

2019



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CURRENT AFFAIRS

POLITY AND NATION

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BusinessLine



1. Gender Gap Report

Why in News?

Recently, Global Gender Gap Index for 2020 has been released by the **World Economic Forum**.

Highlights of the Report

- India has slipped to the **112th spot** amongst 153 countries from its 108th position in the last edition. India was ranked relatively higher **at 98th place in 2006 report**.
 - India has been ranked below countries like China (106th), Srilanka (102nd), Nepal (101st) and Bangladesh (50th).
- Iceland, Norway, and Finland occupy the top three spots respectively in the report.
- The largest gender disparity is in political empowerment. Only 25% of the 35,127 seats in parliaments around the world are occupied by women, and only 21% of the 3,343 ministers are women.
- Projecting current trends into the future, the overall global gender gap will close in 99.5 years, on average, across the 107 countries covered continuously since the **first edition (2006) of the Report**.
 - Globally, the average (population-weighted) distance completed to gender parity is at 68.6%, which is an improvement since the last edition.

Concerns for India

- Economic opportunities for women are extremely limited in India at only 35.4%.
- India is among countries with very low women representation on company boards at 13.8%.
- On health and survival, India fares badly with millions of women not getting the same access to health as men.
- The WEF said India has closed two-thirds of its overall gender gap, but the condition of women in large fringes of India's society is precarious and the economic gender gap runs particularly deep.
- Since 2006, the gap has significantly widened and India is the only country among the 153 countries studied where the economic gender gap is larger than the political one.

About Global Gender Index

- It is **published annually** by the World Economic Forum since 2006.
- The Report benchmarks countries on their progress towards gender parity in **four dimensions**:

- Economic Participation and Opportunity
- Educational Attainment
- Health and Survival
- Political Empowerment.
- The Report aims to serve “*as a compass to track progress on relative gaps between women and men on health, education, economy and politics*”.

2. Inner Line Permit (ILP) in Meghalaya

Why in News?

The Meghalaya Assembly adopted a resolution for implementing the **Inner Line Permit (ILP)** regime in the state.

- Earlier, the Meghalaya Cabinet approved amendments to the **Meghalaya Residents Safety and Security Act (MRSSA), 2016**, which will lead to laws that require non-resident visitors to register themselves.

About Inner Line Permit (ILP)

- The concept comes from the colonial area. Under the **Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act, 1873**, the British framed regulations restricting the entry and regulating the stay of outsiders in designated areas.
 - This was to protect the Crown’s own commercial interests by preventing “**British subjects**” (**Indians**) from trading within these regions.
- In 1950, the Indian government replaced “British subjects” with “**Citizen of India**”.
 - This was done to address local concerns about protecting the interests of the indigenous people from outsiders belonging to other Indian states.
- The ILP is a **special permit** that is required by “outsiders” from other regions of India to enter the states of **Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram**.
 - Recently **Manipur** has also been included under the ILP regime.
- An ILP is **issued by the state government** concerned. It can be obtained after applying either online or physically.
- It states the dates of travel and also specifies the particular areas in the state which the ILP holder can travel to.
- According to the new **Citizenship Amendment Act**, the provisions on citizenship for illegal migrants is not applicable in tribal areas of **Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram or Tripura** as included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution and the area covered under ‘**The Inner Line**’ notified under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.

- It needs to be noted that Meghalaya may not have had an ILP regime but three **Autonomous District Councils** under Sixth Schedule cover practically the entire state.

3. Disha Act - 2019

Why in News?

The **Andhra Pradesh Assembly** has passed the **Disha Act, 2019**, i.e. the **Andhra Pradesh Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2019**. The law aims at awarding capital punishment to the guilty in specified offences against women and to expedite trial in such cases.

- The Act amends relevant provisions of the **Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860** and the **Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973**.

Provisions of the Act

- **Harsh Punishments**

- **Exclusively death penalty** in cases relating to **rape and murder**.
 - At present, punishment in such cases is a fixed jail term leading to life imprisonment or the death sentence.
- Life imprisonment for **ALL** categories of sexual offences against children.
 - Under the **POCSO Act, 2012**, the punishment for sexual offences against children has been prescribed as per the severity of the offence.
- In cases of harassment of women through **social or digital media**, it states **2 years imprisonment for the first conviction and 4 years for second and subsequent convictions**.
 - At present, no such provision exists in the Indian Penal Code.

- **Fast Track Courts**

- It also constitutes exclusive special courts in every district for speedy trial of specified offences against women and children.
- It envisages the **completion of investigation in 7 days** and **trial in 14 working days**, where there is adequate conclusive evidence, and reducing the **total judgment time to 21 days** from the existing 4 months.

- The government will constitute **special police teams** at the district level to be called **District Special Police Team** to be headed by DSP for investigation of offences related to women and children.
- **Women & Children Offenders Registry**
 - A Women & Children Offenders Registry is to be established, operated and maintained by the Andhra Pradesh Government in an electronic form. This registry will be made public and will be available to law enforcement agencies.
 - The Government of India has also launched a **National Registry of Sexual Offenders** but the database is not digitised and is not accessible to the public.

4. Goa Liberation Day

Why in News?

Goa Liberation Day is observed on 19th December every year in India. This day commemorates the freeing of Goa from Portuguese rule by the Indian Armed Forces and the complete independence of the Indian subcontinent.

Liberation of Goa

- While India gained independence on August 15, 1947, Goa was still mouldering under 450 years of the Portuguese rule.
 - The Portuguese were among the first ones to colonise parts of India.
 - They refused to give up their hold over Goa, Daman and Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli even post Indian independence.
- The liberation movement of Goa gained momentum in the 1940s, drawing inspiration from the Indian Independence Movement.
- After the failure of diplomatic efforts with Portuguese, military operation code-named '**Operation Vijay**' was conducted by Indian Navy, Airforce and Army, which liberated Goa on **19th December, 1961**.
- As Goa enters its 58th year of liberation, it remains a blend of the cultures of Portugal while retaining a distinctive position of his own.
- The state has made milestones in the tourism sector.
- It also maintains its position as having the highest per capita income among all the states and union territories of India.

5. Jaga Mission

Why in News?

Odisha became the first state in the country to bag **World Habitat Award** from the World Habitat Mission for its ambitious project '**Jaga Mission**'.

About Jaga Mission

- **Odisha Liveable Habitat Mission (OLHM)- "JAGA"** is a society under Housing & Urban Development Department, Government of Odisha.
- **Aims:**
 - Transform the slums into liveable habitat with all **necessary civic infrastructure and services** at par with the better off areas within the same urban local body (ULB).
 - Continuously **improve the standard of the infrastructure and services** and access to livelihood opportunities.
 - Leveraging and converging various schemes/ programs/ funding opportunities by strengthening collaboration among various stakeholders.
 - Provide advisory support to Government of Odisha **to examine options for policy reforms** required for the sustainable transformation of lives of urban poor.

World Habitat Award

- This award is given by World Habitat, a UK-based organization, in partnership with **United Nation (UN) Habitat**, every year.
- It recognises and highlights innovative, outstanding and sometimes revolutionary housing ideas, projects and programmes from across the world.

United Nations Habitat

- The **United Nations Human Settlements Programme**, UN-Habitat, is the United Nations agency for human settlements.
- It is mandated by the UN General Assembly **to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities** with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.
- It was **established in 1978** as an outcome of the first UN Conference on Human Settlements and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat I) held in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976.
- UN-Habitat is headquartered at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, Kenya.

World Habitat

- It is an international not-for-profit organisation/foundation established in the United Kingdom.

- It works internationally to help bring the best housing to the people who need it the most.

6. Privilege Motion

Why in News?

Congress leader Manickam Tagore submitted a notice to the Lok Sabha Secretariat seeking to move a **breach of privilege motion** against Textile Minister Smriti Irani.

About Privilege Motion

- A privilege motion is a notice by any member of either House of a state legislature or Parliament, against anyone who is accused of breach of privilege.
 - **Parliamentary privileges** are certain rights and immunities enjoyed by members of Parliament, individually and collectively, so that they can “effectively discharge their functions”.
- Each House also claims the right to punish as contempt actions which, while not breach of any specific privilege, are offences against its authority and dignity.
- Notices for the privilege motion have to be given before 10 am to the Speaker or the Chairperson.
- The **Speaker/Chairperson is the first level of scrutiny** of a privilege motion.
- The Speaker/Chairperson can decide on the privilege motion himself or herself or refer it to the **Privileges Committee** of Parliament.
- If the Speaker/Chairperson gives consent, the member concerned is given an opportunity to make a short statement.

Privileges Committee

- In the Lok Sabha, the Speaker nominates a committee of privileges consisting of **15 members** as per respective party strengths.
- A report is then presented to the House for its consideration and the Speaker may permit a half-hour debate on the report.
- The Speaker may then pass final orders or direct that the report be tabled before the House.
- A resolution may then be moved relating to the breach of privilege that has to be unanimously passed.
- In the **Rajya Sabha**, the deputy chairperson heads the committee of privileges, that **consists of 10 members**.

7. EChO Network

Why in News?

The Centre has launched EChO Network, a national program to provide a template for cross-disciplinary leadership in India with the specific focus of increasing research, knowledge, and awareness of Indian ecology and the environment.

EChO Network

- It aims to develop a national network to catalyse a new generation of Indians who can synthesize interdisciplinary concepts and tackle real-world problems in medicine, agriculture, ecology, and technology.
- The Network will identify gaps in knowledge regarding **selected topics in human and environmental ecosystems**.
 - The program will train postdoctoral leaders in research and outreach on these topics, while also incorporating current public and private efforts into a national network.
- EChO Network is a collaborative effort of the Government of India, industry and academia, with the office of the **Principal Scientific Advisor** to the Government of India steering the program.

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