

"The power to change your life lies in the simplest of steps." Steve Maraboli

NATIONAL

PARLIAMENT CLEARS BILL FOR DEATH IN RAPE CASES

A Bill awarding a maximum sentence of death to those convicted for raping girls below 12 years of age was passed by both houses of Parliament.

It replaces the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance that was promulgated in April, following a public outrage over the rape and murder of a minor girl in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua and the rape of a minor from Unnao in Uttar Pradesh.

The amendments have been made to the Indian Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, Evidence Act and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

Accordingly, the minimum sentence in cases of rape of women has been increased from seven to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment.

In cases involving girls below 16 years, the minimum punishment has gone up from 10 to 20 years, which is extendable to life imprisonment.

The law also provides for speedy investigations and trial. The probe has to be completed within two months.

The deadline for completion of trial in all rape cases will also be two months, while a six-month limit has been set for disposal of appeals.

There will be no provision for anticipatory bail for a person accused of rape or gang-rape of an under-16 girl.

SCHEME OF ASSISTANCE FOR PREVENTION OF ALCOHOLISM AND SUBSTANCE (DRUG) ABUSE

Assistance for Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drug) Abuse

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment implements this Central Sector Scheme for identification, counseling, treatment and rehabilitation of addicts through voluntary and other eligible organizations.

Under this Scheme, financial assistance is provided to NGOs/Voluntary organizations and other eligible agencies for setting-up/running Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts (IRCA's).

As per the norms of the scheme following organizations/institutions shall be eligible for assistance under the Scheme of Assistance for Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drug) Abuse:

A Society registered under the Societies' Registration Act, 1860 (XXI of 1860) or any relevant Act of the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations or under any State law relating to the registration of Literary, Scientific and Charitable societies, or

Registered Societies formed by the State Governments.

District Hospitals subject to condition that they maintain separate accounts for de-addiction.

Railway Hospitals near major Railway Stations subject to condition that they maintain separate accounts for de-addiction.

A Public Trust registered under any law for the time being in force, or

A Company established under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956; or

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), organizations/institutions fully funded or managed by State/ Central Government or a local body; or

Universities, Schools of Social Work, other reputed educational institutions, NYKS, and such other well established organizations/ institutions which may be approved by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

The proposals of above eligible organizations are forwarded by the State Governments.

However, the proposals of NGOs for release of grant in aid are considered in the Ministry only after it is inspected and recommended by the State Government.

THE NEED FOR DIGITIZING LAND RECORDS IN INDIA

Nearly two-thirds of all pending cases in Indian courts are related to property disputes.

NITI Aayog has said that such property cases take an average of 20 years to settle.

The result is that millions of Indians cannot use their principal asset as collateral to borrow from the formal financial system.

Steps taken by the government to resolve this problem:

The Union government has been busy trying to address this problem for almost a decade.

National Land Records Modernization Programme was started in August 2008.

It is now part of the Digital India initiative.

The broad aim is to modernize land records management, reduce the scope for property disputes, make land records more transparent and move towards conclusive property titles.

Some of the most interesting work of sorting out the land titling mess has been done by state governments, as has been the case with labour law reforms as well.

The Bhoomi Project in Karnataka led the way even before the Union government got into the act. The state government began to digitize land records at the turn of the century.

The relevant document—the record of rights, tenancy and crops—have been made available through kiosks.

The Rajasthan legislature passed the Rajasthan Urban Land (Certification of Titles) Act in April 2016.

This law ensures that the state government is a guarantor for land titles in Rajasthan, and will provide compensation in case of issues of defective title.

The guarantee is based on certification provided by the Urban Land Title Certification Authority, which will verify ownership of any property for a fee.

Andhra Pradesh has taken a leap into the future. Its state government has tied up with a

Swedish firm to use new blockchain technology to prevent property fraud

As in all other trades, blockchain will allow participants in a distributed ledger to check the ownership of a land parcel

Way Forward:

Clear land titles will ease a lot of constraints—from making it easier for the poor to borrow from the formal financial sector to easing commercial land acquisition for infrastructure projects instead of the misuse of eminent domain.

Where property rights are ensured, so are the prosperity, freedom and ownership of wealth that brings real stability and peace.

ACCESS TO ANDAMAN EASED

Foreigners can visit inhabited islands without Restricted Areas Permit

The Union Home Ministry decided to lift restrictions as the government intends to boost tourism.

Foreigners no longer need a Restricted Areas Permit to visit 29 inhabited islands in the Andaman and Nicobar chain.

11 other uninhabited islands will also be thrown open to foreigners.

Restricted Areas Permit and other provisions:

The 29 inhabited islands have been excluded from the restricted area permit (RAP) notified under the Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order, 1963, till December 31, 2022, subject to certain conditions.

However, citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals having their origin in these countries would continue to require RAP to visit the Union Territory.

For visiting Mayabunder and Diglipur, citizens of Myanmar will continue to require RAP, which shall be issued only with the prior approval of the ministry.

Separate approvals of the competent authority would be required for visiting reserved forests, wildlife sanctuaries and tribal reserves.

SCIENCE AND TECH

EXERCISE MAITREE

1. It is a joint military exercise between the Indian Army and Royal Thai Army which will be conducted from 06 to 19 August 2018 in Thailand.
2. It is a platoon level exercise which comprises of infantry component.
3. The exercise will emphasize to hone the tactical and technical skills in joint counterinsurgency and counter-terrorist operations in the rural and urban scenario under UN mandate.
4. Due emphasis will be laid on increasing interoperability between forces from both countries which is crucial for the success of any joint operation.
5. Both sides will jointly train, plan and execute a series of well developed tactical drills for neutralization of likely threats that may be encountered in urban warfare scenario.

CHANDRAYAAN-2

The mission, Chandrayaan 2, has been postponed again from its proposed October launch to January 2019. This time, the delay was caused because the indigenously developed lander was having trouble with rethrottling. The lander has now gone back to the design table for a design change.

Chandrayaan 2's journey has been rather slow so far. Although the mission was envisioned way back in November 2007, as a joint mission between India and Russia, it had faced a series of setbacks.

As per the tie-up, Russia was supposed to provide the lander for the mission, while India would develop the rover and orbiter. ISRO had its prototype ready for a 2013 launch but Russia delayed delivering the lander. Later, Russia said it would not be able to provide a lander for ISRO.

India then called off the deal and decided to make the Chandrayaan mission completely indigenous. The development has taken time,

and given that it is the first time India is developing a lander, the programme has faced many glitches like the present one.

Chandrayaan-2:

Chandrayaan-2 includes soft-landing on Moon and moving a rover on its surface. It is an advanced version of the previous Chandrayaan-1 mission. It consists of an orbiter, lander and rover configuration.

The Orbiter spacecraft when launched from Sriharikota will travel to the Moon and release the Lander, which will in turn deploy a tiny Rover to roam the lunar surface — all three sending data and pictures to Earth.

It is planned to be launched as a composite stack into the earth parking orbit (EPO) of 170 X 18,500 km by GSLV-Mk II.

RISECREEK

1. Computer scientists and a student team from the IIT- Madras have developed the first of a family of six industry-standard microprocessors.
2. The initial batch of 300 chips named RISECREEK and produced under Project Shakti has been fabricated free at Intel's facility at Oregon, U.S., to run the Linux operating system.
3. The IIT team says its microprocessors can be adapted by others, as the design is open source.
4. They optimise power use and compete with international units such as the Cortex A5 from Advanced RISC Machines (ARM).
5. On the test bench, the IIT design fared better than the A5, measured in terms of the DMIPS per megahertz rating, scoring 1.68 against the competition's 1.57.
6. At a frequency of 350 MHz, RISECREEK can meet the demands of defence and strategic equipment such as NAVIC (Indian Regional Navigation Satellite) and the Internet of Things (IoT) electronics.

The plan includes a family of six types of microprocessors. The first to be ready is the C class, RISECREEK.

2. The E class of microprocessors that can be used in smart cards, IoT devices, fan/motor controls, etc, is almost ready
3. The I class, which can be used for mobile phones, desktops and mobile phones is soon to follow.
4. The design for the S class which can be used for enterprise-class servers is underway, and the H class, which will be used for building High-Performance computers with a massive parallel processing capacity.
5. The H Class is part of the next phase of development, which the team calls the Para-SHAKTI (parallel SHAKTI) project.
6. Para-SHAKTI will make microprocessors for indigenous high-performance computers with over 32 SHAKTI cores.

Project Shakti:

1. The Shakti plan was started in 2014 as an IIT-Madras initiative.
2. It is not aimed at only building processors alone. It also aims to build high speed interconnect for servers and supercomputers based on variants of the RapidIO and GenZ standards.
3. These are key to build large clusters of processors to get Petaflop and Exaflop level supercomputers.
