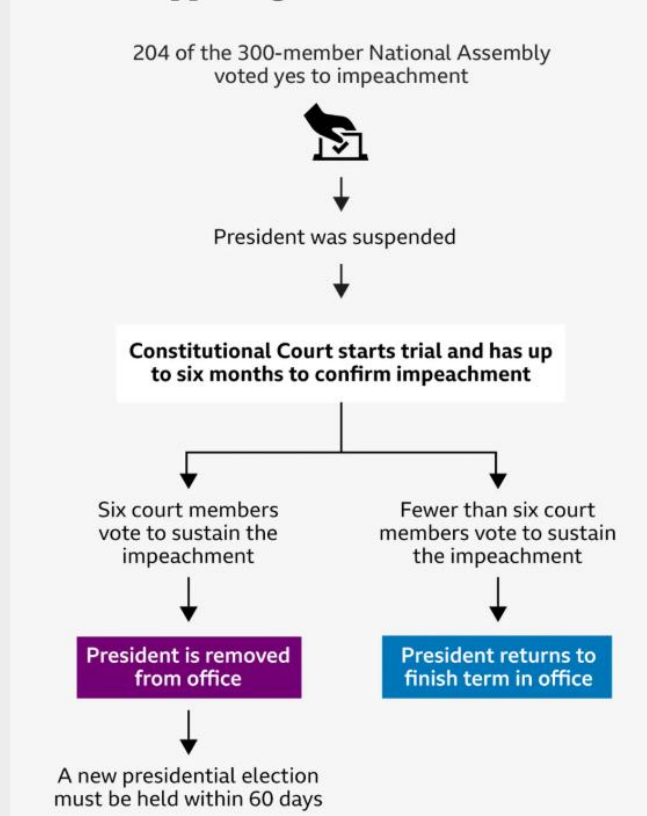


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1. What Will Yoon's Impeachment Mean for South Korea?**Political Chaos and Confrontation****What is happening in South Korea?**

South Korean politics is expected to remain turbulent after the Constitutional Court began deliberating on the impeachment of President Yoon Suk Yeol. The National Assembly passed Yoon's impeachment motion 11 days after his declaration of martial law was overturned. The court now has the authority to either remove Yoon from office or reinstate him.

Suspension of Duties and Interim Leadership

While the court deliberates, Yoon is suspended, and former Prime Minister Han Duck-soo has taken over as acting president. Meanwhile, Han Dong-hoon, leader of the ruling People Power Party (PPP), resigned due to internal party issues, further adding to political instability.

Opposition Gaining Strength

The opposition Democratic Party, led by

Lee Jae-myung, stands to benefit from Yoon's impeachment, with over 70% of the public reportedly supporting the move. Analysts believe the Democratic Party would likely win power if a general election is called. However, Lee faces legal challenges, including charges of bribery and corruption, which could impact his political future.

Deepening Political Polarization

Experts highlight the dangers of South Korea's deep political divides. While peaceful protests have underscored the resilience of its democracy, prolonged dysfunction could hinder governance. Calls for greater accountability mechanisms to prevent government paralysis have grown louder.

Constitutional Court's Role

The court has up to six months to rule on Yoon's impeachment, though past cases have been resolved more quickly. A confirmation of the impeachment would trigger a general election within two months. Complications arise as the court currently has only six judges, with seven needed for a final decision. One dissenting vote could defeat the impeachment.

Potential Government Paralysis

Although the Democratic Party has refrained from pursuing further impeachment proceedings against the acting president and other cabinet members, this stance could change if the interim leadership fails to align with opposition expectations. Analysts warn of potential paralysis in governance and challenges in managing foreign affairs.

Opposition Leader's Legal Troubles

Lee Jae-myung, despite his party's strong position, faces legal hurdles. Convicted of making false statements during his 2022 presidential campaign, he received a suspended prison sentence and is appealing. If elected before his appeal concludes, legal proceedings against him would be paused under Korean law.

Challenges for the Ruling Party

The PPP, established in 2020, is grappling with internal discord and the fallout from Yoon's impeachment. The party's rejection of the Democratic Party's proposal for joint governance further highlights the rift between the two factions.

Public Perspective

Despite the political upheaval, everyday life in South Korea remains largely unaffected. Citizens hope for a peaceful resolution as the legal process unfolds.

Outlook

The impeachment proceedings mark a critical juncture for South Korea, with the potential to reshape its political landscape. However, deep divisions and ongoing legal battles could prolong uncertainty and instability.

Relevance: GS Prelims; International Relations

2. The Transcendental Legacy of Ustad Zakir Hussain

A Legend Passes Away

Ustad Zakir Hussain, the iconic tabla maestro, passed away at the age of 73 after a brief illness. Revered as one of India's greatest musicians, his unparalleled contributions to music leave behind a legacy that transcends boundaries.

Elevating the Tabla

From Accompaniment to the Spotlight

Historically, the tabla was relegated to a secondary role in Hindustani classical music. Zakir Hussain transformed its status, bringing the instrument to center stage. Once overshadowed,

tabla players today enjoy recognition as equal partners in performances, a shift largely credited to his efforts.

Pathbreaker and Innovator

While acknowledging the contributions of his predecessors like Ustad Alla Rakha and Pandit Kishan Maharaj, Hussain's unique innovations propelled the tabla into global consciousness. "He was a game-changer who put Indian music on the world map," said sitar and tabla artist Nayan Ghosh.



Exploring New Horizons

Fusion and World Music

Zakir Hussain's collaborations with international artists, especially through his Grammy-winning band Shakti, redefined fusion music. Combining Indian classical with jazz and other global styles, Shakti became a pioneering force in "world music." Hussain's innovative approach bridged cultural gaps, introducing Indian rhythms to global audiences.

Expanding the Boundaries

Hussain's work did not merely blend traditions; it expanded them. "He created his own style without breaking traditional rules," noted Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri. Hussain described this process as transcending restrictions to

create a path towards musical unity.

Master of His Craft

Style and Versatility

Though trained in the Punjab gharana, Hussain mastered and incorporated techniques from other gharanas, breaking barriers within classical music. He encouraged young musicians to explore and combine styles, emphasizing that no musical expression is "wrong."

Charisma on Stage

Hussain's live performances were a blend of technical brilliance and audience connection. Known for his storytelling through rhythm, his performances were immersive experiences, often described as "perfection." Yet, Hussain humbly rejected this notion, believing music is reborn every day.

Remembering a Genius

A Legacy Beyond Music

Zakir Hussain's life was a testament to innovation, humility, and artistry. His ability to balance tradition with modernity, technical mastery with emotional depth, and global reach with cultural roots ensures that his influence will endure for generations.

As Chaudhuri aptly summarized, "Zakir Hussain was not just a tabla player; he was a communicator, a creator, and a pioneer."

Relevance: GS Prelims; Miscellaneous

3. Entrance Exam Reforms: Recommendations by Govt Panel

Introduction

A seven-member committee led by former ISRO Chairman Dr. K. Radhakrishnan has proposed significant changes to strengthen the National Testing Agency (NTA) and ensure the smooth conduct of entrance exams. The recommendations follow irregularities like the NEET-UG paper leak earlier this year.

Why the Committee Was Formed

Context of Examination Irregularities

- The NEET-UG paper leak prompted the formation of the committee in June 2024.
- Investigations revealed 144 candidates paid for leaked papers, which were stolen, solved, and distributed before the exam.
- Other exams like UGC-NET and CSIR-UGC NET were also postponed or canceled due to similar issues.

Objectives

- Reform the examination process and improve data security protocols.
- Strengthen the NTA's structure and administration.
- Address examination security concerns and update Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Key Recommendations for Exams

Digital and Online Exam Reforms

- Online Exams: Conduct entrance exams online wherever feasible.
- Digital Transmission: Use systems where question papers are digitally transmitted but answered on paper.
- Computer-Adaptive Testing: Move towards tests tailored to candidates' abilities, enhancing security and personalization.

Improving Accessibility and Security

- Testing Centres:
 - Allocate centres in candidates' districts to avoid unnecessary travel.
 - Establish secured testing centres in every district.
 - Deploy mobile testing centres in remote and rural areas.
- Authentication: Introduce multi-stage identity verification using Aadhaar biometrics.

Structural Changes

- Coordination Committees: Set up district and state-level committees for secure test administration.
- Question Paper Guidelines: Train teams involved in preparing question papers.

Strengthening the NTA

- Employ more permanent staff to reduce reliance on contract workers.
- Develop a robust infrastructure for a public test platform.
- Create new director-level and joint director-level posts through the central staffing scheme.

Long-Term Vision

- Transition to computer-adaptive testing for better security and accurate assessment of candidates' abilities.
- Build a comprehensive infrastructure to support digital and secure testing nationwide.

Steps Taken So Far

- The Ministry of Education has sought the support of state governments to implement reforms.
- A high-powered steering committee has been established to monitor progress.
- 16 new positions at the NTA have been created to boost capacity and efficiency.

These measures aim to ensure fairer, safer, and more efficient entrance examinations in India.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance