

INDIAN POLITY**Turning point in LGBTQ rights**

The senior advocate Saurabh Kirpal could be India's first openly gay judge. After deferment for four times, the Supreme Court Collegium has finally recommended his name as judge of the Delhi High Court.

Although conflict of interest was claimed as the excuse for deferment, it has been a popular argument in legal circles that the delay in recommending his name was due to his sexual orientation.

If selected, his elevation will mark a key turning point in LGBTQ rights. LGBTQ is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning. Earlier, the European Parliament had declared the European Union an "LGBTIQ Freedom Zone"

Key Points**Status of LGBTQ Rights in India:**

National Legal Services Authority Vs. Union of India (2014): The SC observed that "recognition of transgenders as a third gender is not a social or medical issue, but a human rights issue".

Navtej Singh Johar vs. Union Of India (2018): The SC decriminalised homosexuality by striking off parts of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) which were held violative of Fundamental Rights of LGBTQ Community.

- The SC held that Article 14 of the Constitution guarantees equality before law and this applies to all classes of citizens thereby restoring 'inclusiveness' of LGBTQ Community.
- It also upheld the pre-eminence of Constitutional morality in India by observing that equality before law cannot be denied by giving precedence to public or religious morality.
- The SC stated that the 'Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Law in Relation to Issues of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity' should be applied as a part of Indian law.
 - Yogyakarta Principles recognise freedom of sexual orientation and gender identity as part of Human Rights.
 - They were outlined in 2006 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia by a distinguished group of International Human Right experts.

Tussle Over Same Sex Marriages: In Shafin Jahan v. Asokan K.M. and others (2018) case, the SC observed that choice of a partner is a person's fundamental right, and it can be a same-sex partner.

- However, in February, 2021, the Central Government opposed same-sex marriage in Delhi High Court stating that a marriage in India can be recognised only if it is between a "biological man" and a "biological woman" capable of producing children.

Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019: The Parliament has passed the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019 which has been criticised for its poor understanding of gender and sexual identity.

Challenges Faced by LGBTQ Community:

Family: The problem of sexual orientation and gender identity leads to fighting and family disruption. Lack of communication and misunderstanding between parents and their LGBTQ children increases family conflict.

Discrimination at Work Place: LGBTQ suffers from the socio-economic inequalities in large part due to discrimination in the workplace.

Health Issues: Criminalisation of homosexuality leads to discrimination and results in LGBTQ people getting poor or inadequate access to services within the health system. It also creates barriers to both the availability and the ability to access HIV prevention, testing and treatment services.

Isolation and Drug Abuse: They gradually develop low self-esteem and low self-confidence and become isolated from friends and family.

These people mostly get addicted to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco to get themselves relieved of stress and rejection and discrimination.

Conclusions

The LGBTQ community needs an anti-discrimination law that empowers them to build productive lives and relationships irrespective of gender identity or sexual orientation and place the onus to change on state and society and not the individual. Government bodies, especially related to Health, and Law and Order need to be sensitised to ensure that the LGBTQ community is not denied public services or harassed for their sexual orientation.

INDIAN ECONOMY**Prime Minister inaugurated the Purvanchal Expressway in Uttar Pradesh.**

Recently, the Prime Minister inaugurated the Purvanchal Expressway in Uttar Pradesh.

Important Points

About the New Expressway

- It starts from Chandsarai village, located near the existing Lucknow-Sultanpur Road (NH-731), in Lucknow district and it ends at Haidaria village on National Highway 31 in Ghazipur, 18 km from the UP-Bihar border, in Ghazipur district.
- The expressway will connect with the existing Agra-Lucknow and Agra-Noida Yamuna expressways to form an industrial corridor, providing connectivity from the eastern to western borders of UP.
 - An industrial corridor is basically a corridor consisting of multi-modal transport services that would pass through the states as main arteries.
- The districts falling on this greenfield expressway are Lucknow, Barabanki, Amethi, Sultanpur, Ayodhya, Ambedkar Nagar, Azamgarh, Mau and Ghazipur.

Features of the Expressway:

- It will have CNG stations, electric recharge stations for vehicles and will be connected with the defence corridor through the Agra and Bundelkhand expressways.

Expected Benefits:

- The eastern region of the state would not only be connected to Lucknow but also further to the National Capital through Agra-Lucknow and Yamuna Expressways.
- It is going to give a boost to the economic development of the eastern parts of Uttar Pradesh.
- The expressway will provide better and quick access to bigger markets for agri commodities and other products manufactured in the region.

UP's New Network of Expressways:

- Besides Purvanchal, at least three more expressways, besides the proposed defence corridor and already operational Agra-Lucknow and Yamuna expressways, are in various stages of completion in UP.
- The Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) has been given the responsibility of completing these projects. UPEIDA has been set up under the UP Industrial Area Development Act.



Industrial Corridor

About:

India is developing various Industrial Corridor Projects as part of the National Industrial Corridor programme. National Industrial Corridor Development Programme is India's most ambitious infrastructure programme aiming to develop new industrial cities as "Smart Cities" and converging next generation technologies across infrastructure sectors.

Aim:

- It is aimed at development of futuristic industrial cities in India which can compete with the best manufacturing and investment destinations in the world.
- The same will create employment opportunities and economic growth leading to overall socio-economic development.

Implementing Agency:

- The development of these eleven industrial corridor projects will be implemented through the National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT).

SOCIAL JUSTICE

MoHUA has launched a week-long awareness campaign on SafaiMitra Suraksha Challenge

Recently, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched a week-long awareness campaign on SafaiMitra Suraksha Challenge (SSC) as part of the 'World Toilet Day' (19th November) celebrations, to run up to the 'Swachh Amrit Diwas'. The Swachh Amrit Diwas is an award ceremony to recognize the role and efforts of the states, cities, ULBs (Urban Local Bodies) and Cantonment Board in Swachh Survekshan 2021, and Garbage Free Star Rating certification on 20th November 2021.

Important Points

About:

- A total of 246 cities are participating in SSC which is being conducted across the country. The state capitals, urban local bodies and smart cities will be eligible to participate.
- Cities will be awarded in three sub-categories – with a population of more than 10 lakhs, 3-10 lakhs and upto 3 lakhs, with a total prize money of Rs. 52 crore.
- It is one of the government efforts to combat manual scavenging.

SafaiMitra Suraksha Challenge (SSC):

- SSC was launched on 19th November 2020 on the occasion of World Toilet Day.
- SSC is aimed to encourage cities to mechanise their sewer and septic tank cleaning operations in order to prevent deaths and fatalities of sanitation workers from 'hazardous entry'.
 - The Government launched this "challenge" for all states to make sewer-cleaning mechanised by April 2021 — if any human needs to enter a sewer line in case of unavoidable emergency, proper gear and oxygen tanks, etc., are to be provided.

Initiatives Taken:

- Under SSC, National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFDC), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, supported by MoHUA are organizing Loan Melas across the country. The aim is to help Safaimitras avail loans under the Swachhata Udyami Yojana (SUY) for procurement of sewer/ septic tank cleaning machine/ equipment for mechanized cleaning.
- Skill development training of Safaimitras have also been conducted through the support of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment via NSKFDC in 115 cities.
- Call Centre and Helpline number have been operationalized in 345 cities for safe cleaning of septic tanks/sewers and registering complaints on hazardous cleaning.
- 31 states/UTs have established a Responsible Sanitation Authority (RSA) and 210 cities are having the Sanitation Response Units (SRU).
- All 246 participating cities have already notified a ban on single-use plastic (SUP).

Manual Scavenging

About:

- Manual scavenging is defined as "the removal of human excrement from public streets and dry latrines, cleaning septic tanks, gutters and sewers".
- The practise of manual scavenging is linked to India's caste system where so-called lower castes were expected to perform this job.
- Officially, the number of manual scavengers dropped to 42,303 in 2018 from 7,70,338 in 2008. The survey of manual scavengers in 2018 was conducted by the NSKFDC.

Related Initiatives:

- **The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation (Amendment) Bill, 2020:**
 - It prohibits construction or maintenance of insanitary latrines, and employment of any person for manual scavenging or hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.

- **The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013:**
 - The act seeks to reinforce the prohibition of manual scavenging in all forms and ensures the rehabilitation of manual scavengers.
- **Prevention of Atrocities Act:**
 - It delineates specific crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- **National Commission of Safai Karamcharis:**
 - The Commission is acting as a non-statutory body of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment whose tenure is extended from time to time through Government Resolutions.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission:**
 - Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is a national campaign launched by the Government on 2nd October, 2014 to clean the streets, roads and build social infrastructure of the country.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

Best Tourism Villages by United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO):

Pochampally

Recently, Pochampally village in Telangana was selected as one of the Best Tourism Villages by United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). The award will be given on the occasion of the 24th session of the UNWTO General Assembly in December 2021 in Madrid, Spain. Earlier, Rudreswara Temple, (also known as the Ramappa Temple) at Mulugu district, Telangana was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage list.

Important Points

Pochampally Village:

- Pochampally in Nalgonda district is often referred to as the silk city of India for the exquisite sarees that are woven through a unique style called Ikat. This style, Pochampally Ikat, received a Geographical Indicator (GI Status) in 2004.
- Pochampally's unique weaving styles and patterns received special focus through the Prime Minister's mantra of Vocal 4 Local as a part of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
 - In 2015, to recognise the diversity of weaving techniques and our rich handloom tradition, the Prime Minister inaugurated the first National Handloom Day on 7th August as a tribute to the formal proclamation of the Swadeshi Movement that was made in a meeting at the Calcutta Town hall on the same day in 1905.
- Pochampally is also known as Bhoodan Pochampally to commemorate the Bhoodan Movement that was launched by Acharya Vinobha Bhave from this village on 18th April, 1951. Vinoba Bhave was the first international figure to receive the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1958. He was awarded Bharat Ratna posthumously in 1983.
- The Ministry of Tourism recommended three villages for the UNWTO Best Tourism Village entry from India. However Pochampally, was awarded as one of the best Tourism Villages by UNWTO. These were Kongthong in Meghalaya, Ladhpura Khas, Madhya Pradesh and Pochampally in Telangana.

Best Tourism Villages Initiative:

- It is a Pilot initiative by UNWTO to highlight those villages where tourism preserves cultures and traditions, celebrates diversity, provides opportunities and safeguards biodiversity.
- It aims to award those villages which are outstanding examples of rural destinations and showcase good practises in line with its specified nine evaluation areas.
- It also aims to support villages to enhance their rural tourism potential through training and access to opportunities for improvement.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Urban flooding is a man-made issue and needs a strategic plan for mitigation in order to safeguard the cities. Comment. (250 words)

Introduction

As the incidence of climate variability and extreme weather events increases, urban flooding becomes more and more common. While the untimely heavy rains can be attributed to climate variability, the urban flooding is largely due to an unplanned urbanisation. Recently, torrential rains that took place in Hyderabad have caused massive urban floods. In many Indian cities, the urban floods have become a

frequent phenomenon in recent years. Overburdened drainage, unregulated construction, no regard to the natural topography and hydro-geomorphology all make urban floods a man-made disaster.

Body:

Causes for the rise in urban floods

Inadequate Drainage Infrastructure: Cities like Hyderabad, Mumbai rely on a century-old drainage system, covering only a small part of the core city. In the last 20 years, the Indian cities have grown manifold with its original built-up area. As the city grew beyond its original limits, not much was done to address the absence of adequate drainage systems.

Terrain Alteration: Lasting irreversible damage has been done to the city by property builders, property owners, and public agencies by flattening terrain and altering natural drainage routes.

Reducing Seepage: Indian cities are becoming increasingly impervious to water, not just because of increasing built up but also because of the nature of materials used (hard, non-porous construction material that makes the soil impervious).

Lax Implementation: Even with provisions of rainwater harvesting, sustainable urban drainage systems, etc, in regulatory mechanisms like the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), adoption at user end as well as enforcement agencies remains weak.

Encroaching Natural Spaces: The number of wetlands has reduced to 123 in 2018 from 644 in 1956. Green cover is only 9 per cent, which ideally should have been at least 33 per cent.

Findings

Need for Holistic Engagement: Urban floods of this scale cannot be contained by the municipal authorities alone. Floods cannot be managed without concerted and focused investments of energy and resources.

- The Metropolitan Development Authorities, National Disaster Management Authority, State revenue and irrigation departments along with municipal corporations should be involved in such work together.
- Such investments can only be done in a mission mode organisation with active participation of civil society organisations at the metropolitan scale.

Developing Sponge Cities: The idea of a sponge city is to make cities more permeable so as to hold and use the water which falls upon it.

- Sponge cities absorb the rain water, which is then naturally filtered by the soil and allowed to reach urban aquifers.
- This allows for the extraction of water from the ground through urban or peri-urban wells.
- This water can be treated easily and used for city water supply.

Wetland Policy: There is a need to start paying attention to the management of wetlands by involving local communities.

- Without doubt, terrain alteration needs to be strictly regulated and a ban on any further alteration of terrain needs to be introduced.
- To improve the city's capacity to absorb water, new porous materials and technologies must be encouraged or mandated across scales.
- Examples of these technologies are bioswales and retention systems, permeable material for roads and pavement, drainage systems which allow storm water to trickle into the ground, green roofs and harvesting systems in buildings.

Drainage Planning: Watershed management and emergency drainage plan should be clearly enunciated in policy and law.

- Urban watersheds are micro ecological drainage systems, shaped by contours of terrain.
- Detailed documentation of these must be held by agencies which are not bound by municipal jurisdictions; instead, there is a need to consider natural boundaries such as watersheds instead of governance boundaries like electoral wards for shaping a drainage plan.

Water Sensitive Urban Design: These methods take into consideration the topography, types of surfaces (permeable or impervious), natural drainage and leave very less impact on the environment.

- Vulnerability analyses and risk assessments should form part and parcel of city master plans.
- In a changing climate, the drainage infrastructure (especially storm water drainage) has to be built considering the new 'normal'.
- Tools such as predictive precipitation modelling can help do that and are also able to link it with the adaptive capacity of urban land use.

Conclusion:

These can all be delivered effectively through an urban mission along the lines of the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) and Smart Cities Mission. Urban Flood management will not just help control recurring floods but also respond to other fault lines, provide for water security, more green spaces, and will make the city resilient and sustainable.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. Consider the following statements about the Chitradurga Fort:

1. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
2. The fort was the capital of Hoysalas.

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. If a meteor makes it to Earth it's known as a:

- (a) Meteorite**
- (b) Meteoroids
- (c) shooting stars
- (d) Comet

Q3. Consider the following statements with reference to Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS):

1. It is an ongoing Central Sector Scheme which was launched in 1993-94.
2. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has been responsible for the policy formulation and release of funds.
3. The annual MPLADS fund entitlement per MP constituency is Rs. 5 crore.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

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

Q4. With reference to the funds under Member of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLADS) Scheme, which of the following statements are correct?

1. MPLADS funds must be used to create durable assets like physical infrastructure for health, education etc.
2. A specified portion of each MP's fund must benefit SC/ST populations
3. The district authority must inspect at least 10% of all works under implementation

Select the correct answer using the given code below-

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

Q5. Consider the following statements:

1. State governments do not have any "absolute" power to keep the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) from investigating crimes inside the State.
2. The CBI is empowered to probe cases concerning any of the Central subjects enumerated in the Union List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.

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