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THE HINDU

Editorial

2024 WEEKLY COMPILATION

10/06/2024



NEET

CONTROVERSIES

NEET faces significant allegations and logistical challenges, prompting calls for thorough investigations and improved exam management.

In its decade-long implementation, NEET has faced significant issues, with recent allegations prompting the National Testing Agency (NTA) to form a committee to investigate the 2024 exam. About 1,500 students from six centres reported problems such as wrong question papers, torn OMR sheets, technical glitches, and delays, leading to incomplete exam times. Courts granted grace marks to affected students. Post-result analyses revealed improbably high scores, including some near-perfect scores. The NTA attributed these anomalies to court-mandated grace marks and an easier exam. Additionally, the exam faced allegations of question paper leaks and inaccuracies in official answer keys. These issues have led to calls from political parties and student groups for a third-party investigation and a retest. NEET, taken by nearly 23 lakh students annually, continues to encounter significant logistical and security challenges. Experts suggest that while errors in such a large-scale exam are inevitable, the NTA must enhance its efforts to prevent technical glitches and cheating. There are also calls for single-window counselling for admissions, reevaluating the zero-percentile benchmark for PG admissions, and strict regulation of fees in private medical colleges.

CLIMATE ACTION MILESTONE

The ITLOS advisory opinion reinforces state obligations to mitigate climate change impacts on marine environments under UNCLOS.

11/06/2024



On May 21, 2024, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) delivered an advisory opinion on climate change, marking a significant milestone in international climate litigation. The advisory opinion was sought by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COSIS), focusing on the obligations of states under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to mitigate climate change. The Tribunal confirmed that states have a duty to prevent, reduce, and control marine pollution from anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, including carbon dioxide. The ITLOS opinion highlights that greenhouse gases have substantial effects on marine environments, such as ocean acidification and sea-level rise. This opinion reinforces the scientific consensus that human-induced carbon emissions significantly impact climate change.

The legal importance of this opinion lies in its emphasis on the principle of prevention or no harm rule, which requires states to avoid causing trans-boundary harm. The advisory opinion underscores the collective interest in addressing climate change and obligates states to take necessary measures to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions based on the best available science and international standards, such as those in the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The ITLOS opinion is seen as a crucial step towards holding states accountable for their climate obligations, promoting a stronger global response to climate change.

12/06/2024



FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Banning films or books to prevent communal tension undermines democratic principles and freedom of expression.

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13/06/2024

MIGRANT WORKERS' PLIGHT



A fire in a Kuwaiti labor camp reveals the dire conditions of Indian migrant workers, urging the Indian government to ensure better safety and welfare measures.

A fire in a labor camp in Kuwait, resulting in numerous casualties, highlights the precarious conditions of Indian migrant workers in the country. Many Indian migrants, lured by promises of better opportunities, face exploitation and hazardous living conditions. This incident underscores the need for the Indian government to take more proactive measures in safeguarding the rights and welfare of its citizens abroad. The tragedy has exposed the poor safety standards in the labor camps where many Indian workers live, calling for better enforcement of labor laws and improved living conditions. A stronger role for the Indian embassy in ensuring the welfare of its nationals is essential, alongside broader efforts to address the exploitation of migrant workers. International cooperation is necessary to protect their rights. The Indian government is urged to step up its efforts in ensuring humane working conditions and to take immediate action to prevent such tragedies in the future.

14/06/2024

RISING FOOD INFLATION



Despite a slight dip in overall inflation, food prices continue to soar, especially impacting urban areas and the poor.

In May, India's provisional headline retail inflation slightly eased to a 12-month low of 4.75%, but food inflation remained high, causing significant concern. The Consumer Food Price Index showed food inflation at 8.69%, with urban areas experiencing a higher rate of 8.83%. Vegetables and pulses were the main drivers, with vegetable inflation above 27% for six consecutive months and key items like potatoes, tomatoes, and onions showing substantial price increases. Retail prices for these vegetables were significantly higher compared to the previous year, and wholesale prices indicated further potential increases. Cereals and products also saw price gains, with rice and wheat becoming more expensive by 13% and 5.7% year-on-year, respectively. Pulses experienced a price rise, with inflation rates for gram dal, tur, urad, and moong ranging from 8.5% to 27% compared to the previous year. Additionally, a 12% rainfall deficit since June 1 adds to concerns, despite an 'above normal' monsoon forecast. Given that food inflation disproportionately affects the poor, it is crucial for policymakers to remain vigilant and take effective measures to control these rising prices.