DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

24 MAY 2024

1 - Multilateral Development Bank Reforms:

GS II

International Issues

- **Context:**

- The UN Secretary-General has announced that the Summit of the Future, which will take place in September 2024 at the UN General Assembly, will place a significant emphasis on reforming multilateral development banks (MDBs).

- **Multilateral Development Banks: What Are They?**

- About: Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) are global financial organisations that support economic and social development initiatives in underdeveloped nations with capital and expert guidance.
- Through joint representation on their boards and pooled resources, several nations form and capitalise on them.
- They were first implemented in the wake of World War II to stable the global financial system and reconstruct nations devastated by the conflict.
- Goal: MDBs do not aim to maximise profits for their shareholders, in contrast to commercial banks.
- Rather, they give precedence to development objectives, such eradicating extreme poverty and diminishing economic disparity.
- They frequently offer grants or loans with little or no interest to finance development-promoting projects in the fields of energy, education, infrastructure, and environmental sustainability.
- The Asian Development Bank, the African Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the World Bank Group, and the Inter-American Development Bank are the principal MDBs.

- **Which are the Main MDB-Related Challenges?**

- Resource Restrictions: MDBs' ability to lend money is frequently limited by the quantity of capital at their disposal. This may make it more difficult for them to fund significant development initiatives, particularly in light of the expanding requirements.
- Keeping Up with Global difficulties: Issues like pandemics, climate change, and technology upheaval present the world with constant, complex difficulties.
- In order to properly handle these problems, MDBs have not completely adjusted their tactics and approaches to these expanding obstacles.
- Making Decisions: Developed nations have more influence in certain MDBs due to the existing voting system.

- Developing countries are requesting more influence in decision-making so that it reflects their objectives and needs.
- There are issues with the MDB's decision-making procedures' transparency as well as the necessity of more robust accountability systems to thwart corruption and poor management.
- For instance, the United States has a sizable 15.85% of the World Bank's voting power, which gives it significant influence over the organization's choices.
- One-Size-Fits-All Approach: Because of their disparate economic structures and financial capacities, countries in the global south find it difficult to comply with one-size-fits-all lending terms from MDBs, such as uniform interest rates or payback timelines.

- **What Changes in Multilateral Development Banks Are Required?**

- Funding Climate Action: In developing nations, MDBs can be extremely helpful in raising funds for programmes aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change and adapting to them.
- This would entail setting up facilities specifically for financing climate change, providing green bonds, and constructing cutting-edge risk-sharing tools for renewable energy initiatives.
- Encouraging MDBs to enhance knowledge exchange between developing nations in order to promote knowledge sharing and South-South cooperation.
- This can entail establishing connections between nations dealing with comparable issues and encouraging cooperation on effective development plans.
- Graduation Strategies: Establishing distinct routes for middle-income nations to "graduate" from low-interest loans to market-rate funding from private sources as they grow.
- As a result, MDB resources are now available for low-income nations that still require substantial assistance.
- Increasing the effectiveness of social and environmental safeguards will help projects supported by the MDB avoid having a negative social or environmental impact and instead support inclusive sustainable development.

- ***Source → The Hindu***

2 - Getting Young People in India to Vote:

GS II

Election related issues

- **Context:**

- As India gears up for the 18th Lok Sabha elections, a concerning trend emerges, the reluctance of the country's youngest eligible voters to participate.

- **Why are India's Youngest Voters Hesitant to Participate?**

- **Historical Trends:**

- Less than 40% of voters between 18 and 19 have registered for the 2024 elections, raising concerns about youth engagement in the electoral process.
- Lowest enrollment rates in Delhi, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh.
- Despite exposure to political voices via social media, many young people seem hesitant to participate actively in voting, despite their passion for social action and protests.
- Bihar reports only 9.3 lakh enrolled out of a potential 54 lakh (17%), despite being known for its youthful population.
- Similar trends are observed in other states like Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra, where enrollment rates remain notably low.
- Lack of Political Education: Many young people feel that the education system does not adequately prepare them to understand the political process and its significance.
- Insufficient education on the importance of civic engagement and voting.
- Lack of critical thinking skills and political awareness in school curriculum.
- Absence of Youth-Centric Agendas: Political parties often fail to advocate agendas that resonate with the younger demographic, leading to a disconnection.
- Political parties may often overlook key issues that are of significant concern to the younger demographic, such as job opportunities , and affordable higher education.
- Inadequate Representation: Despite forming a significant portion of the population, youth are often underrepresented in political decision-making bodies.
- This lack of representation can lead to policies that do not adequately address the needs and concerns of young people.
- Lack of Engagement: Limited opportunities for meaningful participation in the political process.
- Disillusionment with top-down decision-making and governance structures.

- **Social Pressures:**

- Social pressures, including stereotypes and negative perceptions, can discourage youth from engaging in politics.
- Instead of focusing on meaningful agendas, there's often an emphasis on money and muscle power in politics.
- This can divert attention from genuine political activism and hinder youth participation in bringing about meaningful change.

- **Disconnect from Issues:**

- Feeling disconnected from political issues that directly affect their lives and communities.
- Perceived irrelevance of political decisions to their immediate concerns and priorities.

- **Technological Influence:**

- Over Reliance on social media for information, leading to misinformation and superficial engagement with political issues.

- **How Voter Disinterest Puts Democracy at Risk?**

- **Disenfranchisement:**

- Disenfranchisement refers to the deprivation of voting rights, often resulting from legal barriers, thereby impeding citizens' ability to participate in the democratic process.
- Many migrants face disenfranchisement due to their inability to travel to polling stations where they are registered as voters, as required by law. While it is possible to register to vote at a new location, doing so requires proof of a fixed address, which many of the poor do not have.
- Social disenfranchisement during elections persists despite constitutional guarantees (article 326) that hinder equitable participation in the electoral process.

- **Undermining Democratic Principles:**

- Voter disinterest challenges the core principle of democracy, which thrives on active citizen participation in the electoral process.
- When citizens disengage from voting, they relinquish their role in collective decision-making, eroding the foundation of democratic governance.

- **Perpetuating Exclusion:**

- Disinterested voters allow a minority to dictate the course of governance, leading to a cycle of exclusion for marginalised communities.

- Lack of voter participation perpetuates inequality and injustice, as the voices of underrepresented groups go unheard in policymaking.

- **Questioning Legitimacy:**

- Low voter turnout raises questions about the legitimacy of electoral outcomes, undermining public trust in the democratic process.
- When a significant portion of the population abstains from voting, the mandate of elected representatives may be called into question, casting doubt on the credibility of democratic institutions.

- **Way Forward:**

- Engage young voters through appealing political agendas and increased understanding of the political system.
- Advocate for increased representation of youth in political decision-making processes.
- Provide platforms for young voices to be heard and valued in societal and political discussions.
- Recognising the power of every vote is essential to breaking free from the cycle of disenfranchisement.
- Encouraging active participation in the democratic process is crucial for safeguarding the principles of democracy and ensuring inclusive governance
- Focus on states with large youth populations, addressing issues affecting young adults during political campaigns, and dispelling stereotypes about Gen Z's (generation of people born between 1997 and 2012) social awareness and engagement.
- Empower India's youth by orienting them towards the impact of their decisions, sensitising them towards local and national issues, encouraging informed choices and emphasising the consequences of not participating in the democratic process.
- Harness the potential of digitally connected and socially aware youth, and encourage activism, social responsibility, and empowerment among young voters.

- ***Source → The Hindu***

3 - Marine Cloud Brightening:

GS I

Geography related issues

- **Context:**

- Recently, scientists are testing a geoengineering technique called marine cloud brightening.

- This method involves using machines to inject tiny saltwater particles into marine stratocumulus clouds, aiming to increase their reflectivity and cool the Earth.

- **What is Marine Cloud Brightening?**

- **About:**

- Marine cloud brightening is a scientific initiative that explores how altering atmospheric particles (aerosols) can impact cloud reflectivity.
- By releasing tiny aerosol particles into the atmosphere, researchers aim to enhance cloud brightness, leading to increased sunlight reflection.
- Aerosols of the right size and concentration could significantly increase the reflectivity of specific types of clouds.
- This phenomenon is visible in satellite images of clouds brightened by ship emissions (known as "ship tracks").

- **Goals of the Marine Cloud Brightening Program:**

- Better understanding of the present-day effects of pollution aerosols on clouds.
- Investigate whether aerosol particles made from sea salt could be used to intentionally reduce near-term climate warming while greenhouse gas concentrations are brought down to safer levels.
- Understand the benefits, risks, and efficacy of the intentional use of aerosols to reduce warming through different implementations of marine cloud brightening.

- **Aerosol and Climate Effect:**

- Aerosol concentration is declining due to expanding air quality regulations, leading to fewer particles in the atmosphere.
- Most aerosol particles have a cooling effect on climate, so their reduction adds to global warming.

- Scientists estimate that aerosols from human emissions are offsetting 0.5°C of global warming, but the actual cooling effect could range from 0.2°C to 1.0°C.
- Uncertainty about aerosol effects on clouds contributes to uncertainty in future warming projections.

- **What are the Challenges and Risks Associated with MCB?**

- Technical Feasibility: MCB involves the large-scale spraying of seawater into the atmosphere at significant altitudes, which presents engineering complexities in terms of design, cost, maintenance, and operation of the spraying devices.
- Environmental Impacts: Alterations in cloud patterns and precipitation due to MCB could affect regional climate and hydrological cycles, potentially causing unintended consequences like droughts or floods.
- Changes in clouds over broad regions affect the circulation of the atmosphere, weather, and precipitation.
- Both marine cloud brightening (MCB) and pollution aerosols can change clouds, which in turn affects regions both nearby and far from where the brightening occurs.
- Ethical Issues: MCB raises ethical dilemmas about human intervention in natural processes and the governance and decision-making processes surrounding its implementation.
- Moral Hazard: MCB might lead to complacency among policymakers and the public, diminishing their commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change.

- **Conclusion:**

- Marine Cloud Brightening (MCB), a cutting-edge climate intervention, remains in its early research and development stages. Scientists are diligently exploring its feasibility, efficacy, and potential impacts.
- Sustainable human adaptation is considered the sole novel approach among various geoengineering methods to mitigate global warming and address climate change, with acknowledgment of associated risks and uncertainties
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- ***Source → The Hindu***

4 - Israel's GPS Spoofing Against Iran:

GS II

International Issues

- **Context:**

- Recent reports suggest that Israel employed Global Positioning System (GPS) spoofing techniques to protect against Iranian missile attacks, reminiscent of past instances like United States (US) actions during the Kargil war in India.

- **What is GPS Spoofing?**

- **About:**

- GPS spoofing is a technique used to manipulate the GPS signals to deceive receivers, making them believe they are at a different location than they are.
- This can involve broadcasting false GPS signals or altering genuine ones to mislead navigation systems, leading to inaccurate positioning information.
- Spoofing can be used for various purposes, including deceiving enemy navigation systems, protecting against unauthorised tracking, or creating false location data for malicious intents.

- **Implications:**

- Military Disruption: Misleading enemy navigation systems, leading to inaccurate targeting.
- Navigation Safety Risks: Potential accidents or collisions in maritime and aviation sectors.
- Critical Infrastructure Disruption: Disruption of essential services like power grids or transportation systems.
- Financial Fraud: Manipulation of location-based services for fraudulent transactions.
- National Security Threats: Deception of military or government agencies, espionage, and infiltration risks.

- **Did the US Engage in GPS Spoofing During the Kargil War?**

- According to the reports, about 25 years ago, Pakistani soldiers crossed into India and took positions in Kargil in 1999. The Indian military requested GPS data for the region but was denied by the US.
- The US initially employed a technology called "selective availability" to intentionally introduce errors into civilian GPS receivers, reserving the best accuracy for military use.

- This technology was used to "degrade" GPS accuracy for the Indian military during the Kargil war, hindering their operations.

- **India's Response:**

- India developed NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation), which was erstwhile known as the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- NavIC provides precise and secure positioning, navigation, and timing services anywhere in India and 1500 kilometres beyond India's territorial boundary.
- NavIC offers two services:
- Standard Position Service (SPS) for civilian users and Restricted Service (RS) for strategic users.
- NavIC SPS signals are interoperable with the other global navigation satellite system (GNSS) signals namely GPS, Glonass (Russia), Galileo (European Union) and BeiDou (China).

- ***Source → The Hindu***