



Target4IAS
Together We Can

Weekly Current Affairs

(The Hindu+IE+PIB)

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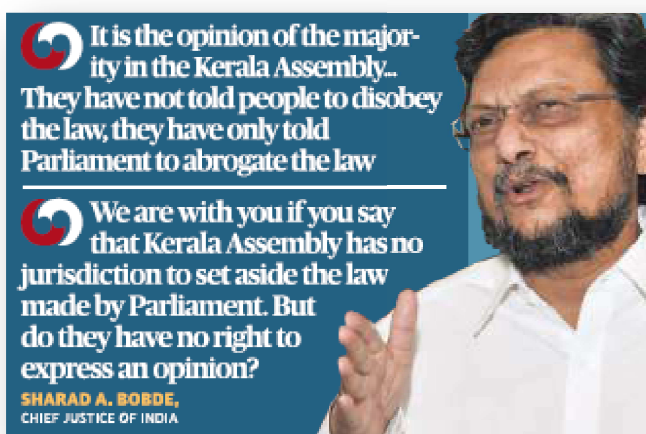
State resolutions on Central laws are fine: Supreme Court

In news:

The court was hearing a PIL filed by a Rajasthan based NGO, Samta Andolan Samiti, that said State Assemblies, such as of Rajasthan, Kerala, Punjab and West Bengal, have no business passing resolutions against Central laws that come under the Union List of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.

Key Takeaways:

- No harm in State Legislative Assemblies, such as those in Kerala and West Bengal, passing resolutions against Central laws like the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act or the new agriculture laws.
- These resolutions are merely “opinions” of the majority members of a Legislative Assembly and do not have the force of law.
- They have not told people to disobey the law; they have only told Parliament to abrogate the law.



Global hunger Index

In news

Union Minister of State for Agriculture Parshottam Rupala, in the Rajya Sabha, questioned the methodology and data accuracy of GHI report 2020 and asks why India was ranked below countries such as Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

What is GHI Index

It is a tool for comprehensively measuring and tracking hunger at global, regional, and national levels. It is calculated on the basis of four indicators — undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting, child mortality.

Child wasting, the share of children under the age of five who are wasted, that is, who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute under nutrition; child stunting, children under the age

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of five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition; and child mortality, the mortality rate of children under the age of five.

Published by: Welthungerhilfe (lately in partnerships with Concern Worldwide) since 2000.

Key Takeaways GHI report 2020

- India ranked 94 among 107 countries and is in the 'serious' hunger category
- 14% of India's population is undernourished.
- Reason behind the low ranking -> Poor implementation processes and lack of effective monitoring in tackling malnutrition and poor performance by large states.

Helium

In news:

India imports the majority of helium for its domestic needs. However, the U.S appears to cut off exports of helium from 2021. Hence, the Indian industry stands to lose out heavily.

About Helium

- It is a colourless, odourless, tasteless, non-toxic, inert and a noble gas.
- The liquified Helium is obtained by cooling the gas to -270 degrees Celsius.

Applications of Helium:

- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans,
- rockets
- nuclear reactors
- Leak detection
- The density of helium is lighter than air. Therefore, helium is used as lift gas for balloons, meteorological balloons and airships

Potential helium sources in India

- India's Rajmahal volcanic basin in Jharkhand is the storehouse of helium trapped for billions of years.
- At present, India is mapping the Rajmahal basin extensively for future exploration and harnessing of helium.

Note: Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre (VECC) project of Kolkata.

Gandhi Peace Prize

In news

- Gandhi Peace Prize for the Year 2019 and 2020 were announced.
- **The Gandhi Peace Prize for 2019:** (Late) His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said of Oman.
- **Gandhi Peace Prize for 2020** Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

About Gandhi Peace Prize:

- It is an annual award instituted in 1995 on the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- It is given to individuals and institutions for their contributions towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian methods.
- The Jury for Gandhi Peace Prize is chaired by Prime Minister, and comprises of two ex-officio members, the Chief Justice of India and Leader of the single largest Opposition Party in Lok Sabha.

Draft Plan for District-Wise Export Promotion

In news

The government has readied a draft district-wise export promotion plan for 451 districts after identifying such products and services which have export potential

Key takeaways

- Aiming for double-digit export growth from 500 districts over 3-5 years.
- While foreign trade constitutes 45% of India's GDP, most export promotion efforts are driven by the Centre.
- States are asked to prepare an annual 'export ranking index' of districts.
- The district-specific approach involves the States in identifying potential export sectors and the logistics bottlenecks to be fixed.
- In the initial phase, products and services with export potential in each district have been identified and an institutional mechanism of State and District Export Promotion Committees (SEPC) is being created, with an action plan to grow exports from each district.
- District Export Promotion Committees have been notified in the districts of all the States except West Bengal.

Patriotism can't be revealed by a gross physical act: HC

In news

The court set aside a Judicial Magistrate's order to register a criminal case against certain persons in Coimbatore, who organized and participated in a Christmas celebration, where a cake containing an icing of the national flag was cut and consumed.

Key takeaways:

- A patriot is not one who only raises the flag, symbolizes his national pride and wears it on his sleeve, but also a person who bats for good governance.
- The symbolization of national pride is not synonymous with patriotism, just like how cutting a cake is not unpatriotic. Rig Veda asks us to let noble thoughts come to us from every side, which reflects the Indian ethos i.e., tolerance."
- Patriotism could not be determined just by a gross physical act. The intention behind such act would be the true test though it could be possible that sometimes the very act itself manifests the intention behind it
- Act of cutting a cake with an icing of the Indian flag would not amount to an offence under Section 2 of the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act of 1971.

Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971:

- It penalises the desecration of or any insult to the national symbols like National Flag, National Anthem, Indian Map as well as the contempt of the Constitution of India.
- **Section 2 of the Act says** "Whoever in any public place or in any other place within public view burns, mutilates, defaces, defiles, disfigures, destroys, tramples upon or 1[otherwise shows disrespect to or brings] into contempt (whether by words, either spoken or written, or by acts) the Indian National Flag or the Constitution of India or any part thereof, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both."

Sixth Schedule

In news:

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has informed the Lok Sabha that "presently, there is no proposal to implement panchayat system in Sixth Schedule areas of Assam"

Efforts in this regard- Constitution (125th Amendment) Bill, 2019:

- Introduced in the Rajya Sabha on February 6, 2019, the Bill provides for elected village municipal councils.

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- The Bill that is still active proposes that **the State Election Commissions would hold elections to the autonomous councils, village and municipal councils.**

About sixth Schedule

- It protects tribal populations and provides autonomy to the communities through creation of autonomous development councils that can frame laws on land, public health, agriculture and others.
- As of now, 10 autonomous councils exist in **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.**
- This special provision is provided under **Article 244(2) and Article 275(1) of the Constitution.**

National Policy on the Voluntary Sector

In news

A NITI Aayog group is working on a national policy to regulate civil society organizations. It is constituted in September last year, for Formulation of New National Policy for Voluntary Sector, chaired by Niti Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar.

Key takeaways:

- **There is no regulatory mechanism at the national level to regulate the functioning of the civil society.** NITI Aayog want to come up with a national-level framework to self-regulate or regulate civil society organisations who violate the government mandate and to bring some standard among them.
- **There are more than 32 lakh civil society organisations registered under different Acts but the actual contributors to societal development are very few**
- Although a 2007 policy by the erstwhile Planning Commission is in place. However several violations of the new regulatory additions, including to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), led to this call for a revamped policy
- Niti Aayog launched a portal – **DARPAN** – **in 2016** for mandatory registration of civil society organizations and insists on GIS mapping of NGOs' projects and is working on **DARPAN 2.0.**
- Last year, Parliament passed **new restrictions under the FCRA, reducing foreign funds cap to 20 per cent among other measures.**
- The framework will ensure the Indian government abides by the guidelines of the FATF, a global body aimed at preventing money laundering and terrorist financing.

Ken Betwa Link Project

In news

The governments of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have signed an agreement that nudges forward a long stalled multicore, controversial project to link the Ken and the Betwa rivers and

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irrigate the water deficient Bundelkhand region, spread over both States, and provide electricity.

Key takeaways:

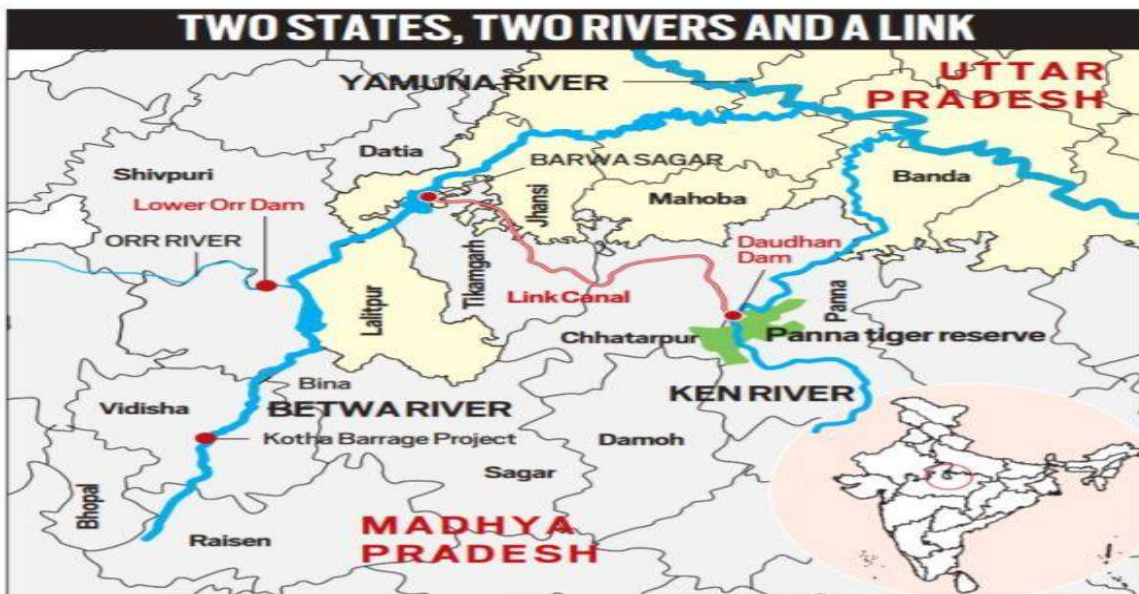
- The Ken-Betwa Link Project is the first project under the National Perspective Plan for interlinking of rivers. The Ken-Betwa Link Project has two phases-
- Phase I- involves building a 77metre tall and a 2 kmwide **Dhaudhan dam** and a 230 km canal.
- Phase-II, three components — Lower Orr dam, Bina complex project and Kotha barrage will be constructed.
- Ken and Betwa rivers originate in MP and are the **tributaries of Yamuna**.

Benefits of interlinking:

- Enhances water and food security.
- Proper utilisation of water.
- Reducing the excessive dependence on groundwater in the Bundelkhand region.
- Curbing the recurring droughts.
- It will produce 75 MW of electricity along with providing drinking water to 13 lakh people in the two states.

Environmental concerns:

- The project will partly submerge the Panna Tiger Reserve in M.P. and affect the habitat of vultures and jackals.
- Estimated 4.6 million trees will be cut down for the project which will adversely affect the rain in the already dry Bundelkhand region.





Ad-hoc judges:

In News:

The Supreme Court has suggested the appointment of retired judges as ad-hoc judges to deal with the pendency of cases in High Courts. The court said retired judges could be chosen on the basis of their expertise in a particular field of dispute and allowed to retire once the pendency in that zone of law was over.

Constitutional Provisions in this regard:

- The appointment of ad-hoc judges was provided for in the Constitution under **Article 224A**.
- Under the Article, the Chief Justice of a High Court for any State can request a person to act as a judge of the High Court. The conditions are
 - For this, the prior consent of the president is required.
 - The person should have held the office of judge of that court or of any other High Court.
- Such a judge is entitled to allowances as determined by the President.

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- He will also enjoy all the jurisdiction, powers and privileges of a judge of that high court. But, he will not otherwise be deemed to be a judge of that high court.

Next CJI recommended

In news

Present Chief Justice of India has recommended Justice N.V. Ramana, the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court, as the next CJI

Key takeaways

- Justice Ramana is now set to take over as the 48th CJI from April 24.
- He will be the CJI till August 26, 2022.

Appointment of CJI

Article 124: Manner of appointing judges to the SC.

- There is no specific provision in the Constitution for appointing the Chief Justice.
- CJI should be the senior most judge of the SC.
- Law Minister has to seek recommendation of the outgoing CJI for appointment of new CJI at an appropriate time.

Article 124(2): Consultation with other Judges to be made In case of doubt about the fitness of the senior-most Judge to hold office of CJI. Law Minister then puts up recommendation to Prime Minister (PM) who will advise the President on appointment.

Way to the top
A brief profile of **Justice N.V. Ramana**

- Aug. 27, 1957:** Born in an agricultural family in Ponnavaaram village in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh
- Feb. 10, 1983:** Enrolled as an advocate
- June 27, 2000:** Appointed permanent judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court
- March 10-May 20, 2013:** Functioned as the Acting Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court
- Sept. 2, 2013:** Elevated as the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court
- Feb. 17, 2014:** Elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court

- He has practised in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh, Central and Andhra Pradesh Administrative Tribunals and the Supreme Court in civil, criminal, constitutional, labour, service and election matters
- Justice Ramana specialises in constitutional, criminal, service and inter State river Laws

Suez Canal:

In news

A 400 m long “Ever Given vessel” blocked the Suez Canal. According to Egypt’s Suez Canal Authority(SCA) ship was caught in a galeforce sandstorm, common in Egypt’s Sinai desert at this time of the year. It was “mainly due to the lack of visibility due to the weather conditions, which affected the control” of the ship.

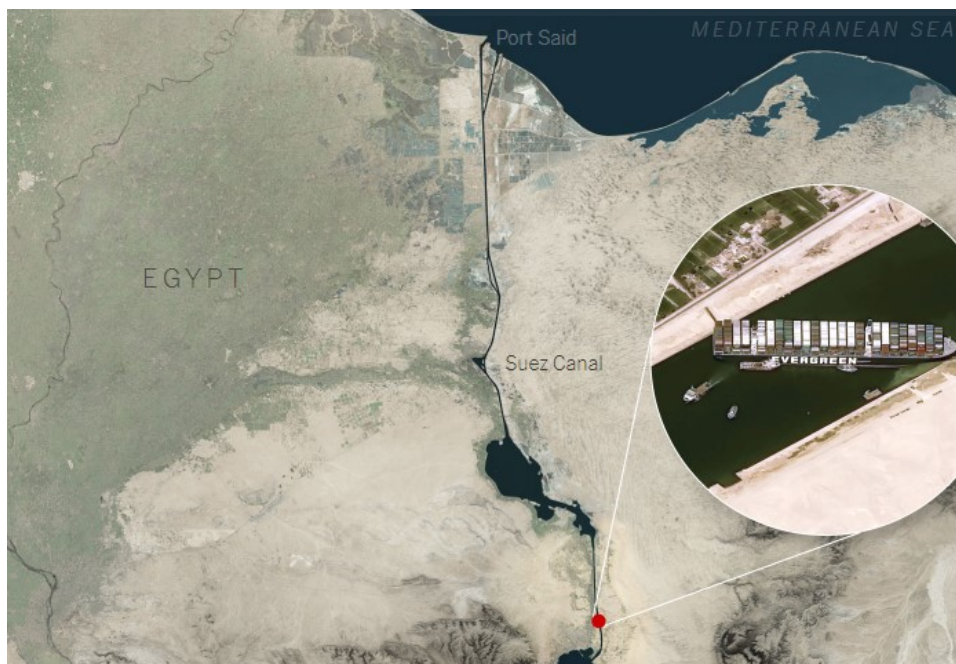
About Suez Canal:

The canal is in Egypt, connecting Port Said on the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean via the Egyptian city of Suez on the Red Sea. The canal is the world’s longest without locks, which connect bodies of water at differing altitudes.

Importance of Suez canal:

- The passage enables more direct shipping between Europe and Asia, eliminating the need to circumnavigate Africa and cutting voyage times by days or weeks.
- The first canal that directly links the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea.
- Suez Canal is one of the world’s busiest and important trade route. About 12% of global trade passes through it.

Alternative Route: An alternative route to the Suez Canal is through the Cape of Good Hope on the southern tip of Africa. But this route takes two weeks longer than the Suez Canal Route.



National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development

In news

The Rajya Sabha cleared the legislation to establish the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NBFID), which was announced in the Budget speech as the principal development financial institution (DFIs) for infrastructure financing. This includes the development of bonds and derivatives markets which are necessary for infrastructure financing.

Key takeaways:

- It will be **set up as a corporate statutory body** with an authorized share **capital of Rs 1 lakh crore** with financial and developmental objectives.
- It will invite more investment, both foreign and domestic, to the country.
- The new institution will provide financial assistance to infrastructure projects located in India, or partly in India and partly outside India.
- NBFID to borrow or raise money by way of loans or otherwise, both in rupees and foreign currencies.
- It will be answerable to Parliament and will be managed by Government appointed chairman & board nominated professionals.

Development Financial Institution (DFIs)

DFIs are set up to provide long-term finance for those segments of economy where risks involved are beyond acceptable limits of commercial banks and other financial institutions. DFIs do not accept deposits from people. Instead, they source funds from market, government and multi-lateral institutions. They are often supported by government guarantees.