



## News Analysis (06 Feb, 2020)

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### SC Panel Recommendations on Prison Reforms

#### Why in News

The Supreme Court appointed **Justice Amitava Roy (retd.) Committee** has given recommendations to **reform prisons**.

The Court **appointed the Committee in 2018** to examine the various problems plaguing prisons, from overcrowding to lack of legal advice to convicts to issues of remission and parole.

#### Problems Highlighted

- **Indian jails over-occupied**
  - A total of 1,341 prisons were functional in India as on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2018. The total population of prisoners in India was 4.68 lakh against total sanctioned strength of 3.83 lakh.
  - From 2016 to 2018, the total prison population in India has increased by 8.2% against an increase of 0.7% in the prison sanctioned capacity.
  - Seven states, namely Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Meghalaya and Delhi have an occupancy rate of 150%.
- **Huge number of undertrials**
  - Most of the prisons are full of undertrial prisoners, their numbers being highly disproportionate to those of convicts (declared guilty).
  - An undertrial is a person who is being held in custody awaiting trial for a crime.

- **Shortage of Prison Staff**

- The Prison Department has a perennial average vacancy of 30%-40%. This hinders implementation of Model Prison Manual and various jail reforms.
- Physical production of an accused for a trial in a court remains far below the aspired 100% in several States, mainly because of unavailability of sufficient police guards for escort and transportation.

- **Unhygienic Food**

The preparation of food in kitchens is “primitive and arduous”. The kitchens are congested and unhygienic and the diet has remained unchanged for years now.

## Key Recommendations

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- **For overcrowding**

- **Speedy trial:** Speedy trial remains one of the best ways to remedy the unwarranted phenomenon of overcrowding.
- **Lawyer to prisoner ratio:** There should be at least one lawyer for every 30 prisoners, which is not the case at present.
- **Special courts:** Special fast-track courts should be set up to deal exclusively with petty offences which have been pending for more than five years. Further, accused persons who are charged with petty offences and those granted bail, but who are unable to arrange surety should be released on a **Personal Recognizance (PR) Bond**.
- **Avoid adjournment:** An adjournment should not be granted in cases where witnesses are present and the concept of plea bargaining, in which accused admits guilt for a lesser sentence, should be promoted.

- **For prisoners**

- **Accommodative Transition:** Every new prisoner should be allowed a free phone call a day to his family members to see him through his first week in jail.
- **Legal aid:** Providing effective legal aid to prisoners and taking steps to provide vocational skills and education to prisoners.
- **Use of ICT:** Use of video-conferencing for trial.
- **Alternatives:** The courts may be asked to use their "discretionary powers" and award sentences like "fine and admonition" if possible instead of sending the offenders to jails.

Further, courts may be encouraged to release offenders on probation at pre-trial stage or after trial in deserving cases.

- **Filling Vacancies**

The Supreme Court should pass directions asking authorities to start the recruitment process against permanent vacancies within three months and the process should be completed in a year.

- **For Food**

Modern cooking facilities and canteens to buy essential items.

## Note

- **'Prisons/persons detained therein' is a State subject** under Entry 4 of List II of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. Administration and management of prisons is the responsibility of respective State Governments. However, the Ministry of Home Affairs provides regular guidance and advice to States and UTs on various issues concerning prisons and prison inmates.
- **Article 39-A of the Constitution** directs the State to ensure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on a basis of equal opportunity and shall, in particular, provide free legal aid by suitable legislation or schemes or in any other way, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities.

**Right to free legal aid or free legal service** is an essential **fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution**. It forms the basis of reasonable, fair and just liberty under **Article 21 of the Constitution of India**, which says, "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law".

- A **Personal Recognizance (PR) bond** is also known as Own Recognizance (OR) bond, and sometimes referred to as "no cost bail". With this type of bond, a person is released from custody and is not required to post bail. They are, however, responsible for showing up on their specified court date, and must sign a release form stating this promise in writing. The person is then released from custody based on their promise to appear in court and abide by any conditions of release set by the court.

**Source: TH**

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## Soil Health Card Scheme

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### Why in News

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According to the **National Productivity Council (NPC)**, the **Soil Health Card** scheme has led to a **decline of 8-10% in the use of chemical fertilizers** and also **raised productivity by 5-6%**.

Issuance of the Soil Health Cards has enabled the farmers to understand the soil health parameters and improve the productivity by judicious application of soil nutrients.

### Key Points

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- Under the **Phase-I (2015-17)** of the scheme, **10.74 crore cards** were distributed, while under the **Phase-II (2017-19)**, **11.69 crore cards** have been distributed.
- A pilot project, '**Development of Model Villages**' is also being implemented by the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare in the financial year 2019-20**.

It is to be noted that, this project is different from the **Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY)** which was launched in **October 2014** with the goal of **developing the socio-economic and physical infrastructure of villages**.

### **Development of Model Villages**

- Under this project, a Model Village is selected for aggregation of soil samples and analysis of each agricultural holding.
- The programme promotes farm holding based soil sample collection and testing with farmers' participation.

The **Soil Health Card Scheme along with other projects (National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture)** for soil health management has created jobs for the agrarian youth.

- Under these, village youth and farmers **up to 40 years of age** are eligible to set up **Soil Health Laboratories** and undertake testing.
- **75% of laboratory costs** are proposed to be **funded by the Central and State Governments**.

The same provision applies to **Self Help Groups, Farmers' Cooperative Societies, Farmers Groups and Agricultural Producing Organisations**.

### **Soil Health Card Scheme**

- The **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare** introduced the scheme on **December 5, 2015**.
- Soil Health Card (SHC) is a **printed report** which **contains nutrient status of soil with respect to 12 nutrients**: pH, Electrical Conductivity (EC), Organic Carbon (OC), Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), Potassium (K), Sulphur (S), Zinc (Zn), Boron (B), Iron (Fe), Manganese (Mn) and Copper (Cu) of farm holdings.
- SHC is provided to all farmers in the country at **an interval of 3 years** to enable the farmers to apply recommended doses of nutrients based on soil test values to realize improved and sustainable soil health and fertility, low costs and higher profits. Farmers can track their soil samples and also obtain their **Soil Health Card report**.
- It is a field-specific **detailed report** of soil fertility status and other important soil parameters that affect crop productivity.

### **National Productivity Council**

- It is a national-level organization to promote productivity culture in India.

- Established by the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, Government of India in **1958**, it is an **autonomous, multipartite, non-profit organization**.

**Source: PIB**

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## Command Posts for Women in Army

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### Why in news

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The Supreme Court (SC) has asked the Central Government to accommodate women at command post in **non-combat services** like National Cadet Corps and Sainik Schools.

However, the Government highlighted the difficulties in giving 'Command Appointments' for women.

### Government on Granting Command Posts

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- **Physiological limitations** : The Central Government has asserted that the **"physiological limitations"** of women officers and **changed battlefield scenario** as the primary reasons for not granting the **command posts** for women in the Army.
- **Societal norms**: The troops are not yet mentally schooled to accept women officers in command of units, the composition of rank and file being male predominantly drawn from the rural background with prevailing societal norms.
- **Physical standards**: Officers have to lead from the front. They should be in prime physical condition to undertake combat tasks.
  - Inherent physiological differences between men and women preclude equal physical performance resulting in lower physical standards.
  - Physical capacity of women officers in the Indian Army remains a challenge for command of units.
- **Other challenges**: Apart from **lower physical standards** of women officers compared to men, other challenges include **prolonged absence** due to pregnancy, children's education, husband's career prospects, etc.
- **Permanent commission**: In 2019, the policy was released to grant permanent commission to women officers on SSC, but this was to apply only **prospectively**.

The Women officers contended that the application of permanent commission prospectively is arbitrary and discriminatory. It should be applied retrospectively.

### Permanent Commission for Women

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The Ministry of Defence has taken steps to ensure implementation of the grant of Permanent Commission to Women officers in the Armed Forces.

- **Indian Air Force:** All Branches, including Fighter Pilots, are now open for female officers.
- **Indian Navy:** All non-sea going Branches/Cadre/Specialisation have been opened for induction of women officers through the Short Service Commission (SSC).
- **Indian Army:** Women officers are granted Permanent Commission in the Indian Army in all the ten branches where women are inducted for Short Service Commission. These are streams of Signals, Engineers, Army Aviation, Army Air Defence, Judge Advocate General (JAG), etc.

### Types of Entry in Armed Forces for Women

- The induction of women into the officer cadre, and their training was undertaken by the **Officers Training Academy in 1992.**
- **Short Service Commission:** This provision provides an option of Joining the Army and serving as a Commissioned Officer for 10/14 years. At the end 10 yrs, an officer has following options:
  - Either opt for a Permanent Commission or
  - Opt out or have the option of a 4 years extension. They can resign at any time during this period of 4 yrs extension.
- **Permanent Commission:** It means a career in the Army till the retirement age. For Permanent Commission, the entry is through National Defence Academy, Pune or Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, Officers Training Academy, Gaya.

**Source: IE**

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## Reducing SO<sub>2</sub> emissions

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### Why in News

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The **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** has sent show cause notices to 14 thermal power plants for **not complying with the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2019 deadline to limit sulphur dioxide emissions.**

The CPCB has the **power to impose steep fines or shut a unit** under the provisions of **the Environment Protection Act, 1986.**

### Key Points

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- To limit **Particulate Matter (PM)**, **sulphur dioxide** and nitrous oxide emission from thermal plants, **India has put in place a phased-approach** that directs coal-fired units to put in place measures to limit pollution by December 2022.  
As per Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) estimates, these norms can help reduce PM emissions by about 35%, NOx emission by about 70%, and SO2 emissions by more than 85% by 2026-27 against a business-as-usual scenario with no pollution control technologies.
- However plants in a 300 km radius of Delhi were to comply by 31st December, 2019 because of the poor air quality in the city as well as the surrounding Gangetic plain.
  - Few units have set in place the process for acquiring flue-gas desulphurisation technology.
  - **Flue Gas Desulfurization (FGD)** is a set of technologies used to remove sulphur dioxide (SO2) from exhaust flue gases of fossil-fuel power plants. Flue gas is a mixture of gases produced by the burning of fuel or other materials in power stations and industrial plants and extracted via ducts.

### Central Pollution Control Board

- The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) of India is a **statutory organisation under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.
- It was established in 1974 under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.
- The CPCB is also entrusted with the powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

### Source: TH

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## Consecration at the Brihadisvara Temple

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### Why in News

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Recently, the consecration (Kumbhabhishekam) ceremony was held at the Brihadisvara Temple after 23 years in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

- The ceremony was held after the Madras High Court settled an old argument over the ritual.
- The ceremony got embroiled in the struggle for supremacy between the Sanskrit and Tamil traditions.
- The court **allowed** the consecration to be performed in **both Tamil and Sanskrit**.
- It argued that there is nothing either in the **Agamas (canonical texts)** or in any other religious script to prohibit the chanting of Tamil mantras in the temples.

# Brihadisvara Temple

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- Brihadeshwara Temple, also known as Raja Rajeswara Temple, is dedicated to Shiva and is located in Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu).

Thanjavur lies in the delta of the Cauvery River.
- It is one of the best examples of the **Dravidian style** of temple architecture built by Chola emperor **Raja Raja Chola I** ( 985-1014 AD) between 1003 AD and 1010 AD.

The Dravidian style of temple architecture flourished roughly from the **8<sup>th</sup> century to about the 13-14 century AD.**
- The temple consists of a **pyramidal spire** and is adorned with sculptures and paintings inside as well as outside.
- The temple entered the **UNESCO World Heritage Site** list in **1987** and is also a part of "**Great Living Chola Temples**" along with the **Brihadisvara Temple** at **Gangaikondacholapuram** and the **Airavatesvara Temple at Darasuram.**
  - **Brihadisvara Temple (Gangaikondacholapuram, Tamil Nadu).**
    - It was built for Shiva by **Rajendra I** (1014-1044 CE).
    - The temple has sculptures of exceptional quality.
    - The **bronze sculptures** of **Bhogasakti** and **Subrahmanya** are masterpieces of Chola metal icons.
  - **Airavatesvara Temple (Darasuram)**
    - It was built by the **Chola king Rajaraja II** (1144-1173 CE):
    - It is much smaller in size as compared to the Brihadisvara temple at Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram.
    - The temple consists of a sanctum **without** a **circumambulatory path** and axial mandapas.
    - The front mandapa is **unique** as it was conceptualized as a chariot with wheels.
- **Special Features:**
  - The temple, which is one of the tallest temples in India, still remains an engineering mystery as it is **completely made of granite** and archaeologists still don't know how the builders got such huge pieces of granite for construction at this height.
  - The apex structure on **top of the temple** is believed to be carved out of a **single stone carving.**
  - It is so designed that the **Vimana does not cast a shadow at noon during any part of the year.**
    - **Vimana:** Vimana is the structure over the garbhagriha or inner sanctum in the Hindu temples of South India and Odisha.
    - It is like a stepped pyramid that rises up geometrically rather than the curving **Shikhara** of North India.





**Source: IE**

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## International Intellectual Property Index: US Chamber of Commerce

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### Why in News

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India has slipped to **40<sup>th</sup> position** on the **International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, 2020** from the **36<sup>th</sup> position in 2019**.

It is **released** by the **US Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Center**.

### Key Points

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- **The US, the UK, France, Germany and Sweden are the top five** economies on the IP Index in 2020.
- India's rank has slipped despite the government's focused effort to support investments in innovation and creativity through increasingly robust IP protection and enforcement, since the release of the **National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy, 2016**.
  - It encompasses and brings to a single platform all IPRs, taking into account all inter-linkages and thus aims to create and exploit synergies between all forms of intellectual property (IP), concerned statutes and agencies.
  - Its implementation has improved the speed of processing for patent and trademark applications and increased awareness of IP rights among Indian innovators and creators.

## US Chamber of Commerce

- It is the **world's largest business federation** representing the interests of more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations.
- The **2020 U.S. Chamber International IP Index** titled '**Art of the Possible**' creates a template for economies that aspire to become the 21st century, knowledge-based economies through more effective IP protection.
  - In its **eighth edition**, the Index maps the IP ecosystem in **53 global economies**, representing over 90% of global GDP.
  - The Index evaluates the IP framework in each economy across **50 unique indicators** which industry believes represent economies with the most effective IP systems. The indicators create a snapshot of an economy overall IP ecosystem and span nine **categories of protection**: patents, copyrights, trademarks, design rights, trade secrets, commercialization of IP assets, enforcement, systemic efficiency, and membership and ratification of international treaties.

**Source: FE**

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## INS Karanj

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### Why in News

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**The third Scorpene submarine, Karanj**, will be delivered to the Indian Navy by December 2020.

INS Karanj is a part of **Project-75** and was launched in **January 2018**. It is currently in advanced stages of sea trials.

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).
- The submarines in the **P75 Scorpene-Class** are powered by the **conventional diesel-electric propulsion system**.
- The **first Scorpene submarine, Kalvari**, was commissioned in **2017** and it would go for a normal refit after six years in 2023, during which time the **Air-Independent Propulsion (AIP) would be installed**.  
**AIP technology** is being developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** to provide submarines **long-range and extended endurance capabilities undersea**.
- **Second Scorpene Khanderi** was inducted in September 2019.
- The remaining submarines (**Vela, Vagir, and Vagsheer**) in the series are in advanced stages of manufacturing and trials.

### Air-Independent Propulsion

- Conventional submarines use a diesel-electric engine, and must surface for oxygen required for fuel combustion. If fitted with an **Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system**, the submarine needs to take in oxygen less frequently.
- While many naval powers, including India, have acquired **nuclear-powered submarines** for deep-sea operations, conventional diesel-electric variants are considered useful for coastal defence. The latter are optimised for stealth, and their weapons and sensors provide for effective operations close to the shore.
- Diesel-electric submarines require them to come to the surface frequently to charge their batteries, their underwater endurance time is less. 'Air-independent' propulsion technology helps to make the diesel generator less dependent on surface air.

**Source: TH**

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## India International Seafood Show

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### Why in News

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The **22<sup>nd</sup> edition** of India International Seafood Show (IISS), 2020 will be organized jointly by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) and the Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI) **in Kochi, Kerala from 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> February 2020**.

**Theme** for 2020 is: "Blue Revolution- Beyond Production to Value Addition".

## Key Points

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- **Event Held: Biennially** (occurring every two years). It is **one of the oldest and largest** seafood events in the world. **The 21<sup>st</sup>** edition of IISS was held in **Goa** in January 2018.
- **Purpose:** It provides an umbrella platform for various involved stakeholders of this sector such as producers, processing machinery manufacturers, linkage sectors, technical experts, etc. to interact, build up trade relations and contribute towards the progress of **seafood exports** from the country.
- **Significance:** It gives scope for **tapping new avenues and introducing various technologies and products** to the global market. In this way, the show paves way for enhancing **Foreign Direct Investment** in India thereby contributing to the **'Make in India'** programme'.  
During **2018-19**, India has exported worth **\$6.70 billion** of marine products. With **sustainable fishing methods, value addition and increased aquaculture production through diversification**, it is expected to achieve an export turnover of **\$15 billion** in the **next five years**.

### Marine Products Export Development Authority

- **Constituted:** In **1972** through the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) Act 1972, under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- It is the **nodal agency** for the holistic development of the seafood industry in India.

### Seafood Exporters Association of India

- **Established** in: **1973** as an organisation registered under the **Registrar of Companies Act, 1956**.
- **Aim:** To **protect and promote** the interests of the seafood industry and develop the international trade of seafood from India.

**Source: PIB**

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## Major Port at Vadhavan

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### Why in News

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The Union Cabinet has given its 'in-principle' approval for **setting up a major port at Vadhavan** near Dahanu in **Maharashtra**.

- With the development of Vadhavan port, **India will break into the countries with top 10 container ports in the world.** A container port is a port which specializes in handling goods transported in containers.
- The port will be developed on '**land lord model**'.  
In the landlord port model, the publicly governed port authority acts as a regulatory body and as landlord while private companies carry out port operations—mainly cargo-handling activities.
- A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) will be formed with **Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT)** as the lead partner to implement the project.
  - The position of Jawaharlal Nehru Port, the **biggest container port in India**, is 28<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of traffic handling capacity.
  - With the completion of the 4<sup>th</sup> terminal at JN Port, its capacity will increase to 10 million TEUs (Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units) making it the 17<sup>th</sup> largest container port in the world.
- The SPV will develop the port infrastructure including reclamation, construction of breakwater, besides establishing connectivity to the hinterland. All the business activities would be undertaken under **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode** by private developers.

**Note:** The Union Government is responsible for development of Major Ports whereas minor ports are under the jurisdiction of respective State Governments.

**Source: PIB**

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