **Aim:** It is the first National Infrastructure Masterplan**. The National Master Plan for Multi-modal Connectivity** is essentially **a digital platform** to bring 16 Ministries includes Railways and Roadways and others.
  - To boost economic growth (Shakti) through infrastructure building.
  - To improve the productivity of industries and employment opportunities.
  - It is considered to be the government's integrated approach to developing modern railways, roadways, waterways and airways.
- **Method:** It **breaks the inter-ministerial silos and to integrate** the planning of infrastructure projects related to road, rail, air and waterways etc.
- **Integration:** It incorporates the infrastructure schemes of various Ministries and State Governments like Bharatmala, Sagarmala, inland waterways, dry/land ports, UDAN etc.
- **Pillars of PM Gati Shakti:**
  - **Comprehensiveness:** It will include all the existing and planned initiatives of various Ministries and Departments with one centralized portal.
  - **Prioritization:** Through this, different Departments will be able to prioritize their projects through cross-sectoral interactions.
  - **Optimization:** The National Master Plan will assist different ministries in planning for projects after identification of critical gaps.
  - **Synchronization:** Individual Ministries and Departments often work in silos. It will help in synchronizing the activities of each department, as well as of different layers of governance.
  - **Analytical:** The plan will provide the entire data at one place with GIS based spatial planning and analytical tools having 200+ layers, enabling better visibility to the executing agency.
  - **Dynamic:** All Ministries and Departments will now be able to visualize, review and monitor the progress of cross-sectoral projects, through the GIS platform, as the satellite imagery will give on-ground progress periodically and progress of the projects will be updated on a regular basis on the portal.

ECONOMIC TIMES

Feb 2

ROSCTL Scheme

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

Government approves continuation of export incentive scheme for apparel, garment till March 2026

Context: The Union Cabinet Thursday approved the continuation of the Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) scheme for apparel, garments and made-ups till March 31, 2026, a move aimed at enhancing the export competitiveness of garment and made-up sectors.

Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) Scheme

- **Launch:** 2020. Earlier, it was extended till March 2024.
- **Chaired by**: Prime Minister of India approved the continuation of the scheme for RoSCTL for export of apparel/garments and made-ups up to March 31, 2026.
- **Objective:** To reimburse all embedded State and Central Taxes/Levies related to the export of manufactured goods and garments.
- **Implemented by**: Department of Revenue.
- **Successor to RoSL Scheme:** Established as the successor to the previous "Rebate of State Levies (RoSL) Scheme."
- **Rebate of State Taxes and Levies comprises:** VAT on fuel used in transportation, captive power, farm sector, mandi tax, duty of electricity, stamp duty on export documents, embedded SGST paid on inputs such as pesticides, fertilizers etc. used in production of raw cotton, purchases from unregistered dealers, coal used in production of electricity and inputs for transport sector.
- **Benefits**: RoSCTL provides exporters with rebates on both State and Central taxes and levies.
  - RoSCTL has been an important policy measure and has helped in enhancing competitiveness of Indian exports of apparel and made ups which are value added and labour intensive segments of the Textile Value Chain.

PIB

Feb 2

E-COURTS MISSION MODE PROJECT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)

Context: The eCourts Mission Mode Project is a national eGovernance project for ICT enablement of district/subordinate courts of the country with a view to facilitate faster disposal of cases by speeding up court processes and providing transparent on-line flow of information on case status, orders/judgments etc.

About eCourts Mission Mode Project:

- **About**: It was conceptualized on the basis of the **"National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the Indian Judiciary – 2005**" submitted by eCommittee, Supreme Court of India .
  - It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** that is part of the National e-Governance Plan.
  - A Pan-India Project, it is **monitored and funded by Department of Justice**, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India.
  - The project is aimed at providing the **necessary hardware and software application** to enable courts to deliver e-services
- **The project envisages**
  - To provide **efficient & time-bound** citizen centric services delivery as detailed in eCourt Project Litigant's Charter.
  - To develop, install & implement **decision support systems** in courts.
  - To **automate the processes** to provide transparency in accessibility of information to its stakeholders.
  - To enhance **judicial productivity**, both qualitatively & quantitatively, to make the justice delivery system affordable, accessible, cost effective, predictable, reliable and transparent.
- **Three phases**:
  - **Phase-I :** In Phase-I of the eCourts Project **beginning from 2007**, a large number of Court Complexes, Computer Server Rooms and Judicial Service Centres were readied for computerization of the District Courts.
  - **Phase II**: It saw a major technological upgrade in courts during the Covid crisis. The **National Judicial Data Grid**, a repository of over 23-crore cases from district courts to SC level was part of the Phase II.
  - **Phase III:** It aims to usher in a regime of maximum ease of justice by moving towards **digital, online and paperless courts** through digitisation of the entire court records, including legacy records.

THE HINDU Page 10

LAW COMMISSION OF INDIA
(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)

Law panel suggests retaining criminal defamation provision

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The 22nd Law Commission has recommended that criminal defamation should be retained within the scheme of criminal laws in India, the Law Ministry said on Friday.

The panel submitted its report to the Ministry on Thursday. In its report, the Law Commission argued that the right to reputation is derived from Article 21 of the Constitution that guarantees the right to life and personal liberty and that is why it has to be protected.

"Reputation is something which can't be seen and can only be earned. It's an asset which is built in a lifetime and destroyed in seconds. The whole jurisprudence around the law on criminal defamation has the essence of protecting one's reputation and its facets," it said.

The matter was referred to the law panel by the Ministry in August 2017. Noting that it could be argued that criminal prosecution for defamatory statements stands opposed to the freedom of speech and expression, the law panel advised exercising caution.

"Speech ought to be illegal only where it is meant to do substantial harm and when such harm materialises," the panel cautioned.

Referring to the issue of punishment, it said the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita has added a provision of community service as an additional punishment. "This law gives a balancing approach, wherein it has safeguarded the interest of the victim and has also neutralised the scope of misuse by giving an alternate punishment of community service," it said.

Context: The 22nd Law Commission recently recommended that **criminal defamation** should be retained within the scheme of criminal laws in India, the Law Ministry said.

- The panel submitted its report to the Ministry, wherein the Law Commission argued that the right to reputation, derived from Article 21 of the Constitution guaranteeing the right to life and personal liberty, must be protected.

Law Commission Of India

- **About**: It is an executive body established by an order of govt of India.
- It ensure that the laws formed are just and fair which work towards its proper implementation.
- **It works as:** An advisory body to **the Ministry of Law and Justice**.
- It is **not defined** under **the Indian Constitution** but It is constituted as part of **Article 39A**.
- Generally law Commission is Constituted for a **term of 3 year** but Govt can extend the same.

Major Recommendation of Law Commission Of India

- Abolition of death penalty for all crimes **except terror-related offences** and waging war against the state**. (Law Commission 267th Report)**
- It recommended for simultaneous election of Lok Sabha and State Assembly for improvement of governance and stability of the states**. (170th Report)**
- It recommended the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the country, for the formulation of one law for India, which would apply to all religious communities in matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption. **(170th Report of Law Commission**)
- The **213th report** in the year 2008 recommended setting up of **Fast track magisterial courts** with special high technology facilities.

Criminal Defamation

- **Defamation**: Any false and unprivileged statement published or spoken deliberately, intentionally, knowingly with the intention to damage someone's reputation is defamation. Section 499 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 defines what is defamation and its exceptions.
- **Criminal defamation**: It is nothing but a defamation for which simple imprisonment may be awarded.

TIMES OF INDIA

Feb 2

MESOLITHIC PERIOD
(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – History)

Mesolithic era rock art discovered in T

Context: Mesolithic era rock paintings have been recently discovered at Sitamma Loddi, Gattusingaram, in Peddapalli district, Telangana.

Mesolithic Period

- **About:** The Mesolithic, known as the Middle Stone Age, bridges the gap between the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods, marking an ancient cultural stage.
- **Timeframe**: This era is generally recognized to have spanned approximately 12,000-10,000 years ago.
- **Transition in Tool Usage:** People shifted from large chipped stone tools to smaller chipped stone tools, known as microliths.
  - Microliths were likely affixed to bone or wood handles, creating tools like saws and sickles.
  - Concurrently, older tool varieties persisted in usage.
- **Shift in Lifestyle**: The Mesolithic Age witnessed a transition from group hunting of large herds to a more hunter-gatherer lifestyle.
- **Introduction of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry:** Towards the era's conclusion, agricultural practices and animal husbandry emerged.
  - Domestication of dogs occurred during the Mesolithic Age.
- **Variety in Settlements**: Permanent Mesolithic settlements ranged from villages with huts to walled cities.
- **Development of Artistic Expressions**: Humans in the Mesolithic period created cave paintings, engravings, and ceramics, providing insights into their daily lives.
  - Certain regions produced a diverse range of pottery during this era.

Mesolithic Sites in India

- Noteworthy Mesolithic sites in India include Bagor in Rajasthan, Sarai Nahar Rai in Allahabad, and Jharkhand's Chhota Nagpur plateau.
- In Orissa, major Mesolithic sites include Mayarbbhanj, Keonjhar, and Sundugarh.
- South India, particularly Godavari bases, is rich in microliths during the Mesolithic Age.

DTE Feb 2

BLUE ECONOMY 2.0
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

Union Budget 2024-25: New initiative to boost Blue Economy 2.0 announced

Context: The interim budget speech delivered by Union Finance Minister of India provided a boost to Blue Economy 2.0 with the announcement of a new scheme "for restoration and adaptation measures, coastal aquaculture, and mariculture with an integrated and multi-sectoral approach".

Blue Economy 2.0: Promoting Climate Resilient Activities

- **About:** The blue economy presents immense opportunities for sustainable growth.
- **Aim**: To promote climate resilience in the blue economy, a scheme for restoration and adaptation measures, as well as coastal aquaculture and mariculture, will be launched.
- This integrated and multi-sectoral approach will contribute to the growth of the sector while ensuring environmental sustainability.
- **Aquaculture**: Farming of aquatic plants and animals.
- **Mariculture**: Rearing and harvesting marine creatures in salt water.

Blue Economy

- **About**: The Blue Economy revolves around the sustainable utilization of ocean resources to foster economic growth, enhance livelihoods, and generate employment opportunities.
- **Origin**: The idea was first introduced by Gunter Pauli in his 2010 book, "The Blue Economy: 10 years, 100 innovations, 100 million jobs."
- **Objectives and Focus**: The concept advocates for the implementation of eco-friendly strategies in ocean development, aiming for increased productivity while simultaneously ensuring the preservation of the ocean's overall health.
- **India's Maritime Landscape**: India boasts a coastline stretching 7,500 km, with 9 out of 29 states having coastal boundaries.
  - The country is home to 1,382 islands.
  - India's Exclusive Economic Zone extends over 2 million square kilometers.
- **Significance of the Blue Economy for India**
  - **Socio-Economic Opportunities**: The expansive scope of India's blue economy presents a significant socio-economic opportunity, allowing the responsible utilization of ocean resources for the benefit of society.
  - **Synergy With SDG**: The concept aligns seamlessly with all of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a particular emphasis on contributing to SDG14, which focuses on 'life below water.'

INDIAN EXPRESS

Explained

AMU MINORITY STATUS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)

Hearing over in AMU minority status case: 3 key arguments before SC

AJOY SINHA KARPURAM
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

THE SUPREME Court on Thursday concluded hearings in the case to decide if Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) can claim minority status under Article 30 of the Constitution. The seven-judge Bench will also decide if the verdict in *S Azeez Basha v Union of India* (1967), where the court held that AMU was not a minority institution, should be overruled.

The Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud heard both sides for eight days between January 10 and February 1. The arguments on three key issues:

1 What is the effect of a statute on minority status?

BACKGROUND: Under Article 30(1) of the Constitution, "all minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice".

In *Azeez Basha*, the SC held that AMU was "established" through the enactment of a law, the Aligarh Muslim University Act, 1920. This meant that AMU does not qualify for minority status — as it was not established by the Muslim community.

PETITIONERS: Senior Advocate Rajeev Dhavan argued that there is a contradiction in *Azeez Basha*: the court had held that in order for degrees from a university to be valid, the university would have to be recognised by a statute (such as the AMU Act); however, the court had also held that recognition by a statute would strip AMU of its minority status.

Dhavan argued this would force every minority institution to seek recognition under a statute, and give up its minority status, thus making Article 30 ineffective, and subordinating a fundamental right to a statute.

RESPONDENTS: Solicitor General Tushar Mehta argued that AMU surrendered its minority status to the British government and chose to be a "loyalist" institution, as opposed to "nationalist" institutions (like Jamia Millia Islamia University), which resisted and denounced the Raj. This surrender of rights, he said, was recognised in *Azeez Basha*.

EXPLAINED LAW

2 How does the administration of AMU impact its minority status?

PETITIONERS: Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal argued that it does not matter who is in charge of administration in a minority institution — even if members of the administration are not members of the minority community. Article 30(1) gives minorities the right to choose who is in charge of administration without affecting the minority status of the institution in question.

RESPONDENTS: The administration must be considered in this case, as the British government had ultimate control of the university through the Lord Rector, when AMU was first established. Though the Court of the University handled the day-to-day administration, its decisions were subject to the approval of the Lord Rector under the AMU Act.

3 Should the 1981 amendment be considered in this case?

BACKGROUND: The 1981 amendment to the AMU Act introduced multiple provisions stating that the university was established by the Muslim community, and highlighting the need to promote the cultural and educational advancement of Indian Muslims.

Allahabad HC struck down this amendment in 2005, holding that as per *Azeez Basha*, AMU was not a minority institution. It also held that the 1981 amendment was enacted in order to override the *Azeez Basha* decision. This ruling was challenged at the SC, and was referred to a larger Bench by a two-judge Bench in 2006.

PETITIONERS: Sibal argued that there is no requirement to examine the validity of the 1981 amendment and the HC decision. If *Azeez Basha* is struck down, the 1981 amendment becomes "redundant", as AMU's minority status would be recognised. If *Azeez Basha* is upheld, then the amendment will be considered along with the HC decision by a smaller Bench.

Advocate Shadan Farasat argued that the 1981 amendment cannot be considered in this hearing as, without the Union of India defending it, there is no one presenting a defence on behalf of Parliament. He also urged the court to decide if the Union has the option to not defend the amendment, despite being constitutionally obligated to do so.

RESPONDENTS: Mehta argued that the seven-judge Bench should be considered in this case to avoid multiple hearings on the same subject. He also stated that the petitioners see the 1981 amendment as a "second chance" to make a case for AMU's minority status if *Azeez Basha* is upheld.

CJI Chandrachud asked how the government could choose not to support an amendment enacted by Parliament. Mehta replied that the Allahabad HC decision gave the central government ground to stand on to make this argument. Senior Advocate Neeraj Kishan Kaul later argued that Parliament tried to use the 1981 amendment to override the court's findings in *Azeez Basha*, which is impermissible according to previous SC judgments.

Context: The Supreme Court concluded the hearings in the case to decide if Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) can claim minority status under Article 30 of the Constitution.

Effect of A Statute On Minority Status

- **Background**: Article 30(1) of the Constitution of India states "All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice."
- **Legal Pronouncement in 1967**: In the legal case of S Azeez Basha v Union of India (1967), the Supreme Court ruled that the establishment of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) occurred through the enactment of the Aligarh Muslim University Act, 1920.
- **AMU's Non-Qualification for Minority Status**: As per the court's interpretation, the legal establishment of AMU through a legislative act negated its eligibility for minority status, as it was not founded solely by the Muslim community.
- **University Status**: In 1920, the institution attained university status, with all assets of MOA College transferred to it.
  - The AMU Act incorporated a teaching and residential Muslim University at Aligarh. However, the dispute over the university's minority character arose in 1967 during a legal review of amendments to the AMU Act in 1951 and 1965.

Should The 1981 Amendment Be Considered In This Case?

- **1981 Amendment:** The 1981 amendment to the AMU Act included provisions emphasizing the Muslim community's role in establishing the university and stressing the promotion of cultural and educational advancement for Muslims in India.
- **Allahabad High Court's Ruling**: In 2005, the Allahabad High Court declared the 1981 amendment void, asserting that the AMU was not a minority institution based on the Azeez Basha precedent. The court suggested that the amendment was an attempt to overturn the Azeez Basha decision.
- **Challenges and the Supreme Court's Involvement:** The Allahabad HC's ruling was contested in the Supreme Court, leading to a referral to a larger bench by a two-judge bench in 2006. This move indicates the complexity and significance of the legal issues surrounding the 1981 amendment.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS Page 2

FISCAL CONSOLIDATION

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

'Fiscal consolidation to lower inflation, interest rates'

The Centre's adherence to the fiscal consolidation path indicates the commitment to the medium-term glide path, which the rating agencies should take note of, Chief Economic Advisor **V Anantha Nageswaran** *said. Exports are facing a difficult global environment, Nageswaran told* **Prasanta Sahu**. *Edited excerpts:*

Will fiscal consolidation lead to lower inflation and interest rates?

Will it necessarily lead to lower inflation? I will say the answer is yes. Should that lead to lower interest rates? Possibly, yes.

But, this is not an expectation or a prediction of monetary policy.

I don't answer questions on monetary policy.

You already saw there is a reaction in the treasury bond yields, they dropped by 15 basis points.

How do you see external headwinds to exports?

We know that merchandise exports jumped after the Covid, in 2021-22.

The numbers have been kind of hovering around that level, it's not growing, not coming down.

The services sector surplus is growing.

We are probably close to achieving some $800 billion of trade this year in terms of exports, both merchandise and services exports.

It is a difficult environment because of higher interest rates in the developed world leading to lower growth coming year, and so on.

Rating agencies flagging high public debt in India getting a rating upgrade...

We are showing that we are committed to bringing down the fiscal deficit. They said it would be challenging to bring down the fiscal deficit to 4.5% by FY26.

We're showing that we are committed to bringing it down.

Are the stable budgets for the last few years giving confidence to foreign investors, especially for FDI?

FDI is a function of many factors, not just the government of India's policies, although it definitely matters. There are levels of interest rates in that country that will also matter to them.

That is why, globally FDI flows came down in 2022-2023.

So, FDI flows are a function of many things. Whatever we can do, we are doing.

If you look at the UNCTAD report, in terms of greenfield announcements of anticipated FDI, India is very much on top of the list of many investors.



Context: The Chief Economic Advisor emphasized that the Centre's adherence to the fiscal consolidation path indicates its commitment to the medium-term glide path, a point which rating agencies should recently take note of.

Fiscal Consolidation

- **About**: It refers to a series of government policies aimed at diminishing deficits and restraining the accumulation of debt. These policies are typically assessed as a percentage of nominal GDP.
- **Deficit Reduction Strategies**: The reduction of deficits can be achieved through enhanced economic growth, resulting in increased revenues and reduced expenditures. Fiscal consolidation involves a dual approach of boosting income and trimming expenses.
- **Significance of Fiscal Deficit**: The fiscal deficit stands as a pivotal indicator of the government's financial well-being. It mirrors the amount of government borrowing within a specific fiscal year.
- **Government's Dual Deficits:** The two primary deficits of the government are the Revenue Deficit and the Fiscal Deficit, each playing a distinct role in financial management.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BUDGET MANAGEMENT ACT (FRBM ACT), 2003

- **About**: The FRBM Act, 2003, establishes financial discipline to reduce fiscal deficit.
- **Aim**: To introduce transparency in India's fiscal management systems.
- The Act's long-term objective is for India to achieve fiscal stability and to give the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) flexibility to deal with inflation in India.
- **Enacted**: To introduce more equitable distribution of India's debt over the years.
- The FRBM Act made it mandatory for the government to place the following along with the Union Budget documents in Parliament annually:
  - Medium Term Fiscal Policy Statement
  - Macroeconomic Framework Statement
  - Fiscal Policy Strategy Statement
- **FRBM Act exemptions:** On grounds of national security, calamity, etc, the set targets of fiscal deficits and revenue could be exceeded.

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