

## GS II & ESSAY

SYLLABUS: PART OF: SOCIAL ISSUES, MORAL-ETHICAL DEBATES, HUMAN RIGHTS.

### DEATH PENALTY

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 1, 10.

**News:** "Lifelong imprisonment for R.G. Kar case convict".

**News:** "Court gives 24-year-old woman death sentence in murder case."

**As society must rise above the primitive instinct of "a life for a life"—Judge in R.R.Kar rape and murder case.**

"In the realm of modern justice, we must rise above the primitive instinct of 'an eye for an eye' or 'a tooth for a tooth' or 'nail for a nail' or 'a life for a life'. Our duty is not to match brutality with brutality, but to elevate humanity through wisdom, compassion and a deeper understanding of justice," the judge said, adding that the "measure of a civilised society lies not in its ability to exact revenge but in its capacity to reform, rehabilitate, and ultimately to heal".

"In 2023 alone, India had 120 recorded death sentences, there were no recorded executions"—**Project 39A.**

#### Criticism of Death Penalty:

- **Death penalty doesn't effectively stop serious crimes** Eg. The murder rates have consistently decreased over past 20 years even as death sentences execution slowed down since 1980s—**Justice Verma committee 2013.**
- **Under BNSS 2024:** punishable offences by death **increased from 12 to 18** without any significant change in women's safety and empowerment.
- **Celebration of Death:** deeply rooted in Indian culture (killing devils by gods and goddesses) as a call of Justice. But ignoring victim's autonomy and what led them to do such act.
- **Lack of victim centred approach:** Eg. Changing societal approach like some sort of efforts to **eliminate patriarchal notion** (beta padhao, beti bachao).
- **Death penalty as safest escape route from accountability:** as it does not stress reforming police, prosecution, judiciary and supporting survivors.

#### Justice Verma Committee 2013 recommendations

These recommendations led to amendment of criminal laws in 2013.

#### Recommendations by committee on Rape:

- Recommended **'tougher' punishments for rape** (10 years, 20 years, life imprisonment) but not death penalty.
- **If victim left in permanent vegetative state** (awake but not aware of surroundings) the **punishment would be 20 years of rigorous imprisonment**, which could extend to life imprisonment.
- **Death penalty is not recommended** for sexual offences including gang rapes. **However cabinet** did not consider the above recommendations and **moved ahead with death penalty.**

#### Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) 2024:

- **Section 64, 65, 70:** if woman is **under 18 years**, death penalty is awarded for rape and gang rape.

#### Note:

- **Lower courts in India can issue death sentences, but the High Court must confirm them.**
- **The High Court** can acquit, commute, or remit the sentence.
- **The Governor** can **only suspend, remit, or commute a death sentence.** He/she **cannot pardon a death sentence.**

21 JAN 2025

## GS II

SYLLABUS: BILATERAL AGREEMENTS INVOLVING INDIA.

### INDIA–MIDDLE EAST–EUROPE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (IMEC)

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 6.

**News:** "Prioritising IMEC is in America's best interest".

#### About IMEC:

- With IMEC, **India aims to position itself as a global supply chain alternative.**
- The proposed corridor is expected to **reduce the transit time between its eastern and western (beyond Haifa) nodes by 40%, and costs by 30%**, compared to transportation via the Suez Canal.
- **IMEC involves Rail connectivity, Shipping lines, Energy pipelines, High-speed data cables.**
- **Participating countries** (India, U.S., United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Italy, France, Germany, and European Commission).
- **Two corridors under IMEC:**
  - **Eastern:** Connects India to Arabian Gulf.
  - **Northern:** Connects Arabian Gulf to Europe.

#### Ongoing Status:

- **Northern End:** Conflict between Israel and Palestine engulfed crisis the whole of West Asia.
- **Eastern End:**
  - India signing **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with UAE**, led to faster pace of development.
  - India and the UAE launched the **Virtual Trade Corridor** (an integral part of the IMEC):
    - Reduction of administrative processes and time.
    - Reduction of logistics and transportation costs.
    - Ease of doing trade.

#### Opportunities for India:

- Current crisis on Northern part is to be seen as an opportunity for:
  - Prepare its **ports.**
  - Develop **specific economic zones** along the connectivity nodes.
  - Improve its **domestic logistics for seamless integration** with the IMEC.
  - Enhancing its **manufacturing competitiveness.**

21 JAN 2025

### THE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR





## EDUCATION

PRE-CONTEXT

### UNIVERSITY GRANT COMMISSION

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 6, 8.

**News:** "UGC's draft regulation has serious constitutional issues."

**News:** "UGC regulations or State university laws?"

#### Context:

- UGC has sought to amend Regulation 2010 that relates to the selection and appointment of vice chancellors by widening the area of selection.
- Under the existing regulations, a vice chancellor can be selected only from among academicians who have a minimum experience of 10 years as professor.
- Through this amendment, the UGC declares that professionals with 10-plus years of experience in industry, public administration or public policy, shall also be considered.
- The draft evoked protests.

#### Education falls under Concurrent List.

#### About University Grant Commission:

- Established under **UGC Act, 1956**. Works under **Ministry of Education**.
- **Objective:** co-ordination and determination of standards in Universities (Higher Education).
- **Act, mandates the UGC to take all steps as it thinks fit for:**
  - **The promotion and the coordination** of university education.
  - **Determination and maintenance of standards** of teaching, examination, research in universities.
  - **Provides grants** to eligible universities and colleges.
  - **Power to recognise or de-recognise** universities.
  - **Categorizing universities** as Central, State, Deemed, or Private universities.
  - **Accreditation and Monitoring:** UGC collaborates with the Statutory bodies like National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bar Council of India, AICTE for quality assurance.
- **UGC regulations are advisory, not mandatory.** Universities can choose whether or not to follow them.
  - **In case of non compliance UGC can withhold grants** under Section 14 of the UGC Act, 1956.
- **Chairman of UGC** is **appointed by the Central Govt.**
- **Major initiatives:**
  - **NET Exam** for recruitment of **Assistant Professors** and **Junior Research Fellows**.
  - **SWAYAM portal:** Promotes online learning through the government's SWAYAM platform.
- **Recent Developments:**
  - The **UGC is proposed to be replaced by the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)** under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

#### State Universities:

- Established under **respective State legislative Acts**.
- **Governor** is the **Ex-officio Chancellor of 'State' Universities**, he **appoints the vice chancellor**.
  - The governor **acts independently of the council of ministers** when acting as chancellor.
- **UGC regulates State Universities in India that receive central assistance.**

P.T.O

- However, some Supreme Court judgments have ruled that **UGC regulations are not mandatory for State Universities unless adopted by the state.**

#### National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC):

- Accreditation body.
- **Not a statutory body**, it was established by UGC in 1994.
- **Objective:** Assesses and **accredits higher education institutions (HEIs) in India** to ensure quality standards in education.
- NAAC evaluates them on specific criteria and assigns a grade (**e.g., A++, A+, B**).

#### All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE):

- **Regulatory Body.**
- **Statutory body** established under **AICTE Act 1987**.
- **Objective:** Regulates and ensures quality in **technical education** (engineering, management, architecture, etc.) in India.
- Approves new technical institutions, courses, and programs.

#### Bar Council of India:

- **Statutory body**, established under the **Advocates Act, 1961**.
- **Objective:** **Regulates legal education** and the profession of law in India.
- **Sets standards for law colleges and universities.**
- Conducts the All India Bar Examination (AIBE) for practicing lawyers.
- Frames the code of conduct for legal practitioners.

#### National Medical Commission (NMC):

- Statutory body est. under **National Medical Commission Act, 2019**.
- **Objective:** **Regulates medical education and professional practice** in India.
- **Role:** Approves medical colleges, monitors the curriculum, and ensures the quality of medical education.

21 JAN 2025

P.T.O



## GS III

SYLLABUS: GOVERNMENT BUDGETING.

### CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 6.

**News:** "Capex quandary".

#### Trends of Capital Expenditure:

- **1991-2000: Fiscal Consolidation and Reduced Capex.**
  - **Reduction of Capex** from 4% in the early 1990s to approximately 2.5% by the end of the decade.
  - **LPG reforms 1991:** shifted govt. spending pattern.
  - **Government encouraged private sector participation** in infrastructure through models like Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) etc.
- **2000-2010: Renewed Focus on Infrastructure.**
  - **Recognition of infrastructure bottlenecks,** govt. increased capital expenditure, averaging around 2.8% of GDP.
  - **Significant push towards Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs),** with initiatives like Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) etc.
- **2010-2020: Balancing Fiscal Deficit and Growth.**
  - **Global financial crisis of 2008:** capital expenditure faced fluctuations due to fiscal pressures.
  - **Continued investments in infrastructure,** with schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) and expansion of rail networks.
  - Capex averaged around 2.8% of GDP during this period.
- **2020-2023: Emphasis on Infrastructure-led Growth:**
  - **Substantial Increase in Capex:** Union Budget 2022-23 allocated ₹7.5 lakh crore for capital expenditure, marking a 35% increase over the previous year.
  - **Budget 2023-24:** The allocation further increased to ₹10 lakh crore, accounting for about 3.3% of GDP.
  - **Budget 2023-24:** 3.4% of GDP (₹11 lakh crore). As of

#### Trends of Capital Expenditure:

- High **fiscal multiplier effects.**
- **Economic growth driver:** enhances productivity, reduces costs, improves EoDB.
- **Infra projects are labour intensive,** leading to creation of direct and indirect employment opportunities.
- **Crowding-in Private Investment** eg. PPP models.
- **Reduction in regional disparities:** investing in underdeveloped regions improves connectivity, inclusive growth etc.

#### Challenges associated with Capital expenditure in budget making:

- **Fiscal constraints:**
  - **FRBM Act** limits the govt. ability to increase the Capex.
  - **Rising Debt Levels:** Eg. Debt levels rose to 90% in 2020-21 from 70% of GDP in 2014.
- **Revenue shortfalls:**
  - **Due to economic slowdown** after COVID 19.
  - **Missed Disinvestment targets:** target of ₹2 lakh crore was set in FY 2020-21, only ₹32,000 crore was realized.
- **Underutilisation of allocated funds:**
  - Ministry of Railways utilised only 70% of its capital outlay — **CAG Reports 2021.**

P.T.O

- **Environmental clearances** take an average of 600 days in India, compared to the global average of 150 days leading to underutilisation of funds — **World Bank.**
- **Cost overruns:** approx. Rs. 5 lakh crore and numerous delayed projects span of months to years — **MoSPI report 2023.**
- **Long term financing constraints:**
  - Infrastructure financing needs are estimated at \$1.5 trillion over 2019-2023, but banks are constrained due to asset-liability mismatch, NPAs — **National Infrastructure Pipeline report.**
  - **Election Polls:** goal of 2024-25 (spend Rs.11 lakh crore) is unlikely to be attained partly due to spending curbs in the poll-affected first quarter.

#### Union Budget 2024-25 Highlights (Capex):

- **Allocation:** Capex is set at ₹11 lakh crore (3.4% of GDP).
- **Focus Areas:**
- **Transportation:** Significant investments in railways and road infrastructure.
- **Energy Transition:** Allocation for green hydrogen mission and renewable energy projects.
- **Digital Infrastructure:** Investments in 5G services rollout and digital public infrastructure.

#### Targets:

- **NITI Aayog Estimates:** As per the "Strategy for New India @75" report, India needs to invest around \$4.5 trillion in infrastructure by 2030.
- **Required Capex ratio for Viksit Bharat 2047:** should be around 7-8% of GDP annually (public and private combined).

#### Initiatives for Development of Infrastructure:

- National Infrastructure Pipeline 2019.
- PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan 2021.
- National Monetisation Pipeline 2021.
- National Logistics Policy 2022.
- Adoption of Global Best Practices.

21 JAN 2025

**Thank you!**