



THE DESERVING INDIA

WEEKLY EDITORIALS

23-09-2024 to 28-09-2024



23-09-2024

National Security STRATEGY

“

The editorial argues that India urgently needs a comprehensive National Security Strategy (NSS) to address its internal and external challenges.

”

India's national security is under scrutiny as global tensions rise, with conflicts like Ukraine and Gaza and economic uncertainties affecting growth. For the U.S., NSS focuses on projecting power, both domestically and internationally, aligning values with strategy. The U.K. emphasizes defending global interests through integrated military capabilities. France, facing challenges from Russia, integrates European unity into its defense outlook.

India lacks a formal strategy, and its budget speeches do not address direct external threats or provide a cohesive approach to combining defense, economy, and technological development. With multilateral alignments, such as the Quad and BRICS, India must navigate a complex geopolitical landscape, where economic ties conflict with security goals, especially in balancing relations with powers like the U.S., Russia, and China.

An effective NSS should clearly define national priorities, include transparency in budget allocations, and address weaknesses in defense and internal governance. India's defense budget needs transparency, and its strategy must cover all dimensions, from diplomacy to technological innovation. While India cannot act as an independent global force, its NSS should focus on long-term strategic resilience and improving coordination across sectors like defense, finance, and foreign policy.

24-09-2024

India's Defence EXPORTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW



“

India needs to amend its laws to align with international humanitarian law for arms exports.

”

India's Supreme Court dismissed a plea to stop exporting defence equipment to Israel, despite concerns about possible war crimes in Gaza. Several countries, like the Netherlands and the UK, have halted such exports, citing compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL). India, however, lacks a legal framework to assess IHL compliance when exporting arms.

India's domestic laws, such as the Foreign Trade Act (FTA) and the Weapons of Mass Destruction Act (WMDA), regulate defence exports but do not explicitly address IHL compliance. Unlike the UK or the European Union, India is not obligated to review whether the importing nation complies with IHL, leaving a legal gap.

International law, particularly the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), bars the export of conventional arms if there is knowledge they could be used for war crimes. Although India is not a signatory to the ATT, some of its principles reflect customary international law. Additionally, the Geneva Conventions obligate India to prevent weapons from being used to violate IHL.

To uphold its credibility as a major defence exporter, India should amend the WMDA and FTA to explicitly assess the humanitarian law compliance of importing countries. This legal amendment would help India strengthen its international standing and ensure responsible defence exports.

25-09-2024

National Credit FRAMEWORK FOR HOLISTIC EDUCATION

“ **The National Credit Framework (NCrF) promotes flexibility, vocational training, and multidisciplinary learning in higher education institutions to better align with societal, technological, and economic nee** ”

The National Credit Framework (NCrF), derived from India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, provides a flexible structure for higher education institutions (HEIs) to offer credits across various disciplines, including vocational and skill-based education. The NCrF aims to shift the outdated, colonial mindset of rigid academic structures and introduce a broader-based, more adaptable system. This framework gives students the flexibility to earn credits through classroom activities, research, internships, apprenticeships, and vocational training, enabling them to gain a more holistic education.

HEIs adopting the NCrF would help bridge the skill gap in India's job market, aligning curricula with technological and industrial changes. By incorporating both vocational skills and academic knowledge, institutions can prepare students for both employment and entrepreneurship, moving away from the traditional role of universities as mere centers of knowledge. The framework also emphasizes continuous curriculum adaptation to stay relevant to evolving societal and technological needs.

Critics who resist the framework are seen as clinging to outdated educational models, which may stagnate growth. The NCrF fosters an inclusive, democratized education system that balances academic knowledge with practical skills, helping students increase their social mobility and employability, making HEIs centers of both learning and skill development.

26-09-2024

The Drawbacks of 'One Nation One Election'

“ The article critiques the impracticality and challenges of implementing simultaneous elections across India. ”

The idea of simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha, State Assemblies, and local bodies was revived by the Prime Minister recently. A high-level committee recommended this approach, which was endorsed in the ruling party's manifesto. However, the author points out significant hurdles. The first step of the plan is to hold the Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections together within 100 days, which requires a Constitutional amendment.

One major challenge is achieving the special majority of 362 members to pass the bill in the Parliament, given that the ruling National Democratic Alliance lacks such numbers. Moreover, synchronizing election terms could undermine India's federal structure. The frequent dissolution of assemblies would disturb governance, and fixed election cycles would weaken the flexibility that individual states currently possess.

The estimated savings of ₹466 crore by holding fewer elections are minimal, compared to larger public expenditures. Additionally, the article highlights logistical difficulties, such as requiring more election personnel and resources.

Lastly, the article argues that while political parties cite distractions from governance due to frequent elections, the real issue lies in accountability. Elections are crucial for ensuring government responsibility, and the idea of 'one nation, one election' overlooks this critical function of democracy.



Rethinking India's Pension System

“ India’s pension system requires reform to balance market reliance and welfare provisions, ensuring security for retirees.”

India's pension system has evolved over time through the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), New Pension Scheme (NPS), and the proposed Unified Pension Scheme (UPS). While OPS offered a defined benefit system, guaranteeing income based on the last drawn salary, NPS introduced a market-based approach where retirees' pensions fluctuate based on investments. The NPS shifts risks to individuals, leaving retirees vulnerable to market volatility. With rising concerns about market-driven pensions and the erosion of welfare provisions globally, a return to a welfare-based approach is being reconsidered. The UPS aims to address these issues by balancing market reliance and providing more state-backed security. It calls for a universal pension structure that ensures a minimum guaranteed income, akin to OPS, while including informal workers, who lack sufficient pension coverage. A major concern remains government contribution, as the UPS needs to reduce reliance on market fluctuations and expand its inclusivity to all citizens. The broader welfare model seen in other nations and the global shift towards guaranteed social protection is influencing the ongoing debate on India's pension reforms.



28-09-2024



The Self-Respect Movement's Legacy

“ The editorial discusses the centenary of the Self-Respect Movement, its evolution, impact on social justice, and relevance against contemporary challenges in Indian society. ”

The Self-Respect Movement, celebrating its hundredth year, aimed to empower individuals to challenge hierarchical structures in society, promote rational thinking, subaltern politics, and women's rights. While often associated with the Dravidian Movement, the two are distinct, yet collectively contribute to Tamil Nadu's political discourse and resist majoritarian ideologies. Originating in 1925, under the leadership of E.V. Ramasamy (Periyar), the movement emphasized gender equality, eradication of caste-based oppression, and self-respect, leading to significant reforms like marriage rights and anti-religious stances.

Over the decades, the movement catalyzed radical social reforms such as the abolition of child marriage, the advocacy for property rights, and inter-caste marriages, challenging traditional norms. Although the movement was not opposed to religion, it resisted the caste structure perpetuated by religious practices, advocating for freedom from oppressive customs. The movement's ability to address contemporary issues like gender justice and cultural homogenization remains vital.

In the modern context, the rise of right-wing ideologies threatens the movement's core values by promoting a singular cultural identity. This makes the Self-Respect Movement's principles crucial for combating discrimination and fostering social justice. As it enters its second century, engaging youth and responding to new social challenges will be critical for its sustained relevance and impact.