



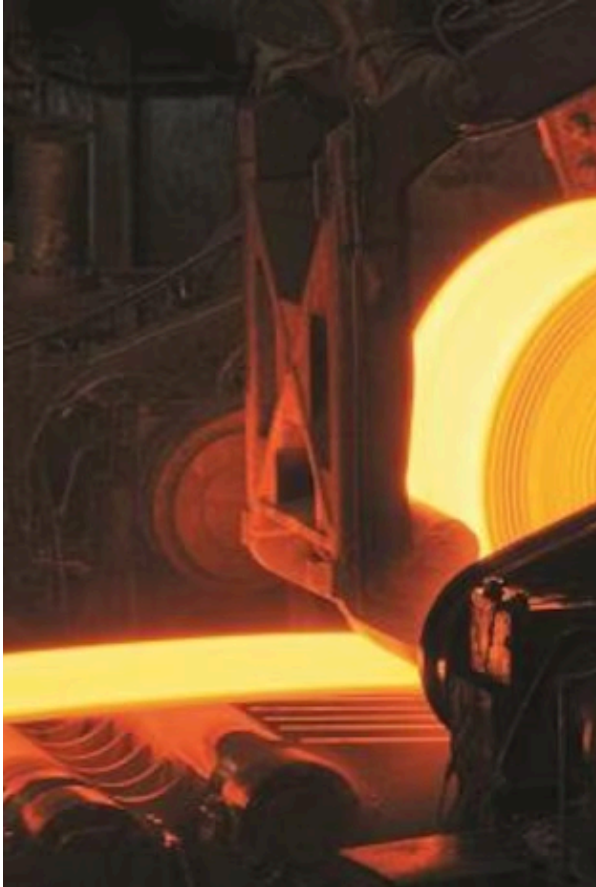
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13/05/2024 to 18/05/2024

13/05/2024

Sluggish Industrial Output Growth



The small rise in industrial output holds some worrying portents

In March India's factory output growth slowed to 4.9% down from 5.6% in February as reported by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP). This year's growth though slightly higher than the year's decline remains modest with mining output hitting a 19 month low at 1.2% and manufacturing growth at 5.2%. On the side electricity generation saw an increase of 8.6%. The National Statistical Office anticipates a 5.8% uptick in output for the year 2023 24 just above last year's figure of 5.2%. This rise is primarily driven by mining which saw a surge of 7.5% while manufacturing and electricity showed improvements. However production of consumer durables and non-durables experienced increases of 3.6% and 4% respectively remaining below pre COVID levels. The slow rebound in household spending among lower income households presents a challenge for investment as a catalyst for economic expansion. Generating jobs and enhancing wage levels are crucial for fostering a recovery in demand. Notably labour intensive sectors such as apparel and electronics witnessed contractions in the year 2023 24 due in part to subdued exports. It is imperative for the government to tackle these issues to spur investment and instil confidence, among consumers.

14/05/2024

Mediation in India's Legal Landscape



In April 2024, Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud of India emphasized the importance of mediation as an alternative to litigation, a sentiment endorsed by the Mediation Act of 2023. This law, which came into effect on September 15, 2023, expands the scope of mediation to cover litigation matters court linked mediation, online platforms and community-based mediation. Justice S.K. Kaul also underscored the evolution of mediation and its role in complementing rather than replacing established processes like the IBC. Drawing inspiration from Gandhi's principles, mediation seeks to resolve conflicts and mend relationships through cooperation rather than conflict. Nevertheless, transitioning from learning about mediation to practising it poses challenges. Existing guidelines mandate that mediators have 15 years of experience, creating a gap between traditional legal advocacy training and the unbiased role required in mediation. It underscores the need for education that seamlessly allows legal professionals to transition into mediator roles. In order to enhance the effectiveness of mediation practices, innovative training techniques such as co-mediation and shadow mediation are suggested under the Mediation Act of 2023. These approaches, coupled with training on mediation included in law school curricula, are designed to prepare mediators with the necessary skills and confidence for resolving intricate disputes successfully. This transformative approach aims to reshape India's landscape by fostering a culture that values and prioritizes resolution through mediation.

15/05/2024

Food Price Surge



Food inflation continues to undermine wider price stability

In April, the latest figures on inflation indicated a decrease to 4.83%. However, this data masks an increase in food prices rising to a four-month peak of 8.7%, as reported by the Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI). Rural areas felt the impact of inflation acutely, with CPI-based inflation at 5.43%, surpassing the 4.11% seen in regions. Prices of cereals rose by 26 basis points while vegetable costs remained high at 27.8%, showcasing pressure on food items. Pulses continued their streak of double-digit inflation for the month, with reports from the Department of Consumer Affairs highlighting significant price hikes in key pulses. The current water reserves stand at 27% capacity as of May 9th, raising concerns about productivity levels. The performance of the sector – vital for stabilizing food prices – heavily relies on the monsoon season. Optimism surrounding a 'normal monsoon' provides hope for relief; however, its effectiveness hinges on how rainfall is distributed and timed across regions. Tackling disparities between rural and urban impacts necessitates targeted interventions to ease the strain on populations already facing hardships. A comprehensive approach involving policies, water management strategies and social safety nets is crucial to mitigate the impact of food price increases and uphold economic stability.

16/05/2024

Cancer Detection



Government must heed warning in NitiAayog report that flags gaps in cancer detection. Investment in training grassroots professionals is needed

A recent NitiAayog report highlights significant gaps in cancer detection efforts in India, particularly at the grassroots level. Despite the government's efforts under the National Programme for the Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke, and the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan ArogyaYojana (AB-PMJAY), only a small percentage of people over 30 are screened for cancer. The report reveals that less than 10% of the 1,50,000 Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) have completed one round of screening for non-communicable diseases, including cancer.

India has made progress in piloting low-tech cancer screening methods deployable by community workers. However, the government has not sufficiently invested in training these frontline professionals, particularly ASHA workers, in cancer prevention and screening techniques. Prior studies have emphasized the need to educate and improve the working conditions of these low-paid, overburdened workers. The Union Ministry of Health's designation of the National Institute for Cancer Prevention and Research as a training hub is a positive step. Utilizing this institution's expertise to provide online training can help frontline workers educate others. To effectively reduce India's cancer burden, comprehensive efforts are needed to address the gaps identified by the NitiAayog report.

17/05/2024

Protection of Private Property: Supreme Court's Landmark Judgement



Constitutional Right to Property

The right to property was reaffirmed by the Supreme Court of India as an human right. Justices P.S. Narasimha and Aravind Kumar highlighted the importance of following safeguards when the state acquires property. The court emphasized that simply offering compensation to property owners is not sufficient to make the acquisition constitutional.

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO PROPERTY

- 1 Right to Notice:** The state must inform individuals of its intention to acquire their property.
- 2 Right to Notice:** The state must inform individuals of its intention to acquire their property.
- 3 Right to Reasoned Decision:** The state must provide a reasoned decision for property acquisition.
- 4 Public Purpose Justification:** The state must demonstrate that the acquisition is exclusively for public purposes.
- 5 Right to Fair Compensation:** Citizens are entitled to fair compensation for their property
- 6 Timely Acquisition Process:** The state must conduct the acquisition process efficiently and within prescribed timelines.
- 7 Conclusion of Proceedings:** The acquisition process must conclude with the vesting of rights in the state.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The court decision makes reference to cases and emphasizes the significance of following proper procedures in property acquisition. It highlights the nature of rights in ensuring fairness and justice in state led property acquisitions. Article 300A incorporated into the Constitution declares that "no individual shall be deprived of their property except by authority of law." This underscores that private property cannot be seized without process protecting individuals from state interventions.

SUMMARY

The Supreme Court's verdict underscores the balance between eminent domain powers and individual property rights. It stresses the necessity for adherence to guidelines to prevent unwarranted seizure of properties ensuring that acquisitions serve legitimate public interests while offering just compensation to affected parties. This significant ruling reinforces the structure safeguarding property rights, in India.

18/05/2024

Importance of Chabahar Port



India should not tailor its ties with Iran to U.S. foreign policy changes

India has elevated its relationship with Iran by signing a 10-year agreement to develop and operate the Chabahar port, despite ongoing tensions in West Asia. India will invest \$120 million and offer a \$250 million credit facility for the development of the ShahidBeheshti terminal. However, the U.S. State Department has warned of potential sanctions for entities doing business with Iran, which previously delayed the project due to American sanctions linked to Iran's nuclear program. Despite these challenges, India continued its cooperation with Iran, securing a carve-out from U.S. sanctions to operate the port. The Chabahar port is crucial for India's connectivity and trade strategy. It provides an alternative route to Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan, and is expected to connect to the International North-South Transport Corridor (NSTC), enhancing trade with Europe via Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia. This route offers a cost-effective alternative to the Suez Canal. Additionally, the port's proximity to Pakistan's Gwadar, where China is developing a port under the Belt and Road Initiative, allows India to bolster its geopolitical influence in Central Asia. India's policy should remain independent of U.S. foreign policy shifts to ensure sustained investment in Chabahar and continued growth in trade and connectivity projects with Central Asia.