

2019



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CURRENT AFFAIRS

POLITY AND NATION

4th November- 9th November



BusinessLine



1. First Ever Movement Of Container Cargo On Brahmaputra (National Waterway - 2)

Why in News?

The Inland vessel **MV Maheshwari** will travel via National Waterway-1 (river Ganga), NW-97 (Sunderbans), Indo-Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) route and NW-2 (river Brahmaputra) to the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) terminal at Pandu in Guwahati.

- The Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade between India and Bangladesh allows mutually beneficial arrangement for the use of their waterways for movement of goods by vessels of both countries.
- The IBP route extends from Calcutta on NW 1 to Silghat (Assam) on NW 2 (the Brahmaputra) and Karimganj on NW 16 (the Barak).
- This is the first ever containerised cargo movement on this Inland Water Transport (IWT) route.
- It is aimed at providing a fillip to North East Region's industrial development by opening up an alternate route for transportation of raw material and finished goods.

National Waterways (N.W.)

| Waterways | Stretch | Specification |
|-----------|---|---|
| NW 1 | Allahabad - Haldia stretch (1.620 km) | It is one of the most important waterways in India which is navigable by mechanical boats up to Patna and by ordinary boats up to Haridwar. It is divided into three parts for developmental purposes- (i) Haldia-Farakka (560 km). Farakka-Patna (460 km). (iii) Patna-Allahabad (600 km). |
| NW 2 | Sadilya-Dhubri stretch (891 km) | Brahmaputra is navigable by steamers up to Dibrugarh (1.384 km) which is shared by India and Bangladesh. |
| NW 3 | Kottapuram-Kollam stretch (205 km). | It includes 168 km of west coast canal along with Champakara canal (23 km) and Udyogmandal canal (14 km). |
| NW 4 | Specified stretches of Godavari and Krishna rivers along with Kakinada Puducherry stretch of canals (1078 km). | |
| NW 5 | Specified stretches of river Brahman) alongwith Matal river, delta channels of Mahanadi and Brahman) rivers and East Coast canals (588 km). | |

Inland Waterways Authority of India

- The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is a **statutory body** under **Ministry of Shipping**. It was established in **1986**.
- Its main function is to develop and regulate inland waterways for shipping and navigation.
- It is **headquartered** in **Noida**, Uttar Pradesh.
- As per the National Waterways Act, 2016, 111 waterways have been declared as NWs.

2. Atal Pension Yojana

Why in News?

The Atal Pension Yojana (APY), a flagship pension scheme of the government to cover the workers mainly in the **unorganised sector**, has crossed 1.9 crore subscriber mark.

- The primary reason for the rise in enrollment was achievement of targets allocated to banks for opening of new APY accounts.

Atal Pension Yojana (APY)

- It is administered by the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)**.
- It is open to all bank account holders who are not members of any statutory social security scheme. But, the main target group is workers from unorganised sector.
- Under the APY, guaranteed minimum pension of Rs. 1,000, 2,000 3,000, 4,000 and 5,000 per month will be given at the age of 60 years depending on the contributions by the subscribers.
- The age of the subscriber should be between 18 - 40 years.
- In APY, Government will co-contribute 50% of the total contribution or Rs. 1,000/- per annum, whichever is lower, to the eligible APY account holders who join the scheme during the period 1st June, 2015 to 31st December, 2015.

3. Building Digital Infrastructure For National Health Database

Why in News?

To bring transparency in **Ayushman Bharat** and to overcome the challenges in **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)- National Digital Health Blueprint (NDHB)** has been submitted to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare by J. Satyanarayana committee.

- **National Digital Health Blueprint or NDHB** is the architectural document for the implementation of **National Health Stack**.

National Health Stack (NHS)

- NHS is a digital infrastructure built with the aim of making the health insurance system more transparent and robust.
- It was unveiled by the **NITI Aayog** last year.
- The NHS seeks to provide a common digital language for the operationalisation and interoperability of various health schemes including Ayushman Bharat and several schemes running in the states.
- There are **five components** of NHS:
 - An **electronic national health registry** that would serve as a single source of health data for the nation.
 - A **coverage and claims platform** that would serve as the building blocks for large health protection schemes, allow for the horizontal and vertical expansion of schemes like Ayushman Bharat by states.
 - A federated **personal health records (PHR)** framework to serve the twin purposes of access to their own health data by patients, and the availability of health data for medical research.
 - A **National Health Analytics** platform to provide a holistic view combining information on multiple health initiatives, and feed into smart policymaking.
 - Other horizontal components include:
 - A unique digital health ID
 - Health data dictionaries
 - Supply chain management for drugs, payment gateways

National Digital Health Blueprint (NDHB)

- It is the architectural document for the implementation of the NHS.
- Its vision is to create a national digital health ecosystem that supports universal health coverage in an efficient manner and ensuring the security, confidentiality and privacy of health-related personal information.
- **Key Features** include:
 - Unique Health ID (UHID), privacy and consent management
 - National portability.
 - Electronic health records.
 - Multiple access channels like Call Centres, Digital Health India portal, and the MyHealth app.
- NDHB recognises the need to establish a specialised organisation, called the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) that can drive the implementation of the blueprint, and promote and facilitate the evolution of a national digital health ecosystem.

4. Khadi Gets Separate Unique HS Code

Why in News?

The central government has issued a Unique Harmonised System (HS) code bracket to Khadi. Earlier, Khadi did not have its exclusive HS code. As a result all the data regarding export of this signature fabric used to come as normal fabric under the textile head.

- Now the export figures of Khadi can be accounted properly which will help us in planning of our export strategies.

HS Code

- HS Code is a six digit identification code. It was developed by the World Customs Organisation (WCO).
 - The WCO, established in 1952 is an independent intergovernmental body whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness of customs administration.
- It is used to clear every commodity that enters or crosses any international border.
- It is also known as Indian Trade Clarification.

5. Shaala Darpan Portal

Why in News?

Minister of State for Human Resource Development has launched **Shaala Darpan portal** an E-Governance school automation and management system for Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) in New Delhi.

Shaala Darpan Portal

- **Shaala Darpan** is an end to end e-Governance school automation and management system.
- It links Industry and academia by way of Alumni portal.
- It Improves information dissemination and easy in navigation for end users.
- It aids real time performance audit through analytical dashboards.
- It acts as a repository of learning store.
- It will improve the quality of learning, efficiency of school administration, governance of schools and service delivery to key stakeholders namely- students, parents, teaching community and school.

6. Ayodhya Land Dispute Verdict

Why in News?

In a unanimous decision, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court permitted the construction of a temple at the 2.77 acre site where the Babri Masjid once stood, and asked the government to allot a **prominent and suitable** 5 acre plot for Muslims to construct a mosque in Ayodhya.

Case and Petitioners

- Ram Janmabhoomi – Babri Masjid Land Title Dispute is a political, historical and socio-religious debate in India, centred on a plot of land in the city of Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh.
 - According to the Ramayana, Ayodhya is the birthplace of Lord Rama.
 - The Babri Masjid was built in 1528 by Mir Baqi, one of the generals of Mughal Emperor Babur.
- The key parties to the case are:
 - i. Nirmohi Akhara
 - ii. Ram Lalla (deity - represented through third party)
 - iii. Sunni Waqf Board

Key points

- The Bench has directed the Central government to formulate a scheme within three months and set up a trust to manage the property and construct a temple.
- The Centre had acquired the entire 67.73 acres of land including the 2.77 acre of the disputed Ramjanmabhumi-Babri Masjid premises in 1993.
- For the time being, the possession of the disputed property would continue to vest with the Centre until a notification is issued by it investing the property in the trust.

Adverse Possession

- One of the questions before the Supreme Court was whether the Sunni Wakf Board had acquired the title of the disputed land by adverse possession.
- Adverse possession is hostile possession of a property - which has to be continuous, uninterrupted and peaceful. In case an owner does not stake his claim over his property for 12 years, a squatter can acquire legal rights over the property.
- The Bench concluded that the adverse possession claimed by Muslims was not continuous and exclusive in nature, and hence they could not assert the right of adverse possession.

Article 142

- While referring to the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992 as unlawful, the Supreme Court invoked Article 142 **to ensure that a wrong committed must be remedied.**
- Using Article 142 the Bench directed that land admeasuring 5 acres be allotted to the Sunni Central Waqf Board either by the Central Government out of the acquired land or by the Government of Uttar Pradesh within the city of Ayodhya.

- Article 142 of the Constitution empowers the Supreme Court to pass an order for ensuring complete justice. It confers three different powers on the Supreme Court:
 - Securing the attendance of persons before it.
 - Discovery and production of documents.
 - Investigation and punishment of contempt of the court.
- Article 142 ensures that the Supreme Court must not be dependent on the executive for the enforcement of its decrees and orders.

Shebait

- A 'shebait' is vested with the authority to manage the properties of the deity and ensure the fulfilment of the purpose for which the property was dedicated.
- The Nirmohi Akhara - a group of Hindu ascetics wanted shebait rights over the temple and argued that they had rights in the capacity of a manager of the deity's property.
- However, the Bench rejected the claim of Nirmohi Akhara on the ground that, a pujari is a servant or appointee of a shebait and gains no independent right as a shebait despite having conducted the ceremonies for a long period of time.

Places of Worship Act, 1991

- The Supreme Court in its recent Ayodhya verdict made mention of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 which prohibits the conversion of religious places of worship as it existed at the time of Independence.
- The Act was passed in September 1991, over a year before the demolition of the Babri Masjid (1992).
- Provisions
 - The Act bans the conversion of a place of worship or even a section of it into a place of worship of a different religious denomination or of a different segment of the same religious denomination.
 - The Act also imposes a positive obligation on the State to maintain the religious character of every place of worship as it existed at the time of Independence.
 - This legislative obligation on the State to preserve and protect the equality of all faiths is an essential secular feature and one of the basic features of the Indian Constitution.
- However, the disputed site at Ayodhya is exempted from the provisions of the Act.
- The Act also does not apply to any place of worship which is an ancient and historical monument or an archaeological site covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.

7. International Treaty of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Why in News?

The eighth session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) is being held in Rome, Italy.

- India has highlighted the need for conservation of plant genetic resources and the uniqueness of Indian legislation **Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPV&FR) Act, 2001** to address the related issues

About ITPGRFA

- The treaty was adopted by the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in November, 2001.
- It is also known as Seed Treaty as it is a comprehensive international agreement for ensuring food security through the conservation, exchange and sustainable use of the world's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA).
- Objective:
 - To recognise the contribution of farmers to the diversity of crops,
 - Establish a global system to provide farmers, plant breeders and scientists with access to plant genetic materials.
 - To conserve and sustainably use plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of their use, in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPV&FR) Act, 2001

- The Act provides for the establishment of an effective system for the protection of plant varieties, the rights of farmers and plant breeders and to encourage the development of new varieties of plants.
- Provisions:
 - Breeders will have exclusive rights to produce, sell, market, distribute, import or export the protected variety. Breeder can appoint agent/ licensee and may exercise for civil remedy in case of infringement of rights.
 - Researcher can use any of the registered variety under the Act for conducting experiment or research. This includes the use of a variety as an initial source of variety for the purpose of developing another variety but repeated use needs prior permission of the registered breeder.
 - A farmer is entitled to save, use, sow, resow, exchange, share or sell his farm produce including seed of a variety protected under the PPV & FR Act, 2001 except the brand name.

8. PRAGATI Meet

Why in News?

The PM chaired the meeting of Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation (PRAGATI) to direct states to expedite delayed projects, especially in light of the current stubble burning menace in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana.

About PRAGATI

- Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation is a multi-purpose and interactive Information and Communications Technology (ICT) platform with the objective of initiating a culture of:
 - Addressing common man's grievances.
 - Monitoring important programs of Union and State Governments.
- The platform has been designed by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) with the help of National Informatics Center (NIC) in 2015.
- PRAGATI has a three tier redressal and monitoring system where the PM interacts through Video-Conferencing on various issues, including those relating to stalled projects.
 - Structure:
 - PMO
 - Government of India Secretaries
 - Chief Secretaries of States
- The platform uniquely bundles three latest technologies:
 - Digital data management
 - Video-Conferencing
 - Geo-spatial technology
- The platform makes use of the data bases of the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) for grievances, Project Monitoring Group (PMG) and the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
 - CPGRAMS is an online web-enabled system developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC) in association with the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) with an objective of speedy redress and effective monitoring of grievances by:
 - Ministries
 - Departments
 - Organisations of Government of India
 - PMG is an institutional mechanism for resolving a variety of issues including fast tracking the approvals for setting up and expeditious commissioning of large Public, Private and Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Projects. PMG is functions under Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

- PRAGATI gives impetus to cooperative federalism since it brings on one stage the Secretaries of Government of India and the Chief Secretaries of the States. With this, the Prime Minister is able to discuss the issues with the concerned Central and State officials with full information and latest visuals of the ground level situation.

9. Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996

Why in News?

With the support of the Telangana government in the tribal areas through implementation of the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) 1996, tribals in three districts of Adilabad, Mancherial and Kumaram Bheem Asifabad in Telangana have enforced prohibition in their villages.

- The state government has imparted training through Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) to the tribal population in understanding PESA.
- As a result gram panchayat sabhas have been passing resolutions to not allow the government to open liquor shops in their villages.
- The erstwhile composite district of Adilabad — which was bifurcated in October 2016 to create smaller districts of Adilabad, Mancherial, Nirmal and Kumaram Bheem Asifabad — was the biggest consumer of liquor in the state till August 2019.

About PESA

- The Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) 1996 was enacted to extend the provisions of Part IX of the constitution relating to Panchayats to the Fifth Schedule areas of the country.
- Features of PESA:
 - It safeguards and preserves the traditions and customs of the people, and their cultural identity, community resources, customary mode of dispute resolution.
 - PESA empowers Gram Sabha/Panchayat at appropriate level with right to mandatory consultation in land acquisition, resettlement and rehabilitation of displaced persons.
 - It ensures that a state legislation on the Panchayats in the Scheduled Areas shall be in consonance with the customary law, social and religious practices and traditional management practices of community resources.
 - The recommendations of the Gram Sabha or the Panchayats at the appropriate level shall be mandatory for grant of prospecting licence or mining lease for minor minerals in the Scheduled Areas.
 - The Gram Sabha or the Panchayats at the appropriate level shall be consulted before making the acquisition of land in the Scheduled

Areas for development projects and before resettling or rehabilitating persons affected by such projects in the Scheduled Areas.

10. Brus in Tripura Camps

Why in News?

- Tripura government announced that it would restore food supplies, leading to the Brus withdrawing a road blockade they had set up for eight days.
 - Nearly 32,000 Brus have been living in Tripura camps since 1997, when they fled their homes in Mizoram. Recently, the government decided to stop food supplies and cash dole to these camps.
- The restoration of supplies, however, is only until a deadline of November 30, within which the Brus have to decide whether they will accept a package for repatriation to Mizoram.

Bru Tribe

- The Brus community are also known as **Reangs**.
- Bru or Reang is a community indigenous to Northeast India, living mostly in Tripura, Mizoram and Assam.
 - In the state of Mizoram, they inhabit small pockets of Mamit, Lunglei and Lawngtlai districts.
 - However, the biggest chunk is in Mamit bordering North Tripura district of Tripura.
- They are recognised as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group** in Tripura.
- In Mizoram, they have been targeted by groups that do not consider them indigenous to the state.
- In 1997, following ethnic clashes, nearly 37,000 Brus fled Mamit, Kolasib and Lunglei districts of Mizoram and were accommodated in relief camps in Tripura.
- Since then, 5,000 have returned to Mizoram in eight phases of repatriation, while 32,000 still live in six relief camps in North Tripura.

Contentious Issues

- In June 2018, Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF) signed an agreement with the Government of India and Governments of Mizoram and Tripura.
 - The central government will provide financial assistance for rehabilitation of Bru community members in Mizoram.
 - It will also address their issues of security, education, livelihood, etc. in consultation with the governments of Mizoram and Tripura.
- But most camp residents rejected the terms of the agreement as insufficient.

- They argue that the package does not guarantee their safety in Mizoram. They have demanded resettlement in cluster villages, among other things.
- After a series of meetings over repatriation failed to make headway, the government suspended food supplies.
- It offered a final package, which expires on November 30: Rs 25,000 for each family which accepts the package and gets ready to be repatriated within two days.



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