

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY**Kempegowda**

CM Yediyurappa's plans to construct a 101-foot-tall Kempegowda bronze statue at the Bengaluru airport at the cost of Rs 100 crore is widely seen as an attempt to gain leverage with the Vokkaliga community.

About:

Name: Nadaprabhu Hiriya Kempe Gowda (1510 - 1569) is also known as Kempe Gowda. He was an Indian ruler under the Vijayanagara Empire.

Contributions:

- The city of Bengaluru, capital of Karnataka, was founded by Kempe Gowda in 1537. He was successful in planning and building Bengaluru Fort and Bengaluru Pete, the foundation of Bengaluru.
- He is also noted for his societal reforms and contribution to building temples and water reservoirs in Bengaluru.
- One of his social reforms was to prohibit the custom of amputating the last two fingers of the left hand of the unmarried women during "Bandi Devaru", an important custom of Morasu Vokkaligas.
- He was a patron of art and learning.

Legacy:

- He is a political icon for the dominant agricultural Vokkaliga community in south Karnataka.
- Bengaluru's airport is known as the Kempegowda International Airport, the main bus stand is the Kempegowda Bus Stand, a main arterial road in the old city is the K G Road or the Kempegowda Road.

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**Public Premises (Eviction Of Unauthorised Occupants) Amendment Act, 2019**

The Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Amendment Bill, 2019 which was passed by the Parliament during the last Budget Session has come into effect.

About:

- The Bill amends the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971.
- This will facilitate smooth and speedy eviction of unauthorized occupants from Government residential accommodations. This is expected to further increase availability of government residential accommodations for eligible persons and reduce the waiting period.
- As per the Amendment Act, the Estate officer will issue short Show cause notice of three days before eviction of the unauthorized occupant from Government accommodation.
- If the person in unauthorised occupation of the residential accommodation challenges the eviction order passed by the estate officer in court, he will be required to pay damages for every month of such occupation.

Background:

- The Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971 was enacted to provide for eviction of unauthorised occupants from "public premises" and for certain incidental matters.
- Under the existing provisions, the eviction proceedings of unauthorised occupants from "public premises" takes around five to seven weeks' time. Sometimes, it takes years to evict the unauthorised occupants, especially, if the unauthorised occupant approaches higher courts.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**Govt.-funded NGOs under RTI**

The Supreme Court in a recent judgment held that Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) "substantially" financed by the government fall within the ambit of the Right to Information Act.

Key highlights of judgement:

- The Supreme Court laid down that NGOs which receive considerable finances from the government or are essentially dependent on the government fall under the category of “public authority” defined in Section 2(h) of the Right to Information (RTI) Act of 2005.
- This means that they have to disclose vital information, ranging from finances to hierarchy to decisions to functioning, to citizens who apply under RTI.
- An NGO may also include societies which are neither owned or controlled by the government, but if they are significantly funded by the government, directly or indirectly, they come under the RTI Act.
- The court defined “substantial” as a “large portion.”
- It does not necessarily have to mean a major portion or more than 50%. Substantial financing can be both direct or indirect.
- If government gives land in a city free of cost or on heavy discount to hospitals, educational institutions or any such body, this could also be substantial financing.

Annual Refresher Programme In Teaching (Arpit)

Union Human Resource Development Minister launched Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPIT) – 2019 under Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (PMMMNMTT) in New Delhi.

About:

- ARPIT is a major and unique initiative of online professional development of 1.5 million higher education faculty using the MOOCs platform SWAYAM.
- For implementing ARPIT, discipline-specific National Resource Centers (NRCs) are identified which are tasked to prepare online training material with focus on latest developments in the discipline, new & emerging trends, pedagogical improvements and methodologies for transacting revised curriculum.
- Following Institutions have been notified as NRCs: Centers under the Ministry’s Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (PMMMNMTT) located in Central Universities, IISc, IUCAA, IITs, IISERs, NITs, State Universities; UGC’s Human Resource Development Centres (HRDCs), NITTTRs, IIITs etc.
- Through ARPIT all in-service teachers, irrespective of their subject and seniority have been given an enabling opportunity to keep abreast of the latest developments in their disciplines through the technology based online refresher courses.

Leadership For Academicians Programme (Leap)

Union Human Resource Development Minister launched Leadership for Academicians Programme (LEAP) - 2019 under Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (PMMMNMTT) in New Delhi.

About:

- Leadership for Academicians Programme (LEAP) is a three weeks leadership development training programme (2 weeks domestic and one week foreign training) for second level academic functionaries in public funded higher education institutions.
- The main objective is to prepare second tier academic heads that are potentially likely to assume leadership roles in the future.
- LEAP is being implemented through the following 15 higher education institutions (HEIs) institutions like Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, Banaras Hindu University, Jamia Milli Islamia etc.
- The mandatory eligibility conditions are: minimum 8 years of experience as Professor; 3 years administrative experience; Impeccable Integrity; High academic standing preferably 30 publications in 'SCOPUS' indexed international journals or UGC approved journals; and age below 58 years.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

President’s Three Nations Visit

The President of India recently concluded his visit to the three nations namely, Iceland, Switzerland, and Slovenia.

India-IcelandHistorical Background

- India and Iceland's friendship is based on the shared values and mutuality of interests.
 - A string of high-level visits between the two nations since 2000, imparted a new dynamism to the bilateral relations.
- Iceland was the first Nordic country that publicly extended support to India's candidature for permanent membership at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- Iceland was one of the countries that co-sponsored the resolution at the UN to declare June 21 as the International Day of Yoga.

Key Highlights of the Visit

- India and Iceland signed and exchanged three agreements in the fields of, Fisheries collaboration, Cultural cooperation, and Visa waiver for the holders of diplomatic and official passport.
- Culturally, India's long-pending demand for setting up a Hindi Chair at the University of Iceland was fulfilled. The Hindi language will now be taught at the University of Iceland.
- On the economic front, with India's aim to become a \$5 trillion economy by 2024-25, India's transformative growth and Iceland's technological know-how can add immense value.
 - In the purview of Climate Change, India wants to combine its economic progress with clean technology.
 - In this regard, Iceland's pioneering efforts in green technologies, be it carbon capture, energy-efficient buildings or waste-to-wealth projects can leverage significant benefits to India.
- The future areas of cooperation between India and Iceland lie in the field of pharma, healthcare and biotech space, finance, hospitality and tourism services.

India-SwitzerlandHistorical Background

- India is one of Switzerland's principal partners in Asia. The two countries signed the Treaty of Friendship in the year 1948.
- Since then, Switzerland and India have signed numerous bilateral agreements that cover a wide range of areas such as trade, education and vocational training, visas, migration, air traffic, investment, finance, taxation, and scientific and technological cooperation.

Key Highlights of the Visit

- The Indian President addressed the Federal Council of Switzerland (which is the highest executive authority of Switzerland) and unveiled a statue of Mahatma Gandhi at Villeneuve, Switzerland.
- Both the countries agreed to have their first automatic exchange of information on tax matters.
- Switzerland is the largest exporter to India from Europe.
- The bilateral trade volume stands at around US\$ 19 billion and India is committed to expand the trading ties further.
- The future opportunities lie in the field of capital, technology, science and skills, inter alia for mutual benefit.

India-SloveniaHistorical Background

- The Republic of Slovenia attained independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. And, India recognized the independent state of Slovenia in 1992 and supported its candidature for the membership at the UN.
- Since then both the nations share cordial bilateral relations.
- The balance of trade between the two nations is tilted in favour of India.

Key Highlights of the Visit

- This is the first-ever presidential visit from India to Slovenia.

- India and Slovenia signed and exchanged seven MoUs and Programmes of Cooperation in the fields of Investment, Sports, Culture, River Rejuvenation (Clean Ganga Mission), Science & Technology and Standards.
- India sought for Slovenia's support in its bid to get permanent membership at the UN Security Council and the membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.
- The future cooperation possibilities between the two countries lie in the fields of high technology (especially clean technology), robotics and artificial intelligence, start-ups and innovation sectors.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

National Centre For Clean Coal Research And Development (Ncccr&D)

Union Minister of Science & Technology, inaugurated the National Centre for Clean Coal Research and Development at Indian Institute of Science (IISc)-Bengaluru.

About:

- Government of India through Department of Science & Technology, has set up the National Centre for Clean Coal Research and Development (NCCCR&D) as a national level consortium on clean coal R&D, led by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc)-Bengaluru.
- The primary goal is to address several critical R&D challenges towards the development of clean coal technologies, in tandem with developing supercritical power plant technologies, both at the materials and system level.
- The pathways identified for lowering the carbon footprint of coal-based thermal power plants is by shifting towards high efficiency advanced ultra-supercritical (AUSC) steam power plants as well as supercritical carbon dioxide (s-CO₂) based Brayton cycle power plants, along with exploration of new combustion and gasification technologies.
- The research in clean coal domain could potentially be game changer for meeting the energy needs of the country in terms of higher efficiency and capacity at lower operating costs and size.

Clean coal technology

Clean coal technology is a collection of technologies being developed in attempts to lessen the negative environmental impact of coal energy generation and to mitigate worldwide climate change.

The term "clean coal" has been applied to many technologies, ranging from wet scrubbers, which remove sulfur dioxide from coal-generated gas, to coal washing, which removes soil and rock from coal before it's sent to a factory.

MISC

Dr. Kalam Smriti International Excellence Award

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh was conferred the Dr Kalam Smriti International Excellence Award 2019 in Dhaka for her vision of a peaceful and prosperous South Asia and her contribution to fostering cooperation between India and Bangladesh.

About:

- The award has been instituted in the memory of former Indian President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.
- The award is given every year to honour statesmen or leaders who have shown excellence in their fields to achieve the best for their countries.
- Earlier, the Presidents of the Maldives, Ghana and Mauritius received the prestigious award since its introduction in 2015.
- It is presented by Dale View, a non-governmental organisation registered under the Charitable Societies Act. It was created in 1978 in Kerala to bring about socio-economic development to rural areas through education.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns Has RTI been successful in bringing transparency into governance? Critically evaluate.

Ans

Participation, transparency, legitimacy and responsiveness form the pillars of good governance. The concept of good governance was applied in India through the passing of Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment. Right to Information Act, 2005 forms the basic requisite of good governance and the Act has played and is still playing a major role in bringing good governance by making our system transparent and accountable.

RTI act has ushered in transparency

- RTI Act has lent voice to the aspirations of ordinary citizens in issues of governance. It gave the common people a defining power to shape the government schemes and policies. It empowered the people to question, audit, review, examine, and assess government acts and decisions to ensure that these are consistent with the principles of public interests, good governance and justice.
- Right to Information is the most effective instrument to check corruption where the citizen has the right to take the initiatives to seek information from the state and thereby promotes openness, transparency and accountability in administration by making the government more open to public scrutiny. It also empowered the people to seek definite and direct answer from the officials of their works or lack of it thus facilitating and encouraging the participation of common people in the process of good governance. RTI Act democratized the information and decentralized the power. Power no more remains confined to select few, rather it was made available equally to all the citizens.
- People have showed increased interest in the affairs of government and sought information regarding various issues affecting their lives and well-being. RTI Act empowered the people to seek definite and direct answer from the officials of their works or lack of it. RTI applications have annually increased by 8 to 10 times. A 2009 study estimates that in the Act's first three years alone, close to two million RTI requests were filed in different parts of the country. Thus, there is massive use of the right to know. Of the millions of applications for information, less than 5 per cent have been denied information under various exemption categories. So, accountability has invariably led to efficiency and a sense of responsibility among government officials.
- The Right to Information act is intended to promote accountability and transparency in government by making the process of government decision making more open. Though some departments of the Union government are exempted from this Act but the information can be sought if it is concerned with violation of human rights. Even the information from the private authority can be sought only through the controlling authority and controlling authority will send the notice to the institution concerned under section 11 of the Act.
- The larger use of RTI has been seen in areas of women empowerment, youth development, democratic rights, rights and entitlements of the underprivileged, abuse of executive discretion and strengthening of participative and good governance.

Success stories of RTI

- For many, particularly India's poor and disadvantaged, the simple act of filing an RTI application is empowering, and often leads to tangible results. In 2010, K.S. Sagaria, a resident of Kushmal village in rural Orissa, filed an RTI application seeking

information on the number of ponds constructed in his village under the government's national wage employment scheme. The information he received was revealing: the ponds had never been constructed even though money had been allocated and spent. Following complaints from villagers, the local administration was forced to take action and suspend the officials involved in the pond scam.

- In the model district of Mochha, Chhattisgarh, people are using RTI to secure employment, scholarships and pensions for the elderly. They also pressured government doctors and school teachers to show up at work regularly. Villagers in Madhubani district, Bihar used RTI to expose a solar-light scam, leading to charges against 200 corrupt officials.

Challenges with respect to RTI

- Attacks on Activists : There have been quite a few cases where people were killed. Unless the whistle blower protection act is implemented by notifying the rules, things will not change on ground. There has to be a concerted effort by both central & state governments to prevent such attacks.
- Frivolous RTI have been used by politicians to settle score and waste time.
- Implementation of Section 4: The people who drafted the RTI act were very pragmatic in including Section 4 in the RTI act. The idea was that proactive disclosure of the most important information by government machinery would reduce the need for citizens to separately seek information. Most studies confirm that more than 50% of the applications filed under the RTI act ask for information that should have been disclosed under Section 4. And more than 60% of the government offices do not have any kind of physical disclosures. Even in places, where the disclosure is made, the information is outdated. Like it is emphasized by a sub-committee of Information Commissioners, section 4 implementation is going to be a crucial piece in the success of the RTI act.
- Working of the Information Commissions: The Information Commissions were envisioned as the watch dogs in the implementation of the RTI act. 13 years later, the commissions seem to be going the way of the Judiciary in terms of pendency. In more than 90% of the cases analyzed by the RaaG study, penalty was not imposed where it was supposed to have been imposed. Unless the commissions buckle up and start working effectively, they might become the Achilles heel in the implementation of the act. At the same time, the government should make the process of selection of Information Commissioners more transparent. Close to 60% of all commissioners in the country are retired civil servants.

Conclusion: Since its inception in 2005, one can conclude that RTI has made its impact felt in the functioning of Government bodies and the larger governance discourse, as the staff has become active, conscious, regular, punctual, accountable and responsible. People do feel more empowered. Their bargaining power vis-a-vis public officials has increased manifold. A great change has come in India in the last decade in the power equation between the sovereign citizens and those in power. This change is just the beginning and if it can be sustained and strengthened, our defective elective democracy could metamorphose into a truly participatory democracy within the next one or two decades. Thus the impact of RTI in good governance is palpable.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQS

1. With reference to the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Amendment Bill, 2019, consider the following statements:
 1. The Estate officer will issue short Show cause notice of three days before eviction of the unauthorized occupant from Government accommodation.
 2. If the person in unauthorised occupation of the residential accommodation challenges the eviction order then he will be required to pay damages for every month of such occupation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) **Both 1 and 2** (d) Neither 1 nor 2
2. National Centre for Clean Coal Research and Development is an initiative of:
 - (a) Ministry of Coal
 - (b) **Ministry of Science and Technology**
 - (c) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
 - (d) Ministry of Mines
3. With reference to the Interdisciplinary Centre for Energy Research (ICER), consider the following statements:
 1. It is located at the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Delhi.
 2. It is India's first of its kind centre equipped with state-of-art facilities for conducting wide spectrum of energy research by knowledge network of elite researchers.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) **2 only**
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. Recently seen in news, Deocha Pachami Dewanganj-Harinsingha coal block located in which of the following states?
 - (a) Odisha
 - (b) Jharkhand
 - (c) Chhattisgarh
 - (d) **West Bengal**
5. Who among the following was recently conferred the Dr Kalam Smriti International Excellence Award 2019?
 - (a) **Sheikh Hasina**
 - (b) Aung San Suu Kyi
 - (c) Christine Lagarde
 - (d) Angela Merkel
6. With reference to the Leadership for Academicians Programme (LEAP) - 2019, consider the following statements:
 1. The main objective is to prepare second tier academic heads that are potentially likely to assume leadership roles in the future.
 2. It is being implemented through all the higher education institutions (HEIs) in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) **1 only** (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. With reference to the Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPIT) – 2019, consider the following statements:
 1. It is a major and unique initiative of online professional development of 1.5 million higher education faculty using the MOOCs platform SWAYAM.
 2. For implementing ARPIT, discipline-specific National Resource Centers (NRCs) are identified which are tasked to prepare online training material.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) **Both 1 and 2** (d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. Who among the following founded the city of Bengaluru, capital of Karnataka?
 - (a) **Kempe Gowda**
 - (b) Tipu Sultan
 - (c) Basavanna
 - (d) Krishnadevaraya
9. With reference to the Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), consider the following statements:
 1. The Supreme Court in a recent judgment held that Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) "substantially" financed by the government fall within the ambit of the Right to Information Act.
 2. It does not necessarily have to mean a major portion or more than 50%. Substantial financing can be both direct or indirect.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) **Both 1 and 2** (d) Neither 1 nor 2