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MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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THE HINDU Page 5

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO STATES
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

Kerala seeks Sitharaman's help to tackle fund crunch

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM


K.N. Balagopal

Kerala has approached the Centre seeking urgent measures, including expansion of its borrowing limit, a special assistance of ₹3,224.61 crore for capital investment, and payment of arrears for tackling "resource constraints" faced by it.

The State has also repeated its demand that the Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation period be extended by five more years at least till taxation measures stabilise revenue streams.

Calling on Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi on Monday, Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal presented the State's demands in a detailed representation, and sought her "urgent intervention" on them. Open market borrowing limit should be upped by at least one percentage of the GSDP as resource constraints are impeding infrastructure development and welfare programmes, Mr. Balagopal said.

Further, Mr. Balagopal urged the Centre to add the unutilised portion of the 2021-22 borrowing quota, amounting to ₹1,619 crore, to the quota for the current fiscal.

He also sought the Centre's nod for additional borrowing to the tune of ₹4,060 crore stating that the conditions set for it have been complied with. Although Kerala furnished the compliance report in October, the Centre is yet to give its consent, Mr. Balagopal said.

The Centre is yet to release the pending GST compensation for June amounting to ₹1,548 crore, Mr. Balagopal said. He urged the Centre to reimburse the State ₹750.93 crore spent in connection with the implementation of the seventh UGC pay revision.

Context: Kerala has approached the Centre seeking urgent measures, including expansion of its borrowing limit, a special assistance of ₹3,224.61 crore for capital investment, and payment of arrears for tackling "resource constraints" faced by it.

Scheme Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment

- **About:** In 2022, the Government of India has launched a **Scheme Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment for 2022-23.**
- **Nodal Ministry**: An initiative of the Department of Expenditure, **Minister of Finance**.
- **Key features**: Under this Scheme, financial assistance is provided to the States Governments in the form of 50-year interest free loan for capital investment projects.
    - For the 2022-23 Financial Year (FY) a total financial assistance of **Rs 1 lakh crore would be given to states.**
    - The loan under the scheme would be over and above the **normal borrowing ceiling allowed to states for FY 2022-23** and should be spent in the same year.
- **Mandatory Conditions:**
    - **Compliance with the official name:** Full compliance with the official name of all **Centrally Sponsored Schemes** (correct translation to local language is permissible).
    - **For new and ongoing projects:** Funds provided to the States under the Scheme shall be **used for new and ongoing projects, for long term benefits to the State.**
        - States may submit projects of higher value than the funds allocated, indicating their preference/priority.
    - **Exclusion**: Project with capital outlay of **less than Rs. 5 crore (Rs. 2 crore for North Eastern States)** and repair and maintenance projects irrespective of capital outlay will **not be considered under the Scheme.**
- **7 Parts of the scheme:**
    - Projects included in the PM Gati Shakti Master Plan.
    - PM Gati Shakti related expenditure.
    - PM Gram Sadak Yojana.
    - Digitization of the economy.
    - Completion of Optical Fiber Cable network.
    - Urban Reforms including creation of Sponge Cities.
    - Disinvestment and monetization.

BUSINESS STANDARD

Page 1

EXERCISE SEA VIGIL-2022

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Internal Security)

Third, and the biggest, edition of coastal defence exercise from today

AJAI SHUKLA
New Delhi, 14 November



The Navy and Coast Guard will conduct the third, and largest, edition of the comprehensive coastal defence Exercise Sea Vigil-2022 on Tuesday and Wednesday.

On the fateful evening of November 26, 2008, 10 heavily armed Lashkar-e-Toiba terrorists sailed a small boat right up to the shore of Mumbai City. Getting off the boat in the vicinity of their targets, they shot dead 166 people and wounded more than 300.

A stunned Navy ordered to ensure this never happens again, joined hands with the Coast Guard and the police forces of coastal states to put in place a coastal defence structure that watched over and guarded the approaches to India's 7,516-kilometre coastline. In 2018, for the first time, the Navy conceptualised a national-level coastal defence exercise to validate the various measures that had been instituted for enhancing maritime security since 26/11. The third edition of that exercise will begin on Tuesday.

"Coastal security being a major sub-set of coastal defence, the concept of 'Exercise Sea Vigil' is to activate the coastal security apparatus across India and assess the overarching coastal defence mechanism," the Ministry of Defence (MoD) said on Monday.

The exercise will be undertaken along the 7,516-km coastline, and in India's 2 million square km Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). It will involve all coastal states and Union Territories, along with other maritime stakeholders, including the fishing and coastal communities, the MoD said. "The scale and conceptual expanse of the exercise is unprecedented in terms of the geographical extent, the number of stakeholders involved, the number of units participating and in terms of the objectives to be met," said the MoD.

Exercise Sea Vigil is part of the build up towards the biennial Theatre Level Readiness Operational Exercise (TROPEX), in which the Navy validates its warfighting readiness every two years.

Together, Sea Vigil and TROPEX will assess the Navy's reactions to the entire spectrum of maritime security challenges — from terrorist attacks and piracy to aircraft carrier and submarine operations.

Besides the Indian Navy, Coast Guard, Customs and other maritime agencies, the exercise will also be facilitated by the Ministries of Home Affairs; ports shipping and waterways; petroleum and natural gas; fisheries, animal husbandry and dairying; and other government agencies.

The MoD said, "While smaller scale exercises are conducted in coastal states regularly, including combined exercises amongst adjoining states, the conduct of exercise Sea Vigil at the national level is aimed to serve a larger purpose." "Exercise Sea Vigil-2022 will provide a realistic assessment of our strengths and weaknesses and thus will help in further strengthening maritime and national security," said the MoD.

In the wake of the 26/11 attacks, the Navy was made the senior partner for coastal security, overseeing operations undertaken jointly with the Coast Guard.

The government established a Maritime Security Advisory Board, which was to speed up ministerial decision-making in an emergency.

A three-star admiral was appointed maritime security adviser (MSA). Joint operation centres (JOCs) were set up in Kochi, Mumbai, Port Blair, and Visakhapatnam.

More on business-standard.com

Context: The Navy and Coast Guard will conduct the **third, and largest, edition** of the comprehensive coastal defence Exercise Sea Vigil-2022 on Nov 15 and 16.

Exercise Sea Vigil-2022

- **About:** Exercise Sea Vigil is **part of the build up towards the biennial Theatre Level Readiness Operational Exercise (TROPEX)**, in which the Navy validates its warfighting readiness every two years.
- **Origin**: In 2018, for the first time, the **Navy conceptualised a national-level coastal defence exercise** to validate the various measures that had been instituted for enhancing maritime security since 26/11.
  - The first edition of the Sea Vigil Exercise was **held in 2019.**
- **Nodal Ministry**: The **Ministry of Defence** is not the only facilitator in the exercise, as it is also being coordinated by the ministries of home affairs, shipping and waterways, petroleum and natural gas, fisheries animal husbandry and dairying, customs, and other agencies concerned with the central and state governments.
- **Key features:**
  - The **two-day long multi-exercise** will cover the 7,516 km-long coastline of the country.
  - It will involve all **coastal states and Union Territories,** along with other maritime stakeholders, including the fishing and coastal communities.
  - Along with covering India's coastline, the exercise will also take place in the **exclusive economic zone.**
  - Together, Sea Vigil and TROPEX will **assess the Navy's reactions to the entire spectrum of maritime security challenges** - from terrorist attacks and piracy to aircraft carrier and submarine operations.

INDIAN EXPRESS

Page 1

RELIGIOUS CONVERSIONS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Indian Society)

Forced conversions dangerous, may affect nation's security: SC

Make stand very clear, what action do you propose to take: Bench to Centre

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 14

SAYING THAT "forced" religious conversions are "very dangerous" and may "affect the security of the nation and freedom of religion and conscience", the Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre to step in and make "very serious and sincere efforts" to tackle the issue.

"The issue with respect to the alleged conversion of religion, if it is found to be correct and true, is a very serious issue which may ultimately affect the security of the nation as well as the freedom of religion and conscience of the citizens... Therefore, it is better that the Union government may make their stand clear and file counter on what steps can be taken by Union and/or others to curb such forced conversion, maybe by force, allurement or fraudulent means," said a Bench of Justices M R Shah and Hima Kohli.

The Bench was hearing a petition filed by Advocate Ashwini Upadhyay seeking directions to the Centre and states to take stringent steps to check such conversions.

Asking the Centre why it had not filed its response to the petition, the Bench said: "Why have you not filed counter? Very dangerous thing. Everyone has freedom to choose religion but not through force or coercion". The court had, on September 23, sought responses from the Centre and others to the plea.

The Bench told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who appeared for the Centre, that "very serious and sincere efforts are to be made" to check such conversions.

"There may be freedom of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Context: Describing forced religious conversions a "very serious" matter affecting the national security, the Supreme Court issued notice on a PIL seeking directions to the Centre and states to take measures to check the practice.

Religious Conversions

- **About:** The adoption of a new religious identity, or a change from one religious identity to another.
- **Constitutional provisions**: **Article 25 guarantees** the freedom of conscience, the freedom to profess, practice, and propagate religion to all citizens.
  - **Not a fundamental right**: Article 25 **does not give fundamental right status** to the Right to conversion from one religion to another.
    - **Rev Stanislaus vs Madhya Pradesh, 1977:** While considering the issue whether the fundamental right to practise and propagate religion includes the right to convert, held that the right to propagate does not include the right to convert.
  - **Power to enact law**: The Constitution of India under article 25 also **allows the States to enact laws** to prohibit the religious conversion by way of force, fraud and allurement. And also provides for registration of conversion.
- **Legal Provisions**: **No central legislation** restricting or regulating religious conversions.
  - **'Freedom of Religion' legislation**: Over the years, **several states have enacted 'Freedom of Religion' legislation** to restrict religious conversions carried out by force, fraud, or inducements.
  - **'Freedom of Religion laws' are currently in force in eight states**: Odisha (1967), Madhya Pradesh (1968), Arunachal Pradesh (1978), Chhattisgarh (2000 and 2006), Gujarat (2003), Himachal Pradesh (2006 and 2019), Jharkhand (2017), and (viii) Uttarakhand (2018).

LIVEMINT

Page 1

CPI AND WPI

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

Cooling food prices bring inflation relief

CPI inflation slows to a three-month low, easing below the 7% mark

Dilasha Seth
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NEW DELHI

Retail inflation slowed to a three-month low in October, easing below the 7% mark, led by softening food and commodity prices, official data showed. Wholesale inflation also eased to a 19-month low in October, touching single digits for the first time since March last year.

Inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) eased to 6.77% in October from 7.41% in September, according to data released by the statistics ministry on Monday. A *Mint* poll of 22 economists had predicted inflation at 6.7%.

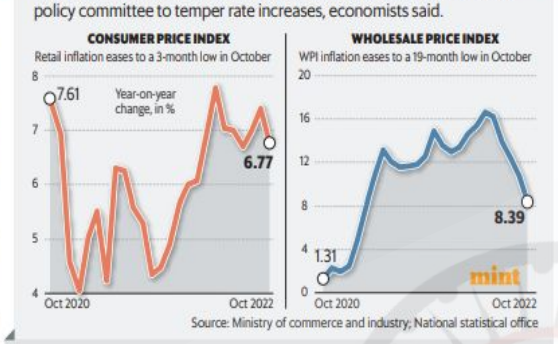
Slowing inflation may ease some pressure on the Reserve Bank of India, allowing the central bank's monetary policy committee (MPC) to temper rate increases, economists said. However, the panel may need more convincing evidence of price pressures easing before suspending interest rate increases.

Economists expect retail and wholesale inflation to ease further, led by factors such as last year's high base and stability in energy and commodity prices.

Inflation has now remained over RBI's upper tolerance band of 6% for the tenth straight month. As a result, RBI has projected inflation for FY23 at 6.7%.

MORE TO GO

Slowing inflation may ease some pressure on RBI, allowing its monetary policy committee to temper rate increases, economists said.



Source: Ministry of commerce and industry; National statistical office

WHAT'S NEXT?

INFLATION stayed over RBI's upper tolerance band of 6% for the 10th month

BUT economists expect both retail and wholesale inflation to ease from now

LAST year's high base and stability in commodity prices may cool inflation

SARVESH KUMAR SHARMA/MINT

Wholesale Price Index-based inflation eased sharply to 8.39% in October against 10.7% in the previous month, data released by the commerce ministry showed on Monday. Wholesale inflation eased to single digits after 18 months of double-digit inflation.

"The moderation is primarily led by a strong base. With the base effect kicking in, we can expect the inflation numbers to moderate gradually. The easing of global commodity prices and domestic WPI inflation is also supportive of moderation in CPI inflation. However, producers may not fully pass on the benefits of easing commodity prices to consumers in the near term," said Rajani Sinha, chief economist, CareEdge.

She added that the MPC might be less hawkish in its December policy meet and go for a 35-bps rate hike. "Nonetheless, there is a need to closely

TURN TO PAGE 6

Context: Retail inflation slowed to a three-month low in October, easing below the 7% mark, led by softening food and commodity prices, official data showed.

Consumer Price Index

- **Index Measurement**: It measures price changes from the perspective of a retail buyer.
  - The CPI **calculates the difference in the price of goods and services** such as food, medical care, education, electronics etc, which Indian consumers buy for use.
- **Released by:** the National Statistical Office (NSO) in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- **Four types of CPI are as follows:**
  - **CPI for Industrial Workers (IW)**: compiled by the Labour Bureau in the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
    - Recently, the Ministry of Labour and Employment released the new series of Consumer Price Index for Industrial Worker (CPI-IW) with base year 2016.
  - **CPI for Agricultural Labourer (AL):** compiled by the Labour Bureau in the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
  - **CPI for Rural Labourer (RL):** compiled by the Labour Bureau in the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
  - **CPI (Rural/Urban/Combined)**: compiled by the NSO.
- **Base Year:** 2012.
- **Significance**: The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) uses CPI data to control inflation.
  - In April 2014, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had adopted the CPI as its key measure of inflation.**

Wholesale Price Index

- **Index Measurement**: It measures the **changes in the prices of only goods** sold and traded in bulk by wholesale businesses to other businesses.
  - It is the most **widely used inflation indicator** in India.
- **Published by**: the Office of Economic Adviser, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Base year of All-India WPI**: revised from 2004-05 to 2011-12 in 2017.

ECONOMIC TIMES

Page 2

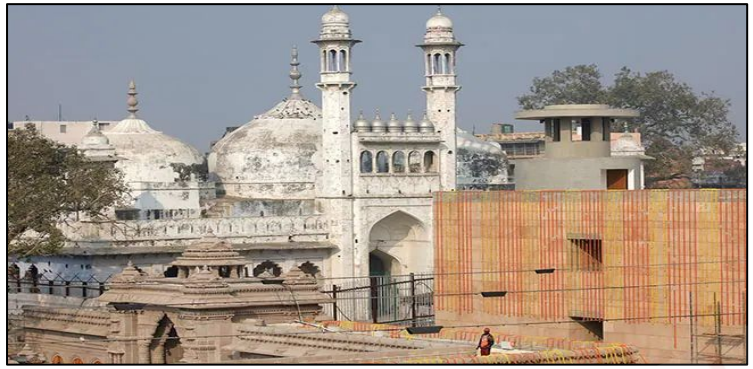
PLACES OF WORSHIP ACT 1991

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Indian Society)

Need to Consult Top Govt Functionaries on Plea Challenging Worship Act: Govt in SC

Bench accepts Solicitor General's request, posts matter for resumed hearing in Jan first week

Our Political Bureau



New Delhi: The Centre on Monday informed the Supreme Court that it needs to consult top government functionaries on the plea challenging the Places of Worship (special provisions) Act, 1991 before taking a stand on the issue.

This was conveyed by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to a bench comprising Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala during the resumed hearing of the plea challenging the Places of Worship Act.

The Solicitor General said consultation at a "higher level" is needed on the issue and urged the bench to post the matter for rehearing in the first week of December.

Accepting the request, the bench has posted the matter for resumed hearing in the first week of January. It will be taken up by a three-member bench.

In the instant clutch of petitions, the plea by BJP spokesperson Ashwini Upadhyay argues that the Act allows the illegal acts of invaders to continue for perpetuity by barring legal remedies to Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs.

Upadhyay had contended that the Centre has, without resolution of the disputes through process of the law, abated the suit/proceedings, which is 'per se' unconstitutional and beyond its law-making power.

His petition states the "Centre has barred the remedies against illegal encroachment on the places of worship and pilgrimages, and now Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs cannot file a suit or approach the high court under Article 226. Therefore, they won't be able to restore their places of worship and pilgrimage, including temple endowments, in spirit of Articles 25-26 and the illegal barbarian act of invaders will continue in perpetuity".

The top court had sought the Centre's response on his plea in March last year. At the last hearing, in September, the court had allowed applications by the Royal Family of Kashi and Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind to intervene in the matter.

Shared spaces

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad and other Hindu groups have in the past laid claim to Shahi Idgah, located adjacent to Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple in Mathura, and Gyanvapi Mosque, next to Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi



Krishna Temple, left, and Shahi Idgah, right, exist side by side. Security camps were added following the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992

Context: The Centre informed the Supreme Court that it needs to consult top government functionaries on the plea challenging the Places of Worship (special provisions) Act, 1991 before taking a stand on the issue.

Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991

- **About**: An Act to **prohibit conversion of any place of worship** and to provide for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August, 1947, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- **Origin**: This law was enacted by the Parliament under the PV Narasimha Rao government in 1991 in the backdrop of the **Ram Mandir agitation.**
- **Key Provisions**:
  - This Act **freezes the religious character** of a place of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947.
  - Section 3 of the Act **prohibits the conversion of a religious place of worship or a section of a religious place of worship** into a place of worship of a different religion or a different denomination of the same religion.
  - According to Section 4(2) of the Act, **all appeals, suits or other proceedings** with respect to converting the religious character of a place of worship shall **end on the commencement of the Act.** Also, fresh appeals won't be allowed to be filed.
  - **Legal proceedings could be initiated** if the change of religious character of the place of worship was done after the cut-off date of August 15, 1947.
  - The Act **imposes a positive obligation on the State** to maintain the religious character of all places of worship as it existed at the time of independence.
- **Exemptions**: The disputed site of the **Ayodhya Ram Temple** was exempted from the Act.
  - Any place of worship which is **an ancient and historical monument or an archaeological site covered** by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.
  - Any **dispute that has been settled by the parties** or conversion of any place that took place by acquiescence before the Act commenced.
  - A suit that has been finally **settled or disposed of**.
- **Penalty**: Maximum penalty of **3 years imprisonment along with a fine.**

TIMES OF INDIA

Page 14

CRIMINALIZATION OF POLITICS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Polity & Governance)

Pendency of criminal cases against lawmakers up 21% in 3 yrs, SC told

Maharashtra Tops List, Odisha A Surprise Second As 7 Major HCs Fail To Furnish Info

Dhananjay.Mahapatra
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Reports from high courts on pendency of criminal cases against sitting and former MPs and MLAs showed a 21% increase in three years from 4,122 in December, 2018 to 4,984 in December, 2021.

Collating the statistics received from the HCs and giving his suggestions on the way forward to the Supreme Court, amicus curiae and senior advocate Vijay Hansaria said as many as 1,899 cases are pending for more than five years, 1,475 between 2-5 years and 1,599 for less than two years. After October 2018, the fast-track MP/MLA courts have disposed of 2,775 such cases.

Seven major high courts did not furnish any information about the states/UT concerned — Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh and J & K (UT).



Getty Images

PENDING TRIAL

However, Hansaria mentioned that as many as 106 criminal cases were registered against UP strongman Ateeq Ahmed between 1979 and 2019, of which 17 involved murder charges, 12 under UP Gangster Act and eight under UP Goonda Act. Given his criminal activities even while being lodged in a UP jail, the SC had in 2019 ordered his shifting to a Gujarat jail.

The amicus curiae's report, filed through advocate Sneha Kalita, stated that Maharashtra registered the highest number of criminal cases (482) against present and former elected representatives. Of these 169 are pending trial for more than five years. On a PIL filed by Ashwini Upadhyay alleging that the present and former elected representatives use money and muscle power to delay trial, the SC had fast-tracked the proceedings and appointed amicus curiae to help in monitoring the progress in trials.

Odisha is a surprise second with 454 criminal cases against sitting and former MPs and MLAs. Pendency of as many as 323 such cases for more than five years reflected the fact that the trial proceedings are going at snail's pace.

Other states with huge pendency of such cases include Kerala (384), Madhya Pradesh (329), Tamil Nadu (260), West Bengal (244), Karnataka (221), Jharkhand (198), Delhi (93), Andhra Pradesh (92) and Punjab (91).

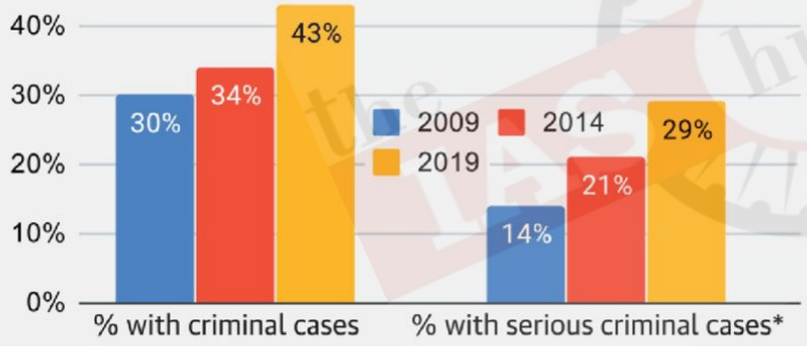
In its status report, CBI informed that 121 cases are pending trial against 14 sitting MPs and 37 former MPs. Similarly, the agency has filed chargesheets against 34 sitting MLAs and 78 former MLAs. In 58 of the cases, the charges are punishable with life imprisonment.

The Enforcement Directorate informed the amicus curiae that as many as 51 MPs and ex-MPs are facing PMLA cases of which 28 cases are still under investigation. As many as 71 MLAs/MLCs are accused in PMLA cases, it said. The NIA said it is investigating four such cases of which two are against sitting lawmakers.

Hansaria suggested that the special courts set up to expeditiously try cases against sitting and former MPs/MLAs must not be saddled with other cases, which could be taken up after completing the trial in the cases for which they have been set up. He also suggested that except in rare and exceptional circumstances, these courts must not grant any adjournment.

Under the scanner

Close to **43% winners** of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls have criminal cases against them, according to the Association for Democratic Reforms



* rape, murder, kidnapping, crimes against women, etc

Context: Reports from high courts on pendency of criminal cases against sitting and former MPs and MLAs showed a 21% increase in three years from 4,122 in December, 2018 to 4,984 in December, 2021.

Criminalization of Politics

- **About:** It means that the **criminals entering the politics and contesting elections** and even getting elected to the Parliament and state legislature.
- **Constitutional Provisions**: In this regard, Indian **Constitution does not specify** as to what disqualifies a person from contesting elections for the Parliament, Legislative assembly or any other legislature.
- **Legal provisions**: Currently, under the **Representation of Peoples (RP) Act**, lawmakers cannot contest elections only after their conviction in a criminal case.
    - **Section 8 of the Representation of the People (RP) Act, 1951** disqualifies a person convicted with a sentence of two years or more from contesting elections. But those under trial continued to be eligible to contest elections.
    - The **law does not bar individuals** who have criminal cases pending against them from contesting elections therefore the disqualification of candidates with criminal cases depends on their conviction in these cases.
- **Supreme Court's Judgment:**
    - **Timeline for convictions**: It r**emoved the statutory protection of convicted legislators** from immediate disqualification in 2013, and in 2014, directed the completion of trials involving elected representatives within a year.
    - **Special courts**: In 2017, it asked the Centre to **frame a scheme to appoint special courts** to exclusively try cases against politicians, and for political parties to publicize pending criminal cases faced by their candidates in 2018.
    - **February 2020 Direction:** It required political parties to **publish details of criminal cases against its candidates on their websites** besides a local vernacular newspaper and a national newspaper and social media accounts within 48 hours of candidate selection or not less than two weeks before the first date for filing of nominations, whichever is earlier.
        - The court modified this and said the details "shall be **published within 48 hours** of the selection of the candidate" as the latter is difficult to follow given statutory provisions.

PIB

Nov 15

GRADED RESPONSE ACTION PLAN (GRAP)

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

Stage III of the GRAP REVOKED in entire NCR with immediate effect

Context: The Sub-Committee for invoking actions under Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) has reviewed the situation and took the appropriate call on the actions under Stage III of GRAP.

Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)

- **About** : A **set of emergency measures** that kick in to prevent further deterioration of air quality once it reaches a certain threshold in the Delhi-NCR region.
- **Origin**: Approved by the Supreme Court in 2016 and notified in 2017, the plan was formulated.
- **Basis**: It is based on a plan that was submitted by the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** in November 2016.
- **Notification**: The GRAP was first notified in January 2017 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- **Implementation**: The **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)** has constituted a sub-committee for the operationalization of the GRAP.
  - This body includes officials from the CAQM, member secretaries of pollution control boards of Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, the Central Pollution Control Board, a scientist from the IMD and one from the IITM and Health Advisor.
  - The sub-committee is **required to meet frequently** to issue orders to invoke the GRAP.
  - The **orders and directions of the CAQM will prevail** in case of any conflict between directions issued by the State governments and the CAQM.
- **Various stages:**
  - **Stage 1 of GRAP**: Activated when the AQI is in the 'poor' category (201 to 300), and On Wednesday, for instance, the AQI in Delhi was 211.
  - **Second, third and fourth stages:** Activated three days ahead of the AQI reaching the 'very poor' category (301 to 400), 'severe' category (401 to 450) and 'severe +' category (above 450).
- **Data Source:** For this, the CAQM is relying on air quality and meteorological forecasts by the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and the India Meteorological Department (IMD).**

PIB

Nov 15

ATAL TINKERING LABS PROGRAMME

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Government Policies & Interventions)

ATL Schools across India celebrate Childrens' Day with Mega Tinkering Activity

Context: In a first of its kind occurrence, around 1.5 lakh students from more than 5000 schools from India in the Atal Tinkering Labs programme of the Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog took part in a unique mega tinkering activity on the occasion of Children's day, on Nov 14.

Key Points

- With a vision to '**Cultivate one Million children in India as Neoteric Innovators**', Atal Innovation Mission is establishing Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATLs) in schools across India.
- Recently AIM has **achieved the objective of establishing more than 10,000 ATLs in schools across India** with an objective to:
  - Foster curiosity, creativity, and imagination in young minds; and
  - Inculcate skills such as design mindset, computational thinking, adaptive learning, physical computing etc.
- **ATL students across the country have been ambassadors of the tinkering movement** and have used their creative energies to make better versions of the hand-held fans.

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)

- **About**: The Indian **Government's flagship program** to foster a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation.
- **Objective**: To develop new programmes and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy, provide platform and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, create awareness and create an umbrella structure to oversee the innovation ecosystem of the country.
- **Funding**: AIM **provides grant-in-aid** that includes a one-time establishment cost of Rs. 10 lakh and operational expenses of Rs. 10 lakh for a maximum period of 5 years to each ATL.
- **Components of the AIM**: Atal Tinkering Labs, Atal Incubation Centres, Atal New India Challenge, Mentor of Change Program, Atal Community Innovation Center and Atal Research & Innovation for Small Enterprises (ARISE)
- **Game Development module**: AIM has launched the **Game Development module as part of the 'Tinker from Home' campaign.**
  - It is an **online platform** through which students can learn to create their own games and also share it with others. This platform envisages to make students transition from 'game players' to 'game makers'.

Atal Tinkering Labs programme

- **About**: A sub-mission under the Atal Innovation **Mission to nurture an innovative mindset** amongst high school students across the length and breadth of India.
- **ATL Eligibility:** ATL's would be set up by schools (having grades VI to X) that are managed by the government, local bodies, private trusts or societies, etc.
- **Features of Atal Tinkering Labs**: A work space where **young minds can give shape to their ideas** through hands on do-it-yourself mode; and learn innovation skills. Young children get a chance to work with tools and equipment to understand the concepts of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).
- **'Tinker from Home' campaign**: In **Covid-19**, the ATL program has launched a 'Tinker from Home' campaign to ensure that the children across the county have access to useful easy-to-learn online resources to keep themselves fruitfully occupied.

DTE

Nov 15

TOKHÜ EMONG BIRD COUNT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)



Context: A recent birding drive - Tokhü Emong Bird Count (TEBC), organised in Nagaland during Tokhü Emong post-harvest festival of the Lotha Nagas, has documented a total of 178 bird species in the state.

Species reported

- **Species of warblers reported:** Ashy-throated, Buff-barred, Yellow-browed, Dusky, Grey-cheeked, Greenish, and Yellow-bellied Warblers, Spot-breasted Parrotbill, Ashy-throated, Buff-barred, Yellow-browed, Greenish, Yellow-bellied, Whistler's, Blyth's Leaf, Grey-hooded, Brown Bush, and Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler.
- **3 species of partridge:** Hill, Rufous-throated, and Mountain Bamboo-Partridge.
- **Multiple raptors were seen**: Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Himalayan Buzzard, Oriental Scops-Owl and Amur Falcon.
- **A total of 90 bird species were recorded on the third day of drive**: Asian Barred and Collared Owlet and three species of Scops-Owl — Mountain Scops-Owl, Collared Scops-Owl and Oriental Scops-Owl.
    - Three individuals of **Black-tailed Crake.**
- **Eight species of bulbul**: Black-crested, Crested Finchbill, Striated, Red-vented, Red-whiskered, Flavescent, Himalayan Black, Mountain Bulbul.
- **Four species of thrush:** Long-billed, Black-breasted, Eyebrowed, Blue Whistling-Thrush.
- **Three species of wagtail**: Grey, Eastern Yellow, and White Wagtail.

Tokhü Emong Bird Count(TEBC)

- **About**: Nagaland's first **bird documentation** event to celebrate the birds of the state.
    - The event has been timed with the **post-harvest Tokhü Emong festival of the Lotha Nagas** to spread awareness about the State's avian diversity.
    - As 1 million Amur Falcons roost in Nagaland, this place in India was declared as the **Falcon Capital of the World** by the Ornithologists.
- **Organized by:** Wokha Forest Division and the Divisional Management Unit, Nagaland Forest Management Project (NFMP), Wokha, Nagaland and Bird Count India.
    - The event falls within the **Salim Ali Bird Count**, a nationwide event conducted by the Bombay Natural History Society.
- **Basic activity:** Go outdoors on any or all days from **November 4-7 from** anywhere in Nagaland, spend at least 15 minutes watching birds and upload your bird list to eBird, the bird recording platform.

Tokhü Emong festival

- **About:** Celebrated on 7th November every year for 9 days in Nagaland.
    - Tokhu means moving from house to house, collecting tokens and gifts in form of naturals resources and food.
    - The meaning of Emong is to put a halt for the appointed time.
- **Participating community:** Lothas, the **Naga community** that dominates **Wokha district of Nagaland.**
- **Rituals**: Gracious offerings are made to the '**Sky God' and 'Earth God'** seeking for blessings.

DTE

Nov 15

AGREEMENT ON PORT STATE MEASURES

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Internal Security)



AFRICA

Four African countries back agreement against illegal, unregulated fishing

100 countries have signed the Agreement on Port State Measures — the first internationally binding agreement in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

NEXT NEWS >

By Susan Chacko

Published: Monday 14 November 2022

Context: Angola, Eritrea, Morocco and Nigeria last week signed the Food and Agricultural Organziation's (FAO) Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA), taking the number of signatories to this global alignment against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing to 100 countries.

Key Points

- **Loss of economy**: One in every five fish caught around the world every year is thought to **originate from IUU fishing.**
  - IUU fishing is **responsible for the loss of 11-26 million tonnes of fish each year**, which is estimated to have an economic value of $10 billion-$23 billion.
- **Worst-performing countries**: Nigeria is amongst the 10 worst-performing countries, according to the **IUU Fishing Index 2021.**
  - The index measures the degree to which states are exposed to and effectively combat IUU fishing.
- **Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing:** According to the World Trade Organisation, IUU fishing refers to fishing and fishing-related activities conducted in
  - Contravention of national, regional and international laws
  - Non-reporting, misreporting or under-reporting of information on fishing operations and their catches
  - Fishing by stateless vessels
  - Fishing in areas under the mandate of regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) by non-party vessels and
  - Fishing activities which are not regulated by states and cannot be easily monitored.

Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA)

- **About**: A 2009 international treaty of the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** designed to prevent and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.
- **Origin**: The first internationally **binding instrument** which entered into force in June 2016.
- **Official Name:** Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
- **Members**: The treaty has 55 parties, which includes 54 states plus the **European Union.**
  - **4 signatory states have not ratified the treaty**: Benin, Brazil, Samoa, and Sierra Leone.
  - So far, **India is not a signatory of the agreement.**
  - **Angola, Eritrea, Morocco and Nigeria** are the **latest countries** to back the agreement.

Other treaties

- **Cape Town Agreement (2012):** The Cape Town Agreement was adopted by the IMO in 2012 to help combat illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing.
  - **So far, India is not a signatory of the agreement.**
- **UNCLOS**: As per the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), coastal nations are responsible for addressing IUU fishing issues within their respective EEZ.
  - **India has ratified the UN Law of the Seas in 1995.**

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