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Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2023

Context: Yesterday, the Lok Sabha passed the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2023.

- The Bill's primary objective is to enhance Ease of Living and Ease of Doing Business.
- It seeks to decriminalize 183 provisions within 42 Central Acts that fall under the jurisdiction of 19 Ministries/Departments.
- By amending these provisions, the Bill aims to reduce the burden of legal complexities and promote a more business-friendly and citizen-friendly environment.

Process of decriminalisation

- Some provisions will no longer carry the punishment of imprisonment and/or fine.
- In a few provisions, imprisonment will be eliminated, while fines will still apply.
- In certain provisions, imprisonment will be abolished, but fines will be increased.
- Imprisonment and fines will be transformed into penalties in specific provisions.
- Compounding of offenses will be introduced for selected provisions.
- The bill proposes the following measures to ensure effective implementation:
 - Pragmatic revision of fines and penalties to match the gravity of the offense committed.
 - Creation of Adjudicating Officers to handle legal proceedings related to the offenses.
 - Establishment of Appellate Authorities to handle appeals against decisions made by the Adjudicating Officers.
 - Periodic increase in the quantum of fines and penalties.
- The bill also guarantees that the degree and nature of punishment align with the seriousness of the offense committed.

Benefits

- The Amendment Bill rationalizes criminal provisions, reducing fear of imprisonment for minor defaults.
- It ensures penalties align with the seriousness of the offense, maintaining law rigor.
- Administrative adjudication mechanisms will reduce pressure on the justice system.
- Decriminalization benefits citizens and certain government employees.
- The legislation fosters growth, serves as a guide for future amendments, and saves time and cost for all stakeholders.

Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023

Context: Recently, the Lok Sabha tabled the "Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023."

- The "Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023" aims to nominate two members from the "Kashmiri Migrants" community to the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Among the nominated members, one will be a woman.
- The Bill also proposes to nominate one member from "Pakistan-occupied Kashmir," who was displaced during the wars with Pakistan in 1947-48, 1965, and 1971.
- The primary objective of the Bill is to preserve the political rights of these communities and promote their overall social and economic development.

Background

- August 2019: Parliament revoked Article 370, ending Jammu and Kashmir's special status.
- Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into two union territories - Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh (without an Assembly).
- Central rule has been in place in Jammu and Kashmir since 2018, delaying Assembly elections.
- The Delimitation Commission received representations regarding seat reservations.
- The commission recommended representation through nomination, similar to the provision for women in Section 15 of the 2019 Act.
- The total seats in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly increased from 107 to 114, including nine reserved seats for Scheduled Tribes for the first time.



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How Does the US Federal Reserve Interest Hike Impact Indian Economy?

Context: To address above-target inflation, the US Federal Reserve recently increased its benchmark lending rate to the highest level since 2001.

About US Federal Reserve

- The Federal Reserve, also known as the Fed, is the central banking system of the United States.
- It ensures a secure, flexible, and stable monetary and financial system for the country.
- The Federal Reserve System consists of 12 regional Federal Reserve Banks, each responsible for a specific geographic area in the U.S.
- The Fed's primary responsibilities include conducting national monetary policy, overseeing and regulating banks, ensuring financial stability, and offering banking services.

Impact of Fed hike

- The US Federal Reserve holds the title of the world's most powerful central bank.
- When the Fed adjusts interest rates, its impact is felt globally, affecting both developed and emerging economies.
- Common belief suggests that higher US interest rates could attract investors to American assets, potentially causing capital outflows from riskier markets, particularly in capital-intensive sectors reliant on Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs).
- A consequence of higher US interest rates could be a reduction in global liquidity, resulting in increased borrowing costs for foreign investors.

Impact on India

- US Fed's interest rate hike narrows the difference between US and Indian interest rates, impacting currency trade.
- Foreign investors may withdraw from the Indian market and invest in US assets due to the attractiveness of the US Dollar and Treasury yield, leading to capital outflow from India.
- A US interest rate hike strengthens the US Dollar and weakens the Indian rupee.
- The weaker rupee prompts RBI to increase interest rates in India to curb outflows from Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) and stabilize the rupee.
- If the rupee depreciates significantly, RBI might sell dollars from the Forex reserve to support the domestic currency.

Maitree Super Thermal Power Project

Context: Bharat Heavy Electricals, a state-owned engineering firm, recently achieved synchronization of the 660-MW unit-2 at the 1,320-MW Maitree Super Thermal Power Project (STPP) with the electricity grid in Bangladesh.

Name: Maitree Super Thermal Power Project

Location: Rampal, Bangladesh

Capacity: 1,320MW coal-fired power station

Site: 1,834-acre area on the bank of Passur River

Proximity to Sundarbans: Approximately 14km away from the Sundarbans

Status: Under construction

- The Maitree Super Thermal Power Project is being developed by the Bangladesh India Friendship Power Company (BIFPCL).
- BIFPCL is a joint venture with equal partnership from India's National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) and Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB).
- Construction of the power project commenced in April 2017.
- Once completed, the Maitree Super Thermal Power Project will rank among the largest coal-fired power plants in Bangladesh.

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- Additionally, the Payra Power Plant in Pataukhali, which began test production in January 2020, is another significant coal-fired power plant in the country..

Plant make-up:

- The power plant will comprise two ultra-supercritical coal-fired units, each with a capacity of 660MW.
- The stack height of the plant will exceed 275m.
- Its design includes a twin-flue steel-lined reinforced concrete chimney.
- Both units will be equipped with flue gas desulfurization (FGD) and dry bottom ash-handling systems to manage emissions.

Finance

- The Maitree Super Thermal Power Project is being financed through a £1.3bn (\$1.6bn) loan from the Export-Import (EXIM) Bank of India.
- BIFPCL, in March 2017, entered into a loan agreement with the EXIM Bank of India to secure the financing for the project.

Contractors involved

- BHEL (Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited) was awarded an engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) contract valued at £1.15bn (\$1.5bn) for the power plant in July 2016.
- In May 2017, BHEL subcontracted global technology company GE (General Electric) for the supply of pressure part components required for the project.

Global Education Monitoring Report 2023

Context: The Global Education Monitoring Report for the year 2023 was recently published.

- The Global Education Monitoring Report is an independent annual report hosted and published by UNESCO.
- Its primary mandate is to monitor progress on education in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The report also evaluates the implementation of national and international education strategies.
- It serves as a mechanism to hold all relevant partners accountable for their commitments in the field of education.
- The "Global Education Monitoring Report 2023" has been titled "**Technology in education: a tool on whose terms?**"

Report Highlights

- UNESCO warns against uncritical adoption of digital products in education due to "little robust evidence" on its added value.
- Excessive screen time negatively impacts a child's educational performance and emotional stability.
- The report endorses banning smartphones in schools if technology integration does not improve learning or student well-being.
- Mere proximity to a mobile device can distract students and negatively impact learning in 14 countries, yet less than one in four have banned smartphone use in schools.
- Research shows that banning mobile phones from schools improves academic performance, especially for low-performing students.
- 16% of countries explicitly guarantee data privacy in education by law.
- During the pandemic, 89% of 163 education technology products could survey children's data.
- 39 out of 42 governments providing online education during the pandemic fostered uses that risked or infringed on children's rights.
- Basic digital learning in low-income countries and connecting all schools to the Internet in lower-middle-income countries would add 50% to their current financing gap for achieving national SDG 4 targets, according to the report.

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NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

World Hepatitis Day



The World Hepatitis Day is Observed annually on July 28 to raise awareness about viral hepatitis and its global impact.

About Hepatitis:

Hepatitis is liver inflammation caused by various factors, including viral infections (Hepatitis A, B, C, D and E), alcohol abuse, medications, autoimmune disorders and toxic substances.

Symptoms: fatigue, jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting.

Objective: Aims to promote prevention, testing, and treatment of hepatitis and show support for those affected.

Theme 2023: 'One life, one liver' - Focused on enhancing understanding and driving action against hepatitis.

History: Initially observed on May 19, moved to July 28 in 2010 to honor Dr. Baruch Samuel Blumberg, discoverer of Hepatitis B.

Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar



Home Minister of India (Amit Shah) launched the "Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar" initiative as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav in New Delhi.

What is Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar?

'Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar' is a pan-India cultural initiative launched by the Ministry of Culture under the National Mission on Cultural Mapping. It aims to culturally map India's 6.5 lakh villages across 29 states and 7 union territories on a comprehensive virtual platform.

Purpose: Promotes appreciation for India's diverse culture, fostering economic growth and social harmony in rural areas.

Event Highlights: Features grand projection mapping show at Qutub Minar, showcasing cultural wonders from selected villages.

Partnership: The Ministry of Culture and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) are coordinating the project.

Samvaad: Involves a "Samvaad" (dialogue) between people from different villages and the minister.

DENV Type-2



Dengue viruses are arboviruses transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes, causing dengue fever in tropical regions. The four serotypes (DENV-1 to DENV-4) make vaccine development challenging due to immune complexities and lack of cross-protection among serotypes.

DENV-2 (Dengue Virus Serotype 2):

- DENV-2 is one of the four serotypes of the dengue virus, a mosquito-borne RNA virus that causes dengue fever in humans.
- It is transmitted primarily by Aedes mosquitoes and is widely distributed in dengue-endemic regions worldwide.
- DENV Type-2 is one of the strains of the Dengue virus, which causes the disease dengue.
- It has a tendency to cause haemorrhagic fever and may lead to multi-organ failure.
- Patients with DENV Type-2 are at higher risk of developing dengue shock syndrome.
- Most cases of DENV Type-2 reported in Delhi have been contained with mild symptoms.
- Healthcare professionals, such as Dr. Rommel Tickoo and Dr. Suranjit Chatterjee, play a critical role in diagnosing and managing dengue cases caused by DENV Type-2.

Silvopasture



Silvopasture is an ancient practice integrating trees, forage and livestock on the same land. It offers a solution to deforestation and natural resource degradation.

Advantages of Silvopasture System:

Climate Buffer: Silvopasture systems act as buffers against temperature and wind extremes for livestock.

Carbon Sinks: Trees in silvopasture lands sequester significantly more carbon, aiding in climate change mitigation.

Nutrient Cycling: Trees' root systems enhance nutrient cycling, soil stability, and combat erosion.



Reversing Deforestation: Silvopasture plays a vital role in reversing the trend of deforestation for pasture land.

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	<p>Nutrient Cycling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nutrient cycling involves the transfer of energy and matter between living organisms and the non-living environment. ➤ In silvopasture systems, there is an exchange of nutrient elements among soil, plants, and animals, contributing to ecosystem health.
<p>Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023</p> 	<p>What is The Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023? The Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023 is a legislative proposal introduced in the Indian Parliament to amend the existing Cinematograph Act, 1952. The primary objective of this bill is to address various issues related to film piracy and make changes in the movie certification process by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).</p> <p>Punishment for Piracy: The bill proposes a three-year jail term and a fine of up to 5% of the movie's production cost for making pirated copies of films.</p> <p>New Certification Categories: The bill introduces three certifications under the 'UA' category: UA 7+, UA 13+, and UA 16+, allowing children below specified ages to access movies with parental guidance.</p> <p>No Revisonal Powers of the Centre: The bill states that the Central government will not have any revisonal powers over the certificates issued by the CBFC.</p> <p>Empowering CBFC: The bill grants more authority to the Central Board of Film Certification, enabling it to issue separate certificates for a film's exhibition on television or other media platforms.</p>
<p>Place in News</p> <p>Niamey</p>	<p>Supporters of a coup in Niger ransacked and set fire to the headquarters of the ruling party in Niamey. The army command declared its backing for the takeover carried out by soldiers of the presidential guard.</p> <p>Geographical Location: Niamey is the capital city of Niger, a landlocked country located in West Africa. It is situated along the banks of the Niger River, which plays a significant role in the city's economy and transportation.</p> <p>Importance: Niamey serves as the political, administrative and cultural center of Niger. It is the largest city in the country and a hub for various activities.</p> <p>Economy: Niamey's economy is driven by trade, agriculture, and crafts. It serves as a vital transportation and commercial center for the region.</p> <p>Landmarks: Notable landmarks in Niamey include the Grand Mosque, Niger National Museum, and Niamey Grand Market.</p> <p>Insecurity in the Region: Since President Mohamed Bazoum's election in 2021, the Sahel region has faced a jihadist insurgency, leading to insecurity in Niger, Mali, and neighboring countries.</p> <p>International Condemnation: The coup in Niger received condemnation from the African Union, ECOWAS, and Germany.</p> 

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