

UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS Paper 2 International Relations – India and its neighborhood- relations.

Emerging Challenges for India after the Bangladesh Elections

Problems with India's Import Duties:

- 1. Increased Production Costs:**
 - Inverted duties lead to higher production costs, affecting sectors like textiles and engineering, reducing global competitiveness.
- 2. Complex Tax System:**
 - India's import tax system is complex, with multiple layers of tariffs and an intricate inverted duty structure. This deters foreign investment and hampers domestic manufacturing competitiveness.
- 3. Negative Global Perception:**
 - The increase in average import tariffs from 13.5% in 2014 to 18.3% in 2021 goes against global trade trends, inviting international criticism.
- 4. Hindered Global Integration:**
 - High tariffs and complexity impede Indian manufacturers' integration into global value chains, crucial for economic growth in a globalized economy.

Government Initiatives:

- **Inter-Ministerial Coordination:**
 - The commerce ministry has engaged with the finance ministry to address distortions for specific items in the Union budget, indicating a collaborative approach.
- **Focus on Rationalization:**
 - Efforts are underway to simplify the tariff system by reevaluating basic customs duties and other charges, moving beyond the previous approach of increasing tariffs on imported final products.

Recommendations:

- 1. Revise Inverted Duty Structure:**
 - Reform the import duty system by reducing taxes on inputs, especially in key sectors like textiles and engineering, to enhance global competitiveness and lower production costs.
- 2. Simplify and Rationalize Tariffs:**
 - Make the tariff system more transparent and investor-friendly to attract foreign investment and facilitate the integration of Indian manufacturing into global value chains.

By addressing these issues and implementing strategic reforms, India can create a more conducive environment for economic growth and global competitiveness in the manufacturing sector.

UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS GS Paper 2 Indian Polity – Issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure.

On Republic Day Parade Tableaux Selection – Show of fairness

Background:

The Republic Day Parade showcases the cultural richness and diversity of India through tableaux, with around 15 or 16 entries selected annually from States and Union Territories (UTs). However, controversies have arisen over allegations of politically motivated decisions, especially affecting Opposition-ruled states.

Procedure for Tableau Selection:

1. Screening by Experts:

- The Defence Ministry employs a screening mechanism involving a committee of distinguished individuals, including Padma awardees, to evaluate proposals from States and organisations.

2. Tableau Construction:

- The Ministry of Culture has enlisted 30 agencies for the design and fabrication of tableaux through an open selection process. States/UTs are encouraged to engage these agencies.

3. Rotational Plan Proposal:

- The Defence Ministry has devised a rotational plan ensuring equitable opportunities for all States/UTs to display their tableaux within a three-year cycle.

Way Forward:

1. Apolitical and Transparent Selection:

- The selection process must remain apolitical and transparent. Political considerations should not influence decisions to maintain the integrity and fairness of the showcase.

2. Implementation of Rotational Plan:

- The proposed rotational plan offers a fairer and transparent mechanism. States/UTs should be given equal opportunities in a structured manner, mitigating concerns of favouritism or bias.

By adhering to these principles, India can enhance the credibility of the Republic Day Parade's tableau selection process, ensuring it remains a true reflection of the nation's cultural diversity without succumbing to political influences.

UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS Paper 2 International Relations – Bilateral groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

On Speaker's Powers in Anti-Defection Cases – The Speaker's courts

Speaker's Ruling on Shiv Sena Faction Disqualification:

The recent ruling by the Maharashtra Assembly Speaker on disqualification petitions related to rival factions within Shiv Sena has raised concerns about the powers of Presiding Officers under the anti-defection law. In this case:

1. Recognition of Eknath Shinde Faction:

- The Speaker concluded that there was no basis for disqualifying members of the Eknath Shinde or Uddhav B. Thackeray (UBT) faction. The Eknath Shinde group was acknowledged as the 'real political party.'

2. No Violation of Whip:

- The Speaker held that the UBT faction's appointee ceased to be the authorized whip, legitimizing the Shinde faction's appointee as the valid whip. Consequently, there was no violation of any whip by the Shinde loyalists.

Supreme Court's Observations:

Earlier observations by the Supreme Court in this case included:

1. Incorrect Recognition of Whip:

- The Speaker erred in recognizing the Shinde faction's appointee as the party's whip.

2. Defence Against Disqualification:

- No faction can argue that they represent the original political party to defend against disqualification for defection.

3. Irrelevance of Faction Size:

- The percentage of members in each faction is irrelevant to the disqualification case. The determination of the real party is a crucial factor.

4. Speaker's Decision on Faction Recognition:

- The Speaker may have to decide on which faction is the authentic political party, considering the party constitution and leadership structure submitted to the Election Commission.

Legal Remedies Against Speaker's Decision:

The UBT faction may opt to approach the Supreme Court again, contending that the Speaker's decisions contradict the Court's earlier observations. This legal avenue can be pursued to seek a reconsideration of the ruling in light of the Court's guidance.