

'Sharing is Caring'

If you have friends preparing for Civil Services, tell them that they can also receive Updates from PrepMate IAS by sending 'Name' and 'State' through WhatsApp on 75979-00000

1. Rights Queer Couples Are Fighting For

Introduction

"Queer" is an umbrella term used to describe people who don't identify as cisgender or heterosexual, and can include people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, or transgender. It can also refer to people who don't fit into rigid binaries of male/female or straight/gay.



A recent advisory from the Finance Ministry marks a significant step toward alleviating some challenges faced by queer couples who cannot legally marry. This guidance, along with a Reserve Bank of India circular, affirms that LGBTQIA+ individuals can open joint bank accounts and designate their partners as beneficiaries.

Challenges of Unrecognized Unions

Supriyo Chakraborty and his partner, together for 12 years, highlight the harsh realities of unrecognized relationships. In critical situations, such as medical emergencies, their partnership lacks legal acknowledgment, leaving partners vulnerable when it comes to decision-making. The tragic case of Jebin, who had to seek court permission to attend his partner's funeral, underscores the severe implications of this lack of recognition.

Beyond life-and-death scenarios, everyday tasks become complicated. Queer couples cannot access essential documents like ration cards, nominate each other for financial benefits, or receive inheritance rights. Their communications lack the protection afforded to married couples, and they face barriers in organ donation and adoption.

Supreme Court's Position

In October 2023, the Supreme Court declined to recognize same-sex marriage but emphasized the constitutional rights of queer couples to form unions. The court acknowledged the government's plan to establish a committee to explore entitlements for these couples, indicating a potential path forward.

Necessary Legal Changes

While recent advisories from financial institutions have made some strides, real change requires more than policy statements. Chakraborty criticizes banks for their lack of sensitivity

despite claims of inclusivity. There's a need for comprehensive advisories from various government sectors and legislative amendments to family and inheritance laws, which are essential for establishing equitable rights for queer couples.

Conclusion

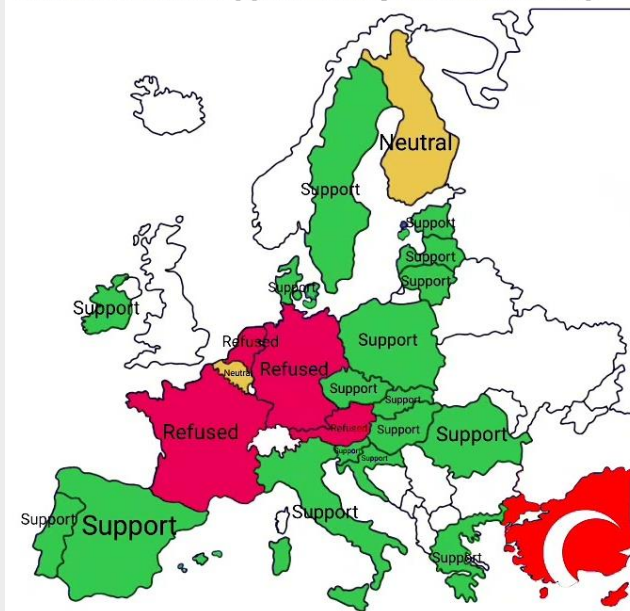
The journey to secure rights for queer couples is far from over. Although recent developments are promising, achieving full legal recognition and associated rights will take sustained effort and advocacy.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Hindu

2. Will Turkey's Bid to Join BRICS Speed Up EU Accession?

Countries That Support Turkey EU Membership



Overview

Turkey has officially applied to join BRICS, a coalition of emerging economies, raising questions about its relationship with the European Union (EU). This move could indicate a shift away from the EU or serve as a political strategy to pressure the bloc.

Turkey's Position on BRICS

Omer Celik, spokesperson for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling party, confirmed the application, stating it is "pending." Russian President Vladimir Putin has expressed support for Turkey's inclusion, framing it as a potential counterbalance to Western influence.

Implications for EU Accession

Experts are divided on whether Turkey's BRICS application signals a departure from EU ambitions or reflects frustration with stalled accession talks. The EU expects candidate countries to uphold its values, a requirement Turkey has struggled to meet. Reports indicate Turkey's alignment with EU foreign policy has plummeted, highlighting the challenges it faces in pursuing EU membership.

Frustration with the EU

Turkey's interest in BRICS may stem from dissatisfaction with the EU's lack of progress on issues like customs modernization and visa liberalization. Turkish officials express that without significant reforms addressing fundamental freedoms and rule of law, EU accession remains unlikely.

Potential Backfire of Joining BRICS

While some Turkish experts believe joining BRICS could enhance Turkey's leverage in negotiations with the EU, there are risks. Membership might further erode Turkey's credibility in the eyes of EU nations, who may perceive it as drifting away from Western alliances.

Turkey's Complex Relations with the West

Turkey's foreign policy choices, such as purchasing defense systems from Russia and supporting groups like Hamas, have led to mistrust among Western allies. Despite its strategic importance, Turkey is often seen as a "mistrusted, necessary ally" by NATO and the EU.

Conclusion

Turkey's BRICS application could be a strategic maneuver in its foreign policy, reflecting both frustration with the EU and a desire to assert its importance on the global stage. The implications of this move for Turkey's EU accession prospects remain uncertain, as it navigates a complex geopolitical landscape.

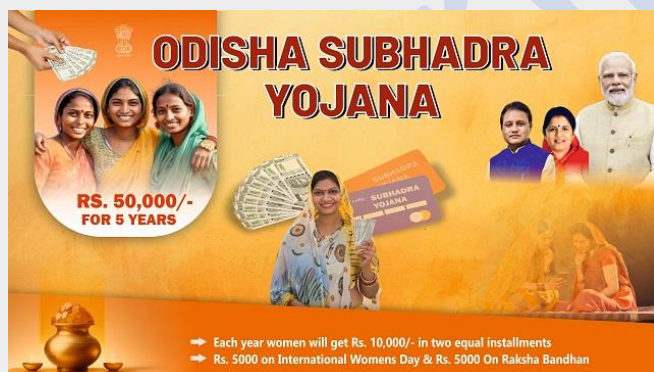
Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: Indian Express

3. All about Odisha's Subhadra scheme, to be launched by PM Modi on his birthday

Introduction

On September 17, his 74th birthday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the Subhadra Yojana, the Odisha government's scheme to transfer Rs 10,000 per year to eligible women beneficiaries in the state between the ages of 21 and 60.



The Mohan Charan Majhi government has planned a massive congregation of women from across the state at Bhubaneswar's Janata Maidan for the launch of the scheme. Arrangements have been made to telecast the PM's program live at the panchayat and block levels.

Awareness drives are being organised statewide, and all government departments have been asked to use the Subhadra logo in their official communication and social media handles.

The scheme is named after Goddess Subhadra, the younger sibling of Lord Jagannath, the presiding deity of Odisha. Lord Jagannath, who is deeply revered in the 90%-Hindu state, is always depicted as part of a triad of deities that includes Subhadra and their oldest sibling, Balabhadra.

Over five years until 2028-29, the scheme will provide more than 1 crore women across the state with financial assistance of Rs 10,000 annually. The transfers will be made in two instalments of Rs 5,000 each, on Rakhi Purnima (Raksha Bandhan, which typically falls in August), and International Women's Day (March 8) every year.

More than 50 lakh women have already registered for the scheme.

How it will work

The money will be deposited directly into the beneficiary's Aadhaar-enabled single-holder bank account. The government has made e-KYC mandatory for the scheme. A Subhadra Debit Card will be issued to the beneficiaries.

A total 100 beneficiaries with the highest number of digital transactions in each gram panchayat and urban local body area will receive an additional incentive of Rs 500.

Women from economically well-off families, government employees, and income-tax payees will not be eligible for the scheme. Women who receive assistance of Rs 1,500 or more per month (or Rs 18,000 or more per year) under any other government scheme will also be excluded.

Banks, post offices, and common service centres across Odisha have been witnessing a rush of women to enrol for the scheme or to update their Aadhaar details. There is no last date to register; the process will continue until all eligible beneficiaries have been registered.

Financing the scheme

Official sources said the government has budgeted for Rs 55,825 crore for the scheme for five years from 2024-25 to 2028-29. For the current (2024-25) financial year, a sum of Rs 10,000 crore has been kept aside for the scheme.

Officers in the state finance department said there will be no financial constraints for the scheme, on which the government will remain focused.

The political context

The Subhadra scheme was the flagship promise of the BJP ahead of the elections to the Assembly and Parliament, which ended 24 years of BJD rule and produced victories for the BJP in 20 of the state's 21 Lok Sabha seats.

Women, especially the 70 lakh members of some 6 lakh women's self-help groups (WSHGs) organised under Mission Shakti, were the biggest factor behind the BJD's electoral success for 24 years. Mission Shakti was launched in 2001 to empower women by providing them with credit and market linkages, and it had over the years managed to create a committed vote bank of women for the BJD.

To counter the BJD's Mission Shakti program, the BJP proposed a scheme of direct money transfer (DBT) in its election manifesto, promising to give a voucher of Rs 50,000 to every woman beneficiary, which could be encashed in two years. BJP workers collected details of women in a certain format during the election campaign and assured them of its implementation immediately after the party came to power, which got much traction on the ground.

The government cleared the implementation of the scheme, with a few changes to its election promise, within hours of taking oath on June 12.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Governance

Source: Indian Express

PrepMate