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DAILY NEWS DIARY

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FOR PRELIMS AND MAINS

Warm Greetings.

- DnD aims to provide every day news analysis in sync with the UPSC pattern.
- It is targeted at UPSC – Prelims & Mains.
- Daily articles are provided in the form of Question and Answers
- To have a bank of mains questions.
- And interesting to read.
- Providing precise information that can be carried straight to the exam, rather than over dumping.

Enjoy reading.

THE HINDU - TH
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Essay Paper

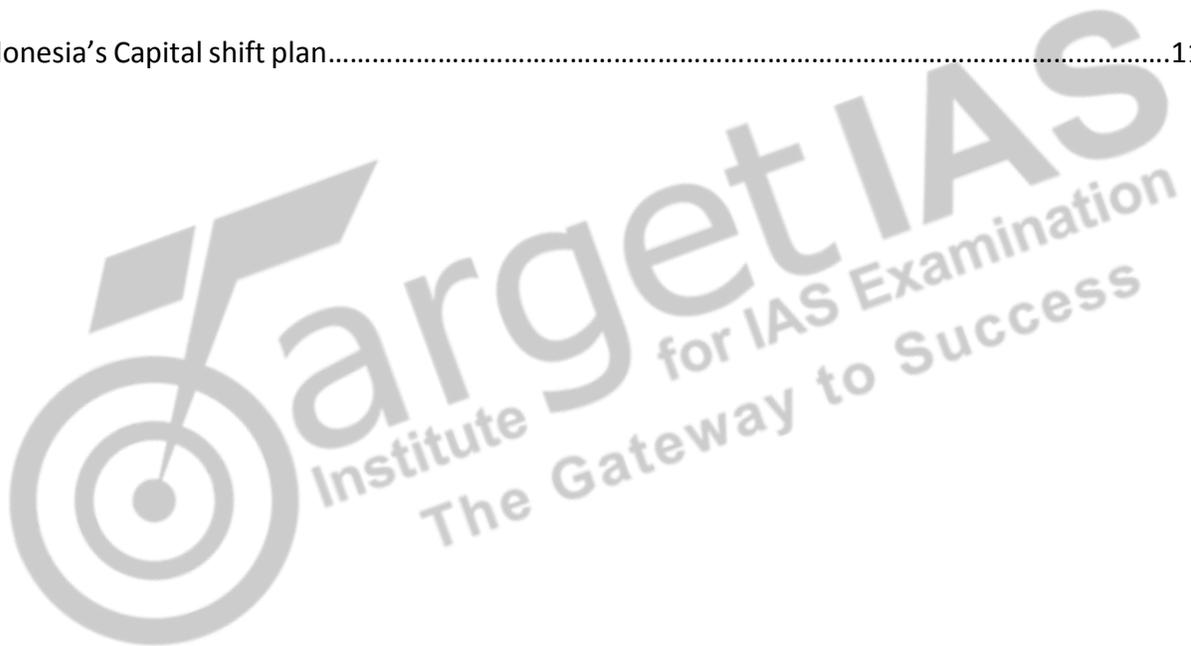
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ESSAY PAPER

Editorial

Q- Rising inequality per se isn't a big problem if economic growth raises incomes overall. Elaborate.

INTRODUCTION = Oxfam International and its India unit recently brought out two separate reports on the same subject, inequality. It's a politically salient topic and understandably generates debate.

- However, the suggestions in Oxfam's reports don't capture the nuances of the problem and, therefore, their solutions are unworkable.
- None of this is to suggest that concentration of economic wealth is good. An economy in the grip of oligarchs will stagnate and shut off opportunities for everyone. The issue, however, requires parsing.



WORLD

2,153 billionaires have more wealth than **4.6 bn** people, making up **60%** of planet's population



Richest **1%** have more than twice as much as wealth as **6.9 bn** people



The **22** richest men have more wealth than **all the women** in Africa



THE GREAT DIVIDE BETWEEN RICH AND POOR



Men own **50% more** wealth than women

The total value of women's unpaid care work to the global economy is **\$10.8 tn** per year

INDIA

Richest **1%** hold more than 4-times wealth held by **953 mn** (bottom **70%** of the country's population)



Source: Oxfam

Wealth of **63** Indian billionaires > **UNION BUDGET FOR 2018-19 (₹24,42,200 CR)**

Oxfam has followed a popular approach to measuring inequality.

- It has **used wealth, not income**, as the yardstick.
 1. This approach is lopsided as it tilts towards using the market value of financial assets which fluctuate almost every minute.
 2. Oxfam India has made three suggestions in this context.
 - a. One, is to ask for better measurements and more regular ones. Good quality statistics are a public good and Gol needs to raise its game here.
 - b. The other two suggestions pertain to taxation. Oxfam asks for a wealth tax and a temporary 1% surcharge on the richest 10%.
 - c. It's in the area of taxation that the suggestions consider neither the trade-offs involved nor India's history with wealth tax.

India did levy a wealth tax. It was abolished in the 2015 Union Budget. It was a feel-good tax with no meaningful impact. To illustrate, in its last year (2015-16), Gol could raise only Rs 1,079 crore as wealth tax. That is, just Rs 1.4 for every Rs 1,000 that accrued through direct taxes. To compensate for its abolition, a surcharge on incomes above Rs 1 crore was levied. There are practical difficulties in taxing wealth, which has also been influenced by more than a decade of loose monetary policies of major central banks that are trying to boost economic growth. **What really matters is economic growth and the creation of pathways to economic mobility.**

Way Forward

Post-1991, the rise in India's economic growth lifted millions out of poverty even as inequality widened. Economic growth is indispensable to provide the opportunity of a better life to everyone.

1. Policy needs to focus on obstacles to growth, including rent-seeking. In this context, we need to note that a clutch of US billionaires who draw Oxfam's disapproval didn't inherit their wealth. Their ideas created their wealth and millions of other jobs and opportunities. That's what India needs.
2. Policy focus should be on creating pathways of economic mobility, not messy taxation laws. The size of the pie needs to grow.

GS 2**❖ Governance****Q- Identify and List the sectors of review in criminal law from women's perspective?**

BACKGROUND = At a consultation organised by the National Commission for Women on amendments to criminal law, there was unanimity among speakers that marital rape should be

criminalised. The meeting also discussed rising instances of cybercrime against women and the need for gender-neutral rape laws.

1. The NCW is looking at a review of the **criminal laws, including the Indian Penal Code, 1860, the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.**
2. The petitions have sought **striking down the exception to Section 375 of the IPC**, which says forcible sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being 18 years, is not rape. "There was agreement among all present that marital rape exemption cannot continue."
3. **'Strict burden of proof'** - Geeta Luthra, senior advocate in the Supreme Court, who made the point on the need for evidence for punishing marital rape, "No one is talking against women's autonomy or privacy or that marital rape should not be an offence. But there should be a better investigative process and a strict burden of proof so that it doesn't happen that someone is miffed and makes a marital rape allegation."
4. The meeting also discussed the **interpretation of consent**. "We have said there should be a broader understanding of when consent stands vitiated. Anything obtained with fraud or force where force means fear of injury to body, mind and reputation is considered in cases of extortion and we are demanding that the same standard should be applied to consent in sexual offences as well. The focus has to be on violence and not morality."
5. On the **issue of age of marriage being raised for women to 21 years** to make it equal to that of men, most speakers agreed that 18 years should be the age of marriage for both men and women.
6. The meeting also discussed the **need for gender-neutral anti-rape laws** which the civil society has demanded to recognise same-sex assaults among gay, lesbian and bisexual people as well as sexual crimes against transgender persons.
7. There was a lot of emphasis on **cyber-crimes against women as well as making revenge porn and online stalking punishable.**

❖ International Relations

Q-Who are the Houthis? What is the underlying conflict threatening regional stability?

BACKGROUND = A suspected drone attack on Monday in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), caused multiple explosions in which three people were killed —two Indians and one Pakistani. The Shia Houthi rebels of Yemen, who have been controlling the northern parts of the country, including the capital Sana'a, for almost seven years, have claimed responsibility for the attack. While the UAE hasn't confirmed the Houthi claims, its officials said to the media that the explosions were caused by a suspected drone attack. On Tuesday, the Saudi-led coalition that is fighting the Houthis in Yemen, launched air strikes on Sana'a.

Who are the Houthis?

The roots of the Houthi movement can be traced to "Believing Youth" (Muntada al-Shahabal-Mu'min), a Zaydi revivalist group founded by Hussein al-Houthi and his father, Badr al-Din al-Houthi, in the early 1990s. Badr al-Din was an influential Zaydi cleric in northern Yemen. Inspired

by the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the rise of Hezbollah in southern Lebanon in the 1980s, Badr al-Din and his sons started building vast social and religious networks among the Zaydis of Yemen, who make up roughly one-third of the Sunni-majority country's population. The Zaydis are named after Zayd Bin Ali, the great grandson of Imam Ali, Prophet Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law who Shias, Sunnis and Zaydis revere. Zayd Bin Ali had led a revolt against the Ummayyad Caliphate in the eighth century. He was killed, but his martyrdom led to the rise of the Zaydi sect. While the Zaydis are seen part of the Shia branch of Islam, both in terms of theology and practice, they are different from the 'Twelver' Shias of Iran, Iraq and Lebanon.

For centuries, the Zaydis were a powerful sect within Yemen. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, the Zaydis would establish a monarchy (the Mutawakkilite Kingdom) in the country. But their dominance would come to an end in 1962 when the Egypt-backed republicans overthrew the monarchy. When Badr al-Din al-Houthi and his son Hussein launched the Believing Youth, the plan was to reorganise the Zaydi minority. But when the movement turned political and started attacking the "corrupt" regime of Ali Abdullah Saleh and his support for the U.S.'s war on terror, it became a thorn on Saleh's side. They called themselves Ansar Allah (Partisans of God), mobilised tribesmen in the north against the Government and chanted "Death to America". In 2004, Saleh's government issued an arrest warrant against Hussein al-Houthi. He resisted the arrest, starting an insurgency. In September, the Government troops attacked the rebels and killed Hussein. Since then, the Government launched multiple military campaigns in Sa'dah, the Zaydi stronghold, to end the resistance, which was locally called the Houthis movement, after their "martyred" leader. But it only strengthened the Houthis, who, by 2010, when a ceasefire was reached, had captured Sa'dah from the Government troops.

What led to the Houthis' rise?

When protests broke out in Yemen in 2011 as part of the Arab Spring protests that felled Tunisian and Egyptian dictators, the Houthis, now confident from their military victories and the support they enjoyed in Sadah, backed the agitation. President Saleh, a Zaydi who was in power for 33 years, resigned in November, handing the reins to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, a Saudi-backed Sunni. Yemen, under the tutelage of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, started a national dialogue to resolve internal differences. The Houthis were part of the dialogue. But they fell out with the transitional Government of Mr. Hadi, claiming that the proposed federal solution, which sought to divide the Zaydi-dominated north into two land-locked provinces, was intended to weaken the movement. They soon got back to insurgency. Saleh, who was sidelined by the interim government and its backers, joined hands with his former rivals and launched a joint military operation. By January 2015, the Houthi-Saleh alliance had captured Sana'a and much of northern Yemen, including the vital Red Sea coast. (Later the Houthis turned against Saleh and killed him in December 2017).

Why did Saudi Arabia attack Yemen?

The rapid rise of the Houthis in Yemen set off alarm bells in Riyadh which saw them as Iranian proxies. Saudi Arabia, under the new, young Defence Minister, Mohammed Bin Salman, started a military campaign in March 2015, hoping for a quick victory against the Houthis. But the Houthis

had dug in, refusing to leave despite Saudi Arabia's aerial blitzkrieg. With no effective allies on the ground and no way-out plan, the Saudi-led campaign went on with no tangible result. In the past six years, the Houthis have launched multiple attacks on Saudi cities from northern Yemen in retaliation for Saudi air strikes. In 2019, the Houthis claimed the attack on two Saudi oil installations that knocked out, briefly, half of the kingdom's oil output (the Houthi claim was disputed by experts and governments, who said the attack was too sophisticated for the rebels to carry out. The U.S. has blamed Iran).

The Houthis have established a Government in the north. The Supreme Political Council, headed by its President, Mahdi al-Mashat, is the executive branch of their rule. Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, Hussein's brother, leads the movement. There are serious allegations against both the Saudis and the Houthis in the war.

While the Saudi bombings caused a large number of civilian deaths, the Houthis were accused, by rights groups and Governments, of preventing aid, deploying forces in densely populated areas and using excessive force against civilians and peaceful protesters.

Why did the Houthis target the UAE?

This is not the first time the Houthis attacked the UAE. In 2018, when the UAE-backed forces were making advances in Yemen, the Houthis claimed attacks against the Emirates. Since then, the UAE pulled out its troops from Yemen and offered tactical support to the Southern Transitional Council, a group of rebels based in Aden, that was also fighting the Saudi-backed Government forces of President Hadi. During this period, the Houthis stayed focussed entirely on Saudi Arabia and Saudi-backed forces inside Yemen. But in recent months, Giants Brigades, a militia group largely made up of Southern Yemenis (backed by the UAE) and the Joint Forces (the militia led by a nephew of the slain former President Saleh) turned their guns against the Houthis. They inflicted major damages on the Houthis in Shabwah on the Arabian coast and have, with Government troops, pushed into the Houthi territories in al-Bayda and Marib. By flying armed drones undetected all the way from northern Yemen to the Gulf coast, either across Saudi Arabia or through the Gulf of Oman, and carrying out attacks on Abu Dhabi, the second most populous city in the tiny UAE, the Houthis appear to have sent a clear message to the Emiratis — stay out of Yemen or face more attacks.

GS 3

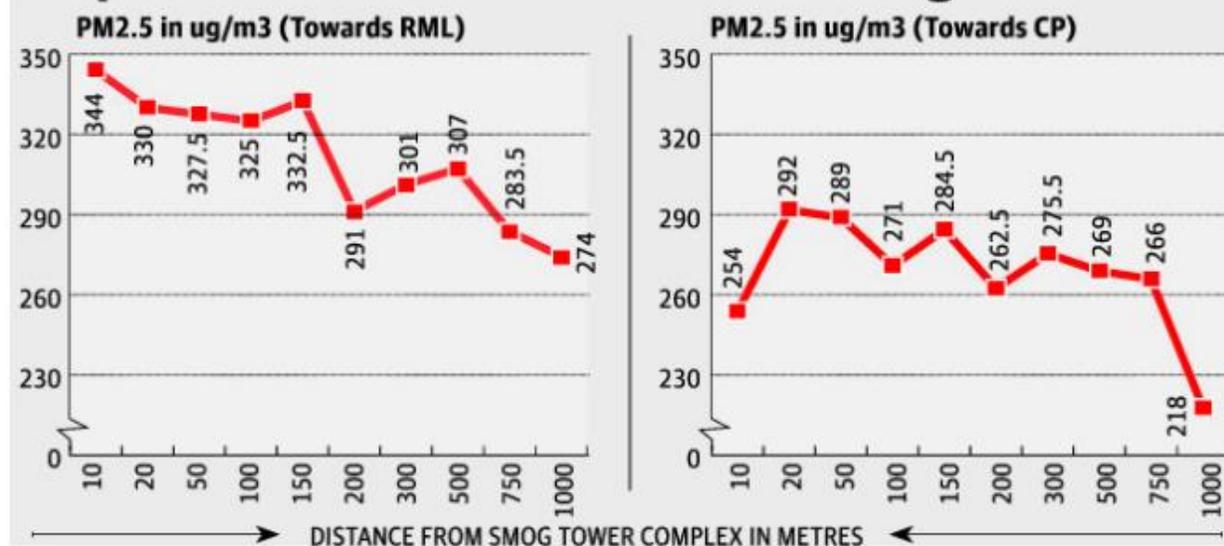
❖ Environment

Q- Why is the Delhi Government in a flux over smog tower efficiency?

BACKGROUND = A walk of up to one km in three different directions from the smog tower in Connaught Place with a handheld air quality monitoring device has revealed fluctuating levels of the chief pollutant, PM 2.5.

- What is interesting is while the air closest to the tower should be cleanest, the device recorded the opposite in several instances — falling pollution levels as one moved away from the tower.

Air pollution with distance from smog tower



- The air closest to the tower should be the cleanest because it sucks in the dirty air from the top of the tower and releases filtered air near the surface through fans on the sides of the tower.
- Whereas the value of PM 2.5 decreased as you moved away from the tower, which is in contradiction to normal scenario. The readings indicate the efficiency of the smog tower is not enough to clean the air to the extent it is needed.
- At the height of 1.5 to two metres from the surface, it is a mixed zone with high turbulence. When approached, a Delhi government official held that multiple factors could be responsible for such variations and therefore, the data is not showing a clear trend of reduction in pollution with distance from the tower.
- This reporter walked towards RML Hospital, where the value of PM2.5 was 327.5 ug/m3 at 50 metres from the tower and 325 at 100 metres from the tower, but it dropped to 301 at 300 metres and raised slightly to 307 at 500 metres.
- Towards Connaught Place also a similar trend was observed, but towards Parliament House, there was a rise after the fall in values. The readings were taken on December 25, when the city's air quality was 'severe'.

Way Forward -

Multiple monitors should be ideally used to measure pollution at all points at the same time to get accurate results.

1. If at all the smog tower has an impact, then the pollution should increase as you move away from the tower.
2. But the recorded values show a decrease.
3. Which means that at different points along the road, there is an impact of different sources of pollution. This also shows that the impact of the smog tower is negated by all these sources.
4. Focus has to be on reducing emissions at sources than attempting to purify dynamic and voluminous air in outdoor conditions.

5. She wondered how tiny whiffs of purified air mixed with polluted air could help to improve the quality of air in general

The experts reiterated the smog towers are not a viable method to clean city's air.

On October 1, Environment Minister Gopal Rai said that a committee constituted to look into the efficacy of smog tower would submit three reports to the government at the end of every three months.

But the government is yet to release any data on what impact the smog tower has made on the quality of air when at a distance from the tower.

Snippets

❖ Environment

Q- What are the reasons behind Indonesia's Capital shift plan?

- Indonesia's parliament passed a law approving the relocation of its capital from slowly sinking Jakarta to a site 2,000 kilometres away on the jungle-clad Borneo island that will be named "Nusantara".



- The House of Representatives vote provides the legal framework for the move, which was first tipped by President Joko Widodo in April 2019, citing rising sea levels and severe congestion on densely populated Java island.
- Home to more than 30 million people in its greater metro area, Jakarta has long been plagued by serious infrastructure problems and flooding exacerbated by climate change.
- The new capital will cover about 56,180 hectares in East Kalimantan province on the Indonesian part of Borneo.

- Early plans for the new capital depict a utopian design aimed at creating an environmentally friendly “smart” city, but few details have been confirmed.
- Environmentalist critics of the capital’s move have warned it could damage ecosystems in the region.
- Budget details have not yet been revealed in a presidential decree, though previous reports have pegged the project’s costs at \$33 billion.



Q- He is known to have mobilised the tribal community against the British and had forced the colonial officials to introduce laws protecting the land rights of the tribals. The state of Jharkhand was created on his birth anniversary in 2000. He was:

- a) Tana Bhagat b) LaxmanNayak
c) Allurisitaramaraju d) BirsaMunda



Q - The terms ‘Bewar’ and ‘Podu’ are related to which of the following?

- a. Tribal communities
b. Agricultural systems
c. Ancient methods of water harvesting
d. Soil types

Answer: b

- Bewar is a term used in Madhya Pradesh for shifting cultivation or slash and burn type agricultural practice. Podu is the term used for shifting cultivation or slash and burn type in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. The tribal people in the Eastern Ghats have been practising podu, or slash and burn, or the shifting form of agriculture for subsistence since ages. Hence, option (b) is correct.

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