



VEDANTA COACHING ACADEMY

Current Affairs Study Notes

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1 IMEC: Commerce Corridor or Geopolitical Gamble?

- **Core Objective:** The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) is a strategic multimodal transportation network aimed at integrating India, West Asia, and Europe.
- **Strategic Shift:** It fundamentally shifts international trade reliance away from the highly congested Suez Canal, offering a modern alternative to secure global supply chains.
- **Transit Map:** The route encompasses critical transits through the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel, culminating at the strategic Haifa Port before reaching European shores.

SIGNIFICANCE & KEY CHALLENGES

- **Significance:** Establishes direct trade access to European markets and positions India as a central hub, countering unilateral infrastructure initiatives like China's BRI.
- **Challenges:** Persistent geopolitical instability across West Asia, heightened security concerns involving Israel, and the diverging national interests of stakeholder nations.

EXAM READY FACT

IMEC was officially unveiled during the 2023 G20 Summit in New Delhi. It is a flagship project under the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), serving as a direct counterweight to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

**2**

Supreme Court of India Appoints 5 New Judges

- **Current Update:** The Union Government has approved the elevation of five judicial officials to the Supreme Court, raising the operational working strength to 37.
- **Newly Appointed Justices:** The roster includes Justice Sheel Nagu, Justice Shree Chandrashekhar, Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva, Justice Arun Palli, and Senior Advocate V. Mohana (elevated directly from the Bar).
- **Judicial Impact:** This expansion aims to systematically reduce the immense pendency of constitutional and civil cases, while the inclusion of V. Mohana enhances gender diversity at the highest judicial echelon.

EXAM READY FACT

Under **Article 124(2)** of the Indian Constitution, Supreme Court judges are appointed by the President. In May 2026, Parliament systematically increased the maximum sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court from 34 to 38 judges (including the Chief Justice of India).

**3**

Summer Air Pollution Dynamics in Indian Cities

- **Emerging Crisis:** While winter smog dominates the media, summer air pollution is a rising environmental health crisis in metropolises like Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, and Kolkata.
- **Primary Pollutants:** The primary drivers of this summer phenomenon are coarse particulate matter (PM10) and dangerous ground-level ozone.
- **Driving Factors:** Cyclonic dust storms, widespread road dust suspension, unregulated construction, and continuous vehicular/industrial emissions fuel the crisis.

REQUIRED MITIGATION STRATEGIES

- Implementation of stringent dust control measures at construction sites and improved road dust management.
- Strategic reduction of NO_x and VOC emissions from industrial and vehicular sources.
- Expansion of localized Air Quality Early Warning Systems (AQEWS).

EXAM READY FACT

Ground-level ozone is a **secondary pollutant**. It is not emitted directly into the air but is created by chemical reactions between oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the presence of intense summer sunlight (Photochemical Smog).



4 BRICS Culture Track 2026: Ethical AI Integration

- **Event Milestone:** Varanasi recently hosted the 2nd BRICS Culture Working Group Meeting, marking a significant step forward in cultural diplomacy among member states.
- **Thematic Focus:** The 2026 agenda strongly pivoted towards the intersection of technology and heritage, specifically the ethical application of Artificial Intelligence within creative and cultural spaces.
- **Core Discussions:** Delegates focused on empowering the creative economy, fortifying copyright protections in the digital age, and ensuring the sustainable governance of AI models.

EXAM READY FACT

BRICS originally began as BRIC in 2006, adding South Africa in 2010. Following the recent expansion, the bloc now represents a significantly larger portion of the global population and GDP, making cooperative frameworks on technology and copyright highly influential globally.



5 Codeine Syrup Abuse: A Public Health Crisis in Bihar

- **The Crisis:** Bihar is currently grappling with a soaring misuse of codeine-based cough syrups, particularly among its youth demographic, leading to severe addiction and mental health complications.
- **Regulatory Response:** Bihar has formally classified codeine syrups as "intoxicants" under the stringent provisions of the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2016.
- **Enforcement Action:** The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) recently seized approximately 7,500 illicit bottles in Patna alone, highlighting the massive scale of trafficking networks.

STRATEGIC WAY FORWARD

- Rigorous enforcement of prohibition laws against highly organized illegal syndicates without denying genuine patients access to medication.
- Widespread community awareness campaigns and the establishment of specialized rehabilitation centres.

EXAM READY FACT

Codeine is an opioid alkaloid naturally derived from the poppy plant. In India, its manufacture, possession, and transport are strictly regulated under the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985**.



6 South Sudan: Protracted Civil War and Humanitarian Emergency

- **Historical Context:** Since gaining hard-fought independence in 2011, South Sudan's trajectory has been marred by a civil war that erupted in 2013, driven by political factionalism between leaders Salva Kiir and Riek Machar.
- **Humanitarian Toll:** A staggering 56% of the national population currently faces acute food insecurity, exacerbated by mass internal displacement and systemic attacks on civilians.
- **International Role:** The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) continues to play a vital, though strained, role in civilian protection, aid delivery, and human rights monitoring.

EXAM READY FACT

South Sudan (Capital: Juba) is the world's youngest internationally recognized country. It officially became the 193rd member state of the United Nations in 2011 following a referendum to secede from Sudan.



7 Gir Lion Fatalities and the Ecological Need for Relocation

- **Ecological Crisis:** The recent deaths of eight Asiatic lions in Gujarat's Gir region, suspected to be caused by Babesiosis (a tick-borne parasitic disease), have reignited urgent conservation debates.
- **Geographic Vulnerability:** The entire global population of free-ranging Asiatic lions is confined exclusively to the Gir landscape, creating a critical vulnerability to localized natural disasters, forest fires, and rapid-spreading zoonotic epidemics.
- **Conservation Plan:** Experts advocate for expediting the translocation of lions to suitable alternative sanctuaries to serve as an ecological "safety-net," alongside advanced genetic management protocols to prevent inbreeding depression.

EXAM READY FACT

The Asiatic Lion (*Panthera leo persica*) is listed as **Endangered** on the IUCN Red List. The **Barda Wildlife Sanctuary** in Gujarat has been identified and prepared as a potential second home to alleviate the risks of a single-population habitat.