

**DAILY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
ANALYSIS**

LAKSHYA ACADEMY[®]

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1 – Visa Shopping:

GS I

Globalization related issues

- **Context:**

- Travel agencies often arrange this arrangement for tourists, a practise known as "visa shopping," which has gained popularity in Punjab and other Indian states.

- **Does Visa Shopping Exist?**

- Getting a visa for a country that one may or may not visit within the allotted time frame is known as "visa shopping."
- This is because, even if a person has a visa for another European country, these visas can act as a gateway for them to enter their desired countries, especially those in Europe.
- People are also buying visas for countries for which they do not already have travel plans.
- Given that the application procedure frequently takes a long time or has a potential of being rejected, this is to increase the likelihood that they will eventually be granted visas for the countries of their choosing.

- **About the Schengen Visa:**

- A well-known illustration of this is the "Schengen Visa," which enables travellers to visit numerous European nations without obtaining additional documentation.
- In 1985, an accord amongst European nations established the Schengen system.
- It allows citizens of the member nations to travel freely throughout the Schengen area without passing through border restrictions.
- Travellers have unrestricted travel across more than 24 countries once they enter the Schengen Area.
- Travellers with the visa can enter the area for brief visits.

- **Legal concerns related to purchasing a visa:**

- If the tourist follows the rules and regulations of the visa application process and obtains legitimate authorization to remain in that nation, then this practise is not prohibited.
- Legal issues occur when someone applies for a visa to enter a nation but stays in another, or when they demonstrate that their intentions were to enter the country only temporarily.

- *Source → The Hindu*

2 - Invocation of the Vienna Convention by India and Canada:

GS II

International Relations/Issues

- **Context:**

- The Canadian government stated that it had recalled 41 diplomats stationed in India, together with their families, amid the ongoing dispute between India and Canada.

- **What is the Diplomatic Relations Vienna Convention?**

- A 1961 United Nations convention known as the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations established some guidelines and requirements for how nations should handle their diplomatic envoys.
- Sixty-one nations signed it in 1961.
- In order to promote the "development of friendly relations among nations," it lays up a framework for diplomatic relations between sovereign states.

- **Goal:**

- To establish appropriate lines of communication and amicable ties between nations.

- **The diplomatic immunity principle:**

- A well-known illustration of such a theory is diplomatic immunity.
- It is the right that diplomats have to be free from some laws and taxes, given to them by the nation where they are stationed.
- It was designed to allow diplomats to work without fear of intimidation or threats from their host nation.

- **Two agreements, together known as the Vienna Conventions, provide the basis for diplomatic immunity:**

- the Vienna Convention 1961
- the Convention on Consular Relations 1963

- As of right now, 113 nations have accepted the convention, indicating that they believe it ought to be enforceable against them.
- Ratification entails a nation's domestic legislature passing legislation to ratify the treaty and give it legal force.
- The Diplomatic Relations (Vienna Convention) Act of 1972 was used by India to ratify it.
- **Vienna Convention 1961 and diplomatic recall:**
- According to Article 11 of the convention, the receiving State may inform the sending State at any time and without providing an explanation for its choice that the mission chief or any other member of the diplomatic staff is persona non grata, or undesirable.
- In such a situation, the sending state will have two options: it will either recall the individual in question or stop his mission-related duties.
- The receiving State may decline to accept the individual in question as a member of the mission if the sending State neglects or refuses to fulfil its responsibilities in this regard, i.e., if it refuses to recall its diplomats.
- The receiving State may demand that a mission stay within boundaries it deems to be fair and typical in the absence of explicit agreement regarding the mission's size.
- *Source* → *The Hindu*

3 – About the Quote ‘Not everyone who wanders is lost’:

GS IV

Ethics related issues

- **Context:**
- This passage is taken from *The Lord of the Rings*, one of JRR Tolkien's immensely popular epic fantasy books.
- **This is the pertinent passage:**
- The aged and strong do not wither; everything that is gold does not dazzle; the frost does not penetrate the deep roots; and not everyone who wanders is lost.
- **What the quote means:**

- Tolkien creates sentences that have an immediate effect by using contrasted qualities and symmetry in his construction.
- It requires shifting perspectives so that one can realise that even unassuming, unassuming people can be as strong and important as "gold," and that just because someone is moving about doesn't always mean they are aimless or directionless.
- **If you are not lost, why wander?**
- People can learn valuable lessons via wandering and develop into more contributing members of society in addition to becoming better individuals.
- Curiousness can lead one to roam and discover new things about the planet and its diverse population.
- Seeing those who are different from oneself can help one develop empathy, which is a critical quality in a society where division is growing.
- In essence, wandering is moving outside of one's comfort zone and overcoming uncertainty, both of which can provide invaluable life lessons.
- Whereas staying on the safe road cannot teach resilience, self-reliance, or problem-solving skills, facing obstacles head-on and coming up with creative solutions can.
- It is customary in Indian culture as well to leave one's home and journey in pursuit of enlightenment and "gyan," with Gautam Buddha serving as the most well-known example.
- Tolkien did not advocate for aimless wandering.
- He explains that not everyone who wanders is lost when he says this.
- Only when one uses their wandering to learn something new or pursue a specific objective can it be considered fruitful.
- For instance, a UPSC candidate may feel lost at times, but their time in coaching centres and dorms is dedicated to achieving their exam-passing objective.
- One may be merely frittering away time if they mindlessly stroll around without a strategy, directions, or schedule in mind.
- **Source → *The Hindu***

4 – Need of examining the Dam Safety Act again:

GS II

Government Policies and Interventions

- **Context:**

- The Indian Dam Safety Act needs to be reexamined, experts have said.

- **Important information:**

- Approximately 80% of the nearly 6,000 big dams in India are over 25 years old and pose a safety risk.
- Late in 2021, a new Dam Safety Act (DSA) was passed.
- Recently, one of India's largest hydroelectric projects, the Teesta III dam at Chungthang, washed away by a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) at South Lhonak Lake in North Sikkim.
- Since then, reports have shown that preventive measures, risk assessments, and early warning systems—all mandated by the Act—were absent.

- **Act provisions include:**

- The Dam Safety Act stipulated important duties and required the establishment of bodies at the federal and state levels for execution.
- Rules and regulations pertaining to dam safety would be supervised by a National Committee on Dam Safety.
- State-level disagreements would be settled by a National Dam Safety Authority and implemented by them.
- At the federal level, the Central Water Commission (CWC) Chairman would be in charge of dam safety regulations.
- There will be the establishment of a State Dam Safety Organisation (SDSO) and State Committee on Dam Safety (SCDS).

- **Responsibilities of the states:**

- **Sections mandate that States:**

- Divide up dams into hazard-risk categories.
- Carry out routine inspections.

- Make plans for emergency action.
- Install flood warning systems for emergencies.
- Conduct period risk assessment studies and safety evaluations.
- The states were requested to document and report any instances of dam failure.
- **Is there any repercussion for not complying?**
- Any violation of the Act's provisions is subject to fines and/or imprisonment.
- The entity may be imprisoned for up to two years if the obstruction or unwillingness to follow instructions causes lives to be lost or puts them in immediate danger.
- For instance, the Gati Hydropower Project business was ordered by the Sikkim High Court to pay ₹70 lakh to two widowed mothers for their failure to comply with the Dam Safety Act.
- **Problems:**
- **Absence of failure reporting:**
- Up until now, no single agency was in charge of keeping track of this data, and no legal provision mandated the systematic reporting of failures.
- **No data changes:**
- The CWC maintains a list, however it is not updated frequently.
- **Issues of transparency:**
- The DSA falls short of providing incentives for transparency and does not support risk-based decision-making.
- **It is a neglectful pattern:**
- The number and severity of these catastrophes point to a pattern of disregard.
- These occurrences, which are referred to as "natural disasters," are frequent and have terrible effects on individuals.
- However, there is nothing organic about them.
- **No recurring evaluations:**
- Periodic reviews are either not carried out very regularly or, when they are, the results are not readily accessible to the general public.

- **Absence of failure analysis standardisation:**
- The Act mandates thorough safety assessments of dams, but the methods for reporting and analysing failures are not standardised.
- **Path ahead:**
- **Dam safety is the result of numerous factors:**
 - Creating and building dams with safety margins in mind,
 - Upkeep and operation in accordance with rules,
 - Capturing data in an obtainable format in real-time,
 - Predicting dangerous situations and
 - Putting emergency preparations in place, etc.
 - From the spillway capacity (which regulates the discharge of water from a reservoir) to the design of the dam, the Sikkim GLOF demonstrates inadequate compliance at every stage.
 - Risk of hazards changes instantly in response to urbanisation, climate change, and the location or usage of water by individuals or businesses.
 - New rule curves (which establish the capacity of dam reservoirs) and inundation maps are anticipated to be produced on a regular basis, both of which improve downstream area safety.
 - Every five years, spillway capacity and other parameters need to be examined.
- *Source → The Hindu*

5 – Bidenomics:

GS II

International Issues

- **Context:**
- Wide-ranging effects could result from the US election outcome, particularly in relation to "Bidenomics," or President Biden's unique approach to economic policy.
- **Important information:**

- Given that several of the largest and most powerful economies will be holding elections in 2024, it will be a hugely critical year for the global economy.
- India, Russia, the US, the UK, and the EU are a few of these.
- When combined, the GDP of these nations exceeds \$54 trillion, or around 52% of the world GDP in 2023.
- These nations and their leaders would determine not just the direction of their own economy but also the nature of governing in other nations because of their intricate linkages.
- The US election may be the most significant of them from a global perspective.

- **About Bidenomics:**

- Bidenomics is the colloquial phrase used to describe any and all policy decisions made by the Biden administration.
- Despite the fact that Biden and his group have used the word over time, they did not originate it.

- **Relationship to Reaganomics:**

- It is a response to the prevailing structure of the US economy, particularly since Republican President Ronald Reagan assumed office in 1981.
- In an effort to stimulate economic activity while decreasing the role of government in the economy, Reaganomics called for tax cuts for corporations.
- It was hoped that higher economic growth and reduced taxation would have a knock-on effect on the overall economy.

- **Ramifications:**

- The rich got richer thanks to this top-down strategy, which may not have produced the same level of general prosperity as its supporters had claimed.
- This strategy has been severely criticised by the notable increase in wealth and income disparity over the subsequent decades.

- **The importance of Bidenomics:**

- For two reasons, the departure of Biden might jolt US policy and the international system.

- **Significant exits during Trump's presidency:**

- Trump's proposals frequently represented sharp breaks from the consensus worldwide or the US's long-standing positions.
- For example, the United States withdrew from the Paris Climate Agreement during the Trump administration.

- In a similar vein, Trump believed that US trade deficits were inherently harmful, particularly when they were directed against nations like China that are steadily undermining US economic dominance.
- Thus, further globalisation suffered a severe blow.
- **Expect more reversals:**
- Following his assumption of office, Biden introduced Bidenomics, a drastic change in economic principles that has since been attempted to rewind the last fifty years.
- There could be multiple reversals if Trump wins.
- **Tenets of denialism:**
- **The three main components of Biden's economic vision are as follows:**
- Judicious public spending in the United States.
- Training and empowering employees to expand the middle class.
- Fostering competition to cut costs and support the success of small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Stated differently, Bidenomics encompasses measures that:
 - Enhance the digital and physical infrastructure of the US,
 - Lessen its reliance on competitors like China for trade,
 - Improve the possibilities and quality of life for the middle 40% and the poorest 50% of Americans
- Increase employment within its borders.
- The Biden administration has made adjustments to the tax code and spending policies in order to accomplish these objectives.
- On the one hand, it sought to increase taxes by \$737 billion.
- Conversely, it chose to allocate an additional \$500 billion in funding for sustainable energy and healthcare cost reduction.
- Additionally, it has attempted to strengthen labour unions in order to protect workers' rights and has taken a number of actions to limit the concentration of economic power in the hands of a select few.
- **The consequences of Bidenomics:**
- **Growth and recovery of GDP:**
- The United States has surpassed all other major developed nations in terms of GDP growth.
- Just 1.4% of US economic growth is below the pre-pandemic trend.

- Even a quick and sharp hike in interest rates by the US central bank has not resulted in the recession that many had predicted because of how strong the US economic recovery has been.
- **Rate of unemployment:**
 - Since Biden assumed office, the unemployment rate has significantly decreased and reached a record low.
 - There are currently two open positions for every unemployed individual in the US economy due to the economy's continued rapid creation of millions of new employment.
- **Deflation:**
 - The only significant drawback is the rise in inflation, which after the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022 reached its highest points in forty years.
 - The negative impacts of the surplus money that the government injected into the economy in an attempt to revitalise it were made worse by high energy costs and supply constraints.
- **Way Forward:**
 - With its roots in the Reagan administration, so-called neoliberal policies have resulted in growing economic disparities, which are the focus of Bidenomics.
 - However, Bidenomics goes beyond simple economics.
 - Its goals go beyond simply lowering inequality.
 - Important geopolitical objectives like opposing China and other US adversaries abroad are also its main focus.
 - Consequently, the US is choosing policies that could harm not only the impoverished within its borders (it keeps high import tariff barriers to support domestic producers and oppose China), but also the poorer countries beyond the purview of the clean energy growth story.
- **Source → *The Hindu***