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TODAY'S ANALYSIS

(19 November 2024)

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- PM MODI'S VISIT TO NIGERIA
- SNAP POLLS IN GERMANY
- BODOLAND MAHOTSAV
- MCQs



PM MODI'S VISIT TO NIGERIA



Why is this Visit Significant?

- First Visit in 17 Years: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Nigeria is the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 17 years.
- This shows the importance of renewing and enhancing India-Nigeria ties, given
 Nigeria's status as Africa's largest democracy and economy.

KEY BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS

India-Nigeria Strategic Partnership: The discussions between PM Modi and President
 Bola Ahmed Tinubu focused on strengthening the India-Nigeria Strategic Partnership,
 which is critical for addressing global and regional challenges in various sectors:



- Defense and Security: The leaders addressed security issues, particularly counterterrorism, maritime piracy, and separatism.
- Nigeria faces significant challenges in the Gulf of Guinea, where piracy has been a
 major concern. Both sides agreed to enhance defense and security cooperation.
- Technology and Innovation: India offered assistance for Nigeria's digital transformation, particularly in Information and Communication Technology (ICT).
- health and Education: India expressed willingness to support Nigeria in healthcare, including medicine supply and capacity-building for Nigerian healthcare professionals.
- Both sides also agreed to facilitate student exchanges and academic collaborations.
- Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs): After their discussions, PM Modi and President
 Tinubu signed three MoUs:
 - Cultural Exchange: To promote mutual understanding and strengthen people-topeople ties.
 - Cooperation in Customs: To streamline customs procedures, making trade more efficient between the two countries.



- Survey Cooperation: To improve cooperation in surveying and geographical data,
 assisting in infrastructure development and planning.
- Humanitarian Aid: In light of the severe flooding in Nigeria, PM Modi announced that
 India would send 20 tons of humanitarian aid to assist with flood relief efforts.
- PM Modi also expressed condolences for the loss of life and devastation caused by the floods, underscoring India's solidarity with Nigeria.

Economic Cooperation and Trade

- Bilateral Trade: In 2022, the trade between India and Nigeria amounted to USD 15 billion.
- India's key exports to Nigeria include pharmaceuticals, automobiles, machinery, and chemicals, while Nigeria exports oil and gas products to India.
- Energy Cooperation: Nigeria, as Africa's largest oil producer, and India, with its substantial energy needs, are natural partners for energy cooperation.
- India has shown interest in investing in Nigeria's oil and gas sectors and has been a key partner in oil exploration in the country.
- Investment Opportunities: India is exploring investment opportunities in Nigeria, especially in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and renewable energy. Indian companies are well-positioned to bring technology and investment to these sectors.

Global and Regional Issues Discussed

- ECOWAS: PM Modi acknowledged the important role of President Tinubu as Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).
- He praised Nigeria's contribution to regional stability and cooperation in West Africa.
- Climate Change and Green Initiatives: PM Modi invited Nigeria to join India's climate action initiatives, such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the International Big
 Cat Alliance, which focus on renewable energy and biodiversity conservation.
- G20 Summit: The leaders also discussed the significance of the African Union's permanent membership in the G20, a key outcome of India's 2023 G20 presidency.

 PM Modi emphasized the importance of empowering developing countries in global decision-making forums.

Recognition and Diplomatic Engagement

- Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger (GCON): In recognition of PM Modi's
 efforts to strengthen bilateral relations, Nigeria conferred its highest national honor,
 the Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger (GCON), on PM Modi.
- This is the first time the honor has been awarded to a foreign leader since 1969.





- PM Modi dedicated this honor to the 140 crore people of India and the enduring friendship between the two countries.
- Indian Diaspora in Nigeria: PM Modi addressed the Indian community in Abuja,
 emphasizing the shared democratic values between India and Nigeria.
- The Indian diaspora in Nigeria, around 60,000 strong, plays a crucial role in strengthening bilateral ties and fostering people-to-people connections.

India's Development Assistance to Nigeria

- Concessional Loans: India has extended a concessional loan worth USD 100 million to Nigeria, aimed at supporting key infrastructure and development projects.
- Capacity-Building: India has been providing training programs to Nigerian professionals
 to help build local capacities, contributing to Nigeria's development in sectors such as
 healthcare, education, and technology.

The Role of India and Nigeria in the Global South

Voice of the Global South: PM Modi and President Tinubu discussed their shared vision
to advocate for the Global South in international forums such as the United Nations
and World Trade Organization (WTO). India's leadership in promoting the concerns of
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developing nations, particularly through initiatives like the Voice of the Global South Summit, received strong support from Nigeria.

 Common Development Agenda: Both countries emphasized the need for sustainable development, poverty reduction, and climate change mitigation, with a focus on inclusive and equitable development for the Global South.



SNAP POLLS IN GERMANY



- On November 6, 2024, Germany's ruling coalition, made up of the Social Democrats
 (SPD), Greens, and Free Democrats (FDP), fell apart after Chancellor Olaf Scholz fired
 his Finance Minister, Christian Lindner (FDP).
- After this, a no-confidence vote will take place on December 16, 2024.
- Since Scholz is expected to lose without support from the FDP, snap elections are
 planned for February 23, 2025, earlier than the original election date in September 2025.

THE CURRENT COALITION

Germany's coalition government, formed after the 2021 federal elections, was a threeparty alliance:

- 1. Social Democratic Party (SPD) Center-left.
- 2. **The Greens** Left-wing.
- 3. Free Democratic Party (FDP) Center-right, fiscally conservative.

WHAT CAUSED THE COLLAPSE OF THE COALITION?

The current coalition has been struggling due to **conflicts over important issues**, especially on money matters:

- Disagreements Over Money and Spending:
 - The SPD (Social Democrats) and Greens wanted to increase government spending to help with things like climate change and defense.
 - However, Christian Lindner (FDP) opposed this, pushing for strict rules on borrowing money to keep government debt low.
- Tax Cuts and Budget Cuts:
 - The FDP also wanted tax cuts for the rich and spending cuts in other areas, which the SPD and Greens didn't agree with.

- These disagreements over money created tension within the coalition.
- Big Budget Problems:
 - The government was already facing a multi-billion euro gap in the national budget,
 which made the situation even worse.

WHAT IS GERMANY'S DEBT BRAKE RULE?

Germany has a debt brake rule that limits how much money the government can borrow. The government can only borrow up to 0.35% of GDP (the total value of goods and services in the country). This rule is in the German Constitution and was created to avoid too much borrowing, which could lead to large debts in the future.

- Exceptions to the Debt Brake: In cases of emergencies, like natural disasters or major crises, the German Parliament (Bundestag) can temporarily suspend the debt brake.
- For example, it was used during the COVID-19 pandemic and Ukraine war, which
 caused an energy crisis in Germany.

THE BUDGET CRISIS

To get around the debt brake rule, the government used some special **off-budget funds** to finance important projects. These include:

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- Climate and transformation fund
- Economic stabilization fund
- Federal armed forces fund

These funds helped pay for things like climate change programs and defense spending. But a court ruling in November 2023 said that it was unconstitutional to move 60 billion euros of unused pandemic debt into one of these funds. This decision created a big budget problem and made the coalition even more unstable.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- No-Confidence Vote and Snap Elections:
 - The no-confidence vote will happen on December 16, 2024.
 - Chancellor Olaf Scholz is expected to lose this vote without the support of the FDP, which has left the coalition.
 - As a result, snap elections will be held on February 23, 2025, earlier than the original elections planned for September 2025.
- Rising Opposition:
 - The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Christian Social Union (CSU), which are part of the main opposition, are now leading in the polls.

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- A recent survey shows that the CDU/CSU alliance has 33% of the vote, while the SPD is at only 16%.
- The Far-Right Party (AfD):
 - o The AfD (Alternative for Germany), a far-right party, has also been growing in popularity.
 - It is now at 17% in the polls, higher than the SPD.
 - The AfD recently won a state election in Thuringia, marking its first win since the
 Nazi era.
 - The AfD has been criticized for having links to neo-Nazi groups and for pushing antiimmigrant policies.
 - There are debates in Germany about whether the AfD should be banned, but no action has been taken so far.



BODOLAND MAHOTSAV



Key Details:

- Event: 1st Bodoland Mahotsav (Festival)
- Inauguration by: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi
- Date: 15th November 2024 (6:30 PM)
- Venue: SAI Indira Gandhi Sports Complex, New Delhi
- **Duration**: Two-day event (15th & 16th November 2024)
- Theme: "Peace and Harmony for Prosperous Bharat"

PURPOSE OF THE EVENT

- The Bodoland Mahotsav is a cultural, linguistic, and literary festival aimed at promoting peace, harmony, and prosperity through the celebration of Bodo culture and heritage.
- It is a major step towards promoting unity among the Bodo people and other indigenous communities of the North Eastern region of India, particularly in Assam,
 West Bengal, Nepal, and bordering areas.
- The festival highlights the role of cultural and linguistic diversity in the development of a vibrant Bodo society.

OBJECTIVES

- Promoting Peace and Unity: The event marks the ongoing journey of peace in the Bodoland region, particularly after the Bodo Peace Accord of 2020, which resolved decades of conflict and violence.
- The agreement, achieved under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, is evidence of the
 commitment towards peacebuilding in the region and serves as a model for
 resolving similar issues in other areas.
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- Cultural and Linguistic Integration: The festival will emphasize the importance of preserving and promoting the Bodo language, traditions, and customs, while also focusing on the cultural contributions of other communities from the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).
- It is an opportunity for the Bodo people, spread across Assam, West Bengal, Nepal,
 and other international border areas, to showcase their rich heritage.
- Promoting Bodo Society's Development: The Mahotsov aims to create a more integrated Bodo society by celebrating cultural diversity, fostering educational advancements, and promoting tourism, particularly through themes such as ecological biodiversity and the tourism potential of the Bodoland region.

SIGNIFICANCE

- Cultural Revival: The event will showcase Bodo literature, language, traditions, and customs through various sessions and discussions.
- Special focus will be on how Bodo culture contributes to India's overall heritage.
- Education Focus: One of the key discussions will address the National Education
 Policy (NEP) 2020 and its role in promoting mother-tongue instruction, particularly in Bodo and other indigenous languages.



• **Tourism Development**: The festival will also explore opportunities for promoting tourism in the Bodoland region, which is known for its scenic beauty, cultural richness, and ecological diversity.

THE BODO TRIBE

- Historical Background: The Bodo tribe is one of the earliest known ethnic groups to inhabit Assam, historically linked to the Indo-Mongoloid or Indo-Tibetan family.
- The Bodos have distinctive linguistic and cultural traits that differentiate them from other ethnic groups in India.
- Geographic Distribution: Bodo-speaking communities are found across Assam (especially in the Brahmaputra Valley), West Bengal, and Nepal.
- In Assam, they are known as the **Bodos** or **Boros**, and in Lower Assam and West Bengal,
 they are referred to as **Meches**.
- Language: The Bodo language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family, which is spoken by a large number of people in the northeastern region, including in parts of Assam, West Bengal, and Myanmar (Burma).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REGION

- Socio-political Impact: The Bodo Peace Accord (2020) was a landmark agreement that
 addressed the long-standing demands of the Bodo people, which included autonomy,
 recognition of the Bodo language, and a separate administrative body.
- The successful implementation of the peace agreement has played a crucial role in reducing insurgency and fostering a stable political environment in the region.
- Economic Development: The festival can also have significant economic benefits for the region by boosting cultural tourism, enhancing the region's profile, and bringing attention to its untapped potential in terms of biodiversity, natural resources, and cultural heritage.

MCQs

- 1. Consider the following statements wrt India & Nigeria and mark the correct one:
 - 1. India & Nigeria established Strategic Partnership in 2024.
 - 2. Nigeria is Africa's largest economy.
 - (A) Only 1
 - (B) Only 2
 - (C) Both 1 & 2
 - (D) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans. (B)

- 2. Which of these statements about Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger (GCON) is/are true?
 - 1. It is the highest national honour of Nigeria.
 - 2. Queen Elizabeth was the first foreign national to receive this award.
 - (A) Only 1
 - (B) Only 2
 - (C) Both 1 & 2
 - (D) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans. (C)

- 3. Recently the debt brake rule of Germany was in news. What does it mean?
 - (A) It means the government cannot take loan during emergency years.
 - (B) It means the government cannot take loans beyond 0.35% of the GDP.
 - (C) It means the govt. Cannot take loans beyond 35% of the GDP.
 - (D) None of the above.

Ans. (B)

- 4. Consider the following statements wrt Bodoland Mahotsav and mark the correct one:
 - 1. In 2024, the first ever Bodoland Mahotsav was celebrated.
 - 2. It aims to promote peace & harmony on one side and cultural & linguistic integration on the other side.
 - (A) Only 1
 - (B) Only 2
 - (C) Both 1 & 2
 - (D) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans. (C)