



THE HINDU
EDITORIAL
WEEKLY *18 to 23* **COMPILATION**





18/03/2024

BONDED FAVOURS DISCLOSURES

BONDED FAVOURS DISCLOSURES CONFIRM FEARS OF SCEPTICS ABOUT ELECTORAL BONDS.

The ongoing revelations surrounding electoral bonds underscore the concerns raised by critics regarding the scheme's potential for abuse. Instances of suspected quid pro quo arrangements and close ties between companies under investigation and significant purchases of electoral bonds validate these apprehensions. Furthermore, fears regarding the exploitation of shell companies and loss-making entities to procure and donate bonds to political parties have materialized. The waiver allowing companies to exceed donation limits relative to their profits has been deemed illegal, affirming earlier criticisms. Despite the Supreme Court's intervention and subsequent ruling of the bonds as unconstitutional due to their susceptibility to misuse, the prolonged legal battles without halting the scheme's operation have had repercussions. Though some parties have disclosed donor details to the Election Commission, major players like the BJP and Congress have not, hinting at a lack of transparency. The timing of investigative actions in relation to bond purchases suggests potential misuse of state apparatus for political ends. While the BJP has received substantial contributions, attempts to justify these figures based on parliamentary representation seem disingenuous. Such misuse of power threatens the integrity of democracy and emphasizes the urgent need for reform in campaign financing.

19/03/2024



TRADE PUZZLE

THE UPTICK IN GOODS EXPORTS IS HEARTENING, BUT DIFFICULT TO SUSTAIN.

India experienced a significant boost in goods exports, rising by 11.9% in February, marking the strongest growth in 20 months, reaching \$41.4 billion, the highest in 11 months. This surge is notable amidst concerns over disrupted trading routes due to issues in the Red Sea and the Panama Canal. Despite ongoing challenges, including high interest rates and global demand conditions, economists attribute the increase to a combination of backlogged orders and improved demand.

However, the World Trade Organization (WTO) remains cautious, forecasting a modest 3.3% global trade growth in 2024 after a sluggish 0.8% in 2023. Regional conflicts and geopolitical tensions pose further risks, potentially derailing any gains. While policymakers aim to surpass previous export records, they must address lingering challenges, including the impact of freight hikes on margins and support for employment-intensive sectors like textiles and gems. Despite a spike in imports, particularly of gold, contributing to a 17-month high trade deficit, immediate concern is mitigated. Notably, electronics exports have bucked the trend, but recent declines in electronic components trade warrant attention. Finding avenues to bolster exporters, particularly in vulnerable sectors, remains imperative.



20/03/2024

SELECTION AND ELECTION

THE ELECTION COMMISSION NEEDS A SELECTION
PANEL FREE OF EXECUTIVE
BIAS.



The swift appointment of two new members to the Election Commission of India (ECI) following the resignation of Arun Goel has sparked justified criticism. Goel's resignation, coupled with the timing of the appointments amid ongoing legal challenges, raises concerns about the independence of the selection process for ECI members. Critics argue that recent legislation falls short of ensuring the commission's autonomy as envisioned by a constitutional bench verdict. The circumstances surrounding Goel's departure, citing "personal reasons," only add to the unease, especially given its timing before the finalization of the Lok Sabha election schedule. The underlying issue stems from legislation passed in response to Supreme Court questioning regarding the absence of a formal appointment process for ECI members. While the interim arrangement involved a committee with representation from various branches of government, the subsequent law gave the executive a significant majority in the selection process. This raises doubts about the committee's independence, contrary to the constitutional imperative of ensuring free and fair elections through an impartial electoral body. The ongoing debate highlights the need to prioritize institutional independence over executive influence in the appointment of ECI members.



21/03/2024

FEROCIOUS FRIENDS WHILE ALLOWING FOR A CHOICE OF PETS, THEIR RAISING SHOULD NOT BE AN UNBRIDLED RIGHT.

The relationship between dogs and their societal role in India presents complex challenges. Street dog populations create concerns, with citizens facing attacks in residential areas, yet political action to enforce laws remains lacking. Additionally, pet dogs raise separate issues, leading to deliberations on breed-related aggression. An expert committee recommended banning breeds deemed "ferocious," including Pit Bull Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier, and others, due to attacks prompting legal petitions. Proposed regulations require sterilization of existing pets. However, the Karnataka High Court halted implementation, citing unilateral decision-making and insufficient expert input. The Kennel Club of India may face disadvantages from these rulings. Understanding of dog behavior suggests aggression stems from various factors, including environment and training. While some countries regulate specific breeds more strictly, India's focus on public safety primarily emphasizes responsible ownership. Individual choice in pet selection and care is important but not unlimited. Thus, promoting owner accountability is crucial for enhancing public safety, given India's unique approach to street dogs and differing standards compared to other nations.

22/03/2024

NEW CAPABILITIES THE CHOICE OF MIRV ON AGNI-V GIVES IT RANGE AND ABILITY TO DEFEAT DEFENCES.



The Prime Minister of India announced India's induction into the league of nations possessing the capability to deploy multiple nuclear warheads on a single missile via social media on March 11. This achievement was realized through the successful maiden flight test of Agni-V, India's longest-range ballistic missile, exceeding 5,000 kilometers, featuring Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology under 'Mission Divyastra' by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). Agni-V has undergone iterative improvements, including canisterization for enhanced handling and operational ease since its inaugural test in April 2012. The indigenous avionics and high-precision sensor packages of the MIRV system ensure precise targeting of re-entry vehicles, meeting the mission's designated parameters. This technological milestone reinforces India's nuclear weapons program, bolstering its second-strike capability, vital within its no-first-use policy and credible minimum deterrence doctrine established post the 1998 nuclear tests. The incorporation of MIRV technology onto Agni-V holds strategic significance, particularly concerning China, given its extended range and ability to penetrate missile defenses.



23/03/2024

BLOWBACK PAKISTAN

IS PAYING FOR ITS ROLE IN SUPPORTING
ISLAMISTS IN AFGHANISTAN.

When the Taliban regained control in Kabul in August 2021, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan hailed it as breaking free from "slavery." However, the Afghanistan-Pakistan border is now a source of tension. Pakistan recently conducted airstrikes in Paktika and Khost provinces, purportedly targeting Tehrik-I-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), accused of terror attacks. In retaliation, the Taliban attacked Pakistani military posts along the border. Previously, Pakistan supported the Taliban, but relations soured after 9/11. The Taliban's return bolstered the TTP, causing friction as both share ideology and are Pashtun. The Afghan Taliban, now in power, haven't severed ties with the TTP, escalating tensions. Pakistan historically backed Islamist insurgency, now facing repercussions, notably in Afghanistan. Pakistan anticipated strengthening its influence through a compliant Kabul regime post-2021, but the Taliban's resurgence complicated this. With shared Pashtun roots and Deobandi Islam, the TTP aims for what the Afghan Taliban achieved, leading to a collision between the two countries. Pakistan's historical support for Islamist groups now poses challenges, particularly with the Taliban's resurgence.