

**INDIAN SOCIETY**

**Khasi Inheritance of Property Bill, 2021**

Recently, the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (KHADC) in Meghalaya announced that it would introduce the 'Khasi Inheritance of Property Bill, 2021. The bill is aimed at "equitable distribution" of parental property among siblings in the Khasi community.

If implemented, the proposed Bill would modify an age-old customary practice of inheritance of the matrilineal Khasi tribe.

**Key Points**

**About Matrilineal System of Inheritance:**

- The three tribes of Meghalaya — Khasis, Jaintias, and Garos — practise a matrilineal system of inheritance. In this system, lineage and descent are traced through the mother's clan.
- In other words, children take the mother's surname, the husband moves into his wife's house, and the youngest daughter (khatduh) of the family is entrusted the full share of the ancestral - or the clan's - property. The khatduh becomes the "custodian" of the land, and assumes all responsibility associated with the land, including taking care of aged parents, unmarried or destitute siblings.
- This inheritance tradition applies only to ancestral or clan/community property, which has been with the family for years. The self-acquired property can be distributed equally among siblings.
- In this traditional set-up, if a couple does not have any daughters, then the property goes to the wife's elder sister, and her daughters.
- If the wife does not have sisters, then the clan usually takes over the property.

**Effect of this System on Women Empowerment:**

Women activists have often pointed out that the matrilineal system in Meghalaya rarely empowers women.

**• Issue in Custodianship:**

1. Custodianship is often misconstrued as ownership vested in just one person, that is the youngest daughter.
2. This custodianship comes with the responsibility to care for aged parents, unmarried or destitute siblings and other clan members.
3. Moreover, the custodian cannot buy or sell the land, without taking permission from her maternal uncle.

**• Matrilineal is Not Matriarchal:**

1. People often confuse matrilineal with matriarchal, where women function as heads.
2. While women may have freedom of mobility and easier access to education, they are not decision makers in Meghalaya.
3. There are barely any women in positions of power, in politics, or heading institutions.

**About the Bill:**

**• Provisions:**

1. The proposed Bill is envisaged to provide the "equitable distribution" of parental property among siblings – both male and female.
2. The Bill would let parents decide who they want to will their property to.
3. It would prevent a sibling from getting parental property if they marry a non-Khasi and accept the spouse's customs and culture.

- **Need For the Bill:** Over the years, a few groups have protested the system of property inheritance, saying it "disinherits" men, and pressed for equitable property distribution between all children in the family.

- **Impact:** This would modify an age-old customary practice of inheritance of the matrilineal Khasi tribe. The legislation is aimed at economic empowerment based on the principle of equitable distribution of property.

**SOCIAL ISSUE**

**NHRC on Police Reforms**

Recently, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the State Governments to set up Police Complaints Authorities as per the judgment in Prakash Singh vs. Union of India, 2006.

## Police Reforms

- Police reforms aim to transform the values, culture, policies and practices of police organizations.
- It envisages police to perform their duties with respect for democratic values, human rights and the rule of law.
- It also aims to improve how the police interact with other parts of the security sector, such as the courts and departments of corrections, or executive, parliamentary or independent authorities with management or oversight responsibilities.
- Police come under the state list of schedule 7 of the Indian constitution.

## Key Points

### NHRC Recommendations:

- **Burden of Proof:** The MHA and the Law Ministry should consider implementing the recommendations of the 113th report of the Law Commission of India to add Section 114 B to the Indian Evidence Act, 1872. This would ensure that in case a person sustains injuries in police custody, it is presumed that the injuries were inflicted by the police and the burden of proof to explain the injury lies on the authority concerned.
- **Technology-Friendly Criminal Justice System:** The legal framework should be made technology-friendly to speed up the criminal justice system. Presently the legal framework is not suitable for the adoption of technology in the criminal justice system.
- **Ensuring Accountability:** The group also recommended that the Supreme Court's December 2020 order to instal CCTV cameras with night vision in all police stations should be "implemented immediately" to ensure accountability.
- **Community Policing:** It also pitched for the involvement of trained social workers and law students with police stations as part of community policing and incorporating community policing in police manuals, laws and advisories.

### Supreme Court Directives in Prakash Singh Case 2006:

- The seven main directives from the Supreme Court in the verdict were fixing the tenure and selection of the DGP (Director General of Police) to avoid situations where officers about to retire in a few months are given the post.
- In order to ensure no political interference, a minimum tenure was sought for the Inspector General of Police so that they are not transferred mid-term by politicians.
- The SC further directed postings of officers being done by Police Establishment Boards (PEB) comprising police officers and senior bureaucrats to insulate powers of postings and transfers from political leaders.
- Further, there was a recommendation of setting up the State Police Complaints Authority (SPCA) to give a platform where common people aggrieved by police action could approach.
- Apart from this, the SC directed separation of investigation and law and order functions to better improve policing, setting up of State Security Commissions (SSC) that would have members from civil society and forming a National Security Commission.

## Way Forward

**Modernisation of Police Forces:** The Modernisation of Police Forces (MPF) scheme was initiated in 1969-70 and has undergone several revisions over the years. However, there is a need to fully utilize the finances sanctioned by the government.

- **MPF scheme envisages:**
  1. Procurement of modern weapons
  2. Mobility of police forces
  3. Logistics support, upgradation of police wireless, etc
  4. A National satellite network

**Revamping Criminal Justice System:** Along with Police reforms, there is a need to reform the criminal justice system too. In this context, the recommendations of the Menon and Malimath Committees can be implemented. Some of the key recommendations are as follows:

1. Creation of a fund to compensate victims who turn hostile from the pressure of culprits.
2. Setting up separate authority at the national level to deal with crimes threatening the country's security.
3. A complete revamp of the entire criminal procedure system.

**BIODIVERSITY & ENVIRONMENT**

**Ganges River Dolphin**

Recently, the Ministry of Jal Shakti released a guide for the safe rescue and release of stranded Ganges River Dolphins. The document has been prepared by the Turtle Survival Alliance and the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department (EFCCD) of the Uttar Pradesh Government.

It was recognised as the National Aquatic Animal in 2009, by the Government of India.

**Key Points**

- **Scientific Name:** *Platanista gangetica gangetica*.
- **Discovery:** It was officially discovered in 1801.
- **Habitat:** They live in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems of Nepal, India, and Bangladesh.
- 1. The Ganges river dolphin can only live in freshwater and is essentially blind.
- 2. They hunt by emitting ultrasonic sounds, which bounces off of fish and other prey, enabling them to “see” an image in their mind. They are also called ‘susu’.
- **Population:** The global population of the species is estimated at 4,000, and nearly 80% found in the Indian subcontinent.

**Significance:** It is a reliable indicator of the health of the entire river ecosystem.

**Threats:**

- **Bycatch:** These dolphins and people both favor areas of the river where fish are plentiful and the water current is slower. This has led to fewer fish for people and more dolphins dying as a result of accidentally being caught in fishing nets, also known as bycatch.
- **Pollution:** Industrial, agricultural, and human pollution is another serious cause of habitat degradation.
- **Dams:** Construction of dams and other irrigation-related projects make them susceptible to inbreeding and more vulnerable to other threats because they cannot move to new areas. Dolphins below a dam are threatened by heavy pollution, increased fishing activities and vessel-traffic. They also have less food because dams disturb the migration, breeding cycles and habitat of fish and other prey.

**Conservation Status:**

1. **Indian Wildlife (Protection), Act 1972:** Schedule I.
2. **International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN):** Endangered.
3. **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES):** Appendix I (most endangered).
4. **Convention on Migratory Species (CMS):** Appendix II (migratory species that need conservation and management or would significantly benefit from international co-operation).

**Steps Taken:**

- **Project Dolphin:** The Prime Minister announced the government’s plan to launch a Project Dolphin in his Independence Day Speech 2020. It is on the lines of Project Tiger, which has helped increase the tiger population.
- **Dolphin Sanctuary:** Vikramshila Ganges Dolphin Sanctuary has been established in Bihar.
- **National Ganga River Dolphin Day:** The National Mission for Clean Ganga celebrates 5th October as National Ganga River Dolphin Day.
- **Conservation Plan:** The Conservation Action Plan for the Ganges River Dolphin 2010-2020, which “identified threats to Gangetic Dolphins and impact of river traffic, irrigation canals and depletion of prey-base on Dolphins populations”.

**IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**

**Project-15B Class Destroyer Ship: Visakhapatnam**

Recently, the first ship of the four Project-15B state-of-the-art stealth guided missile destroyers i.e. ‘Y 12704 (Visakhapatnam)’, was delivered to the Navy. The ship is constructed using indigenous steel DMR 249A and is amongst the largest destroyers constructed in India.

**Key Points**

**India’s Destroyer Construction Programme:**

- India’s indigenous Destroyer construction programme commenced in the late 1990s with the three Delhi class (P-15 class) warships and this was followed by three Kolkata class (P-15A) destroyers commissioned a decade later.

- Presently, under the P-15B (Visakhapatnam Class), a total of four warships are planned (Visakhapatnam, Mormugao, Imphal, Surat).
- The Destroyers come next only to an Aircraft Carrier (INS Vikramaditya) in terms of their reach and endurance.

**Project-15B:**

- Four Guided missile Destroyers of Project 15B (P 15B) are under construction at M/s Mazagaon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, Mumbai. The contract for construction of these four ships was signed in 2011.
- These ships are amongst the most technologically advanced Guided Missile Destroyers of the world, with state-of-the-art weapon/sensor package, advanced stealth features and a high degree of automation.

**Features of the P-15B Ships:**

- These ships are equipped with BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles and long-range Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAM).
- The ship has several indigenous weapons systems like medium range Surface-to-Air Missile (SAMs), indigenous torpedo tube launchers, anti-submarine indigenous rocket launchers and 76-mm super rapid gun mount.

**Other Three Ships of Project 15B:**

- The second ship of P15B, Mormugao was launched in 2016, and is being readied for harbour trials.
- The third ship (Imphal) was launched in 2019, and is at an advanced stage of outfitting.
- The fourth ship (Surat) is under block erection and will be launched within this current financial year (2022) .

**Role of P-15B:**

- The Indian Navy's responsibilities to safeguard a large coastline of 7516 Kms and about 1100 offshore islands along with 2.01 million sq km Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) have been enhanced in the present geopolitical scenario.
- Destroyers like the P-15B class shall play an important role in the larger oceans of the Indo-Pacific, making the Indian Navy a potent force.
- The guided missile Destroyers are deployed for various responsibilities like escort duties with the Carrier Battle Group to protect the Naval fleet against any air, surface and underwater threats.

**Other Recent Projects:**

- Project 75 (I): It envisages indigenous construction of submarines equipped with the state-of-the-art Air Independent Propulsion system at an estimated cost of Rs. 43,000 crore.
- Project 75: It is a programme by the Indian Navy that entails building six Scorpene-Class attack submarines. The programme has been undertaken with transfer of technology from French company Naval Group (formerly known as DCNS) at the Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL).

**DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns. To overcome import-dependency in pulses, adequate attention must be paid to structural issues as well as to undertake catalysing policy actions in India's pulse economy. Examine. (250 words)**

**Ans:**

**Introduction**

Pulses are the staple sources of protein for Indians and contribute significantly to their nutritional security. However, limited growth in domestic production, has led to India's increased import dependence. While the domestic production of pulses has risen by 122 per cent between 1981 and 2020 — from 11.5 million tonnes to 25.57 million tonnes — the imports have risen by 1,622 per cent from 0.13 million tonnes to 2.2 million tonnes.

**Body**

**Structural issues leading to import dependency of pulses**

- The sluggish performance of pulses production in the country has resulted in increasing deficit, on the one hand and depletion of foreign-currency reserves by soaring import bills, unpredictable price rise and lower net profit compared to competing crops, on the other hand.



- The production of pulses in India has been caught in the vicious cycle of low and uncertain yields, low per hectare returns resulting in farmers' least preference to grow pulses on irrigated and fertile parcel of land (farmers preferred to grow pulses on marginal lands with no use of production inputs), thereby leading to unstable and low yields.
- Pulse production remains unattractive to Indian farmers because of the relatively low productivity of pulses coupled with preference and policy support to cereals particularly to wheat and rice.
- The technological progress in these crops is slow compared to cereals and other cash crops due to hosts of factors.
- These crops have to compete with the superior cereals and cash crops for resources, research and infrastructure.
- Under this backdrop, the present paper tried to take stock of production, demand of pulses and their imports in India.
- There exists a wide yield gap in all the pulse crops. The sluggish growth in pulses production in India is leading to lower net availability.
- Thus, the increasing mismatch between production and consumption of pulses has resulted in larger imports of pulses in recent years.

#### **Measures needed**

- There is ample scope for bringing pulses in newer areas such as rice fallows, tal (lake) areas, hill agriculture and in intercropping for remunerating cropping system.
- An estimated additional 3.0 million hectare can be brought under such pulses cultivation across the country.
- New research efforts should be initiated to achieve a breakthrough in the productivity.
- Innovative ideas need to be implemented instead of conducting routine research and material evaluation.
- Scientists to work for development of shorter duration, widely adaptable and biotic and abiotic stress resistant varieties to boost the production of pulses.
- Modernization of pulse breeding programme, supporting genetic gains through transgenic technology, enhancing biological nitrogen fixation through development of super nodulating plant types and breeding short duration varieties for achieving self-sufficiency in pulses.
- Extension workers and agriculture technology information centres should work more towards development and dissemination of newer technologies.
- Development of shorter duration, widely adaptable and biotic and abiotic stress resistant varieties to boost the production of pulses.
- The pulses production in the country has increased significantly in the last five years. We need to leverage this for supplying pulses through PDS to provide nutritional security to masses.

#### **Conclusion**

India needs to produce 40-50 lakh tonnes of additional pulses for meeting the domestic requirement and this can be possible only if we develop high yielding short duration, drought and insect-pest resistance varieties of pulses. The important role that pulses can play in sustainable crop production systems, in particular through their contribution to improved soil fertility and to agro-biodiversity along with providing a balanced and healthy diet as evidenced by their use by the World Food Programme and other food aid initiatives makes it a naturally optimal choice.

#### **DAILY QUIZ**

Q1. With reference to Child Welfare Committee in India, consider the following statements:

1. As per the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) are to be constituted by State Government by notification in the Official Gazette for every district.
2. The Committee has the final authority to dispose of cases for the care, protection, treatment, development and rehabilitation of the children as well as to provide for their basic needs and protection of human rights.

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

Q2. 'Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA)' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of negotiations held between India and

- a. **European Union**
- b. Gulf Cooperation Council
- c. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
- d. Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Q3. What is "S-400 Triumf missile system", sometimes seen in the news?

- a. A Russian radar system
- b. India's indigenous anti-missile programme
- c. An American anti-missile system
- d. **A Russian designed long-range surface-to-air missile system**

Q4. Consider the following statements about World Gold Council:

- 1. It is the market development organisation for the gold industry.
- 2. It helps to support its members to mine in a responsible way and developed the Conflict Free Gold Standard.

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

Q5. In the Indian context, what is the implication of ratifying the 'Additional Protocol' with the 'International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'?

- a. **The civilian nuclear reactors come under IAEA safeguards.**
- b. The military nuclear installations come under the inspection of IAEA.
- c. The country will have the privilege to buy uranium from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).
- d. The country automatically becomes a member of the NSG.

