

## CONSTITUTION AND POLITY

### Constitution (126th Amendment) Bill, 2019

Parliament has passed the Constitution (126th Amendment) Bill 2019 with Rajya Sabha approving it. Lok Sabha has already passed it.

#### About:

- The Constitution provides for reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and representation of the Anglo-Indian community by nomination, in Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies of states.
- This has been provided for a period of 70 years since the enactment of the Constitution and will expire on January 25, 2020. The Bill seeks to extend the reservation for SCs and STs by another 10 years till January 25, 2030.

#### Anglo Indians:

- Cutting across the party lines, opposition parties supported the Bill but raised questions over the non-inclusion of Anglo-Indians from the ambit of it.
- The Anglo-Indian community in India traces its origins to an official policy of the British East India Company to encourage marriages of its officers with local women. The term Anglo-Indian first appeared in the Government of India Act, 1935.
- Article 366(2) of the Constitution Of India states: "An Anglo-Indian means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only..."
- Provision for nomination of two Anglo-Indians to the Lok Sabha was made under Article 331 of the Constitution. Article 333 of Constitution deals with the representation of the Anglo-Indian community in the Legislative Assemblies.
- The number of people who identified themselves as Anglo-Indian was 296, according to the 2011 Census.

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

### Genocide Case Against Myanmar

Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi is attending the proceedings of International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague, Netherlands to lead her country's defence against charges of carrying out a genocide against its Muslim Rohingya minority:

Background: An estimated 7.3 lakh Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh since 2017 when the Myanmar military launched a brutal crackdown on Rohingya villages in the country's Rakhine state. In August, the UN said the army action was carried out with "genocidal intent".

#### Recent development:

- The Gambia, which is predominantly Muslim, went to the ICJ in November 2019, accusing Myanmar of genocide, which is the most serious of all international crimes. The Gambia is backed by the 57-member Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC).
- The case, 'Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar)', is being heard by ICJ for three days from December 10 to December 12.

Way ahead: The ICJ will decide the plea on provisional measures fairly soon — possibly within weeks. The hearings dealing with the main, and more serious allegations of genocide will follow — and could begin next year.

#### Related Info:

- So far, only three cases of genocide worldwide have been recognised since World War II: Cambodia (the late 1970s), Rwanda (1994), and Srebrenica, Bosnia (1995).
- The ICJ, also known as the World Court, was established in 1945 and has mostly dealt with border disputes. Allegations of war crimes against individuals go before a different court, the International Criminal Court, which too, is based in The Hague.

### United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)

The US, Mexico and Canada have finalised the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) that will replace the 25-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The USMCA will now go to the countries' legislatures for final approval.

#### North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

- NAFTA is an agreement signed by Canada, Mexico, and the United States, creating a trilateral trade bloc in North America.

- The agreement came into force on January 1, 1994.
- According to Donald Trump, NAFTA is the “worst trade deal ever made by United States”. Thus, he initiated negotiations to replace it.

#### U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA): Salient Features

- USMCA is intended to last 16 years and will be reviewed every 6 years.
- USMCA gives the U.S. greater access to the dairy markets of Canada. Tariffs of up to 275% have kept most foreign milk out of the Canadian market.
- If the U.S. imposes a 25% global tariff on car imports, Canada and Mexico will have a quota of 2.6 million cars they can export to the U.S. as a protection for their car industry.
- Canada managed to preserve the dispute-settlement mechanism as a protection for its wood industry.
- It also includes stronger protections for workers, tough environmental rules, updates the trade relationship to cover the digital economy and provides tougher intellectual property protections.
- It also adds provisions to prevent “manipulation” of the trade rules, including covering currency values, and controls over outside countries trying to take advantage of the duty-free market.

#### World's 1st Fully Electric Commercial Aircraft

The world's first fully-electric commercial aircraft took its inaugural test flight in Vancouver, Canada.

##### About:

- The e-plane, a 62-year-old, six-passenger DHC-2 de Havilland Beaver seaplane was retrofitted with an electric motor.
- Developers: Seattle-based Engineering firm magniX designed the plane's motor and worked in partnership with Harbour Air.

##### Significance:

- The range is enough to start the revolution, adding that batteries and electric motors will eventually be developed to power longer flights.
- It marks the start of the electric aviation age. The technology would mean significant cost savings for airlines, not to mention zero emissions.

Way ahead: The e-plane has to be tested further to confirm it is reliable and safe. In addition, the electric motor must be approved and certified by regulators. Harbour Air will have to wait for at least two years before it can begin electrifying its fleet of more than 40 seaplanes.

### INDIAN ECONOMY

#### NHAI's InvIT

The Union Cabinet gave its approval to National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to set up infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs) as per InvIT Guidelines issued by SEBI to monetize highway assets.

##### About:

- NHAI's InvIT will be a Trust established by NHAI under the Indian Trust Act, 1882 and Securities and Exchange Board of India (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) Regulations, 2014.
- The InvIT Trust will be formed with an objective of investment primarily in infrastructure projects (as defined by Ministry of Finance). InvIT may hold assets either directly or through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) or a holding.
- Significance: This will enable NHAI to monetize completed National Highways that have a toll collection track record of at least one year and NHAI reserves the right to levy toll on the identified highway.

##### Related Info:

- InvITs are investment scheme similar to mutual funds that allow investment from individuals and institutional investors in infrastructure projects to earn a portion of the income as return.
- Such a model is more attractive for investors as it provides greater flexibility and they don't have to build an infrastructure project from scratch and is averse to construction risk.
- Besides, mutual funds and institutes like Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) can also invest in infrastructure space through InvITs.

#### Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme

Union Cabinet has approved "Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme" for purchase of high-rated pooled assets from financially sound Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)/Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) by Public Sector Banks (PSBs).

##### About:

- PSBs can purchase high-rated pooled assets from financially sound NBFCs/HFCs, with the amount of overall guarantee provided by government till the first loss of up to 10 per cent of fair value of assets being purchased by banks or Rs 10,000 crore, whichever is lower.
- The scheme would cover NBFCs / HFCs that may have slipped into SMA-0 category during the one year period prior to 1.8.2018, and asset pools rated "BBB+" or higher.
- The window for one-time partial credit guarantee offered by Gol will remain open till 30th June, 2020 or till such date by which Rs. 1,00,000 crore assets get purchased by the Banks, whichever is earlier.
- Power has been delegated to the Finance Minister to extend the validity of the Scheme by up to three months taking into account its progress.
- Major Impact: The scheme will help address NBFCs/HFCs resolve their temporary liquidity or cash flow mismatch issues, and enable them to continue contributing to credit creation and providing last mile lending to borrowers, thereby spurring economic growth.

#### **ISSUES RELATED TO INTERNAL SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

##### **Nanavati Commission**

The Gujarat government tabled in the Assembly the report of the Nanavati Commission, which it had appointed to probe the burning of the Sabarmati Express in 2002 and the subsequent riots in the state.

##### **Timeline:**

- Nanavati Commission was set up in 2002 following the burning of the Sabarmati Express near Godhra station on February 27, 2002, in which 59 died.
- The Commission got 24 extensions until it submitted the final report in 2014. Now, after 5 years the Gujarat government has tabled the report in assembly.
- Mandate: The Commission inquired into events leading to the Sabarmati Express incident, and subsequent incidents of violence in the state in which nearly 1,200 persons had been killed (including the 59 in the train carnage); and whether the incident in Godhra was pre-planned

##### **Key findings:**

- It concluded that the train burning was "pre-planned act" and done to "cause harm to the kar sevaks travelling in that coach".
- It found that there was no conspiracy involved in the riots and they were largely the outcome of the anger over the Godhra train burning incident. There is no incident to show that either BJP, VHP or any other political party or its leaders or any religious organisations or their leaders had instigated attacks on Muslims.
- It thus gave a clean chit to then Chief Minister Narendra Modi, as well as to police, the BJP, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Bajrang Dal.

#### **ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES**

##### **Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)**

This year's Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) was jointly released by Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute and Climate Action Network at the COP25 climate summit in Spanish capital Madrid.

##### **Key Findings:**

- India for the first time ranks among the top 10 in CCPI. India was ranked 9th in the high category showing that emissions are still comparatively low.
- As none of the countries assessed is already on a path compatible with the Paris climate targets, the first three places of the ranking remain unoccupied.
- Sweden (4th) and Denmark (5th) achieved overall high or very high ratings.
- While only two G20 countries, the UK (7th) and India (9th), are ranked in the high category, eight G20 countries are remaining in the worst category of the index. Australia (56th out of 61), Saudi Arabia and above all the US perform particularly poor.
- China, the largest global emitter slightly improves its ranking in the index to 30th place.

#### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC**

##### **PSLV-C48/RISAT-2BR1**

PSLV-C48 / RISAT-2BR1 PSLV-C48 successfully launched RISAT-2BR1 and nine commercial satellites from Satish Dhawan Space Centre SHAR, Sriharikota.

##### **About:**

- India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, in its 50th flight (PSLV-C48), successfully launched RISAT-2BR1, an earth observation satellite, along with nine commercial satellites of Israel, Italy, Japan and USA from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota.

- These satellites were launched under commercial arrangement with NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), the commercial arm of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

**RISAT-2BR1:**

- RISAT-2BR1 is a radar imaging earth observation satellite carrying an X-band synthetic aperture radar, an Indian version of Israel's TecSAR satellite, with radial rib reflector 3.6 metre mesh antenna.
- The satellite weighs about 628 kg. The mission life of RISAT-2BR1 is 5 years.
- The satellite will provide services in the field of Agriculture, Forestry and Disaster Management. It is believed that RISAT-2BR1 along with Cartosat-3, a remote sensing satellite which was launched on November 27, 2019, will also be used for military reconnaissance.

**Key Milestones:**

- It was PSLV's 50th flight and 48th successful flight since its first successful launch in 1994.
- It was the 75th launch from Sriharikota.
- This was the 2nd flight of PSLV in 'QL' configuration (with 4 solid strap-on motors).
- With this, ISRO has launched a total of 319 foreign satellites from 33 countries since the first launch in 1999 when PSLV-C2 carried satellites from Germany and South Korea.

**ODISHA DEVELOPMENT**

**Odisha Agriculture Department Brought Under 5T-Governance Model**

Odisha govt has brought the Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment department under its Mo Sarkar initiative which focuses on 5T governance model.

- As part of the initiative, the issues of the farmers will be taken up and later the 5T officials will be collecting feedback regarding the services provided by the department
- As part of the 5T initiative, the CM and other senior officials will directly take the feedback from the farmers. This will increase work efficiency and inculcate positive attitude among the officials of the department which is the primary aim of Mo Sarkar.

**Odisha Govt's Pilgrimage Train**

The Indian Railways will run a special train named as 'Baristha Nagarika Tirtha Yatra' which will carry senior citizens from Northern parts of Odisha to Haridwar under the Odisha government's pilgrimage scheme. Odisha government will sponsor the pilgrimage and the special train will run on December 13 (Friday) from Balasore to Haridwar.

While Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) will be running the special train for and on behalf of Odisha government, East Coast Railway (ECoR) will be providing the infrastructural facilities within the train.

**Details of the train.**

- The 'Baristha Nagarika Tirtha Yatra' train- Bhubaneswar-Haridwar-Bhubaneswar, with numbers 08415/08416 will leave Balasore at 11:00 am on December 13 and reach Haridwar at 10: 15 pm on December 14. The train will return from Haridwar on December 16 at 10:00 pm and will reach Balasore on December 18 at around 10:15 am.
- The train will run on Bhadrak-Balasore-Hijli-Adra-Gomoh-Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn.-Varanasi-Lucknow-Moradabad route.
- This special train will have 15 Sleeper Class, 2 Guard cum luggage vans and 1 Pantry Car bogies.
- The pilgrims in the special train will visit various pilgrim destinations like Haridwar, Mansadevi Temple, Har ki Pauri and Ramjhula & Laxmanjhula at Hrisikesh during their journey.

**DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns: Despite India's outstanding growth in the last two decades, low pay and wage inequality remain serious obstacles towards achieving inclusive growth. Examine.**

**Ans**

From 1950 to 1980, Indian real GDP grew at an annual average rate of 3.6%. However with Indian growth turnaround, the average growth rate from the 1980s have been around 6.1%. India's GDP has risen by more than US\$1tr, in the process bringing millions of citizens into a new cohort, called the emerging middle class.

- India's per capita GDP has seen a 6% Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) since 2000, up from 3% during 1980-2000.
- Real wages almost doubled over 18 years between 1993-94 and 2011-12 and GDP grew four-fold.

Yet despite having a strong growth rate over the past two decades, low pay and wage inequality persists in India manifested in the facts as mentioned below:

- Regular workers in urban areas earn an average of Rs 449 per day, 49% more than their peers in rural areas who take home Rs 300.
- India has huge wage gaps between rural and urban, male and female, and regular and casual workers.
- Only a limited number of regular/salaried workers, mostly in urban areas, and highly skilled professionals earn substantially higher average wages.
- Daily wages in urban areas remain more than twice as high as wages in rural areas.
- Regional disparities in average wages have actually increased over time, with wages rising more rapidly in high-wage States than in low-wage ones.
- The gender wage gap was 34.5% in India while globally it was a much lower 20% according to the Global Wage Report 2018-19.

#### Reasons for low pay and wage inequality in India

- Most of the employment in the last two decades was generated in the services sector. The services sector is much less labour-intensive and simultaneously more productive than the primary and secondary sectors.
- The cleavage between value addition and job creation is perhaps best exemplified by the fact that the number of 'direct' jobs created by the Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) sub-sectors was only around three million as of 2013.
- The present minimum wage system in India is extremely complex and geospatial variation is very high.
- Only 66% of workers are covered by the Minimum Wage Act. The remaining 34% not in "scheduled occupations" remain outside the scope of the minimum-wage law.

This generally leads to migration, consequently decreasing the bargaining power of workers. The problem of the minimum wage is further compounded by the unavailability of a statutory body.

- A national minimum wage was introduced in 1991, but its application is not legally binding. In 2009, 15% of regular workers and 41% of casual workers earned less than this minimum daily wage.
- The Indian labour market remains characterized by high levels of segmentation and informality, with around 93% of the working population involved in the informal sector.
- More casual and contractual jobs are being added to the organised sector but there has been a lack of substantial growth of regular jobs after 1991.

#### Addressing the problem of low pay and wage inequality

- Simplifying minimum wage structures, extending the scope of the law to all wage workers and creating a statutory authority for enforcement of minimum wage law are key steps to closing earning disparities.
- The government should facilitate a transformation from low-productivity to high-productivity sectors by focussing on skill accumulation and increasing the supply of more skilled workers.
- Increasing the proportion of higher-skilled workers may increase the wages of lower-skilled workers and thus reduce inequality.

#### Conclusion

Wage inequality can adversely affect political and economic stability and also challenge the notion of social justice and undermine social cohesion. A low pay and wage inequality will inhibit India's path to achieve decent working conditions and inclusive growth. Therefore it is imperative to address the issue of low pay and wage inequality in time.

#### **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs**

1. With reference to the "Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme", consider the following statements:
  1. The scheme would cover NBFCs / HFCs that may have slipped into SMA-0 category during the one year period prior to 1.8.2018, and asset pools rated "BBB+" or higher.
  2. SMA-0 accounts are the special mention accounts (SMA) against which the principal or interest or any other amount wholly or partially is overdue between 1-30 days.
 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. With reference to the NHAI's InvIT, consider the following statements:
  1. It will be a Trust established by NHAI under Section 35 A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
  2. It will be formed with an objective of investment primarily in infrastructure projects.
 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
3. Nanavati Commission, recently in news, is related to:
  - (a) Inquired into events leading to the Sabarmati Express incident in 2002, and subsequent incidents of violence in Gujarat.**
  - (b) Investigating the causes of the Bombay riots.
  - (c) Reforms of the Criminal Justice System
  - (d) None of the above
4. With reference to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), consider the following statements:
  1. It is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN).
  2. The seat of the Court is at the Peace Palace in New York.
 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
5. With reference to the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), consider the following statements:
  1. USMCA gives the U.S. greater access to the dairy markets of Canada.
  2. Canada managed to preserve the dispute-settlement mechanism as a protection for its wood industry.
 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
6. The world's first fully-electric commercial aircraft took its inaugural test flight in:
  - (a) Vancouver, Canada**
  - (b) New York, U.S.A
  - (c) Madrid, Spain
  - (d) Tokyo, Japan
7. With reference to the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), consider the following statements:
  1. It was released by UNFCCC.
  2. India for the first time ranks among the top 10 in CCPI.
 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. With reference to the PSLV-C48 / RISAT-2BR1PSLV-C48, consider the following statements:
  1. RISAT-2BR1 is a radar imaging earth observation satellite carrying an X-band synthetic aperture radar.
  2. It was PSLV's 50th flight and 48th successful flight since its first successful launch in 1994.
 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