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Headlines:

- India's Problem of Overtreatment and Overmedication
- Spiralling Food Prices: Rising Inflation and Rural Distress
- Green Crackers: Limited Gains in Tackling Air and Noise Pollution
- India-U.S. Relations: Strategic Partnership amid Growing Frictions
- India-Canada Relations: Resetting Ties through Trade and Strategic Cooperation



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1. India's Problem of Overtreatment and Overmedication

GS Paper – II: Governance

Why in News?

- Growing concerns over unnecessary medical tests, excessive prescriptions and avoidable procedures have highlighted the need for ethical, evidence-based and patient-centred healthcare in India.

Key Issues and Causes

- **Unnecessary testing:** Routine health-check packages may identify incidental abnormalities, triggering further investigations, anxiety and avoidable treatment.
- **Fragmented healthcare:** Multiple specialist consultations without coordinated care can lead to duplicate prescriptions, drug interactions and excessive medication.
- **Commercialisation of healthcare:** Fee-for-service models may incentivise higher volumes of tests and procedures rather than appropriate care.
- **Insurance-related incentives:** Insurance coverage may encourage low-value interventions, although coverage alone does not necessarily cause overtreatment.
- **Patient expectations and defensive medicine:** Demand for immediate solutions and fear of litigation may encourage unnecessary investigations.

Impact on India

- **Economic burden:** Increases out-of-pocket expenditure and can push vulnerable households into financial distress.
- **Health risks:** Unnecessary procedures, adverse drug reactions and polypharmacy can cause avoidable harm, particularly among older adults.
- **Health-system inefficiency:** Resources are diverted from essential primary care, affordable medicines and underserved populations.
- **Ethical concerns:** Challenges the principles of patient autonomy, beneficence and non-maleficence.

Government Initiatives and Way Forward

- **Strengthen primary healthcare:** Improve Ayushman Arogya Mandirs and establish the family physician as the first point of contact.
- **Rational prescribing:** Introduce periodic medication reviews, prescription review dates and supervised deprescribing wherever clinically appropriate.
- **Evidence-based care:** ICMR and professional medical societies should develop India-specific recommendations to reduce low-value tests and treatments.
- **Patient awareness:** Encourage patients to ask about the necessity, benefits, risks and alternatives before undergoing tests or procedures.

- **Reform incentives:** Align healthcare payments and insurance mechanisms with treatment outcomes, quality and continuity of care.

India must address the dual burden of overtreatment and undertreatment through accessible primary healthcare, ethical medical practice and evidence-based decision-making. Better medicine requires not only timely intervention but also restraint when treatment offers little benefit.

2. Spiralling Food Prices: Rising Inflation and Rural Distress

GS – III: Economy

Why in News?

- The article reports that September retail inflation reached 5.54%, while rural food inflation touched 8.06%, intensifying pressure on rural households. These figures should be verified against official CPI data for the relevant year before publication.

Key Drivers of Inflation

- **Food inflation:** Rising prices of essential vegetables, particularly onions, garlic and ginger, increase household expenditure and reflect supply-side constraints.
- **Climate risks:** Deficient monsoon rainfall, extreme temperatures and El Niño-related uncertainties can disrupt agricultural output and food supply.
- **Cost-push inflation:** Higher crude oil prices increase fuel, fertiliser, transportation and distribution costs, raising production expenses across sectors.
- **Imported inflation:** Rupee depreciation increases the domestic cost of dollar-denominated crude oil and other imports.
- **Geopolitical risks:** Conflicts in West Asia can disrupt energy supplies and intensify global commodity-price volatility.

Impact on the Indian Economy

- **Rural distress:** Rising food expenditure reduces real purchasing power, particularly among low-income households and agricultural labourers.
- **Nutritional insecurity:** Families may reduce consumption of protein-rich foods, affecting dietary diversity and nutritional outcomes.
- **Monetary policy dilemma:** Persistent inflation may prompt tighter monetary policy, potentially moderating investment and economic growth.
- **External-sector pressure:** Expensive oil imports increase the import bill and intensify pressure on the rupee.

Way Forward

- **Supply-side management:** Improve cold storage, warehousing, logistics and agricultural market integration.
- **Price stabilisation:** Strengthen buffer stocks, timely releases and open-market interventions for essential commodities.
- **Monetary policy:** The RBI's flexible inflation-targeting framework should anchor inflation expectations while accounting for supply-side shocks.
- **Cooperative federalism:** Improve price forecasting and coordination between the Centre and States.
- **Energy security:** Diversify crude oil sources and accelerate renewable energy adoption.

India needs coordinated monetary, fiscal and supply-side measures to control inflation, protect rural purchasing power and ensure nutritional security without compromising economic growth.

3. Green Crackers: Limited Gains in Tackling Air and Noise Pollution

GS – III: Environment and pollution control

Why in News?

- Concerns over the effectiveness of green crackers have renewed debate over firecracker regulation, particularly in Delhi-NCR, where winter pollution is aggravated by multiple emission sources.

What Are Green Crackers?

- Green crackers are fireworks designed to reduce emissions compared with conventional crackers. CSIR–National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI) has developed emission-reduction formulations and testing protocols.
- **Scientific limitation:** Green crackers are not pollution-free. Emission reductions depend on the pollutant measured, testing conditions and actual usage; increased consumption can offset potential benefits.

Key Issues

- **Air pollution:** Firecrackers release particulate matter and other pollutants, causing short-term spikes in PM2.5 and PM10 concentrations.
- **Noise pollution:** Loud explosions disturb sleep and can adversely affect children, older adults and animals.
- **Enforcement gaps:** Counterfeit certification, QR-code misuse and unauthorised manufacturing undermine compliance.

- **Multiple sources:** Vehicles, construction dust, industrial emissions, stubble burning and unfavourable meteorological conditions also contribute to winter pollution.

Legal and Institutional Framework

- **Supreme Court:** Arjun Gopal v. Union of India (2018) addressed firecracker pollution through restrictions and regulatory directions, balancing public health, environmental protection, cultural practices and livelihoods.
- **Article 21:** The right to life has been judicially interpreted to include protection of health and a clean environment.
- **CSIR-NEERI and CAQM:** Support green-cracker assessment and coordinate air-quality management across Delhi-NCR, respectively.

Way Forward

- Strengthen independent laboratory testing, certification and supply-chain traceability.
- Impose effective penalties for counterfeit products and unauthorised sales.
- Promote public awareness and integrate firecracker regulation with year-round emission-control measures.

Green crackers alone cannot resolve air pollution. Scientific validation, strict enforcement and public participation are essential for protecting environmental and public health.

4. India-U.S. Relations: Strategic Partnership amid Growing Frictions

GS – II: IR

Why in News?

- The reported U.S. suspension of PERM processing for eight technology companies on October 8, 2026, including major Indian IT firms, has raised concerns over skilled-worker mobility and bilateral economic relations. PERM is a labour-certification process linked to certain employment-based green-card applications, not the H-1B visa programme itself.

Major Areas of Friction

- **Immigration:** Restrictions on employment-based permanent residency may create uncertainty for Indian IT companies and professionals.
- **Trade disputes:** Differences over tariffs, agricultural and dairy market access, and India's Russian oil imports complicate trade negotiations.
- **Defence cooperation:** Limited technology transfer and delays in critical components highlight supply-chain vulnerabilities.

- **Regional security:** Differences over Pakistan and regional conflicts create diplomatic sensitivities.
- **Emerging technologies:** iCET and INDUS-X offer opportunities in AI, semiconductors, defence innovation and advanced manufacturing.

Significance for India

- **Economic interests:** The U.S. is a major market for Indian services, technology exports and skilled professionals.
- **Indo-Pacific strategy:** Cooperation with the U.S. and engagement through the Quad support India's vision of a free, open and stable Indo-Pacific.
- **Strategic autonomy:** India must balance bilateral cooperation with independent foreign-policy priorities.
- **National security:** Technology transfer and domestic manufacturing under Atmanirbhar Bharat can reduce dependence on foreign defence suppliers.

Way Forward

- Resolve trade and immigration concerns through sustained diplomatic dialogue.
- Prioritise technology transfer, defence co-production and resilient supply chains.
- Strengthen cooperation through the Quad while maintaining diversified international partnerships.

Despite bilateral disagreements, economic, institutional and security cooperation remains valuable. India should protect its strategic autonomy while pursuing a stable, mutually beneficial partnership with the U.S.

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5. India–Canada Relations: Resetting Ties through Trade and Strategic Cooperation

GS – II: IR

Why in News?



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney reportedly discussed strengthening bilateral relations and concluding the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) amid renewed diplomatic engagement.

Key Developments

- **Diplomatic reset:** Both countries are seeking to rebuild trust following tensions arising from the 2023 killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar and the subsequent diplomatic dispute.
- **Trade negotiations:** The proposed CEPA aims to expand market access, investment and economic cooperation. The reported ambition is to double bilateral trade from approximately \$23 billion in 2025 to \$46 billion by 2030.
- **Strategic cooperation:** Energy, technology, defence and security are potential areas for renewed engagement.
- **Security dialogue:** Discussions on law enforcement indicate efforts to address bilateral concerns through institutional channels.
- **People-to-people ties:** Educational exchanges, skilled professionals and the Indian diaspora provide a foundation for stronger relations.

Significance for India

- **Economic opportunities:** Greater market access can support Indian exports, investment and employment.
- **Energy and critical minerals:** Canada offers potential opportunities for cooperation in uranium, critical minerals and energy resources, subject to commercial feasibility and applicable agreements.
- **Strategic engagement:** Stable relations can strengthen India's engagement with G7 economies and support cooperation in the wider Indo-Pacific.

Challenges

- Persistent diplomatic mistrust and security concerns may impede progress.
- Differences over sovereignty, law enforcement and market access require sensitive, sustained negotiations.

Way Forward

- Institutionalise diplomatic and security dialogue based on mutual trust and respect for sovereignty.
- Establish regular review mechanisms to monitor trade negotiations and security commitments.
- Translate political assurances into measurable outcomes in trade, energy and technology.

India-Canada relations require a balanced approach combining economic cooperation with credible security arrangements. Sustained dialogue and reciprocal commitments can help rebuild trust and create a stable, mutually beneficial partnership.

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