

**GOVERNANCE**

**Centre Extends Powers Related to Citizenship Application**

Recently, the Supreme Court (SC) has widened the scope of section 304B of Indian Penal Code (IPC) by indicating that there is no straitjacket formula to determine the cruelty against women.

**Key Points**

**About Section 304B of IPC:**

- According to Section 304B, to make out a case of dowry death, a woman should have died of burns or other bodily injuries or “otherwise than under normal circumstances” within seven years of her marriage.
- She should have suffered cruelty or harassment from her husband or in-laws “soon before her death” in connection with demand for dowry.

**Highlights of the Judgement:**

- Section 304B of IPC must be interpreted keeping in mind the legislative intent to curb the social evil of bride burning and dowry demand.
- The court should use their discretion to determine if the period between the cruelty or harassment and the death of the victim would come within the term “soon before”.
- 1. For such determination, an important factor is the establishment of a "proximate and live link" between the cruelty and the consequential death of the victim.
- 2. Over the years, courts had interpreted the phrase 'soon before' in Section 304B as 'immediately before'. This interpretation would make it necessary for a woman to have been harassed moments before she died.
- Even the spectrum of cruelty is quite varied, as it can range from physical, verbal or even emotional. No straitjacket formulae can therefore be laid down to define what exact the phrase ‘soon before’ entails.
- Further, the phrase “otherwise than under normal circumstances” in the section calls for a liberal interpretation. Section 304-B, IPC does not take a pigeonhole approach in categorising death as homicidal or suicidal or accidental.
- Also, the examination of the accused about the incriminatory material against him should be done in a fair manner. However, there is a need to balance other important considerations such as the right to a speedy trial.

**Reports on Dowry Death:**

- Dowry deaths accounted for 40% to 50% homicides in the country for almost a decade from 1999 to 2018.
- In 2019 alone, 7,115 cases of dowry death were registered under Section 304B of the Indian Penal Code.

**INDIAN AGRICULTURE**

**Horticulture Cluster Development Programme**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has launched the Horticulture Cluster Development Programme (CDP) in order to promote the export of horticultural produce.

**Key Points**

**Cluster Development Programme (CDP):**

- **About:** It is a central sector programme aimed at growing and developing identified horticulture clusters to make them globally competitive. Horticulture cluster is a regional/geographical concentration of targeted horticulture crops.
- **Implementation:** It will be implemented by the National Horticulture Board (NHB) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare. In a pilot phase, the programme will be implemented in 12 horticulture clusters out of the total 53 clusters selected for the programme. These clusters will be implemented through Cluster Development Agencies (CDAs) which are appointed on the recommendations of the respective State/UT Government.
- **Objectives:** To address all major issues related to the Indian horticulture sector including pre-production, production, post-harvest management, logistics, marketing and branding. To leverage geographical specialisation and promote integrated and market-led development of horticulture clusters. To converge with other initiatives of the Government such as the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund.
- **Expected Benefit:** The programme will benefit about 10 lakh farmers and is expected to attract an investment of Rs. 10,000 crore when implemented in all the 53 clusters.

### **Horticulture Sector in India:**

- India is the second-largest producer of horticulture crops globally, accounting for approximately 12% of the world's production of fruits and vegetables. India is a leader in producing fruits like Mango, Banana, Pomegranate, Sapota, Acid Lime and Aonla.
- In 2018-19, Andhra Pradesh followed by Maharashtra and UP were the top states in fruit production. West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh were the top States in vegetable production.
- The area under horticulture crops increased to 25.5 million hectare in 2018-19, which is 20% of the total area under foodgrain, and produced 314 million tonnes.
- **Recent steps taken for this sector:**
  1. The Ministry has provided an enhanced allocation of Rs. 2250 Crore for the year 2021-22 for 'Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture' (MIDH).
  2. MIDH is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the holistic growth of the horticulture sector covering fruits, vegetables, root & tuber crops, mushrooms, spices, flowers, aromatic plants, coconut, cashew, cocoa and bamboo.

### **Way Forward**

There is tremendous scope for enhancing the productivity of Indian horticulture which is imperative to cater to the country's estimated demand of 650 Million MT of fruits and vegetables by the year 2050. Some of the new initiatives like focus on planting material production, cluster development programme, credit push through Agri Infra Fund, formation and promotion of FPOs (Farmers Producer Organisations) are the right steps in this direction.

## **SOCIAL ISSUE**

### **EPFO and ESIC Extension To Covid-Hit Families**

Recently, the government has announced an extension of pension coverage and insurance benefits for families of those who died due to Covid-19.

#### **Key Points**

#### **Extension of Benefits Under ESIC Scheme:**

- All dependent family members of such persons (who died of Covid) will be eligible for a pension equivalent to 90% of the average daily wage drawn by the worker as per the existing rules. This benefit will be available retrospectively with effect from 24th March 2020 till 24th March 2022.
- The eligibility conditions for the ESIC benefits are likely to include the norm that the insured person must have been registered on the ESIC online portal at least three months prior to the diagnosis of Covid resulting in death, the insured person must have been employed for wages and contributions for at least 78 days.

#### **Under EPFO-EDLI:**

- The maximum insurance benefit has been increased to Rs 7 lakh from Rs 6 lakh.
- The provision of minimum insurance benefit of Rs 2.5 lakh has been restored and it will apply retrospectively from February 2020 for the next three years.
- Benefits are being made available to families of even those employees who may have changed jobs in the last 12 months preceding his/her death.
- All surviving dependent family members of EPFO are eligible to avail benefits of EDLI in case of death of the member. About 6.53 crore families are expected to be eligible.

### **Employees' State Insurance (ESI) Scheme**

#### **About:**

- It is a multidimensional social system which provides socio-economic protection to the worker population and immediate dependent or family covered under the ESI scheme.
- The ESI is an integrated measure of social Insurance embodied in the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948.

#### **Coverage:**

- ESI Act applies to all factories and notified establishments located in implemented areas employing 10 or more persons and is applicable on employees drawing wages up to Rs 21,000 per month (Rs 25,000 for persons with disabilities).
- It covers about 3.49 crore of family units of workers and provides cash benefits and medical facilities to 13.56 crore beneficiaries.

**Employees' Deposit-Linked Insurance**

- It is an insurance cover provided by the EPFO for private sector salaried employees. It was launched in 1976. Any employee who has an EPF account automatically becomes eligible for the EDLI scheme.
- The registered nominee receives a lump-sum payment in the event of the death of the person insured, during the period of the service. It applies to all organisations registered under the Employees Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952.
- The EDLI scheme is managed on the basis of 0.5% of monthly wages paid by the employer to the fund and there is no employee contribution. The nominee registered by the employee is eligible to claim the benefit under the scheme.

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY****Disinfection System Vajra Kavach**

Vajra Kavach is a simple disinfection process that enables Corona Warriors to reuse their masks and PPEs.

**Key Points****About Vajra Kavach:**

- Vajra Kavach's UV (Ultra Violet) disinfection system removes any possible traces of the disease-causing SARS-Cov-2 (Covid-19) virus from Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), N95 masks, coats, gloves and gowns.
- It enables reuse of PPEs and other materials used by healthcare workers. It thus protects not only them, but our environment too, by helping reduce biomedical waste generation. It is also making personal protective equipment more available, affordable, and accessible.

**NIDHI-PRAYAS:**

- NIDHI-PRAYAS is National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovation PRomoting and Accelerating Young and aspiring Innovators & startups.
- The Department of Science & Technology has launched a NIDHI program under which programmes for setting up of incubators, seed fund, accelerators and 'Proof of concept' grants for innovators and entrepreneurs have been launched. Under NIDHI, PRAYAS programme has been initiated in which established Technology Business Incubators (TBI) are supported with PRAYAS grant to support innovators and entrepreneurs with grants for 'Proof of Concept (PoC)' and developing prototypes. PoC is evidence that a business idea works.
- A maximum grant of Rs. 220 lakh is given to a TBI for establishing a PRAYAS Centre which includes Rs. 100 lakh for PRAYAS SHALA, Rs. 20 lakh for operational cost of PRAYAS Centre and maximum of Rs. 10 lakh to one innovator for developing prototype. Funding for ten innovators is given to the TBI in a year.

**Objectives:**

1. To enable translation of an innovative idea to a prototype.
2. To provide a platform for faster experimentation and modify approaches in the idea to market journey.
3. To generate innovative solutions relevant to local and global problems.
4. To attract a large number of youth who demonstrate problem solving zeal and abilities.
5. To work on their new technology/knowledge/innovation based startups.
6. To enhance the pipeline in terms of quality and quantity of innovative startups to the incubators.

**IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM****OPV Sajag**

Recently, the Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) Sajag got commissioned into the Indian Coast Guard (ICG).

**Key Points****About Sajag:**

- It is third out of five OPV indigenously designed and built by the Goa Shipyard Limited. It is built under the Make in India policy. Other four OPVs are Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Saksham, ICGS Sachet, ICGS Sujeet, and ICGS Sarthak.
- It is fitted with advanced technology equipment, weapons and sensors capable of carrying a twin engine helicopter and four high speed boats. OPVs are long-range surface ships capable of coastal and offshore patrolling, policing maritime zones, control & surveillance, anti-smuggling & anti-piracy operations with limited wartime roles.

- It will help to manage greater responsibilities in the years to come and will strengthen ICGs concurrent multiple operations' capability towards ensuring safe, secure and clean seas as also responding promptly to maritime emergencies in neighbourhood.

#### **Indian Coast Guard:**

- **About:** It is an Armed Force, Search and Rescue and Maritime Law Enforcement agency under the Ministry of Defence. It has a wide range of task capabilities for both surface and air operations. It is one of the largest coast guards in the world.
- **Establishment:** It was established on 18th August 1978 by the Coast Guard Act, 1978. It performs non-military functions. The concept of forming ICG came into being after the 1971 war the blueprint for a multidimensional Coast Guard was conceived by the visionary Rustamji Committee.
- **Head and Headquarter:** The organization is headed by the Director General Indian Coast Guard (DGICG) exercising his overall command and superintendence from the Coast Guard Headquarters (CGHQ) located at New Delhi.
- **Jurisdiction:** It has jurisdiction over the territorial waters of India including contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone.
- **Function:**
  1. Responsible for marine environment protection in maritime zones of India.
  2. Acts as a coordinating authority for responding to oil spills in Indian waters.
  3. Protects India's maritime interests and enforces its maritime law.

#### **2. World No Tobacco Day**

Every year, on 31st May, the World Health Organization (WHO) and global partners celebrate World No Tobacco Day (WNTD).

#### **Key Points**

##### **Focus of WNTD 2021:**

- The theme for the World No Tobacco Day 2021 is "Commit to Quit".
- The WHO has honoured Indian Union health minister Harsh Vardhan with Director-General Special award for his efforts to control tobacco consumption in India. His leadership was instrumental in the 2019 national legislation to ban E-cigarettes & heated tobacco products.

##### **Socio Economic Burden of 'Tobacco':**

- In India, over 1.3 million deaths are attributable to tobacco use every year amounting to 3500 deaths per day, imposing a lot of avoidable socio-economic burden.
- In addition to the death and diseases it causes, tobacco also impacts the economic development of the country. Smokers face a 40-50% higher risk of developing severe disease deaths from Covid-19.
- As per the WHO study (Published in August 2020) titled "Economic Costs of Diseases and Deaths Attributable to Tobacco Use in India". It has been estimated that the economic burden of diseases and deaths attributable to use of tobacco in India was as high as Rs. 1.77 lakh crores, amounting to approx 1% of GDP.

##### **Measures towards tobacco control in India:**

- India adopted the tobacco control provisions under WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).
- Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003:
  1. It replaced the Cigarettes Act of 1975 (largely limited to statutory warnings- 'Cigarette Smoking is Injurious to Health' to be displayed on cigarette packs and advertisements. It did not include non-cigarettes).
  2. The 2003 Act also included cigars, bidis, cheroots, pipe tobacco, hookah, chewing tobacco, pan masala, and gutka.
- Promulgation of the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Ordinance, 2019: Which prohibits Production, Manufacture, Import, Export, Transport, Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement of e-Cigarettes.
- National Tobacco Quitline Services (NTQLS): Tobacco Quitline Services have the potential to reach a large number of tobacco users with the sole objective to provide telephone-based information, advice, support, and referrals for tobacco cessation.



- mCessation Programme: It is an initiative using mobile technology for tobacco cessation. India launched mCessation using text messages in 2016 as part of the government's Digital India initiative.

**Decline in Tobacco Consumption:**

- The prevalence of tobacco use has decreased by six percentage points from 34.6% in 2009-10 to 28.6% in 2016-17.
- Under the National Health Policy 2017, India has set an ambitious target of reducing tobacco use by 30% by 2025.

**WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control**

- Governments adopt and implement the tobacco control provisions of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).
- It is the first international treaty negotiated under the auspices of the WHO.
- It was adopted by the World Health Assembly (apex decision making body of WHO) on 21st May 2003 and entered into force on 27th February 2005.
- It was developed in response to the globalization of the tobacco epidemic and is an evidence-based treaty that reaffirms the right of all people to the highest standard of health.
- The FCTC's measures to combat tobacco use include:
  1. Price and tax measures.
  2. Large, graphic warnings on tobacco packages.
  3. 100% smoke-free public spaces.
  4. A ban on tobacco marketing.
  5. Support for smokers who want to quit.
  6. Prevention of tobacco industry interference.

**DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns. Explain the term western disturbances and their impact on the Indian weather systems.**

**Ans:**

**Introduction**

Western Disturbances are low-pressure depressions that occur during winters, particularly in northern India. They are the extratropical storms that originate in the Mediterranean region and bring sudden winter rain and snow to the north-western parts of the Indian subcontinent.

**Body**

**Impact of western disturbances on the Indian weather systems:**

1. Western disturbances are estimated to bring 5-10% of India's total annual rainfall. They are the cause of the most winter and pre-monsoon season rainfall across North-West India.
2. Western disturbances are usually associated with a cloudy sky, higher night temperatures, and unusual rain.
3. Wheat is one of the most important crops, which helps to meet India's food security. Western disturbances precipitation has great importance in the growth of wheat and other Rabi crops. However, strong western disturbances bring excessive precipitation that can cause crop damage, landslides, floods, and avalanches. On the other hand, weak western disturbances are associated with crop failure and water problems across north India.

**Conclusion**

Western disturbances are generally observed as a favorable beneficial phenomenon. However, owing to climate change, they have caused disasters in the form of cloud bursts and hailstorms.

**DAILY QUIZ**

**Q1. Consider the following statements with reference to Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM):**

1. It is a central government initiative under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
2. The mission's goal is to provide to all households in rural India safe and adequate water through individual household tap connections by 2022.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q2. India celebrates May 11 as 'National Technology Day' every year, in this context, the day (May 11) was chosen because,**

1. India successfully conducted three nuclear tests at Indian Army's Pokhran Test Range in Rajasthan.
2. India tested its first indigenous aircraft Hansa-3 which was designed by the National Aerospace Laboratory.
3. The day saw the successful completion of test firing of India's surface-to-air missile Trishul.

Select the correct answers using the code below:

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3**

Q3. A straight line joining Jaipur and Bhopal is likely to pass through which of the following states?

1. Maharashtra
2. Chhattisgarh
3. Odisha
4. Telangana

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- a. 1, 3 and 4 only
- b. 1 and 4 only**
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q4. Cloud seeding is an artificial way to induce moisture in the clouds so as to cause a rainfall. Which of these compounds are used in this process?

1. Beryllium potash
2. Silver iodide
3. Dry ice
4. Sodium Chloride

Select the correct answer using the codes below.

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 3 and 4 only
- c. 2, 3 and 4 only**
- d. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q5. You are working as an undercover agent for Research & Analysis Wing (R&W) and have been taken to an unknown location in Australia. The Research & Analysis Wing (R&W) team back in India knows your longitude due to the time zone in which you have been captivated. You need to communicate only your latitude to the officers in India to help them evacuate you. You can know the latitude of your place by

- a. finding out the rate of rotation of the moon
- b. measuring the rate of revolution of earth around the sun
- c. measuring the angle of the pole star from your place
- d. it is not possible by any of the above**