

GOVERNANCE**India Justice Report 2020**

The India Justice Report (2020) prepared by the Tata Trusts in collaboration with the Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause, DAKSH, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative has been released recently.

The Report assesses the capacity of various states to deliver justice.

Key Points

The report analysed expenditure, vacancies, representation of women, human resources, infrastructure, workload, diversity across 18 large and medium-sized states with a population of over 1 crore and 7 small states.

Findings:

- The overall ranking is a result of a state's ranking across the four pillars of justice delivery system - Judiciary, Police, Prisons and Legal aid.
- Maharashtra was ranked topmost among 18 states for the second time in a row, followed by Tamil Nadu and Telangana. Uttar Pradesh remains last.
- Amongst the smaller states, Goa remained at the top and Arunachal Pradesh at the bottom.

Women Ratio in Police Force:

- Bihar leads the list of 25 states for employing most women in its police force which is 25.3%.
- It is the only state to have more than 20% women in the police force. However, women account for only 6.1% in the officer category.
- Tamil Nadu has the highest percentage of women police officers (24.8%), followed by Mizoram (20.1%).
- Women Ratio in Judiciary:
- Overall, only 29% judges in High Courts across the country are women, but no state except Sikkim has over 20% women judges.
- Four states - Bihar, Uttarakhand, Tripura and Meghalaya have no woman judges in high courts.

Social Justice:

- Karnataka is the only state to meet its quotas for SC, ST and OBC in both officer cadre and constabulary.
- Chhattisgarh being the only other state that meets the diversity requirements for constabulary.

Lack of Finances:

- In the last 25 years, only 1.5 crore people have received legal aid with the Centre spending Rs. 1.05 per capita in 2019-20.

High Proportion of Undertrials:

- Two-thirds of all prisoners are undertrials awaiting a conviction.
- A person who is being held in custody awaiting trial for a crime.

Causes of Poor Justice Delivery:

Legal services institutions remain affected by a lack of infrastructure, uneven human resource distribution, poor utilization of central funds and an inability to effectively harness Lok Adalats to ease the burden on the judiciary.

INDIAN ECONOMY**Gold Schemes in India**

The government is planning to bring changes in the existing gold deposit and gold metal loan schemes to gradually stop investors from excessive investment in physical gold.

Key Points

- Despite the government's emphasis on gold monetisation over the last few years, including issuing gold bonds as part of its borrowing programmes, investment in physical gold and purchases of jewellery continues to outpace investment through financial channels.

Government's Plan:

- A number of amendments have been finalised in the existing revamped Gold Deposit Scheme, revamped Gold Metal Loan Scheme and India Gold Coin Scheme.
- The existing scheme will be made far from attractive from investment convenience and taxation aspects.

Gold Schemes**Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS):**

- GMS, which modified the then existing 'Gold Deposit Scheme' (GDS) and 'Gold Metal Loan Scheme' (GML), was launched in 2015 to mobilise gold held by households and institutions of the country and facilitate its use for productive purposes, and in the long run, to reduce country's reliance on the import of gold.

Revamped Gold Deposit Scheme (R-GDS):

- Deposit limit: The minimum deposit at any one time shall be raw gold (bars, coins, jewellery excluding stones and other metals) equivalent to 30 grams of gold. There is no maximum limit for deposit under the scheme.
- Proposed Changes in the existing scheme: The minimum requirement of 30 grams could be reduced to 1 gram. Interest earnings and capital gains under the scheme will continue to be exempt from capital gains tax, wealth tax and income tax.
- The designated banks can accept gold deposits under the Short Term (1-3 years) Bank Deposit (STBD) as well as medium (5-7 years) and long (12-15 years) term government deposit schemes.
- All scheduled commercial banks are allowed to implement this scheme and are also free to fix interest rates.
- Depositors can also make premature withdrawal of their deposits. It will be subject to a minimum lock-in period and penalty to be determined by individual banks.

Revamped Gold Metal Loan Scheme (GML)

- It is a mechanism under which a jewellery manufacturer borrows gold metal instead of rupees and settles the GML with the sale proceeds obtained.
- GML can be availed for 180 days in case of domestic jewellery manufacturers and for 270 days in case of exports.

Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme:

Aim: It seeks to encourage people to buy gold bonds instead of actual gold.

Issuer: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issues these bonds on behalf of the central government.

Features:

- The gold bonds will be denominated in multiples of gram (s) of gold with a basic unit of one gram while the minimum investment limit is two grams.
- The maximum subscription is 500 grams per person per fiscal (April-March) and for joint holders, the limit will be applied on the first holder.
- The gold bonds will be sold only to resident Indian entities including individuals, Hindu undivided families, trusts, universities, and charitable institutions.
- The bond tenure is eight years with exit option beginning the fifth year onwards. They will also be tradable.
- These bonds can also be used as collateral for loans.
- Associated Issue (Discourages rupee bond): The price of gold internationally is linked to the dollar. The new gold bonds, if made attractive enough, could become a substitute to rupee bonds.
- Indians will start putting their money into a type of dollar bond rather than rupee bonds. This might exert an upward pressure on interest rates.

The Gold Coin and Bullion Scheme:

The government issues gold coins, which have the Ashok Chakra engraved on them.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

2021: Year Of Indo-French Alliance Towards A Greener Planet

Union Minister for Environment and French Minister for Ecological Transition launched the Indo-French Year of the Environment recently.



Key Points

Objective: To strengthen Indo-French cooperation in sustainable development, increase the effectiveness of actions in favour of global environment protection and give them greater visibility.

- The Indo-French Year of the Environment over the period 2021-2022 would be based on five main themes: (1) Environmental protection; (2) Climate change; (3) Biodiversity conservation; (4) Sustainable urban development; (5) Development of renewable energies and energy efficiency.
- It is also a platform for engaging in discussions on critical areas of collaboration relating to the environment and allied areas.
- From the Indian side, it will be coordinated by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) along with the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, and other concerned Ministries/Departments/Organisations.
- A joint screening committee will also be set up to finalize the calendar of the events for the Indo-French Year of the Environment.

India-France alliance is the main pillar of the International Solar Alliance launched by Indian PM.

CYBER SECURITY**Data Privacy can take the form of non-price competition: CCI**

A study by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has said that the Data privacy can take the form of non-price competition and abuse of dominance can lower privacy protection,

Key Points

- CCI noted that an aspect of data in the context of competition in digital communications market is the conflict between allowing access and protecting consumer privacy.
- Abuse of dominance can take the form of lowering the privacy protection and therefore fall within the ambit of antitrust as low privacy standard implies lack of consumer welfare.
- The study also made observations about other non-price factors such as quality of service (QoS), data speeds and bundled offerings, which are likely to be the new drivers of competitive rivalry between service providers in telecom sector in addition to just price.

Competition Commission of India (CCI)

- It is a statutory body of the Government of India.
- It is responsible for enforcing The Competition Act, 2002 throughout India.
- It prevents activities that have an appreciable adverse effect on competition in India.
- It was established on 14 October 2003 and became fully functional in May 2009.
- CCI consists of a Chairperson and 6 Members appointed by the Central Government.

It is the duty of the Commission to:

- eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition,
- promote and sustain competition,
- protect the interests of consumers,
- ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India.

INDIAN HISTORY**Lala Lajpat Rai**

Recently, the Prime Minister paid tribute to Lala Lajpat Rai on his Jayanti.

Lala Lajpat Rai's birth anniversary is celebrated on **28th of January** every year.

Key Points

- Lala Lajpat Rai was one of the greatest freedom fighters of India.
- He was also called 'Punjab Kesari' and 'Lion of Punjab'.
- He studied law at the Government College, Lahore.
- Was influenced by Swami Dayananda Saraswati and joined the Arya Samaj in Lahore.
- He believed that the ideals in Hinduism combined with nationalism will lead to the establishment of a secular state.
- Along with Bipin Chandra Pal and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, he formed the Lal-Bal-Pal trio of extremist leaders.
- He was also involved with the Hindu Mahasabha.
- He fought against untouchability.

- He was born on 28th January, 1865 in a small village named **Dhudike** in Punjab's Ferozepur district.

Contributions:**Political:**

- He joined the Indian National Congress (INC) and participated in many political agitations in Punjab.
- He was opposed to the partition of Bengal.
- He founded the Home Rule League of America in 1917 in New York. In the USA, he worked to get moral support for the Indian independence movement from the international community.
- He was also elected President of the All India Trade Union Congress.
- He supported the non-cooperation movement of Gandhi at the Nagpur session of the Congress in 1920.
- He protested against the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre that followed.
- He was elected deputy leader of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1926.
- In 1928, he moved a resolution in the assembly refusing cooperation with the Simon Commission since the Commission had no Indian members.

Social:

- He founded Hindu Relief movement in 1897 to provide help to the famine -stricken people and thus preventing them falling into the clutches of the missionaries.
- He founded the Servants of People Society in 1921.
- His important literary works include Young India, England's Debt to India, Evolution of Japan, India's Will to Freedom, Message of the Bhagavad Gita, Political Future of India, Problem of National Education in India, The Depressed Classes, and the travelogue 'United States of America'.
- He co-founded the Punjab National Bank in 1894.

Death:

In 1928, he was leading a silent protest against the Simon Commission in Lahore when he was brutally lathi-charged by Superintendent of Police, James Scott. He died of injuries sustained a few weeks later.

AGRICULTURE**GI Tag for Pakistani Basmati**

Recently, Pakistan received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag for its Basmati rice under its Geographical Indications Act 2020.

Pakistan is fighting a case in the European Union (EU) against India's move to get Basmati Rice as its product.

Key Points**India-Pakistan on Basmati Rice:**

- The issue of protecting Basmati rice as a product of Pakistan came to the forefront after India submitted an application to the European Union (EU) claiming sole ownership of the commodity in September 2019.
- India also claimed that the region producing basmati is a part of northern India, below the foothills of the Himalayas forming part of the Indo-Gangetic plain.
- The Indian claim to the EU was challenged in December 2019 and the main argument by Pakistan was that Basmati rice was a joint product of India and Pakistan.
- International laws require that before applying for registration of any product in the international market it has to be protected under the geographical indication laws of that country.
- Pakistan enacted the Geographical Indications (Registration and Protection) Act in March 2020, which gives it the right to oppose Indian application for registration of Basmati rice exclusive rights.

Significance of Pakistan's GI tag for its Basmati:

- A GI tag would strengthen Pakistan's case in the EU.
- Pakistan exported 5,00,000-7,00,000 tonnes of Basmati rice annually to different parts of the world out of which 2,00,000 tonnes to 2,50,000 tonnes is being shipped to EU countries.

Effect on India:

- Basmati rice was a joint heritage of India and Pakistan and Pakistan is as entitled to secure its Basmati rice trade as India.

- However, Pakistan securing the GI tag for its basmati rice would, in no way, affect India's Basmati exports.

GI tag for Basmati Rice in India:

- India is a producer of premium Basmati and it has been grown from time immemorial in the Indo-Gangetic Plains (IGP) area of India and 18 districts of Pakistan's Punjab.
- It had been a tough battle for the country to protect Basmati name from the encroachment of various nations which all came out with their own versions of Basmati.
- Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) got GI tag for the region located in IGP below the foothills of the Himalayas, spread across seven states (Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Western Uttar Pradesh (26 districts) and Delhi) in May 2010.

Reasons Given:

- The origin and reputation of Basmati rice as a 'long-grain, aromatic rice' from the IGP is found in tradition, folklore, scientific and culinary literature and political-historical records.
- Dehraduni Basmati, Amritsar Basmati and Tarawari Basmati are few varieties which have become famous over the period of hundreds of years.

BIODIVERSITY & ENVIRONMENT**National Marine Turtle Action Plan**

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has released 'Marine Mega Fauna Stranding Guidelines' and 'National Marine Turtle Action Plan'.

Key Points

The documents contain ways and means to guide improved coordination amongst the government, civil society, and all relevant stakeholders on the response to cases of stranding, entanglement, injury or mortality of marine mammals, and also conservation of marine turtles.

These two documents highlight:

- actions to be taken for handling stranded animals on the shore, stranded or entangled animals in the sea or on a boat,
- management actions for improved coordination,
- reducing threats to marine species and their habitats,
- rehabilitation of degraded habitats,
- enhancing people's participation,
- advance scientific research and exchange of information on marine mammals and marine turtles and their habitats.

Status of turtles in India

Five species of Indian turtles along with their IUCN status are as follows:

1. Olive Ridley – Vulnerable
2. Green turtle – Endangered
3. Loggerhead – Vulnerable
4. Hawksbill – Critically Endangered
5. Leather back – Vulnerable

They are protected in Indian Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, under Schedule I.

They are also protected under the Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation programme.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**Kala Utsav 2020**

Recently, Kala Utsav 2020 - an annual function to promote arts in education, was organised by the Ministry of Education.

Key Points

- **Ministry Involved:** Kala Utsav is an initiative of the Ministry of Education (MoE) to promote arts in education.
- This programme was initiated under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), which has now been merged with other schemes under 'Samagra Shiksha – an integrated scheme for school education'.
- **Aim:** Kala Utsav aims at nurturing and showcasing the artistic talent of school students at the secondary stage in the country.
- District/State/National Level Utsav is structured as an art festival which includes performances and display of exhibits.

In Accordance with NCF 2005:

In the context of education of Arts (Music, Theatre, Dance, Visual Arts and Crafts), the initiative is guided by the recommendations of the National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF-2005).

Importance:

- Introduction of Indigenous Toys and Games segment in Kala Utsav 2020 supported the 'Vocal for Local' initiative.
- It is in sync with the recommendations of National Education Policy 2020 which emphasises the promotion of arts and culture through education.
- It complements the Samagra Shiksha Scheme by enhancing aesthetics and artistic experiences for secondary-level students, which play a major role in creating awareness of India's rich cultural heritage and its vibrant diversity in line with 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.
- It enhances the students' reasoning, comprehensibility, problem solving, cognitive and decisive abilities, which are helpful in the all-round development of the student.

Other Initiatives Taken for Promoting Arts:

- Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojana (Ministry of Culture).
- Scheme for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Ministry of Culture).

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. How does the draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2020 differ from the existing EIA Notification, 2006.

Ans:

Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has proposed a draft Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) notification 2020, that seeks to replace the current EIA notification which goes back to 2006.

Major Differences Between Draft And Current Notification

Post-Facto Approval: From a stark departure from the current notification, the new draft allows for post-facto approval for projects.

- It means that the clearances for projects can be awarded even if they have started construction or have been running phase without securing environmental clearances.
- Post facto approval is the derogation of the fundamental principles of environmental jurisprudence and violation of the "precautionary principle," which is a principle of environmental sustainability.

Public Consultation Process: The draft notification provides for a reduction of the time period from 30 days to 20 days for the public to submit their responses during a public hearing for any application seeking environmental clearance.

- If adequate time is not given for the preparation of views, comments, and suggestions to those who would be affected by the project, then such public hearings would not be meaningful.

Compliance Report Issue: The 2006 notification required that the project proponent submit a report every six months, showing that they are carrying out their activities as per the terms on which permission has been given.

- However, the new draft requires the promoter to submit a report only once every year.

Diluting EIA Process: Unlike the existing notification, with the draft notification, the central government gets the power to categorize projects as "strategic."

- Once a project is considered as strategic, the draft notification states that no information related to such projects shall be placed in the public domain.
- Further, the draft notification states that the new construction projects up to 1,50,000 square meters (instead of the existing 20,000 square metres) do not need "detailed scrutiny" by the Expert Committee, nor do they need EIA studies and public consultation.

Conclusion

The draft EIA rule 2020, envisages consolidating the existing EIA rules and has the potential of alleviating some ambiguity in the present law. However, it must not compromise the existing principles of environmental sustainability.

DAILY QUIZ

1. While being cautious of inflation, the RBI has recently decided to continue the accommodative tance in its latest monetary policy to support growth. Accommodative stance means –
a) **RBI may reduce the policy rates to increase the money supply in the economy.**

- b) RBI would have the flexibility to either increase or decrease the policy rates by taking into account the macroeconomic conditions.
- c) RBI would either keep the rates constant or increase the rates.
- d) Key policy rates would move in either direction.
2. During previous monetary policy, RBI introduced a tool called long-term repo operation (LTRO). Which of the following is not true about LTRO?
- a) Under LTRO, RBI provides longer term loans to banks at the prevailing repo rate.
- b) LTRO helped RBI ensure that banks reduce their marginal cost of funds-based lending rate, without reducing policy rates.
- c) RBI introduced LTRO to inject liquidity in the system, as well as to ensure transmission of rates.
- d) LTRO helps to prevent bringing down the yields for shorter-term securities (in the 1-3-year tenor) in the bond market.**
3. Under the Targeted Long-Term Repo Operations (TLTRO), banks can invest in specific sectors through which of the following debt instruments to push the credit flow in the economy?
1. Corporate bonds
 2. Commercial papers
 3. Non-convertible debentures
- Choose correct answer:
- a) 1 only
- b) 3 only
- c) 1 and 2
- d) 1, 2 and 3**
4. Consider the following statements:
1. India's R&D investment in science and technology is less than BRIC nations.
 2. India's gross expenditure on R&D (GERD) as a percentage of GDP stood below 0.5% in 2020.
- 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. Consider the following statements with reference to International Energy Agency:
1. It is a Paris-based autonomous intergovernmental organisation established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
 2. India has signed Strategic Partnership Agreement with the IEA.
- 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