

Carbon pricing

- Three ways of pricing carbon are the establishment of a carbon tax domestically, as in Korea and Singapore; the use of an emissions trading system (ETS), as in the European Union (EU) and China; and the application of an import tariff on the carbon content, as the EU is proposing.



- Among the three ways of pricing, India could find a carbon tax appealing as it can directly discourage fossil fuels while raising revenues which can be invested in cleaner sources of energy or used to protect vulnerable consumers.
- It could replace the more inefficient scheme of petroleum taxes which are not directly aimed at emissions.
- A high enough carbon tax across China, the U.S., India, Russia, and Japan alone (more than 60% of global effluents), with complementary actions, could have

a notable effect on global effluents and warming.

- It could also pave the way to seeing decarbonization as a winning development formula. As carbon pricing gains acceptance, the first movers will be the most competitive.

THE HINDU

Scotland v/s UK

- British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak rejected a call from the new First Minister of Scotland and leader of the governing Scottish National Party (SNP), Humza Yousaf, to hold a second referendum for Scotland's independence from the U.K. In the 1970s, after oil was discovered in the North Sea, the SNP ran a popular campaign in line with its central ideology of independence.



- With the iconic slogan “It’s Scotland’s Oil”, the party argued that if not for Britain’s control over reserved matters, proceeds from the

oil would have benefited the Scottish economy.

- A formal national referendum for independence in Scotland was held in 2014 which saw an 85% turnout.
- However, amid concerns over how an independent Scotland would actually function without British assistance, pro-independence voters lost to those who voted to stay.

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Defamation and Freedom of Speech

- First, it held that the right to “reputation” was protected under Article 21 of the Constitution which guarantees “life and personal liberty”. Now, Article 21 only protects the individual’s life and liberty against interference by the state.
- Notwithstanding this minor textual hurdle, the Supreme Court declared that the right to free speech under Article 19(1)(a) had to be “balanced” against the right to “reputation” under Article 21.
- The court never explained how this balancing exercise was to be carried out, but simply asserted that since reputation could not be “crucified” at the altar of free speech, criminal defamation was constitutional.
- The two moves that the court made first, to elevate “reputation” to the level of a fundamental right, and second, to have it prevail over free speech have no basis in either the text or the structure of the Constitution.
- Over the last 30 years, along with its PIL jurisdiction, the court has radically expanded the scope of the right to “life and personal liberty” under Article 21. Article 21 has been held to include the right to sleep, and the right to a pollution-free environment, among other things.
- For the most part, the court has used this expanded definition to force the state to undertake various “social justice” and welfare measures for the benefit of citizens.
- It held that criminal defamation law protected the feeling of fraternity or solidarity between members of society.
- While this may sound fair enough, there is a slight problem. “Constitutional fraternity” is not a part of Article 19(2) of the Constitution, which specifically limits the circumstances under which the state can restrict speech to eight enumerated categories.
- It is also nowhere in the fundamental rights chapter of the Constitution, so the question of “balancing” free speech against constitutional fraternity does not arise.
- The word “fraternity” is mentioned in the Constitution’s preamble, as an aspirational goal for the newly

independent Indian Republic, alongside “liberty” and “equality” the three great slogans that originated with the French Revolution. “

- And it was always meant to be that an abstract concept and a rallying cry, signifying a dream and a utopia.
- It was never meant to become a tool to broaden the scope of restrictions upon fundamental rights.
- Apart from its broad, almost undefinable nature, there is something particularly unfortunate about using “fraternity” to cut down civil rights.
- The existence of “fraternity” alongside liberty and equality is due to the realization that in a deeply unequal society, guaranteeing civil rights (“liberty”) and equality before the law is not enough.
- As B.R. Ambedkar observed, in his last speech to the Constituent Assembly: “Liberty cannot be divorced from equality, equality cannot be divorced from liberty.
- Nor can liberty and equality be divorced from fraternity.
- Without equality, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would kill individual initiative.
- Without fraternity, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many.

- Without fraternity, liberty, and equality could not become a natural course of things.
- It would require a constable to enforce them.” Fraternity, then, was meant to complement civil rights, not destroy them.

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Finland to Join NATO

- Finland is to join NATO on Tuesday after Turkey ratified its membership last week, lifting the last hurdle to the membership for the Nordic nation that shares a long border with Russia.

THE HINDU

ICE memory

- Italian, French, and Norwegian researchers have set up camp in Norway’s Svalbard archipelago in what they called a race against time to preserve. Crucial ice records for analyzing past environmental conditions.
- They will extract ice in a series of tubes from 125 meters below the surface, containing frozen geochemical traces dating back three centuries.
- Analysis of chemicals in deep “ice cores” provides scientists with valuable data about past environmental conditions.
- But experts warn that water from melting ice is leaking down and

altering the geochemical records
preserved in ancient ice beneath.

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