

1. Less representation given to women in Judiciary

Introduction

Justice Fathima Beevi, the first Indian woman to become a Supreme Court judge, died on Thursday, at the age of 96 in Kollam, Kerala. With her appointment to the SC in 1989, Justice Beevi became the first Muslim woman judge of the Supreme Court, as well as the first woman Supreme Court Justice in Asia.

In a 2016 interview with The Week, she was asked whether the Indian judiciary was patriarchal. Her answer: "Absolutely. No doubt about that."

So, how many women justices has the Supreme Court had?

Currently, only three of the 34 incumbent Supreme Court justices — Justices Hima Kohli, Bela Trivedi, and BV Nagarathna — are women. Their appointment in 2021 created history by pushing the number of women in the top court to four — the highest ever in history. Justice Nagarathna is also projected to become the first-ever woman Chief Justice of India in 2027, although her tenure will only be 36 days. Her appointment will come nearly 80 years after Independence.

Apart from this, there have been a total of 11 women judges in the history of India's apex court — only ten more since Beevi "opened doors" in 1989. This means that of a total of total of 268 judges in the apex court's history, only 11 — or roughly 4 per cent — have been women.

Is the situation in High Courts any better?

As of March 21 this year, India had 25 high courts with a total sanctioned strength of 1,114 judges. Of these, however, only 785 are working while the remaining 329 posts remain vacant. Of this 785, only 107 judges — or 13 per cent — are women. Currently, only of the country's 25 HCs have a woman chief justice.

What is the situation for the lower judiciary?

A 2018 study by the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy found that while representation of women in the lower judiciary is relatively higher at roughly 27 per cent, women hit a glass ceiling in higher appointments — as district judges, and subsequently at the high court level.

The report found that only in three of the smallest states — Goa, Meghalaya, and Sikkim, with a collective total of a mere 103 judges — did the percentage of women judges cross 60 per cent. Barring Telangana and Puducherry, the percentage of women

judges remained below 40 per cent for all other states, regardless of geography, cultural considerations, or other differences.

Though there is no reservation for women in the higher judiciary, several states have provided quotas for women in the lower judiciary, including Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Uttarakhand. These states provide between 30 and 35 per cent reservation for recruitment done through direct appointment.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Indian Express

2. COP, carbon market, loss and damage: A glossary of climate terms

Introduction

With the COP28 summit just around the corner, terms like the Paris Agreement, Kyoto Protocol, loss and damage, and NDCs are making headlines.

Here is a guide to key terms in the climate change conversation.

COP

COP is an international climate meeting organised annually by the United Nations (UN). COP is short for Conference of the Parties. 'Parties' is a reference to (now) 198 countries that have joined the international treaty called the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). 'Parties' to the treaty have pledged to take voluntary actions to prevent "dangerous anthropogenic [human-caused] interference with the climate system."

Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol was an international treaty that placed obligations on the set of rich and industrialised countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions by assigned amounts. It was adopted in Kyoto, Japan, in 1997, and came into effect in 2005. The treaty formally expired in 2020 and was replaced by the Paris Agreement as the main international treaty for coordinating global action against climate change.

Paris Agreement

Adopted in 2015 at COP21 in Paris, the agreement is aimed to limit rising global average temperature. It's considered a landmark deal as it legally binds (now) 195 nations, for the first time ever, to combat climate change and adapt to its effects.

1.5 degree limit

Under the Paris Agreement, the world governments have agreed to keep average global temperature "well below" 2 degree Celsius this century compared to pre-

industrial levels. They have also pledged to pursue efforts to limit the rise to 1.5 degree Celsius — an important threshold, crossing which would unleash far more severe climate change impacts, including more frequent and severe droughts, heatwaves and rainfall.

Glasgow Pact

Reached at the COP26 summit in Scotland's Glasgow, the pact called for phase down of coal and phase out of fossil fuel. This was the first time that a UN climate agreement explicitly mentioned coal. The pact also marked the resolution of the deadlock over carbon markets.

Carbon markets

Such markets are essentially trading systems in which carbon credits are sold and bought. They allow countries, or industries, to earn carbon credits for the greenhouse gas emission reductions they make in excess of their targets. These carbon credits can be traded to the highest bidder in exchange for money. The buyers of carbon credits can show the emission reductions as their own and use them to meet their reduction targets.

One tradable carbon credit is equal to one tonne of carbon dioxide or the equivalent amount of a different greenhouse gas reduced, sequestered or avoided. Once a credit is used to reduce, sequester, or avoid emissions, it becomes an offset and can no longer be tradable.

Greenhouse gases

The gases that trap heat in the atmosphere are known as greenhouse gases (GHGs). They allow sunlight to pass through the atmosphere, but obstruct the heat the sunlight brings from leaving. The main source of GHGs is the burning of fossil fuels like coal, diesel, gasoline or petrol, kerosene and natural gas. Carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide are among the most prominent GHGs.

Net zero

Also referred to as carbon-neutrality, net zero doesn't mean that a country would reduce its emissions to zero. Rather, it is a state in which a country's emissions entering the environment are equal to the greenhouse gases being removed from the atmosphere. The removal can be done by creating more carbon sinks such as forests or by implementing futuristic technologies such as carbon dioxide removal (CDR).

In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) marked 2050 as the deadline by which the world must reach net zero if it wants to limit global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius.

Carbon capture and storage (CCS)

CCS is basically a process that captures carbon dioxide and traps it beneath the earth. It's usually used at fossil fuel plants and factories, where it prevents the gas from escaping into the atmosphere. Notably, CCS is different from carbon dioxide removal (CDR), which involves sucking out carbon from the atmosphere.

Carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS)

CCUS goes a step further than CCS and uses the captured carbon in the production of goods such as alcohols, biofuels, plastics or concrete.

Geo-engineering

It is the deliberate large-scale intervention in the Earth's natural systems to tackle climate change. There are numerous proposed geo-engineering techniques, including CDR. Their effectiveness and potential side effects, however, remain widely debated.

IPCC

The IPCC is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. It was set up in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). IPCC's main activity is to prepare Assessment Reports, special reports, and methodology reports assessing the state of knowledge of climate change.

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

The Paris Agreement requires each country to prepare an outline for their efforts to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. These commitments are known as NDCs. They are submitted every five years, and successive NDCs are supposed to be more ambitious than previous ones.

National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)

The NAP helps countries develop plans to respond to climate change's present and future impacts. They are aimed to reduce vulnerability to the severe effects of climate change and strengthen adaptive capacity and resilience. NAPs also play an essential role in updating and improving the adaptation elements of the NDCs.

Global stocktake

It refers to a five-year review in which countries assess where they are in the fight against climate change, and what needs to be done in the next five years to make this fight more effective and potent. COP28, which will take place from November 30 in Dubai, will witness the presentation of the findings of the first stocktake exercise.

Triple Renewable Energy

In 2021, the International Energy Agency (IEA) published its 'Roadmap to Net Zero by 2050' report, which said that if the world needs to meet the net zero goal, it has to commit to tripling global renewable capacity by 2030. If met, this single step could

avoid carbon dioxide emissions by seven billion tonnes between now and 2030, the agency said. This would be equal to eliminating all the current carbon dioxide emissions from China's power sector.

Just transition

The term describes a shift to a low-carbon or net-zero economy without jeopardising the rights of workers and the needs of communities, which could be affected due major changes to industries like fossil fuels.

Common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR)

It is a principle of international law which states that different countries have different capabilities and responsibilities to address cross-border environmental problems such as climate change. One example of the CBDR principle is the 1989 Montreal Protocol, an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer. It gave a 10-year grace period for 'developing countries' to implement the control measures.

Loss and damage

There is no agreed definition of 'loss and damage' in the international climate negotiations, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In broad terms, it refers to the unavoidable social and financial impacts caused by extreme weather events.

Last year, at COP27, developing countries managed to get a loss and damage fund established. It is meant to provide financial help to countries struck by climate disasters. It is, however, empty right now.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Environment

Source: The Indian Express

3. Javier Milei's Rise and Radical Economic Policy

Introduction

Javier Milei's recent victory as the President-elect of Argentina marks a significant departure from conventional politics. His advocacy for libertarian and anarcho-capitalist ideologies, emphasizing minimal government intervention, has sparked interest and debate. One of his radical proposals is 'dollarisation' as a solution to the country's economic challenges.

Understanding Libertarianism and Anarcho-capitalism

Libertarianism is a political philosophy that gives primacy to individual liberty over everything else. A libertarian believes that individuals have certain God-given rights — such as the right to life and liberty, freedom of speech, right to property, freedom of

worship, moral autonomy etc. — and seeks to define the powers of a government in this context.

Anarcho-capitalism seems to take the libertarian view to what would appear like an extreme. According to Britannica Encyclopaedia, anarcho-capitalism is a political philosophy that advocates the voluntary exchange of goods and services in a society broadly regulated by the market rather than by the state.

The term anarcho-capitalism was coined by Murray Rothbard, a leading figure in the American libertarian movement from the 1950s until his death in 1995. Rothbard envisioned a 'contractual society' in which the production and exchange of all goods and services, including those usually assigned to the state (such as law enforcement, education, and environmental protection) would be conducted through voluntary agreements (contracts) between individuals.

Simply put, imagine a society where even law & order as well as justice delivery is privatised. In such a society, the government has no monopoly on police like it has at present. Almost every sector of the economy is run on free market principles with the belief that people, as consumers, will choose the best option among the available ones and that demand for better quality goods and services (say policing) will incentivise entrepreneurs to come up with the most efficient solutions.

Milei's Policy Proposal: Dollarisation

Milei's unique policy approach suggests disbanding Argentina's currency and central bank, adopting the US dollar as the official currency. This move aims to address the country's high inflation and stagnant economic growth.

Argentina's Economic Woes

A year ago, Argentina faced issues like soaring inflation, fluctuating GDP growth, and stagnating per capita incomes. These challenges stemmed from excessive government spending, leading to a loss in the value of the domestic currency.

Milei's Solution: Dollarisation Explained

Milei proposes two key actions: severe cuts in government spending and the shift to the US dollar as the official currency. Dollarisation aims to bring price stability, enhance predictability in trade, and eliminate the government's ability to fuel inflation through irresponsible spending.

Potential Challenges and Divided Opinions

Experts remain divided on Milei's proposal. Critics question its feasibility, citing political inexperience and a weak mandate. Others argue that dollarisation may not prevent fiscal excesses and could limit the government's ability to respond to economic crises.

Advocates' Perspective and Economic Analysis

Supporters of Milei's libertarian beliefs argue that dollarisation protects purchasing power and cite examples from fully dollarized countries like Panama, Ecuador, and El Salvador. Economic analysis suggests that Argentina has the necessary resources for dollarisation, provided it addresses its existing financial liabilities.

Conclusion: A Paradigm Shift in Argentine Politics

Javier Milei's ascent to the presidency reflects a widespread discontent with traditional policies. While the success of dollarisation remains uncertain, the proposal challenges established norms and opens new avenues for economic discourse in Argentina.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: The Hindu