

**NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC****India ranks 140th in global happiness list**

The World Happiness Report- 2019 was recently released by the UN.

**Highlights of the report:**

- Indians are not as happy in 2019 as they were in 2018 and the country figures at 140th place, seven spots down from last year, according to the UN World Happiness Report- 2019.
- The overall world happiness has fallen over the past few years, which has mostly been fuelled by a sustained drop in India, which came in 140th place this year compared with 133rd place a year ago.
- Pakistan is ranked 67th, Bangladesh 125th and China is placed at 93rd position, according to the report.
- The list is topped by Finland for the second year in a row.
- The US ranks at 19th place despite being one of the richest countries in the world.
- People in war-torn South Sudan are the most unhappy with their lives.
- It is followed by Central African Republic (155), Afghanistan (154), Tanzania (153) and Rwanda (152).

**World Happiness Report**

- The World Happiness Report is a landmark survey of the state of global happiness that ranks 156 countries by how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be.
- It is released by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the United Nations by the UN General Assembly.
- It ranks the countries of the world on the basis of questions primarily from the Gallup World Poll.
- The Gallup World Poll questionnaire measures 14 areas within its core questions: (1) business & economic, (2) citizen engagement, (3) communications & technology, (4) diversity (social issues), (5) education & families, (6) emotions (well-being), (7) environment & energy, (8) food & shelter, (9) government and politics, (10) law & order (safety), (11) health, (12) religion and ethics, (13) transportation, and (14) work.
- The results are then correlated with other factors, including GDP and social security.

**GEOGRAPHY****Special Stamp on Ice Stupa released**

- The Indian Department of Post has released a 'special stamp cover on Ice Stupa'.
- The special stamps aim to create awareness about depleting glaciers and affect the ecology around the Himalayas.

**Why are Ice stupas being built?**

- The idea behind artificial glaciers is to freeze and hold the water that keeps flowing and wasting away down the streams and into the rivers throughout the winter. Instead, this ice will melt in the springtime, just when the fields need watering.
- The idea of the Ice Stupa project was conceptualized by HIAL founder Sonam Wangchuk to reduce problems of Ladakhi farmers in spring.

**How does it look?**

- This is achieved by freezing the stream water vertically in the form of huge ice towers or cones of 30 to 50m height that look very similar to the local sacred mud structures called Stupa or Chorten. These ice mountains can be built right next to the village itself where the water is needed. Very little effort or investment would be needed except for laying one underground pipeline from a higher point on the stream to the outskirts of the village.

**How it works?**

- Water always maintains its level. Therefore, water piped from 60m upstream would easily rise close to 60m up from ground when it reaches the village. Water is made to fall from that height in cold Ladakhi winter nights when it is -30 to -50°C outside (with wind chill factor). The water would freeze by the time it reaches the ground and slowly form a huge cone or Ice Stupa roughly 30 to 50m high.

- Since these ice cones extend vertically upwards towards the sun, they receive fewer of the sun's rays per the volume of water stored; hence, they will take much longer to melt compared to an artificial glacier of the same volume formed horizontally on a flat surface.

Significance: The Ice Stupa is a survival technique that has been developed over a period. Each stupa has the capacity to store at least 30-50 lakh litres of water. This is apart from the naturally saved water in the slopes of mountains.

### CONSTITUTION AND POLITY

#### **Mizoram passes bill to detect "illegal migrants"**

Mizoram Assembly has passed a bill that seeks to detect "illegal migrants" at the village and town level and bring in punitive measures for those making a false statement during the exercise.

#### **The Mizoram Maintenance of Household Register Bill, 2019**

- The bill is aimed at Chakma residents, who are often suspected to be illegal migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh.
- It shall be the responsibility of every householder as well as every member of household in the state to furnish all such information, particulars and passport-size photographs of the members of the household as may be required by the registering authorities reads the bill.
- The Bill further states that once the information prescribed by the state government is received, the concerned registering authority will compile the details in two distinct registers-one for the citizen residents and another for non-citizen residents of a village/area/town.
- Information furnished by individuals for the registers would be verified and counter-signed by the president of the local branch of the state-level NGOs as may be designated by the state government from time to time.
- The Bill says that all government departments and police may use the household registers for administrative purposes, during implementation of development schemes and law enforcement.

#### **Why such move?**

- Influx of foreigners into Mizoram through its porous borders has remained a serious concern for several decades.
- Mizoram has 510-km unfenced borders with Myanmar and 318-km with Bangladesh.
- In many cases the benefit of development and welfare programmes are found eaten away to a large extent by such foreigners who clandestinely stayed back and got assimilated in the people.

#### **Section 33(7) of the Representation of People's Act**

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik to contest from two assembly constituencies.

Provisions in this regard- Section 33(7) of RPA:Section 33(7) of the Representation of People's Act permits a candidate to contest any election (Parliamentary, State Assembly, Biennial Council, or bye-elections) from up to two constituencies. The provision was introduced in 1996 prior to which there was no bar on the number of constituencies from which a candidate could contest.

#### **Why candidates should be barred from contesting from more than one seat?**

- One person, one vote & one candidate, one constituency is the dictum of democracy. However, as per the law, as it stands today, a person can contest the election for the same office from two constituencies simultaneously.
- When a candidate contests from two seats, it is imperative that he has to vacate one of the two seats if he wins both. This, apart from the consequent unavoidable financial burden on the public exchequer, government manpower and other resources for holding bye-election is also an injustice to the voters of the constituency which the candidate is quitting from.

#### **Alternative suggested by the Election commission:**

The ECI has alternatively suggested that if existing provisions are retained then the candidate contesting from two seats should bear the cost of the bye-election to the seat that the contestant decides to vacate in the event of his/her winning both seats. The amount in such an event could be Rs 5 lakh for assembly election and Rs 10 lakh for parliament election.

#### **SC's views:**

The Supreme Court had in December 2017 issued notices seeking replies from the Election Commission and the Centre on the issue. At the time, the Supreme Court had said the practice of one

candidate contesting multiple seats was a drain on the exchequer since it necessitated bypolls. A petition has also been filed in the Supreme Court challenging Section 33(7).

### **Working of J&K Presidential Orders**

Weeks after President Ram Nath Kovind has issued an executive order amending The Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 1954 to extend the provisions of the 77th and 103rd Amendments to the state, the Centre's move has been challenged in the Jammu & Kashmir High Court.

#### **What's the issue?**

- The executive order was issued on March 1, the day after the Union Cabinet approved the proposal of the J&K Governor's administration to amend the 1954 Order. The Centre said the amendment "will give benefit of promotion in service to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and also extend the 10 per cent reservation for economically weaker sections in educational institutions and public employment".
- The latest order has the consent of the Governor without the requisite aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. In a situation of Central rule, the Governor acts only as a nominee of the Union government and does not meet the definition of state government as laid down by Article 370 and the Supreme Court.
- Major J&K parties have always opposed the amendments to the 1954 Order without ratification by the Constituent Assembly of the state. The Centre could do it because the SC allowed it. The opposition in J&K has been to the route taken by the Centre, and not to the laws themselves.

#### **How is J&K governed?**

- J&K negotiated the terms of its entry into the Indian Union. When Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession on October 26, 1947, J&K gave up control over only three subjects: Defence, Foreign Affairs, Communications. A separate Constituent Assembly of J&K was planned to frame the J&K Constitution, and to work out J&K's constitutional relationship with New Delhi.
- Under Article 370, which was part of the Indian Constitution at its commencement on January 26, 1950, only two articles apply to J&K: Article 1, which defines India, and Article 370 itself. Article 370 provides that other provisions of the Indian Constitution can apply to J&K "subject to such exceptions and modifications as the President may by order specify", and with the concurrence of the state government.

#### **Role of state government:**

- State government was defined as "the person for the time being recognised by the President as the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir acting on the advice of the Council of Ministers for the time being in office". The decisions to extend the provisions of the Indian Constitution other than those specified in the Instrument of Accession, however, had to be ratified by the J&K Constituent Assembly.

#### **The 1954 Presidential Order:**

- But the J&K Constituent Assembly was yet to be set up, and the Centre wanted to extend a few provisions of the Constitution to streamline J&K's relationship with the Union. Thus, a Presidential Order was issued on January 26, 1950 itself, with the state government's concurrence. On November 5, 1951, J&K's Constituent Assembly was convened.
- The 1950 Order was replaced by The Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 1954. This Order, while applying to J&K provisions of Part-III of the Indian Constitution that relates to fundamental rights, introduced Article 35A — which protected laws passed by the state legislature of J&K in respect of permanent residents from any challenge on the ground that they violated any of the fundamental rights.
- This order was ratified by the Constituent Assembly that also framed the J&K Constitution, before dispersing on November 17, 1956.
- Through these Presidential orders, successive central governments have extended 94 out of the 97 entries in the Union List, and 26 out of the 47 in the Concurrent List to J&K, and made 260 out of the 395 Articles of the Indian Constitution applicable to J&K. This list does not include The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of

Securities Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002, the GST Acts, and the two constitutional provisions that were extended on March 1.

Views of the Supreme Court in various cases:

- PremNathKaulvs The State Of Jammu & Kashmir (1959)- relationship should be finally determined by the Constituent Assembly of the State itself.
- SampatPrakashvs State Of Jammu & Kashmir, 1969- Presidential orders could still be made through Article 370.
- MohdMaqboolDamnoovs State Of Jammu And Kashmir, 1972- upheld and highlighted the importance of state government.

## INDIAN ECONOMY

### India's first Real Estate Investment Trust subscribed 2.58 times

The initial public offering (IPO) of India's first Real Estate Investment Trust (Embassy REIT) was subscribed 2.5 times, with the share sale generating a demand of over Rs 5,300 crore.

#### REIT

- A Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) is a company that owns, and in most cases operates, income-producing real estate.
- REITs own many types of commercial real estate, ranging from office and apartment buildings to warehouses, hospitals, shopping centers, hotels and timberlands.
- How does it work
- Unlike shares, investors in a REIT get units, somewhat similar to units in a mutual fund.
- A REIT owns a number of rent-yielding commercial and hotel properties, and the unit-holders get a portion of this rental income in the form of dividend and interest income in proportion to their equity contribution.
- It gives the investor an option to buy partial stake in rent-yielding commercial properties, with the benefit of a professional manager managing these assets.
- Increase in rentals of underlying assets, improvement in occupancy rate and commencement of under construction properties are the growth drivers that an investor can
- The net distributable cash flows of the Embassy REIT are based on the cash flows generated from the assets.
- In terms of the REIT Regulations, at least 90 per cent of the net distributable cash flows are required to be distributed to the Embassy REIT.
- The trust distributes the cash flow to unit-holders in the form of dividend and interest income, generally, once every quarter.

#### Associated risks

- Since this is the first REIT issue, there is no comparable data in terms of pricing and attractiveness of the issue.
- Real estate properties are always prone to litigation and operational challenges.
- Even though its assets are in cities offering good rental clients, the rate of occupancy is always a critical factor.
- Also, with future development of new office spaces in upcoming areas, the old buildings lose their charm and thereby their premium to get higher rental.
- The management fee and operating expenses can rise, eating into the returns of investors. The biggest concern is the valuation of the units.
- Since the Net Asset Value of the REIT is based on estimated future cash flows and certain assumptions, it is difficult to gauge the margin of safety for an investor.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

**End of Pain is Success**