

**UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS Paper 2 International Relations – Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests.**

**On International Maritime Trade and Choke Points – Global trade disruption**

Two continental shipping passages, the Suez and Panama canals, are suffering from obstructions to trade traffic. This has raised concerns about supply-chain woes and risks to the global economy. Additionally, it highlights that climate change and geopolitical tensions have the potential to negatively impact global trade and shipping.

**Suez Canal:**



The obstruction to trade in the Suez Canal primarily stems from increased attacks on ships by Houthi rebels from Yemen. These attacks, linked to the conflict in Gaza, have targeted vessels navigating through the Red Sea, posing a threat to the functionality of the Suez Canal. For instance, even an Indian-flagged ship carrying crude oil fell victim to such an attack.

**The repercussions of these disturbances are significant:**

1. **Rerouting of Shipping:** Major shipping companies are redirecting their vessels away from the Suez Canal. Instead, they opt for the longer but safer journey around the Cape of Good Hope, circumnavigating Africa.
2. **Elevated Insurance Costs:** Vessels that continue using the route face considerably higher war-risk insurance premiums due to the heightened risks associated with the turmoil in the Red Sea.
3. **Increased Freight Costs:** These changes have driven up freight and shipping expenses, leading to more expensive imports and exports, impacting global trade.
4. **Impact on India:** The ongoing tensions in the Gulf of Aden can affect India’s trade flows, although its oil imports remain relatively secure. India predominantly sources its oil from West Asia, transported via the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

Overall, the disruption caused by attacks on ships in the Red Sea has resulted in significant alterations in shipping routes, increased costs, and potential trade flow concerns, particularly affecting global trade through the Suez Canal.

**Panama Canal:**

The obstruction to trade in the Panama Canal arises from a combination of drought conditions and the El Niño effect. The canal, crucial for connecting the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, faces challenges due to its dependence on freshwater from nearby lakes, as it cannot function using ocean water.

**The impact of these conditions includes:**

1. **Reduced Capacity:** Currently, the canal is operating at only 55% of its usual capacity due to the effects of drought and limited freshwater availability.
2. **Supply Chain Disruptions:** The blockage in the Panama Canal has worsened supply chain disruptions, affecting global trade routes.

**To address these challenges, several measures should be considered:**

1. **Recognizing Criticality:** Acknowledging the critical role of these key trade routes and implementing measures to manage them effectively during natural emergencies or political crises is crucial for maintaining smooth trade flows.
2. **International Cooperation:** Cooperation among nations is vital for managing major straits and canals during periods of crisis, emphasizing the need for global collaboration in ensuring uninterrupted trade navigation.
3. **Exploring Alternatives:** Exploring alternative modes of transportation, such as intermodal freight transport or increased reliance on air transport, could mitigate the impacts of canal blockages on global trade.

In essence, acknowledging the significance of these crucial trade routes, establishing international cooperation measures, and exploring alternative transportation methods are essential steps to ensure uninterrupted and efficient global trade.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS Paper 2- Governance – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors.**

**Punishment for doctors in Nyaya (Second) Sanhita, bill 2023 – Carry on, doctor**

The amendment was influenced by the **Jacob Mathew vs State of Punjab case**, which specified that criminal charges for medical negligence should apply only in cases of extreme negligence. The Indian Medical Association argued that criminal liability for medical negligence is contentious and advocated for presuming deaths during treatment as accidents unless proven as gross negligence.

**In the Criminal Law Amendment Bills:**

1. **Punishment Revision:** The punishment for medical negligence resulting in death was initially proposed for up to five years but reverted to the previous two-year imprisonment term from the Indian Penal Code (IPC).
2. **Mob Lynching Penalties:** The Bills propose stringent penalties (life imprisonment or death) for mob lynching, aiming to safeguard doctors amid growing safety concerns.
3. **Expanded Definition:** The definition of a Registered Medical Practitioner now includes those recognized under the National Medical Commission Act, 2019, and registered in the National or State Medical Register.

**Concerns about the amendment include:**

1. **Incomplete Exemption:** The amendment did not grant complete immunity to doctors for medical negligence, maintaining the existing legal framework like Section 304(A) of the IPC.
2. **Fear of Legal Repercussions:** Doctors might still face violence and legal challenges, potentially discouraging them from providing optimal care. Balancing accountability and protection for doctors is crucial.

The amendment attempts to address concerns about criminal liability for medical negligence but leaves some uncertainties, especially regarding the balance between holding doctors accountable and ensuring their safety and ability to provide adequate care.