<u>24th April 2025 Daily Current Affairs</u>

Section 69 of the BNS is Redundant

Context and Legislative Overview

Section 69 of the *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita* (BNS) introduces a separate offence for engaging in sexual relations under a false promise of marriage, assigning it a punishment lighter than that for rape. While the Indian Penal Code (IPC) lacked a dedicated provision for such acts, courts previously addressed these cases under Section 375 IPC (now Section 63 BNS).

Relevance: GS Paper 2 – Judiciary, Social Justice

Judicial Precedents and Interpretation

Courts have already established legal safeguards to prevent misuse of rape laws in consensual relationships that are later claimed to involve deception:

- **Intention Test**: In *Anurag Soni v. State of Chhattisgarh* (2019), the Supreme Court held that if a man intended to marry initially but later changed his mind, it does not constitute rape.

- **Nature of Relationship**: In *Rajnish Singh @ Soni v. State of U.P.* (2025), a prolonged consensual relationship followed by betrayal was not seen as rape based on a false promise.

- **Marital Status and Consent**: In *Abhishek Arjariya v. State of M.P.* (2025), the court ruled that if the woman was already married, her consent obtained under a misconception of marriage was invalid.

Criticism of Section 69 BNS

The provision criminalizes sexual activity obtained through "deceitful means" or a "false promise to marry." It also covers misleading claims related to employment, promotion, or concealed identity.

Overlap and Redundancy

- Section 28 of the BNS already defines consent and includes "misconception of fact," which would encompass false promises of marriage.

- As a result, such acts can already be prosecuted as rape under Section 63 BNS.

- Therefore, Section 69 merely duplicates existing provisions, but with a lighter punishment—diminishing the gravity of the offence.

Constitutional and Legal Concerns

- Section 63 does not exempt acts covered under Section 69, leading to potential constitutional contradictions.

- Section 69 lacks a *non-obstante* clause, making it vulnerable to being invalidated under Article 14 of the Constitution (right to equality).

- This could create ambiguity in legal interpretation and loopholes for actual offenders.

Administrative Consequences

- Courts frequently dismiss false FIRs based on consistent judicial principles.

- Police are instructed to carry out initial inquiries before filing charges.

- This approach ensures genuine protection against false accusations, reduces harassment of innocent men, and conserves judicial resources.

Conclusion

Since the fundamental definitions of rape and consent remain unchanged in the BNS, Section 69 seems legally unnecessary. It introduces constitutional and interpretational challenges and thus appears to be redundant and difficult to justify.

IMF Lowers India's Growth Forecast for FY 2025–26

Context: IMF Growth Forecast

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has revised India's projected GDP growth for the fiscal year 2025–26 to **6.2%**, a reduction of **0.3 percentage points** from its earlier estimate of 6.5%. Simultaneously, the global growth outlook for the same period has been downgraded to **2.8%**, marking a **0.5 percentage point** drop.

Relevance: GS Paper 3 – Indian Economy

Reasons for the Revision

- Heightened **global trade tensions** have eroded investor confidence and disrupted export performance.

- Increasing **geopolitical risks**, along with financial market instability, have added to the uncertainty.

- **Tighter monetary policies** in advanced economies are restricting capital inflows and dampening investments.

Impacts on India

- **Export sector risks**: India's participation in global supply chains may be adversely affected.

- **Investment slowdown**: Domestic private sector may hold back on new investments due to rising uncertainty.

- **Employment challenges**: Reduced growth may hamper job creation, especially in informal sectors.

Silver Linings

- Despite the downward revision, India remains one of the **fastest-growing major economies** globally.

- Strong **domestic consumption** and continued investment in infrastructure could help cushion the impact.

- Scope remains for **targeted policy measures** or fiscal interventions if economic conditions worsen further.

Global Economic Context

The IMF's April 2025 *World Economic Outlook* outlines a more uncertain global economic landscape, triggered largely by recent U.S. policies.

Key Drivers of Global Downgrade

- **New U.S. Tariff Policy**: President Donald Trump's April 2 tariffs have escalated trade tensions.

- Rising **global policy uncertainty** is further clouding investment and growth prospects.

Global Forecasts

- **2025**: Growth reduced to **2.8%** (down 0.5 points).

- **2026**: Growth forecast lowered slightly to **3.0%**.

- The IMF has termed this a **"critical juncture"** for the global economy.

India-Specific Outlook

- **FY 2025–26**: Growth now estimated at **6.2%**, still supported by **rural private consumption** despite global headwinds.
- **FY 2026–27**: Growth expected at **6.3%**.
- **Inflation projections**: 4.2% (2025–26) and 4.1% (2026–27).

Structural Economic Shifts

- According to the IMF's Chief Economist, the world is entering a **new economic phase**.
- U.S. tariffs have reached **century-high levels**, impacting global trade dynamics.
- These protectionist trends and rising unpredictability are reshaping the global economic order.

Risks and Inflationary Concerns

- **Risk of global economic downturn** has jumped from **17% to 30%**.
- While the IMF stops short of predicting a recession, it warns of **broad-based slowdowns** in 2025–26.
- **Disinflation** has slowed, due to trade disruptions and uncertainty over investments.
- **Global inflation** has been adjusted slightly upward by **0.1%**.

Conclusion

The IMF's revised outlook reflects rising global fragility, warning that ongoing trade disputes and policy unpredictability could derail recovery. While India remains relatively well-positioned, its deep trade linkages make it vulnerable to external economic shocks.

Parliament's Supremacy Reaffirmed by Vice-President Dhankhar

Context

Vice-President **Jagdeep Dhankhar** has reiterated that the Indian Constitution does not recognize any institution as superior to Parliament. His comments came in response to criticism of his stance on a recent Supreme Court ruling.

Relevance: GS Paper 2 – Polity & Constitution

Background of the Dispute

A **Supreme Court judgment (April 8, 2025)** directed that:

- The **President must act within three months** on Bills passed by State Legislatures and referred by Governors.
- **Governors cannot indefinitely withhold assent** to Bills.

Dhankhar termed this directive **judicial overreach**, suggesting it intrudes into the domain of the Executive.

Dhankhar's Arguments

- Parliament is the **supreme body** under the Constitution.
- The Constitution does not place **any institution, including the Judiciary**, above the Legislature.
- Constitutional authorities must perform **meaningful roles**, not act as ceremonial figures.

Judiciary vs. Legislature – A Clash of Interpretation

- **Supreme Court's View**: Aimed at maintaining **checks and balances**, ensuring that Executive powers are exercised within constitutional limits.
- **Vice-President's View**: Emphasizes the **sovereignty of Parliament** and the democratic legitimacy of elected lawmakers.

Constitutional and Political Significance

- Highlights ongoing **tensions between the Judiciary and Legislature** regarding the scope of their powers.
- Raises vital questions about **separation of powers**, **federalism**, and **institutional accountability**.
- May reignite debates around **judicial activism** versus **parliamentary supremacy**.

Symbolic Messaging

Dhankhar invoked the metaphor of every citizen being an **"atom in democracy,"** with elections reflecting atomic power — reinforcing the idea that democratic legitimacy flows from **popular representation in Parliament**.

AI in Weather Forecasting: Promising Potential Amid Challenges

Core Insight

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are being actively explored to enhance weather predictions in India, particularly for extreme events such as heatwaves, floods, and heavy rainfall. While traditional forecasting depends on physical equations, AI/ML techniques analyze large datasets to identify patterns without explicit instructions. However, their effectiveness is limited by two key obstacles: lack of high-quality data and a shortage of experts skilled in both AI and climate science.

Relevance: GS Paper 3 (Technology & Disaster Management)

Contrasting AI/ML and Conventional Forecasting Methods

- **Traditional Approaches**: Rely on physical laws like thermodynamics and fluid dynamics and require significant computational power.
- **AI/ML Models**: Analyze data to detect complex, non-linear patterns, offering new insights beyond traditional modeling capabilities.

India's Recent Moves

- **Mission Mausam (Sept 2024)**: A ₹2,000 crore initiative to boost AI-based weather prediction capabilities.
- **AI/ML Centre by the Ministry of Earth Sciences**: Focuses on improving short-term rainfall predictions, urban weather modeling, and nowcasting using Doppler radar.
- **Academic Research**: Joint efforts by IIT-Delhi and IIIT-Delhi show ML models predicting monsoon patterns with greater accuracy than conventional systems (61.9% success rate over 20 years).

Key Challenges

1. **Data Issues**
    - High-resolution, clean datasets are essential but often compromised due to faulty sensors or poor coverage in remote areas.
    - While data volume has increased significantly, concerns remain over its consistency and standardization.
2. **Skill Gaps**
    - There is a shortage of professionals who understand both AI and climate systems.

    - The multidisciplinary nature of climate science demands integrated expertise, which is currently lacking.

    - There's a call for specialized institutions dedicated to AI-climate interface research.

3. **Trust and Transparency**

    - AI models function as “black boxes,” making it hard to trace the reasoning behind forecasts.

    - In contrast, physics-based models offer clear reasoning and systematic error correction.

    - Experts advocate for hybrid models that combine AI/ML strengths with physical modeling transparency.

Global Outlook

- At the 2024 Heidelberg Forum, it was noted that while ML is improving weather forecasts, its application to long-term climate modeling is still limited due to the chaotic nature of climate systems.

- Future models must adapt to climate shifts, something current ML models—trained on historical data—struggle to handle.

Use in Predicting Extreme Weather

- AI shows promise in forecasting severe weather like cyclones and cloudbursts.

- A February 2025 *Nature Communications* study recognized AI’s value in risk communication and attribution but cautioned against over-reliance due to issues of interpretability and trust.

Path Ahead

- Develop models tailored to India’s regional and climatic diversity.

- Encourage interdisciplinary research and improve AI literacy among climate scientists.

- Invest in data infrastructure, build collaborative institutions, and train a skilled workforce.

- Foster development of hybrid forecasting frameworks combining AI/ML and traditional science.