

“The man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones.”
Confucius

RAJASTHAN PASSES BILL TO GIVE DEATH PENALTY FOR CHILD RAPE

Rajasthan has passed a Bill providing for death penalty to those convicted of raping girls of 12 years and below. The State Assembly passed the Criminal Laws (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill, 2018 seeking to amend the Indian Penal Code with the insertion of new provision by voice vote.

The Bill is aimed at protecting the girl child by laying down a deterrent punishment, including death sentence, to the offenders.

The Bill provides for capital punishment or rigorous imprisonment ranging between 14 years and lifelong incarceration.

It also makes a similar provision for gang-rape of a girl child, while laying down death penalty or imprisonment from 20 years to lifelong incarceration for those convicted of the offence. Each of the persons constituting the gang will be deemed to be guilty of the offence.

The Bill will become a law after it gets the Presidential assent.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau's 2016 report, the cases of crimes against children have seen a steady increase in Rajasthan. The State recorded 4,034 such cases in 2016, which was 3.8% increase in no. of crimes against children registered across the country. In 2015, the State had registered 3,689 cases of crimes against children.

Rajasthan has become the second State, after Madhya Pradesh, to pass a Bill providing for death penalty to those convicted of raping girls of 12 years and below.

Protection of Children from Sexual offences Act, 2012:

With the intent to effectively address the evil of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) was passed by the parliament in the year 2012.

Salient features of the Act

Definition of Child: Children according to the Act are individuals aged below 18 years. The Act is gender neutral.

Different forms of sexual abuse including but not limited to sexual harassment, pornography, penetrative & non-penetrative assault are defined in the Act.

Aggravated Sexual Assault: Sexual assault is deemed to be aggravated” under certain circumstances such as when the child is mentally ill, Plus when the abuse is committed by the person in a position of trust such as doctor, teacher, policeman, family member. Adequate provisions are made to avoid re-victimization of the Child at the hands of judicial system. The Act assigns a policeman in the role of child protector during the investigation process.

The Act stipulates that:

[I] such steps must be taken which makes the investigation process child-friendly and

[ii] Disposal of case within 1 year from the date of reporting of the offence.

[iii] Special Courts: establishment of Special Courts for trial of such offences and matters related to it.

[iv] Designates National Commission for the Protection of

- Child Rights (NCPCR) and State Commissions for the Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) to monitor the implementation of the Act,
- Section 42 A of the Act provides that in case of inconsistency with provisions of any other law, POCSO Act shall override such provisions.
- Under section 45 of the Act, the power to make rules lies with the central government.
- The Act calls for mandatory reporting of sexual offences.
- Punishability of false reporting: A false complaint with intent to defame a person is punishable under the Act.

CENTRE CONSTITUTES MAHANADI WATER DISPUTES TRIBUNAL

The Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation have issued a notification today constituting the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal.

The Tribunal will have its headquarters at Delhi and will have the following members nominated by the Chief Justice of India:

1. Mr Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, Judge, Supreme Court of India as Chairman
2. Dr Justice Ravi Ranjan, Judge, Patna High Court as Member
3. Mrs Justice Indermeet Kaur Kochhar, Judge, Delhi High Court as Member

The Tribunal has been constituted following orders of the Supreme Court dated 23rd January, 2018 in a suit filed by the Government of Odisha. The Government of Odisha had sought to refer the water dispute regarding the inter-state river Mahanadi and its river valley to a Tribunal for adjudication under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.

COMPREHENSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AGREEMENT FOR TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP (CPTPP)

On March 8th trade ministers from 11 countries gathered in Santiago, the capital of Chile, to sign the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, or CPTPP.

CPTPP:

The CPTPP, also dubbed the TPP-11, was negotiated by Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam. The revived deal will look to reduce tariffs in economies that together represent 500 million people and account for 13.5 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP) – equivalent to a total of US\$10 trillion.

With the exclusion of the US, the CPTPP is putting on hold 20 provisions even as it incorporates the original TPP text by reference. Out of which, 11 of the suspended clauses are related to intellectual property (IP) originally inserted at the demand of US

negotiators. The other nine involve areas like investment, financial services, copyright, telecommunication and government procurement.

Individual member countries will now begin their respective domestic ratification processes and the CPTPP will enter into force after at least 50% of the signatories complete that.

CPTPP's comparison with RCEP:

The 16-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) covers nearly 3.5 billion people and account for a third of the world's gross domestic product.

The RCEP was conceived in 2012. If approved, the free trade agreement will be the largest trade bloc in terms of population. The RCEP countries make up 46% of the global population and are worth 24% of global GDP.

RCEP seeks to bring into its fold China, Japan, India, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand and ASEAN countries. Seven of them are also CPTPP members, namely Australia, Brunei, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand and Vietnam.

Even without the US, it's a hugely significant deal and could become a blueprint for future regional free trade agreements. Other nations have the chance to enter at a later time, if they so wish, and there have been suggestions Indonesia and even the United Kingdom may have some interest.

The TPP also comes at a time when major powers, such as the US, are reverting to protectionist trade policies. The head of policy at the Export Council of Australia, Heath Baker, said its symbolism was significant. It shows that despite the protectionism coming out of the US, there is still momentum to increasing shared prosperity through freer trade.

GOVT. COMMENCED WORK ON DEVELOPMENT OF EIGHT NEW NATIONAL WATERWAYS

The Government has commenced work on development of eight new National Waterways.

Declared Stretch of NW

1. River Barak (NW-16): Bhanga – Lakhipur Stretch of 121 km.
2. River Gandak (NW-37): Bhaisalotan Barrage near TriveniGhat to confluence with Ganga river at Hajipur (296 km) in Bihar and UP.
3. NW-27-Cumberjua – confluence with Zuari to confluence with Mandovi river (17 km)
4. NW 68 – Mandovi– Usgaon Bridge to Arabian Sea (41 km)
5. NW 111 – Zuari– Sanvordem Bridge to Marmugao Port (50 km).
6. Alappuzha – Kottayam – Athirampuzha Canal (NW-9) : Boat Jetty, Alappuzha to Athirampuzha (38 km) in Kerala.
7. River Rupnarayan (NW-86): Confluence of Dwarkeshwar and Silai rivers (Pratappur) to confluence with Hooghly river (Geonkhali) (72 km) in West Bengal.
8. Sunderbans Waterways (NW-97): Namkhana to AtharaBankiKhal& 13 connected rivers (654 km) in West Bengal.

UNION HOME MINISTRY SANCTIONED LAUNCH OF NATIONAL ACADEMY OF COASTAL POLICING (NACP)

The Union home ministry has sanctioned the launch of the National Academy of Coastal Policing (NACP) from a campus of Gujarat's Fisheries Research Centre located in coastal Okha in the newly created Devbhoomi Dwarka district.

It will be the country's first national academy to train police forces in effectively safeguarding the Indian shoreline. It will sharpen the response and skills of the marine forces of multiple states which have sea lines.

The first-of-its-kind institution of the country will be created and run by a multi-agency team of paramilitary and defence forces.

The Union home ministry's policing think tank — the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) — will pilot the establishment and running of the academy.

The Border Security Force (BSF) that guards the Indian frontier in Gujarat with Pakistan,

the navy and the Coast Guard will form the core to run the academy. The BSF will also provide security to the campus which on the Arabian Sea coast and is at a flying distance from the Pakistan coast.

The navy and the Coast Guard will help design "the training curriculum, providing skilled trainers and ensuring access to jetties and boats" for the trainees of the academy.

The academy, that will have faculty from the Navy, Coast Guard and the BSF, will train police personnel and other security agencies staff in maritime laws, seamanship, boat work, navigation, weapons handling, usage of sea guidance and surveillance gadgets and survival skills for long haul operations on the sea or during distress times when they may get stranded in these waters running up to 12 nautical miles from the shore.

Significance of the academy:

India has a vast coastline of 7,516 kms touching 13 states and union territories (UTs). It also has around 1,197 islands. There is no institute in the country that trains marine or coastal police forces in these subjects in a professional manner. That is why the academy will be first-ever and the best practises of various agencies like the navy, the BSF and the Coast Guard will be borrowed by it for teaching purposes. Also, the academy was specially required since India faced its major sea-borne terror attack in November 2008 in Mumbai.

PROJECT UNNATI

Govt. has expeditiously started working on Project UNNATI.

The aims and objectives of Project UNNATI of the Ministry of Shipping are as follows:

- Benchmark operational and financial performance of the 12 major ports with selected Indian private ports and best-in-class international ports for identifying improvement areas.
- Undertake capability maturity assessment for key processes and functional capabilities (e.g., IT, HR, Environment, and

Health) and identify gaps and areas for further strengthening.

- Detailed deep-dive diagnosis and root cause analysis for the identified opportunity areas in each of the 12 major ports to understand underlying reasons for performance bottlenecks.
- Develop practical and actionable solutions on the basis of root cause findings, and develop a comprehensive improvement roadmap for each of the 12 major ports.

DIU BECOMES THE FIRST AND ONLY UNION TERRITORY TO BE 100% SOLAR ENERGY EFFICIENT

In a major boost for utilization of renewable energy in the country, Diu has become the first and only Union Territory to be fully solar energy efficient.

Diu's geographical area is limited only to 42 square kilometers; however, despite the shortage of land, solar power plants have been installed at over 50 acres of land.

A total of 13 megawatts of electricity from the solar power-generating systems is generated, with 3MW generated by rooftop solar plants and 10MW by other solar power plants.

EX SAMVEDNA 2018

A Multilateral Air Force exercise, 'Ex Samvedna', is being spearheaded by Indian Air Force and conducted by Southern Air Command (SAC).

It is the first composite HADR Air exercise in the South Asian region and would be focused on practicing Air Force centric HADR solutions in a Multi-national cooperative Disaster Management environment.

It is aimed at setting up a scenario of pre and post Tsunami disaster requirements and guide participants to work out Air Force Centric HADR solutions.

'Samvedna' means 'Empathy' and will ensure better understanding and sharing of response procedures between a number of friendly neighbouring nations.
