

**CONSTITUTION AND POLITY****Capital Punishment**

Four convicts in Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case were hanged to death at Tihar jail in Delhi.

**About:**

- Nirbhaya, a para-medical student, was gangraped by six men in a moving bus in South West Delhi in December 2012. Another accused killed himself in jail and the sixth - a juvenile - was released from a reformation home after serving a three-year term.
- The last death sentence executed by the justice system in India was the 30 July 2015 hanging of terrorist Yakub Memon, who was convicted in the 1993 Mumbai blasts.
- Hanging and shooting are the two methods of death penalty in India.
- According to the Criminal Procedure Code, hanging is the method of execution in the civilian court system.
- The Army Act, 1950, however, lists both hanging and shooting as official methods of execution in the military court-martial system.

**Pardoning Power**

- The executions were carried out after the convicts exhausted every possible legal avenue to escape the gallows.
- According to Article 72 of the Constitution, the power to pardon — philosophy of which is “every civilised country recognises and provides for the pardoning power as an act of grace and humanity in course of law” — lies with the President.
- The Article also states that he/she can grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the convict.
- The mercy petition is reviewed by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which consults the state involved, before going to the President.

**GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.****Janta Curfew**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the nation and called for a Janta Curfew on Sunday, March 22.

**About:**

- He said this curfew will be “for the people and by the people of India” and will be from 7 am to 9 pm on Sunday.
- PM Modi said it will apply to everyone and urged all citizens to stay inside their homes. He said those in emergency and essential services should do their regular duties.
- PM Modi urged the entire nation to stay at home for the coming few weeks to arrest the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. He said senior citizens aged over 65 years should stay indoors at all cost for the next few weeks.

**Section 144 of CrPC vs Curfew**

- Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) of 1973 authorises the Executive Magistrate of any state or territory to issue an order to prohibit the assembly of four or more people in an area.
- Restriction under Section 144 is different from curfew. In the areas where curfew is imposed, all public activity is barred. Civilian traffic is also stopped. Curfew warrants much graver situation posing bigger danger of rioting and violence.

**INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS****Windrush Scandal**

The British government apologised for Windrush scandal i.e. its treatment of Britons of Caribbean origin, who were wrongly detained or deported for being illegal immigrants, after the publication of a devastating official report.

**Windrush generation:**

- Windrush generation refers to migrants from the Caribbean Commonwealth who had come to the U.K. at a time when they had the right to remain indefinitely in Britain, but had had their rights questioned under a toughened immigration regime.
- The Windrush generation is named after one of the many vessels that ferried some half a million people from the Caribbean islands to the U.K. in the late 1940s.

**Windrush scandal:**

- The Windrush generation, has fallen victim to a ruthless policy that stipulates annual net immigration objectives.

- In its wake, people with cultural links to the region but who have lived all their lives in the U.K. are having to provide proof of residence for every year of their stay of up to 60-70 years.
- Inability to furnish such evidence has been met with job losses, threat of deportation, withdrawal of welfare benefits and even denial of critical medical care.

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Committee To Review The Fiscal Consolidation Roadmap**

The Chairman of the Fifteenth Finance Commission, has constituted a Committee to review the fiscal consolidation roadmap of the general government.

About:

The Committee will be chaired by Chairman N. K. Singh. The Terms of Reference of the Committee are –

- make recommendations on the definition of deficit and debt for the Central government, overall states, the General Government and public sector enterprises.
- lay down the principles for arriving at the debt of the general government debt and consolidated public sector with appropriate netting to avoid double-counting.
- define contingent liabilities, provide quantifiable measures of such liabilities, wherever possible, and specify conditions under which “contingent” liabilities become “explicit” liabilities of the public sector.
- recommend a debt and fiscal consolidation roadmap for FY21-FY25 for the Central Government, overall States and General Government and attempt building up scenarios for public sector enterprises.

#### **Micro, Small And Medium Enterprises (MSMES)**

Union Minister for MSMEs informed the Rajya Sabha that the government would come out with a new definition of MSMEs, which are currently defined on the basis of investment in plant and machinery, by the end of the ongoing session.

About:

- Government has accepted 39 suggestions by the K. Sinha committee on MSMEs appointed by the Reserve Bank of India, including the setting up a “fund of funds” for the sector.
- The MSME sector currently contributed 24% of the GDP growth and 48% of exports, with an annual turnover of ₹1 lakh crore this year. A target of ₹5 lakh crore in five years had been set.
- Among the hurdles before the sector was the pending payments by governments and public sector undertakings, which were ₹5.5 lakh crore to ₹6 lakh crore. These dues needed to be cleared in order to boost the sector.

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

#### **World Sparrow Day**

20th March is being observed as World Sparrow Day with the theme “I LOVE Sparrows”.

About:

- Every year March 20 is observed as World Sparrow Day to raise awareness about the bird. The need for marking this day was felt due to the tremendous decrease in its population. The house sparrow is on the verge of extinction.
- The initiative was started by Nature Forever Society (NFS) of India, founded by Mohammed Dilawar, an Indian conservationist. He started his work helping the house sparrow in Nashik. He was also named one of the Heroes of the Environment for 2008 by Time magazine for his efforts.
- The first World Sparrow Day was celebrated in 2010 in different parts of the world.

Threats to House Sparrow:

- Increased use of pesticides, change in the pattern of buildings and gardens missing from the houses are the main threats.
- Also, the radiation from the mobile and the TV towers has also been a cause of death of sparrows. Birds navigate by sensing the earth's magnetic fields and mobile radiations are known to disturb them and interfering with bird's ability to move around.

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

#### **NEGEV 7.62X51 mm LMG**

Ministry of Defence has signed Rs. 880 crore contract for Light Machine Guns (LMG) with Israeli firm.

About:

- The Acquisition Wing of Ministry of Defence has signed the capital acquisition contract with Israel Weapons Industries for procurement of 16,479 LMGs at a cost of Rs 880 crore.

- The contracted Negev 7.62X51 mm LMG is a combat proven weapon and currently used by several countries around the globe.
- This LMG will greatly enhance the lethality and range of a soldier vis-a-vis the presently used weapon. This critically needed weapon will provide much needed combat power to the Armed Forces.

### **Covid-19 Economic Response Task Force**

To deal with the economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Prime Minister Modi announced the creation of 'COVID-19 Economic Response Task Force' to be headed by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

About:

- The Task Force will consult stakeholders, take feedback, on the basis of which decisions will be taken to meet the challenges.
- The Task Force will also ensure implementation of the decisions taken to meet these challenges.

### **Alcohols Used In Manufacturing Hand Sanitizers**

Prices of Alcohols used in manufacturing hand sanitizers has been capped under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

About:

- In view the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19, prices of the alcohol used in manufacturing the hand sanitizers have been exorbitantly increased by the producers of such alcohol.
- Therefore, Government has notified an Order under the Essential Commodities Act to declare price cap prevailing on the alcohol used in manufacturing the hand sanitizers.
- States can now ask the manufactures of these alcohols not to increase the prices of their produce without concurrence of the Central Government.
- The States have also been advised that the existing manufacturing units of alcohol based sanitizer be encouraged to increase their capacity. Ministry of Environment has allowed increase in capacity by 50% without further environment clearances.

## **PRELIMS SPECIFIC FACTS- INDICES, DAYS, EVENTS, AWARDS ETC**

### **Electricity Production In India**

Minister for Power informed Lok Sabha about the status of electricity production in India.

About:

- As per the latest key world energy statistics published by the IEA in 2019, India is the 3rd largest producer of electricity in the world.
- India also ranks 106th in terms of per capita consumption in 2017.

## **DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns. The judiciary's credibility, its finality, rests not just on justice being done, but on its being seen to be done. Discuss (150 words)**

Ans: Recently ex-Chief Justice of India was nominated to Rajya Sabha which raised the issue of independence and credibility of Judiciary, i.e., judges accepting post retirement posts and chances of furthering a particular political ideology in past in his/her official capacity.

- Judiciary's independence and credibility have been ensured by Indian Constitution in form of:
  - Rigorous removal process of a sitting judge
  - Fixed terms of conditions and pay of office
  - No adverse criticism allowed during official duties without due evidence
- Apart from this, conventions have been developed whereby judges would not accept any political positions post retirement. There is no provision with regards to this in Indian Constitution.
- Judiciary's independence is not only judged from the acts of its members during their official capacity which are to be bound under specific laws and regulations but also from actions in non-official capacity, for example a judge accepting post of Governor post retirement in 2014, which is generally a political appointee.
- This can erode the confidence in the institution where personnels are seen to be bound for limited time and capacity, thus increasing chances of partisanship in dispensing justice.

Conclusion: Hence, to further enhance the independence there is need for regulating the acts of judicial members in non-official capacity also, for example mandatory cooling off period post-retirement.

**DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs**

1. With reference to the Committee to review the fiscal consolidation roadmap, consider the following statements:

1. The Committee will be chaired by Chairman N. K. Singh.
2. It is mandated to make recommendations on the definition of deficit and debt for the Central government, overall states, the General Government and public sector enterprises.

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. Consider the following statements:

1. Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) of 1973 authorises the Executive Magistrate of any state or territory to issue an order to prohibit the assembly of four or more people in an area.
2. Restriction under Section 144 is same as curfew.

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. Who among the following will be the head of 'COVID-19 Economic Response Task Force'?

- (a) **Union Finance Minister**
- (b) Union Health Minister
- (c) NITI Aayog Vice Chairman
- (d) Prime Minister

4. With reference to the alcohols used in manufacturing hand sanitizers, consider the following statements:

1. Prices of Alcohols used in manufacturing hand sanitizers has been capped under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.
2. States can now ask the manufactures of these alcohols not to increase the

prices of their produce without concurrence of the Central Government.

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. Which of the following country is the 3rd largest producer of electricity in the world according to the world energy statistics published by the IEA in 2019?

- (a) U.S.A
- (b) China
- (c) Russia
- (d) **India**

6. With reference to the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), consider the following statements:

1. U.K. Sinha committee on MSMEs recommended a Rs 5,000-crore stressed asset fund for domestic MSMEs.
2. The MSME sector currently contributed 48% of the GDP growth and 71% of exports, with an annual turnover of ₹1 lakh crore this year.

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 World Sparrow Day, consider the following statements:

1. 20th March is being observed as World Sparrow Day with the theme "I LOVE Sparrows".
2. The initiative was started by Bombay Natural History Society in 1967.

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