



INNOVATIVE IAS

Daily News Analysis

20th December 2019

GENERAL STUDIES: 2

Nirbhaya rape and murder case convict

Why in news?

- SC dismissed a petition filed by one of the four Nirbhaya rape and murder case convict to review its May 5, 2017 judgement confirming his death penalty.
- The Court refused to grant him three weeks' time to file a mercy petition before the President of India.

Key points:

Grounds of rejection:

- The law allows a death row convict a week's time to file a mercy plea.
- The court said the death row convict can avail whatever time the law prescribes for the purpose of filing mercy pleas.
- A three Judge Bench led by Justice R. Banumathi said that a review petition did not mean hearing the same arguments repeatedly.

Arguments in review petition by convict:

- The defense counsel remarked that “executions only kill criminals, not the crime”.
- The defense argued executions should not be the tool to counter violence against women and it should work on bringing systematic reforms to bring about change.
- The Defense referred to convicts Nalini and others in the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case, pointing out that they have not been executed.

Review petition:

- Review Petition falls in Section 114 and Order 47 of the CPC.
- Any party aggrieved by an order or judgement may apply for reviewing the said order or judgement to the same court.
- It can be filed where no appeal is preferred or in case there is no provision for appeal.

Mercy Petition:

- Mercy Petition is a last resort when all remedies have been exhausted in front of a convict. For filing mercy petition, death sentence of a sessions Court must be confirmed by the High Court.
- Article 72 provides for the pardoning power of President of India.
- Article 161 provides for Pardoning power of Governor of State.



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The Various Pardoning Powers by President of India are:

- Pardon: The President can free the accused person of offences/charges against him and allow him to walk away like a common citizen.
- Commute: to reduce a harsh punishment in to a lesser harsh punishment due to special circumstances. Like from Capital punishment to Life imprisonment.
- Remission: To reduce the duration of punishment of a convict without changing the nature of punishment.
- Reprieve: when execution of a punishment is delayed to grant a guilty person a specific time period to prove his innocence.
- Respite: To reduce the degree of punishment in special situations like pregnancy, old age etc.
- Court-Martial: the president can pardon a court martial convict charged with breaking a military law, but the governor cannot.

Curative Petition:

- It is the last judicial corrective measure which can be pleaded in any judgment of the Supreme Court. The concept of Curative Petition first evolved in Rupa Ashok HurraVs Ashok Hurra Case and Anr. (2002).

'Operation Twist'

Why in news?

The Reserve Bank of India has announced that it will carry out US-style 'Operation Twist' to bring down interest rates.

Key Points:

- RBI will conduct simultaneous purchase and sale of government securities under Open Market Operations (OMO) for ₹10,000 crore each.
- It will purchase the longer-term maturities (i.e government bonds maturing in 2029), and simultaneously sell the shorter duration ones (i.e. short-term bonds maturing in 2020).
- The eligible participants can bid or submit offers in electronic format on RBI's Core Banking Solution (E-Kuber).

'Operation Twist'

- 'Operation Twist' is when the central bank uses the proceeds from the sale of short-term securities to buy long-term government debt papers, leading to easing of interest rates on the long term papers.
- Operation Twist first appeared in 1961 as a way to strengthen the U.S. dollar and stimulate cash flow into the economy.
- In June 2012, Operation Twist was so effective that the yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury dropped to a 200-year low.



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Meghalaya:

Why in news?

- The Meghalaya Assembly has adopted a resolution for implementing the Inner Line Permit (ILP) regime in the state.
- The Government of Meghalaya will urge upon the centre to include Meghalaya in the preamble of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations, 1873.
- In November 2019, the Meghalaya Cabinet approved amendments to the Meghalaya Residents Safety and Security Act (MRSSA), 2016, which will lead to laws that require non-resident visitors to register themselves. This move came in the backdrop of demands for an ILP-like regime.

Key Points:

- The ILP is a special permit that is required by “outsiders” from other regions of India to enter the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland Mizoram and Manipur. The ILP, which can be received after applying either online or physically, states the dates of travel and also specifies the particular areas in the state which the ILP holder can travel to.
- According to the new citizenship law, the provisions on citizenship for illegal migrants will not apply to tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram or Tripura as included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution and the area covered under 'The Inter Line' notified under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.
- It needs to be noted that Meghalaya may not have had an ILP regime but three Autonomous District Councils under Sixth Schedule cover practically the entire state.

Uniform tax rate of 28%

Why in news?

- In a first, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council meeting resorted to voting to decide on an issue, as all the earlier decisions by GST Council had been taken through consensus. The controversial issue of GST rate for lotteries was decided on basis of voting, with the GST Council headed by Finance Minister fixing a uniform tax rate of 28% on both state and private lotteries with effect from 1 March 2020. The voting move was taken on insistence of Kerala Finance Minister Thomas Isaac's proposal.

GST Rate for Lottery

- Currently, there are dual rates for lotteries, with 12% tax on state-run lotteries and 28% on state-authorized, or private, lotteries. Voting happened twice on the issue, with first time being on whether there should be a uniform or dual rate.
- 17 states voted in favour of single rate and 7 for a dual rate. Then there was voting on whether there should be an 18% or 28% rate for lotteries and all voted for 28%.



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Population stabilisation

Why in News?

The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) will draft the roadmap for population stabilisation in the country. In this context, it is organising a national consultation on 'Realising the vision of population stabilization: leaving no one behind'.

Key points:

- The consultative meeting is organised in partnership with Population Foundation of India (PFI).
- India with a current population size of 1.37 billion is the second-most populous country in the world. According to 'The World Population Prospects 2019' published by the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, India is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country by 2027.
- India's birth rates are falling but the population continues to grow due to the fact that more than 30 % of the population is young and in the reproductive age group.
- This rapidly increasing population poses various new challenges for the present and future generations.

Population Foundation of India (PFI)

- The Population Foundation of India (PFI) is a national level non-governmental, not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting the effective formulation and implementation of gender-sensitive population and development policies, strategies and programs.
- PFI was formerly known as the Family Planning Foundation. It was established in 1970 by a dedicated group of industrialists and population activists led by JRD Tata and Dr Bharat Ram.
- It was in response to meet a pressing need for an independent body to respond to the challenges of the growing population.
- The idea was to supplement and complement the efforts of the government for family planning and also galvanise voluntary action through meaningful support activities.

GENERAL STUDIES: 3

Re-introduction of Rhinos:

Why?

Recently, the Uttarakhand State Wildlife Board has cleared a proposal by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) to introduce rhinoceroses in the Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR).

Around 10 rhinos will be brought in CTR in the first phase and 10 more would be added subsequently. A proposal will be sent to the Center for transporting rhinos from either Assam or West Bengal or both.



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Key Points:

- This has been done to boost tourism and revive the habitats of species that survive on low-height grass.
- Rhinos reduce the size of elephant grass by eating it which would encourage species thriving on lower-height grass like- Hog Deer, Cheetal, Sambar and Swamp Deer.
- Geographical terrain and environmental conditions in CTR are suitable for rhinos.
- Valley habitats bounded on either side by the lower Himalayas (north), Shivalik Hills (south) and the Ramganga Reservoir (east) are the ideal sites. They would act as natural barriers to rhino movement and will minimise man-animal conflict.
- The rhino's range, once continuous across the flood plains of the Indus, Ganges and the Brahmaputra, now limited to small fragmented pockets in India and Nepal as a result of anthropogenic pressures and poaching, as per the WWI experts.
- Re-introduction into habitats in the historic range would create safety-net populations for the species and also restore their ecological role in these faunally-degraded habitats.
- Rhinos are poached because their horns are considered an aphrodisiac.
- Every translocated animal would be fitted with a GPS radio-collar for monitoring their ranging patterns, foraging habits, demography and habitat use.
- The data will be shared with the Forest Department which would be responsible for the safety of these re-introduced rhinos

Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize

Why in News?

- Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa announced the setting up of a Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize in order to help promote Mahatma Gandhi's ideals.

Key points:

- The announcement was made while he was addressing the second meeting of National Committee for Commemoration Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary chaired by President RamNath Kovind at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- Portuguese PM is the only foreign Prime Minister to be a part of the committee. The committee includes President Ram NathKovind, Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister NarendraModi and Union Cabinet, Chief Ministers, Gandhians etc.
- Every year, the Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize would be inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's different thoughts and quotes.
- The first edition of this prize will be dedicated to animal welfare as Mahatma Gandhi said that the greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated. Portuguese PM reiterated that Mahatma Gandhi's message of tolerance and love was revolutionary in his time, and in many parts of the world it is still revolutionary today.



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Exercise Apaharan

Why in news?

The Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard at Cochin port conducted large scale anti-hijacking exercise. The exercise was called Aphanan.

Key points:

- Multiple agencies participated in the exercise. It included 12 ships and helicopters of Cochin Port trust, Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard. This is the first time an anti-hijacking exercise is being conducted at a large scale in India and in the port of Cochin.
- During the exercise, insertion of Marine Commandos (MarCos) into the hijacked vessel through boarding operations and slithering into the deck from a Sea King helicopter were demonstrated.
- The exercise acted as a platform for the stakeholders to identify gaps and self-assess the preparedness of their respective organizations. It also helped to formulate an integrate crisis management for the port of Kochi or Cochin.
- Currently, hijacking of merchant vessels is one of the challenging scenarios of the Indian Navy. Piracy returned in 21st century after Somalian pirates began to hijack commercial ships and demand large ransoms. The Indian Navy began its anti-piracy operations in Gulf of Aden since 2008. It escorts Indian-flagged ships and also ships from other countries.
- It is also important for India to strengthen its anti-piracy skills as terrorists make their way onto the Indian shores via inflatable speed boats. In 2008, 10 terrorists involved in Mumbai terror attack made their way through sea

Pinaka missile:

Why in news?

The Pinaka missile was successfully test fired from Odisha coast on December 19, 2019 from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur.

Key points:

- The Pinaka missile is a modified version of Pinaka Mk-II rocket. The rocket was added with integrated navigation, control and guidance system in order to improve the end accuracy. The missile navigation will be aided by the IRNSS (Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System).
- The flight of the missile was tracked by several tracking systems namely radars, telemetry, Electro-Optical Targeting System. The systems confirmed high performance of the missile.
- Previously, Pinaka was test fired at Pokhran, Rajasthan in March 2019.

Pinaka missile

- The Pinaka is an artillery missile. It is capable of striking an enemy territory till 75 km of range with high precision. Pinaka was used for the first time in Kargil war. Till 2014, around 5,000 Pinaka missiles were being produced annually.
- The manufacturing of Pinaka missiles began with the help of Russian technology transfer. The



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plan was formulated in 1983 and manufacturing began in 1994.

SashastraSeemaBal (SSB)

Recently, the 56th Raising Day Parade of SashastraSeemaBal (SSB) was held in New Delhi.

Key Points:

- SSB comes under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs and a part of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), along with six other central security forces in India (Assam Rifles, Border Security Force, Central Industrial Security Force, Central Reserve Police Force, Indo Tibetan Border Police and National Security Guard).
- It was established as Special Service Bureau in May 1963, in the aftermath of the Chinese aggression in 1962.
- It was declared a lead intelligence agency for Indo Nepal in June 2001 and assigned the Indo Nepal border. In 2004, it was also assigned Indo Bhutan border.
- In 2004, SSB received the President's Colours in recognition of the keystone role in national security, since its inception.

Responsibilities:

- To promote a sense of security among the people living in the border areas.
- To prevent trans border crimes and unauthorized entry into or exit from Indian territory.
- To prevent smuggling and other illegal activities on Indian frontiers.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi and three frontier headquarters are at Lucknow (UP), Patna (Bihar) and Guwahati (Assam).
- It is spread out on Indo Nepal and Indo Bhutan borders across the states of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- President's Colours: It is the highest honour bestowed upon a regiment in recognition of their contribution to the security of the nation.

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