

Intergenerational justice

- With respect to intergenerational justice, that is the idea that present generations have certain duties towards future generations, climate change raises particularly pressing issues, such as which risks those living today are allowed to impose on future generations, and how available natural resources can be used without threatening the sustainable functioning of the planet's ecosystems.
- Moreover, when one talks about the rights of future generations this inevitably seems to raise the issue of how to balance the rights' claims of those alive today against the rights' claims of future generations.
- The main focus of our research lies on the moral problems of intergenerational risk imposition and the ethical requirements of just and sustainable natural resource governance. Both issues very much affect the world in which our children, grandchildren and future generations will live.

Bail reform

- The story so far: On July 11, the Supreme Court urged the Centre to bring a new law to simplify and

streamline the process of bail, referring to the Bail Act of the U.K.

What did the court observe?

- The Supreme Court judgment issued clarifications to a 2021 ruling on the guidelines for considering bail for offenses under the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), 1973.
- The Court observed that arrest is a “draconian” measure that should be used “sparingly”.
- It held that bail continues to be the rule and jail an exception, the touchstone of Article 21, and highlighted the presumption of innocence until proven guilty.
- It said unwarranted arrests are carried out in violation of Section 41 (empowers police to arrest without a warrant) and Section 41A (deals with the procedure for appearance before police) of the CrPC.

What is the present law?

- Bail is governed by provisions in the CrPC. Offenses are categorised as bailable and non-bailable.
- Under Section 436, bail is a right in bailable offences and the police or court is bound to release the accused following the furnishing of a bail bond, with or without surety.
- For a non-bailable offence, an accused cannot claim bail as a right.

- The discretion lies with the courts. Section 437 sets out the circumstances in which courts can grant bail for non-bailable offences.
 - Investigating agencies and officers have to comply with Sections 41 and 41A, it said, adding that action will follow any dereliction of duty.
 - It ruled that non-compliance with Sections 41 and 41A at the time of arrest will entitle the accused to bail.
 - Section 41 deals with arrest in a cognisable offence where punishment is imprisonment for a term which may be less than seven years. Section 41A relates to a notice of appearance before a policeman in cases where the arrest is not required.
 - Notably, a police officer is required to record reasons for arresting or not arresting the person.
 - The Bench directed State Governments and Union Territories to facilitate standing orders for the procedure to be followed under Sections 41 and 41A to avoid unwarranted arrests.
- What are some of the guidelines from the Court?**
- Stressing the need to ensure due procedure for arrests and a time limit for disposal of bail pleas, the Court asked the Centre to consider introducing a “Bail Act”.
 - Bail pleas have to be disposed of within two weeks except when provisions mandate otherwise.
 - A plea for anticipatory bail has to be decided within six weeks.
 - Another guideline is that courts need not insist on a formal bail application in some stages, such as proceedings under Sections 88, 170, 204 and 209 of CrPC.
 - This means that the accused can be granted bail on the court’s own discretion in some situations.
 - Bail can also be granted when a person is produced before court by the police (Section 170) or when the court issues process either a summons on a complaint, or a warrant after the police files a charge sheet (Sec.204) or when a case is committed by a magistrate for trial to a sessions court (Sec. 209).

THE HINDU

Climate resilience

- In the absence of COVID-19, climate change induced disasters would have been India’s biggest red alert in recent years.
- The heatwave that scorched Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and New Delhi this year; torrential

downpours in south India in 2021; and the super cyclone Amphan that battered West Bengal and Odisha in 2020 are symbols of man-made climate change.

- Temperatures over the Indian Ocean have risen by over 1°C since the 1950s, increasing extreme weather events.
- India is the fourth worst-hit in climate migration.
- Heat waves in India have claimed an estimated 17,000 lives since the 1970s. Labour losses from rising heat, by one estimate, could reach ₹1.6 lakh crore annually if global warming exceeds 2°C, with India among the hardest hit.
- India needs a two-part approach: one, to adapt to climate impacts by building resilience against weather extremes, and two, to mitigate environmental destruction to prevent climate change from becoming more lethal.
- Heatwaves are aggravated by deforestation and land degradation, which also exacerbate fires.
- Agriculture, being water-intensive, does not do well in heat wave-prone areas.
- A solution is to promote agricultural practices which are not water-intensive and to support afforestation that has a salutary effect on warming.
- Financial transfers can be targeted to help farmer's plant trees and buy equipment for example, for drip irrigation that reduces heavy water usage. Insurance schemes can transfer some of the risks of extreme heat faced by industrial, construction and agricultural workers to insurers.
- Climate-resilient agriculture calls for diversification for example, the cultivation of multiple crops on the same farm. There will need to be more localised food production.
- Weather-based crop insurance would help.
- Floods and storms are worsened by vast sea ingress and coastline erosion in the low lying areas in the south.
- Southern States need stronger guidelines to avoid construction in locations with drainages.
- It is vital to map flood-risk zones to manage vulnerable regions.
- Environment Impact Assessments must be mandatory for commercial projects.
- Kerala has some flood-resistant houses constructed on pillars.
- Communities can build round-shaped houses, considering

optimum aerodynamic orientation to reduce the strength of the winds.

- Roofs with multiple slopes can stand well in strong winds.
- Arresting runaway climate change.
- Leading emitters, including India, must move away from fossil fuels. But climate mitigation everywhere is painfully slow, because of a lack of political will
- Meanwhile, a big part of climate action lies in protecting and expanding forest coverage.
- Management of dams can exacerbate glacier lake outbursts and floods.
- Nearly 295 dams in India are more than 100 years old and need repairs.
- In stemming landslides in Uttarakhand, regulations must stop the building of dams on steep slopes and eco-fragile areas, as well as the dynamiting of hills, sand mining, and quarrying.
- India's share in disaster management should be raised to 2.5% of GDP.
- States can tap into the Union government's resources, financial and technological, from early warning meteorological systems to centrally sponsored climate schemes.

- MGNREGA funds can be used for climate adaptation in agriculture, waste management and livelihoods.
- States could make compensatory payment to local self-government resources being used for climate adaptation.

THE HINDU

SCO

- The story so far: Iran and Belarus could soon become the newest members of the China and Russia-backed Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

What is the SCO?

- Founded in June 2001, it was built on the 'Shanghai Five', the grouping which consisted of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.
- They came together in the post-Soviet era in 1996, in order to work on regional security, reduction of border troops and terrorism.
- They endowed particular focus on 'conflict resolution', given its early success between China and Russia, and then within the Central Asian Republics.
- Some of their prominent outcomes in this arena entail an 'Agreement on Confidence-Building in the Military

Field Along the Border Areas’ (in 1996) between China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which led to an agreement on the mutual reduction of military forces on their common borders in 1997.

- It would also pitch in to help the Central Asian countries resolve some of their boundary disputes.
- In 2001, the ‘Shanghai Five’ inducted Uzbekistan into its fold and named it the SCO, outlining its principles in a charter that promoted what was called the “Shanghai spirit” of cooperation.
- The charter, adopted in St. Petersburg in 2002, enlists its main goals as strengthening mutual trust and neighbourliness among the member states; promoting their effective cooperation in politics, trade, economy, research and technology, and culture.
- Its focus areas include education, energy, transport, tourism and environmental protection.
- It also calls for joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region; and the establishment of a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order.
- The precise assertion, combined with some of the member states’

profiles, of building a “new international political and economic order” has often led to it being placed as a counter to treaties and groupings of the West, particularly North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

- The grouping comprises eight member states India, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The SCO also has four observer states Afghanistan, Iran, Belarus and Mongolia of which Iran and Belarus are now moving towards full membership.

How is this relevant to India?

- India acquired the observer status in the grouping in 2005 and was admitted as a full member in 2017.
- Through the years, the SCO hosts have encouraged members to use the platform to discuss differences with other members on the sidelines.
- It was on such an occasion that Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a bilateral meeting with former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 2015 in Ufa, and Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar negotiated a five-point agreement with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on the

sidelines of the Moscow conference in 2020.

What is the organisational structure?

- The SCO secretariat has two permanent bodies the SCO Secretariat based in Beijing and the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) based in Tashkent.
- Other than this, the grouping consists of the Heads of State Council (HSC), the Heads of Government Council (HGC) and the Foreign Ministers Council.
- The HSC is the supreme decision-making body of the organisation. It meets annually to adopt decisions and guidelines on all important matters relevant to the organisation.
- The HGC (mainly including Prime Ministers) also meets annually to zero in on the organization's priority areas and multilateral cooperation strategy.
- It also endeavors to resolve present economic and cooperation issues alongside approving the organization's annual budget

Is it about countering the West?

- The Iranian leadership has often stressed that the country must "look to the East".

- This is essential not only to resist its economic isolation (by addressing the banking and trade problems on account of U.S. sanctions) from the West, but also find strategic allies that would help it to reach a new agreement on the nuclear program.
- In other words, using its ties with China and Russia as a leverage against the West.
- Additionally, it would help it strengthen its involvement in Asia. The same premise applies for Belarus, which lent its support to Russia for its actions in Ukraine.

THE HINDU

Extended fund facility

What is the EFF designed for?

- The EFF was established to provide assistance to countries experiencing serious payment imbalances because of structural impediments or slow growth and an inherently weak balance-of-payments position.
- An EFF provides support for comprehensive programs including the policies needed to correct structural imbalances over an extended period.
- Longer engagement and repayment periods

- As structural reforms to correct deep-rooted weaknesses often take time to implement and bear fruit, EFF engagement and repayment cover longer periods than most Fund arrangements.
- Extended arrangements are typically approved for periods of three years, but may be approved for periods as long as 4 years to implement deep and sustained structural reforms.
- Strong focus on structural adjustment
- When a country borrows from the IMF, it commits to undertake policies to overcome economic and structural problems.
- Under an EFF, these commitments, including specific conditions, are expected to have a strong focus on structural reforms to address institutional or economic weaknesses, in addition to policies to maintain macroeconomic stability.

How much can a country borrow and what is the cost?

- Normal access. The EFF is one of several lending facilities under the IMF's General Resource Account (GRA). Access to GRA resources is subject to the normal limit of 145 percent annually of a country's IMF quota [1] (temporarily increased to 245 percent of quota through end

2021 as part of the Fund's COVID-19 response),

- Exceptional access. Access above normal limits is decided on a case-by-case basis under the IMF's Exceptional Access policy.

THE HINDU

SC on minority status

- Every person in India can be a minority in one State or the other. Minority status of religious and linguistic communities is "State-dependent", the Supreme Court said
- But the court indicated that a religious or linguistic community which is a minority in a particular State, can inherently claim protection and the right to administer and run its own educational institutions under Articles 29 and 30 of the Constitution.
- The court asked whether a specific notification was required.

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