

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

❖ **The tedious process of adoption**

❖ **CONTEXT:** From September 1, District Magistrates (DM) have been empowered to give adoption orders instead of courts. All cases pending before courts have to be now transferred. Hundreds of adoptive parents in the country are now concerned that the transfer process will further delay what is already a long and tedious process. There are questions whether an order passed by the executive will pass muster when an adopted child's entitlements on succession and inheritance are contested before a court.

❖ **What do the amended rules say? How did they come about?**

- The Parliament passed the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2021 in July 2021 in order to amend the Juvenile Justice Act (JJ Act), 2015. The key changes include authorising District Magistrates and Additional District Magistrates to issue adoption orders under Section 61 of the JJ Act by striking out the word "court".
- This was done "in order to ensure speedy disposal of cases and enhance accountability," according to a government statement. The District Magistrates have also been empowered under the Act to inspect child care institutions as well as evaluate the functioning of district child protection units, child welfare committees, juvenile justice boards, specialised juvenile police units, child care institutions etc.
- The Act and the corresponding rules came into effect from September 1. The amendments to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016 say, "all the cases pertaining to adoption matters pending before the Court shall stand transferred to the District Magistrate from the date of commencement of these rules."

❖ **Why is there concern over the revised rules?**

- The revised rules have parents, activists, lawyers and adoption agencies worried as cases already before courts for the past several months will have to be transferred and the process will have to start afresh. A petition for adoption orders is filed after a parent registers for adoption, who is then assessed through a home study report, referred a child and subsequently allowed to take a child in pre-adoption foster care pending an adoption order.
- A delay in such an order can often mean that a child can't get admission into a school because parents don't yet have a birth certificate, or like in one case, parents unable to claim health insurance if a child is admitted to a hospital.
- According to the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) there are nearly 1,000 adoption cases pending before various courts in the country. Parents and lawyers also state that neither judges, nor DMs are aware about the change in the JJ Act leading to confusion in the system and delays.
- According to CARA, the Ministry of Women and Child Development is drafting a letter to be sent to State governments clarifying that where adoption orders have already been given, or will be given shortly, the DMs should consider them valid. But there are also larger concerns.

❖ **What is the adoption procedure in India? What are the challenges?**

- Adoptions in India are governed by two laws — the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 (HAMA) and the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015. Both laws have their separate eligibility criteria for adoptive parents.
- Those applying under the JJ Act have to register on CARA's portal after which a specialised adoption agency carries out a home study report.
- After it finds the candidate eligible for adoption, a child declared legally free for adoption is referred to the applicant.
- Under HAMA, a "dattaka hom" ceremony or an adoption deed or a court order is sufficient to obtain irrevocable adoption rights. But there are no rules for monitoring adoptions and verifying sourcing of children and determining whether parents are fit to adopt.
- There are many problems with the adoption system under CARA but at the heart of it is the fact that there are very few children in its registry.
- According to the latest figures there are only 2,188 children in the adoption pool, while there are more than 31,000 parents waiting to adopt a child which forces many to wait for upto three years to be able to give a family to a child. This allows traffickers to take advantage of loopholes in HAMA. These concerns were also highlighted by a Parliamentary panel in August in its report on the "Review of Guardianship and Adoption Law", which recommended a district-level survey of orphaned and abandoned children.
- According to experts, what is needed is a "child-centric, optional, enabling and gender-just" special adoption law like in other countries. "HAMA is a parent-centric law that provides son to the son-less for reasons of succession, inheritance, continuance of family name and for funeral rights and later adoption of daughters was incorporated because kanyadaan is considered an important part of dharma in Hindu tradition. As far as the JJ Act is concerned, the law handles issues of children in conflict with law as well as those who are in need of care and protection and only has a small chapter on adoptions.
- In 2015, Minister for Women and Child Development centralised the entire adoption system by empowering CARA to maintain in various specialised adoption agencies, a registry of children, prospective adoptive parents as well as match them before adoption. This was aimed at checking rampant corruption and trafficking as child care institutions and NGOs could directly give children for adoption after obtaining a no-objection certificate from CARA. But the new system has failed in ensuring that more children in need of families are brought into its safety net.

- There was a need to check malpractices and improve monitoring. But in the new system the soul in adoption is gone. The human contact, bonding and psychological preparedness has been taken away. Therefore, parents may look at other ways to adopt a child.” One other dangerous repercussion of this is that in the past few years, there is an increasing number of disruptions and dissolutions, where children are returned after an adoption is formalised.
- ❖ **The Indira Gandhi Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme in Rajasthan**
- ❖ **CONTEXT: The Indira Gandhi Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme has rolled out in Rajasthan with the objective of providing economic support to the poor and needy families living in the cities through work to be provided on demand for 100 days in a year. The government has touted it as the country's biggest scheme to give guaranteed jobs to the people residing in cities, on the lines of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) for villagers started by the UPA government at the Centre in 2006.**
- ❖ **Who are eligible to get jobs?**
- Those in the age group of 18 to 60 years residing within the limits of urban local bodies are eligible to demand and get employment in the identified segments. There is no income limit, though the poor and destitute people, especially those who lost their livelihood during the pandemic, will be given preference. More than 3.5 lakh people across the State have got themselves registered under the scheme so far and job cards have been issued to 2.25 lakh of them.
- A budgetary provision of ₹800 crore, announced by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in the State Assembly earlier 2022, has been made for the scheme in 2022-23.
- At least 50 persons in each ward of urban local bodies will be given employment and the work permitted under the scheme will be approved and executed through committees at the State, district and local body levels. The State government will also reward the municipal bodies doing good work under the scheme.
- The cost of material and the payment for the labour for work of general nature will be in the ratio of 25:75 and will vary for special work which needs technical expertise. The State government's Department of Local Bodies will be responsible for the scheme's implementation.
- ❖ **What are the categories of tasks?**
- The tasks to be carried out under the scheme have been clubbed mainly under eight heads.
 - The first is environment protection, which will involve tree plantation at public places, maintenance of parks and watering plants on footpaths and dividers.
 - The next is water conservation, where the tasks may be allotted for cleanliness and improvement of ponds, lakes and step wells, construction, repair and cleaning of rain water harvesting structures and restoration of water sources.
 - Other categories are heritage conservation, removal of encroachments and illegal boards, hoardings and banners, stopping defacement of property and service-related works.
- As part of convergence, the people engaged under the employment guarantee scheme can be employed elsewhere in other schemes, already having a material component, which require the labour.
- Eligible people will get work such as tree plantation, cleaning ponds, collecting garbage from door to door and segregating it and catching stray animals.
- Apart from all these categories, the State government can add new tasks or amend the ones already included in the list.
- A Jan Aadhar card, introduced by the State government, or its registration slip will be required for registration, which can be done at e-Mitra centres. While more than 31,000 muster rolls have been issued for the work, the wages will be paid at the rate of ₹259 a day to unskilled labourers and ₹283 a day to skilled labourers.
- The 'mates' or supervisors on top of the labourers will get ₹271 a day.
- Livelihood rights activists feel that though the scheme would help reduce distress among the urban population, the ultimate test of its success will be to ensure that it improves the wage rate in the labour market, which was one of the major contributions of MGNREGA.
- ❖ **What will be its political implications?**
- The Congress government has tried to reach out to large sections of the population with the launch of the scheme and has sought to make an emotional connect by naming it after the former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
- While experts have opined that the labour force participation rate's gap between the rural and urban areas is widening, a few other schemes, including the payment of unemployment allowance, are already operative in the State.
- The latest initiative may benefit the ruling Congress in the run-up to the 2023 State Assembly election, as the party will highlight it as a major step to address the plight of urban poor, which had not received much attention earlier.
- The identification of unemployed youths in urban areas may require an approach different from the one adopted in the villages for MGNREGA. Besides, the kind of jobs provided under the scheme will be different than those in the rural areas and will need a more skilled workforce.

- The scheme may turn out to be a game changer for the people who lost their jobs in the pandemic and are struggling to make ends meet amid high inflation.
- ❖ **Are similar schemes operative in other States?**
- The Rajasthan government has prepared the employment guarantee programme after studying similar such schemes operative in other States.
- Several States are looking favourably towards an urban version of MGNREGA. These schemes include the Ayyankali Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme in Kerala, Urban Wage Employment Initiative under UNNATI in Odisha, Mukhya Mantri Shramik Yojana in Jharkhand and Mukhya Mantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana in Madhya Pradesh.
- The demand for a job guarantee scheme in the cities is increasing because of the growing distress among the urban poor, higher unemployment rates in urban areas in comparison with villages, the persistently high inflation affecting the people and the prevalence of low-wage and poor quality informal work in urban areas. Moreover, as against the rural unemployment being mostly seasonal, unemployed people in the cities face problems throughout the year.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

- ❖ **India and U.S led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework**
- ❖ **Context: India has decided to join three pillars of the United States-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)--supply chains, tax and anti-corruption and clean energy--while opting out of the trade pillar for now.**
- India was the only country not to join the declaration on trade.
- Members: India, USA, Australia, Brunei, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) was launched by United States (US) President Biden in Tokyo in May, 2022.
- The IPEF has four pillars:
 - Trade
 - Supply chains
 - clean energy, decarbonisation and infrastructure
 - tax and anti-corruption
- Except Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar, other Southeast Asian nations are a part of the IPEF.
- The Framework will advance resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness for our economies.
- Through IPEF, the partners aim to contribute to cooperation, stability, prosperity, development, and peace within the region.
- The Framework will also offer tangible benefits that fuel economic activity and investment, promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth, and benefit workers and consumers across the region.
- The 14 IPEF partners represent 40 percent of global GDP and 28 percent of global goods and services trade.
- ❖ **Four Pillars:**
- **Trade Pillar:** In the Trade Pillar, the IPEF partners will seek high-standard provisions in areas that are foundational to resilient, sustainable, and inclusive economic growth, including labour, environment, digital economy, agriculture, transparency and good regulatory practices, competition, inclusivity, trade facilitation, and technical assistance and economic development.
- **Supply Chain Pillar:** In the Supply Chain Pillar, the countries will seek to coordinate actions to mitigate and prevent future supply chain disruptions and secure critical sectors and key products for our manufacturers.
- **Clean Energy Pillar:** In the Clean Energy Pillar, the countries will seek to expand investment opportunities, spur innovation, and improve the livelihoods of citizens as the partners unlock the region's abundant clean energy resources and substantial carbon sequestration potential. The partners aim to advance cooperation on clean energy and climate-friendly technologies, as well as mobilize investment and promote usage of low- and zero-emissions good and services.
- **Fair Economy Pillar:** In the Fair Economy Pillar, the countries will seek to level the playing field for businesses and workers within partner countries by preventing and combatting corruption, curbing tax evasion, and enhancing transparency, recognizing the importance of fairness, inclusiveness, the rule of law, accountability and transparency.

PRELIMS

1. Exercise Parvat Prahar

- ❖ **Context: Army chief General Manoj Pande visited the Ladakh sector to review Exercise Parvat Prahar**
- The exercise was held in the Ladakh plateau at an altitude of 14,000 feet.
- This exercise used newly inducted all-terrain vehicles transported by Chinook heavy lift helicopters and K9-Vajra howitzers.
- The exercise featured a display of operational capabilities by artillery guns and other key weapon systems.

- Simultaneously on the western front, Exercise Gagan Strike culminated with a fire power display of attack helicopters supporting deep operations by Strike Corps.

2. M.P. first to draft suicide prevention strategy

Context: Madhya Pradesh will be the first State in the country to prepare a draft suicide prevention strategy.

- Centre for Social Sector development in Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis has taken up a retrospective study of suicides in Bhopal in order to develop a suicide prevention framework for the state.
- As per the report, the study is classified into three parts.
- Part- A deals with the study of suicides in Bhopal in the stipulated time frame to understand the major trends. The major trends were:
 - 20-30 age groups are the most vulnerable category and males are more prone to suicides than females.
 - Private job holders, housewives, labourers and students form the high risk category.

Cause:

- Quantification of causes showed that family problems,
- mental problems,
- diseases
- financial problems were the major causes for suicides.
- Student suicide also emerged as a matter of concern. The main reason for student suicide seemed to be academic stress.
- Part- B deals with comparative study of suicide prevention strategies from across the world to understand best practices.
- Suitable practices have been incorporated in the suicide prevention framework.
- Part -C pertains to strategy framework proposed by the research team.
- At 17.4%, the suicide rate (instances per one lakh population) was above the national average of 11.3

3. Launch of YD 12653 (TARAGIRI)

❖ **CONTEXT: 'Taragiri', the fifth stealth guided-missile frigate built under the Indian Navy's Project 17A, was launched .**

- Under the Rs 50,000-crore Project 17A programme, a total of seven ships -- four at MDL and three at Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) -- are being built with enhanced stealth features, advanced indigenous weapons, along with several other improvements.
- The keel of 'Taragiri' was laid on September 10, 2020, and is expected to be delivered by August 2025. The ships under Project 17A are all named after hill ranges in India. 'Taragiri' is named after a hill range in the Himalayas located in Garhwal, Uttarakhand.

❖ **Taragiri and Project 17A:**

- P17A ships have been designed by the Indian Navy's in-house design organization, the Directorate of Naval Design (Surface Ship Design Group).
- Taragiri's air defence capability, designed to counter the threat of enemy aircraft and anti-ship cruise missiles, will revolve around the vertical launch and long-range surface-to-air missile system.
- Two 30 mm rapid-fire guns will provide the ship with close-in-defence capability while a Super Rapid Gun Mount will enable her to provide effective naval gunfiresupport.
- Indigenously developed triple tube light weight torpedo launchers and rocket launchers will add punch to the ship's anti-submarine capability.
- The ship was named by Charu Singh, president of the Navy Wives Welfare Association (Western Region), wife of vice admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh, FOC-in-C Western Naval Command.
- The first ship of Project 17A, 'Nilgiri', was launched on September 28, 2019, and is expected to undergo sea trials in the first half of 2024. The second ship, 'Himgiri', was launched on December 14, 2020, and is expected to be commissioned by August 2023. The third ship, 'Udaygiri', was launched on May 17 2022 and it is expected to start sea trials during the second half of 2024. The fourth ship, 'Dunagiri', was launched on July 15, 2022.
- The keels of the sixth and seventh ships were laid on March 5, 2021, and June 28, 2022. They will be named INS Vindhyagiri and INS Mahendragiri.
- Project 17A ships are sourcing 80% of the material/ equipment required for the projects from indigenous vendors. It is also generating employment for over 2,000 Indian firms and MSMEs.
- The ships are propelled by two gas turbines and 2 main diesel engines which are designed to achieve a speed of over 28 knots.
- The steel used in hull construction of P17A frigates is indigenously developed DMR 249A, which is a low carbon micro alloy grade steel manufactured by SAIL.

4. National Metallurgist Award Scheme

❖ **CONTEXT: Ministry of Steel has given approval for National Metallurgist Award 2022.**

- **Background of the Scheme:** National Metallurgists Day Awards, was instituted in 1962 by the then Ministry of Steel & Mines to recognise & honour the outstanding contributions of Metallurgists in the metallurgical field covering operation, research, design, education, waste management and energy conservation. The awards are

given on an annual basis. The first award was given in the year 1963 and subsequently every year thereafter. Over the years, the number of categories and the award money were revised upwards.

- **Name of the scheme:** National Metallurgist Award.
- **Objective:** To recognise outstanding contribution of metallurgists working in Iron & Steel sector covering the fields of manufacturing, research, design, education, waste-management, energy conservation and their specific contribution to achieve objectives of ATMA NIRBHAR BHARAT.
- **Mode of Nominations:** Nominations for the award shall be invited online on the Ministry of Steel's Portal or the centralised portal being developed by MHA. Nominations will be through companies/ organisations or from the public through self-nomination.
- **Date of National Metallurgist Award:** 3rd February every year. (It was on 3rd Feb 1959 when the then President Dr Rajendra Parasad commissioned the first Blast Furnace of the country after independence, at Rourkela).

ANSWER WRITTING

Q. The new tri-nation partnership AUKUS is aimed at countering China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region. Is it going to supersede the existing partnerships in the region? Discuss the strength and impact of AUKUS in the present scenario.

- AUKUS is a trilateral security partnership between the United States of America, Australia and the United Kingdom in the Indo-Pacific region. Under the AUKUS alliance, the UK, the US and Australia seek to increase the development of joint capabilities and technology sharing.
- Creation of the AUKUS is an attempt to send a stronger message to China as it will give its members a credible deterrence powers towards China by deepening military capabilities. It will also enhance the patrolling and surveillance power of the members in Indo-Pacific, thus restoring the sanctity of norms and rules-based order in the region. By providing nuclear submarines to Australia, it will enhance its capabilities to project power in the Indo-Pacific.
- However, critics allege that AUKUS is also likely to supersede the existing partnership in the region. For example, the Quadrilateral Dialogue (QUAD) comprising India, Japan, Australia and the US may get lesser importance as the US might be obliged to share its strength and competence to AUKUS and QUAD both. AUKUS may also weaken the Five Eyes alliance group and the ASEAN centrality in the region.
- On the stronger side, the focus of AUKUS will be on integrating all defence and security-related science, supply chains, industrial bases, and technology. The partnership would also involve a new architecture of meetings and engagements between the three countries and cooperation across emerging technologies like AI, quantum technologies, and undersea capabilities.
- With respect to India, AUKUS may instigate a nuclear/conventional arms race in the Indo-Pacific region. It may lead to China and Russia supplying sensitive defence technologies to other states. With its exclusionary vision, AUKUS may also run contrary to India's vision of an inclusive Indo-Pacific. AUKUS was formulated ignoring France, which may increase trust deficit between the like-minded democratic countries on other matters of global importance.
- Thus, though AUKUS offers the advantage of balance of power, strategic autonomy, and a check on Chinese aggression, it also has significant challenges as it has been termed as Indo-Pacific NATO. India's diverse relationships with the West must be deployed in full measure to prevent a split in the Indo-Pacific coalition.

MCQs

1. Which one of the following statements with regard to the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 is correct?
 - a) It ensures 175 days of employment to needy persons in rural areas.
 - b) It gives higher wages to women workers.
 - c) People are generally given both skilled and unskilled jobs.
 - d) **This is implemented only in rural areas of India.**
2. Consider the following statements regarding Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme.
 1. MGNREGA guarantees 100 days of unskilled manual work to all households in India.
 2. The Act stipulates a minimum wage-material ratio of 60:40.
 3. MGNREGA is to be implemented mainly by gram panchayats (GPs) with the help of contractors.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
 - b) **2 only**
 - c) 2 and 3 only
 - d) 1 and 3 only
3. Consider the following statement with regards to Juvenile Justice Amendment Act 2021
 1. The act for the first time defined "Serious offenders".
 2. Instead of courts as in the 2015 Act, the District Magistrate (DM) can now orders both for intra country and inter country adoptions.

Choose the correct statement using the codes given below

- a) 1 only

- b) **2 only**
 c) Both 1 and 2
 d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. With reference to Indo-Pacific Economic Framework(IPEF) consider the following
1. The IPEF countries together account for 40% of the world's GDP.
 2. IPEF is like a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) which involves reducing tariffs on the imports and exports made between the member countries.

Choose the correct statement/s using the codes given below

- a) **1 only**
 b) 2 only
 c) Both 1 and 2
 d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. In the context of defence, which of the following statement/s is/are correct regarding Taragiri ?
1. It is a nuclear submarine being built in India under Project 75 A.
 2. Project 17A ships are sourcing 80% of the material/ equipment required for the projects from indigenous vendors.

Select the correct option using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
 b) **2 only**
 c) Both 1 and 2
 d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. Which of the following are built under Project 17A of Indian Navy?
1. Nilgiri
 2. Udaygiri
 3. Himgiri
 4. Dunagiri

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below

- a) 1 and 2 only
 b) 2 and 3 only
 c) 1 and 4 only
 d) **All of the above**
7. Which of the following state is first in the country to draft suicide prevention strategy?
- a) Uttar Pradesh
 - b) Uttarakhand
 - c) **Madhya Pradesh**
 - d) Rajasthan
8. The exercise "Parvat Prahar" is between india and which of the following country?
- a) China
 - b) Nepal
 - c) USA
 - d) **None of the above**
9. With reference to Serious Fraud Investigation Office consider the following
1. It is a statutory body
 2. It functions under Ministry of Finance

Select the correct statement/s using the codes given below

- a) **1 only**
 b) 2 only
 c) Both 1 and 2 only
 d) Neither 1 nor 2
10. With reference to Foreign Direct Investment in India, which one of the following is considered its major characteristic?
- a) It is the investment through capital instruments essentially in a listed company.
 - b) **It is a largely non-debt creating capital flow.**
 - c) It is the investment which involves debt-servicing.
 - d) It is the investment made by foreign institutional investors in the Government securities.