



Agnipath Scheme

❖ Context

- Recently, the Supreme Court dismissed petitions challenging the Delhi High Court judgment which upheld the **Agnipath scheme for recruitment to the armed forces.**

❖ Key Highlights

- Some of the petitioners included candidates who were shortlisted in the earlier recruitment process to Army and Air Force.
- Advocate who appeared for some of these candidates told the apex court that their names appeared in a provisional list for recruitment to Air Force but the recruitment process was cancelled when Agnipath scheme was notified.
- He argued that the government must be directed to complete the old process citing the **doctrine of promissory estoppel.**
- **Doctrine of Promissory Estoppel :**
 - Promissory estoppel is a concept **developed in contractual laws.**
 - A valid contract under law requires an agreement to be made with sufficient consideration.
 - A claim of doctrine of promissory estoppel essentially **prevents a “promisor” from backing out** of an agreement on the grounds that there is no “consideration.”

❖ Agnipath Scheme

- **About :**
 - Under this scheme, around 45,000 to 50,000 soldiers will be recruited annually.
 - Most of them will leave the service in just four years. Only **25% of annual recruits will be allowed to continue for another 15 years** under permanent commission.
 - The soldiers recruited under the scheme will be called **Agniveers.**

• Eligibility Criteria :

- The new system is **only for personnel below officer ranks.**
- Aspirants **between the ages of 17.5 years and 21 years** will be eligible to apply.
- The upper age limit has been relaxed from 21 years to 23 years as a one-time measure for the Recruiting Year 2022-23.
- **Recruitment :** The recruitment standards will remain the same.
 - Recruitment will be done **twice a year through rallies.**
- **Training Period :** After selection, the aspirants will go through **training for six months.**
 - After that, aspirants will be **deployed for three and a half years.**
- **Salary and Benefits :** Starting salary : Rs 30,000 + Additional benefits. It will go up to Rs 40,000 by the end of the 4-year service.
 - During this period, **30% of their salary will be set aside under a Seva Nidhi programme.**
 - The government will contribute an equal amount every month, and **it will also accrue interest.**
 - At the end of the four-year period, each soldier will get **Rs 11.71 lakh as a lump sum amount, which will be tax-free.**
 - They will also get a **Rs 48 lakh life insurance cover** for the four years.
 - For those who are re-selected, the initial four-year period will not be considered for retirement benefits.
- **Significance :** It will **make the permanent force levels much leaner** for the over 13-lakh strong armed forces in the country.
 - It will considerably **reduce the defense pension bill.**
 - The **average age** in the forces is 32 years today, which will go down to **26 in six to seven years.**
 - It will create **“future-ready” soldiers.**
 - it will **increase employment opportunities.**

Cost Inflation Index (CII)

❖ Context

- Recently, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) notified the cost inflation index (CII) number for the current financial year, 2023-24.



❖ Key Highlights

- According to the notification, the CII number for the current fiscal year is **348.**
- This CII number will be **used to calculate the capital gains** accrued in the current financial year from the sale of long-term assets.
- The CII number is used to calculate the indexed or inflation adjusted cost on a long-term asset in order to calculate the capital gains.
- Once the capital gains are calculated, then income tax payable on such gains is calculated.

❖ About Cost Inflation Index (CII)

- CII or Cost Inflation Index is **notified under the Income Tax Act, 1961’s Section 48.**

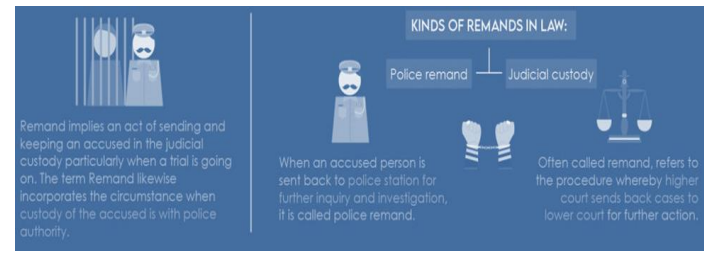
- CII is a **way to calculate inflation**, that is, an **estimated increase in the price of a good or service** over the years.
- In other words, it is an index that is used to calculate the inflation-adjusted rise in the value of an asset.
- The **Central Government takes care of** and publishes the index in the official gazette.
- Usually, for the calculation of CII, **gains on long term capital are taken into account.**
- Capital gains are capital assets like property, plot, agricultural land, bonds, stocks, etc. sold at a profit.
- Cost Inflation Index = 75% average increase in CPI (Consumer Price Index) for the immediate previous year.

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Police Custody Beyond A Period of 15 Days

❖ Context:

- The Supreme Court of India has recently observed that its existing position on whether an accused can be detained in police custody beyond a period of 15 days from the initial date of arrest **needs a review.**



❖ Key Highlights:

- The court made this observation while hearing the case of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) which had moved to the SC seeking additional custody of an accused.
- 1992 ruling **Central Bureau of Intelligence vs Anupam J. Kulkarni** SC held that an accused cannot be detained in police custody after the lapse of 15 days from the date of arrest.
- What Does the Law Say About Police Custody?**
- The law governing police custody is governed by **Section 167** of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which **allows police detention** only in special circumstances.
- Section 167 (2) of the CrPC** gives power to the Magistrate to authorise the detention of the accused in such custody as the Magistrate thinks fit, for a term not exceeding **fifteen days in the whole.**
- Further remand during the period of investigation can only be in judicial custody after the 15-day police custody.
- The 15-day bar does not apply if the accused is involved in a **different case** arising out of a separate cause of action.

- Then, even if he is in judicial custody in one case, he can formally be arrested in the other case & the police can seek custody again, starting another 15-day cycle.
- The CrPC allows** an accused to be released on bail if the investigation is not completed within the prescribed number of days.
- The law is a check on the state's power to restrict an individual's liberty, and it is important **that the police complete their investigation** within the stipulated time frame.



Digital Personal Data Protection Bill 2022

❖ Context:

- The Indian government has informed the Supreme Court that a new law, the **Digital Personal Data Protection Bill 2022**, is ready to be tabled in the Monsoon Session of Parliament in July 2023.



❖ Key Highlights:

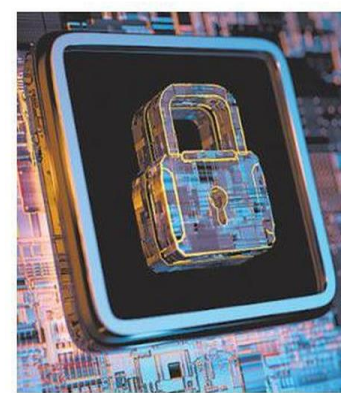
- The Bill aims to replace the current Information Technology (Reasonable Security Practices and Procedures and Sensitive Personal Data or Information) Rules, which were notified in 2011.
- The Bill seeks to **protect online personal data** & ensure that it is processed in a way that recognizes the right of **individuals to protect their personal data** while also fulfilling lawful purposes.
- The Bill defines data as a representation **of information, facts, concepts, opinions or instructions** that can be communicated, interpreted, or processed by humans or automated means.
- It separately defines **data fiduciary, data principal, and data processor.**
- The new Bill would "**address all the concerns**" raised in petitions challenging WhatsApp's policy to share users' data with Facebook.
- Data Fiduciary:** A data fiduciary is a person, including the state, a company, any juristic entity or individual, who determines the purpose and means of processing personal data.
- Data Principal:** The individual to whom the personal data relates and where such individual is a child includes the parents or lawful guardian of such a child.
- Data Processor:** Any person who processes personal data on behalf of a Data Fiduciary.

• Person:

- an individual,
- a Hindu Undivided Family,
- a company,
- a firm,
- an association of persons or a body of individuals, whether incorporated or not,
- the State,
- every artificial juristic person, not falling within any of the preceding sub-clauses.

Bill's ambit

The draft Bill narrows the scope of the data protection regime to personal data protection – a move welcomed by the industry



THIS ACT APPLIES TO:

- Personal data collected from users online
- Data collected offline, but later digitised

THE ACT EXCLUDES:

- Personal data processed by an individual for personal or domestic purpose
- Recorded personal data in existence for at least 100 years

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News in Between the Lines

Zojila Tunnel



KEY FEATURES

- The longest bi-directional single tube road tunnel in Asia
- Length: 14.15 km
- Open all days
- All-weather accessibility
- To be built at Zojila pass on Srinagar-Kargil-Leh NH-1 situated at an altitude of 11,578 feet

❖ **Context**

➤ Recently, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister inspected the under-construction Zojila tunnel.

❖ **Key Highlights**

- As part of an ongoing project to improve connectivity in the region, 19 tunnels are being constructed at a cost of Rs 25,000 crore.
- As of now, 38% of the work on the Zojila tunnel, said to be India's longest, has been completed.
- It is expected to be completed by December 2023.

❖ **About Zojila Tunnel**

- The Zojila tunnel will be India's longest road tunnel, and is **expected to be Asia's longest bi-directional tunnel**, boasting a length of 14.15 km.
- A connecting tunnel from Z-Morh on NH1 to the Zojila tunnel will be built in the Zojila Ghats between Sonmarg and Kargil.
- This involves the development and expansion of the 18.475-km highway between Z-Morh to Zojila.
- A 3-km stretch will be expanded; the rest will be newly developed.
- The highway will have two twin-tube tunnels, five bridges, and two snow galleries.
- The work on the entire 33-km span is spread between two union territories – Jammu and Kashmir; and Ladakh.
- Zojila tunnel will establish **all-weather connectivity between the Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir**.

Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)



❖ **Context**

➤ Political pressure is building within the European Union to tackle the daunting challenge of closing a loophole in its **efforts to stop using Russian fossil fuels: liquefied natural gas (LNG)**.

❖ **Key Highlights**

- In the year since Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the EU has placed sanctions on seaborne oil and coal imports from Russia.
- It has drastically cut reliance on **Russian pipeline gas**, despite not imposing sanctions on the fuel.
- EU countries have increased their overall purchases of Russian LNG, undermining the bloc's pledge to end its use of Russian fossil fuels by 2027.

❖ **Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)**

- LNG is natural gas **reduced to a liquid state (liquefaction) through intense cooling to around -161 degrees Celsius (-259 Fahrenheit)**. This liquid gas is **600 times smaller** than the original volume and is half the weight of water.
- The compressed fossil fuel, which is constituted almost wholly of methane - a potent greenhouse gas - can be transported around the world by ship.
- After arriving at its destination, the cargo is regasified in a floating terminal and redistributed through pipelines.
- **Disadvantage :**
 - The cooling, liquefying and transport processes, as well as the post-transport regasification procedures, **require a lot of energy**.
 - Methane loss across the supply chain risks also contributes to LNG's **high emissions**.
 - LNG creating almost **10 times more emissions than piped gas** by one estimate, its rapid expansion will likely compromise climate targets.
- **Largest Producer of Natural Gas : United States > Russia > Iran > China > Qatar.**

RD-191

❖ **Context**

➤ The Indian Government's Department of Space is facilitating the technology transfer of Russian-origin 'RD-191' semi-cryogenic rocket engines to Indian industry.

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❖ **Key Highlights:**

- This technology transfer is meant to enable Indian industries to **manufacture the Russian-origin rocket engine in India**. This also opens up the possibility of exporting the made-in-India 'RD-191' engines and using the engine as part of **India's heaviest rocket LVM3**, thereby enhancing its payload.
- The 'RD-191' is a high-performance rocket engine fuelled by kerosene and liquid oxygen. It falls under the category semi-cryogenic, as its fuel kerosene can be stored at room temperature and the oxidiser liquid oxygen has to be stored **at super-cooled temperatures (below -150 degrees Centigrade)**.
- India currently operates three kinds of engines on its operational rockets -
 - solid-fuelled, liquid-fuelled and cryogenic (where liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen are stored at super-cooled temperatures).

Justice Ranganath Mishra Report



❖ **Context**

- The Supreme Court recently set out to examine whether the 2007 report of the former Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranganath Mishra Commission can be used to decide on quota for Dalit converts.

❖ **Key Highlights:**

- Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah of a three-judge bench headed by Justice S.K. Kaul said that the report was not **as perfunctory as the government** had claimed and that the government may need to **re-check its stance on the report**.
- The court asked whether **the empirical data from the report** could be used to determine if the exclusion of Dalit converts to Christianity and Islam from the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950 was discriminatory and unconstitutional.
- The government had recently constituted a new commission to prepare a report on the question of granting SC status to new persons who have historically belonged to the Scheduled Castes but have converted to religions other than **Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism**.

International Conference on Defence Finance & Economics



❖ **Context**

- The Ministry of Defence (Finance) organized the International Conference on Defence Finance & Economics recently.

❖ **Key Highlights:**

- The conference aimed to contribute to the country's defence readiness with optimum financial resources and effective implementation of the Defence Budget.
- It also sought to facilitate collaborations with **foreign governments, international institutions**, and global leaders in the domain of Defence Finance and Economics to support the Government's ongoing efforts on indigenisation and self-reliance in the Defence sector.
- The significance of the conference lay in its potential to provide a platform for sharing insights and experiences **on Defence Finance and Economics** in the context of evolving security challenges and policies globally.

Codenamed Orion



❖ **Context**

- France is set to host a multinational wargame codenamed Orion from the third week of April to May 5, 2023.

❖ **Key Highlights:**

- The exercise will simulate **a war scenario and test the combat capabilities** of participating countries' air forces in a multinational environment.
- The backdrop of the wargame is the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, where NATO is opposing Russian moves against Ukraine.
- **The Indian Air Force (IAF)** will participate in Orion with its **Rafale fighter jets** from the Western Air Command's Golden Arrows squadron.
- The exercise involves not only their Air Force but **also their Army and Navy along** with their allies, the US and the UK.
- The Orion wargame will take place in France and involve a **range of combat capabilities** from air-to-air combat to ground attacks. Some **7,000 NATO troops have reportedly participated** in the drill involving the land forces of their NATO allies.

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