

10.1.2018

CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. NATIONAL ANTHEM IN CINEMA HALLS IS NO LONGER COMPULSORY

It is no longer mandatory for cinema halls to play the national anthem before screening a film.

- ❑ The Apex court modified the November 30, 2016 order which had made the playing of national anthem in cinema halls mandatory. Under the modified order, it will now be up to cinema hall owners whether or not to play the national anthem. However, the movie-goers will have to show respect to the anthem in case it is played, and they will have to stand.
- ❑ This came a day after the Centre, in an affidavit to the Supreme Court, asked it to reconsider its order making it mandatory for cinema halls to play the national anthem before screening of films. The Centre said an inter-ministerial committee was being asked to look into the matter and the government would take a call once the committee submitted its recommendations in six months.

2. UGC NOD TO REGULATIONS GIVING INSTITUTIONS GREATER AUTONOMY

The UGC approved new regulations, including one on freeing top-ranking institutions from the regulator's control. The 'UGC (Categorization of Universities for Grant of Graded Autonomy) Regulations aims to provide greater autonomy to institutions based on their NAAC accreditation score.

- ❑ Universities either accredited by NAAC with a score of at least 3.5 or ranked in the top 50 institutions of National Institutions Ranking Framework (NIRF) for two consecutive years will be parked in '**Category I**'. Universities in this category will be free to start a new course, department and school without UGC's approval. They will also be exempt from UGC's regular inspections and can collaborate with foreign educational institutions without the regulator's permission. Their performance will be reviewed based on self-reporting.
- ❑ To be eligible for '**Category II**', universities should either have been accredited by NAAC with a score between 3.01 and 3.49 or ranked between 51 and 100 in the NIRF ranking. Although such universities will also be exempt from UGC's regular inspections, they will be subject to stricter control in comparison to 'Category I' institutions. So, 'Category II' universities will need the UGC's permission to sign MoUs with foreign universities. Their performance will be reviewed by a peer group.
- ❑ Institutions categorised as '**Category III**' will be the most regulated universities. They will not enjoy any of the exemptions granted to their counterparts in 'Category I & II'. On Tuesday, the commission also approved a regulation that permits third-party agencies other than NAAC to accredit higher education institutions.

3. DEATH PENALTY BY INJECTION NOT WORKABLE: CENTRE

The Centre told Supreme Court that lethal injection as an alternative to death by hanging was “not workable” as there were several instances of it failing.

Additional Solicitor General conveyed this to Supreme Court which was hearing a PIL seeking abolition of the practice of executing death row convicts by hanging and introduction of a more “dignified” mode. During the brief hearing, the CJJ also wondered how the court could decide the mode of execution and sought to know the norm in other countries. It asked the ASG to clarify the government’s stand in an affidavit within four weeks.

The plea

- ❑ The plea has sought striking down of section 354(5) of the CrPC which says “when any person is sentenced to death, the sentence shall direct that he be hanged by the neck till he is dead”.
- ❑ The plea also wanted the court to “declare Right to Die by a dignified procedure of death is a Fundamental right as defined under Article 21 of the Constitution of India “and pointed out that the Law Commission in its 187th Report had noted that there was a significant increase in the number of countries where hanging has been abolished and substituted by electrocution, shooting or lethal injection as method of execution.
- ❑ The plea said hanging is undoubtedly accompanied by intense physical torture and pain. While in hanging, it takes over 40 minutes to declare a prisoner dead, shooting involves not more than few minutes and in case of intravenous lethal injection, it is all over in 5 minutes.

4. CHINA DENIES PLANS TO SET UP MILITARY BASE AT JIWANI IN PAKISTAN

China denied as “unnecessary” speculation reports that it was planning to build a military base at Jiwani in Pakistan’s Balochistan province close to the strategic Chabahar port, which is being jointly developed by India, Iran and Afghanistan.

RAKHIGARHI VILLAGERS FACE EVICTION

- ❑ The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has urged the district administration to raze 201 structures, mostly houses, in Rakhigarhi village so that the protected land is cleared of encroachments. Residents have been served eviction notices. In protest, they have started a dharna, demanding that the land be de-notified. The ASI has carried out a fresh survey in the village to identify the protected area on Harappan-era mounds and found out that houses have been built on mound numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Rakhigarhi is a village in the state of Haryana situated 150 kilometers to the northwest of Delhi. It is the site of a pre-Indus Valley Civilisation settlement going back to about 6500 BCE. Later, it was also part of the mature Indus Valley Civilisation, dating to 2600-1900 BCE. The site is located in the Ghaggar-Hakra river plain, some 27 km from the seasonal Ghaggar river.

5. DONT USE NATIONAL FLAG MADE OF PLASTIC, SAYS MHA

The government urged everyone not to use national flag made of plastic and asked the states and Union territories to ensure strict compliance of the flag code.

- ❑ The ministry said that it has been brought to its notice that during important events, the national flag made of plastic is also being used in place of paper flags. Since, the plastic flags are not biodegradable like paper flags, these do not get decomposed for a long time and ensuring appropriate disposal of national flag made of plastic commensurate with dignity of the flag, is a practical problem.
- ❑ As per Section 2 of The Prevention of insults to National Honour Act, 1971 - Whoever in any public place or in any other place within public view burns, mutilates, defaces, defiles, disfigures, destroys, tramples upon or otherwise shows disrespect to or brings into contempt (whether by words, either spoken or written, or by acts) the Indian National Flag or any part thereof, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both.
- ❑ The advisory said that on important national, cultural and sports events, flags made of paper only are to be used by public in terms of the provisions of the Flag Code of India, 2002 and such paper flags are not to be discarded or thrown on the ground after the event. Such flags are to be disposed of, in private, consistent with the dignity of the flag. Wide publicity for not using the national flag made of plastic should be made along with its advertisement in the electronic and print media.

6. TEAMINDUS HAS TO LOOK FOR LAUNCHER, FUNDS

- ❑ TeamIndus, a private company that hoped to reach the moon, has hit a roadblock. This is because ISRO's commercial arm, Antrix Corporation, which was to launch its robotic rover, has cancelled it due to a series of delayed and pending payments.
- ❑ Now, with the deadline of March 31 staring at them, TeamIndus is left with neither a launcher nor the funds. The company is unable to meet the programme cost of `450 crore (about \$70 million). Now with ISRO backing out, TeamIndus not only has to look for an alternative space agency to launch its robotic rover -- named ECA Rover (ECA, standing for Ek Choti Asha) -- but also raise more funds than what they had agreed to pay ISRO.
- ❑ TeamIndus had planned a mission phased over 24 days with 10 days in orbit and 14 days spent on the moon. En route, the spacecraft would hit a maximum speed of 10.5 km per second and decelerate to soft-land on Mare Imbrium, a vast lava plain on the moon. Besides this, there is the crucial component of the competition of traversing the robotic rover over 500 metres on the lunar surface and send back data to earth.

7. 2nd GOA BIRD FESTIVAL

- ❑ The second edition of the Goa Bird Festival will be held from January 12 to 14 at **Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary**, Canacona and Netravali wildlife sanctuaries.
- ❑ The **State Forest department** is organising the event with the support of Goa Tourism, the **Goa Bird Conservation Network (GBCN)** and Birderpics.
- ❑ The State of Goa nestled between Western ghats in the east and Arabian Sea to its west is an acclaimed tourist destination for its serenity, stretching from north to south over a coastline that is 105 km long and hospitality.
- ❑ The Western ghats constitute one of the 25 mega biodiversity hot spots in the world and by virtue of its location, the State represent a unique confluence of two diverse ecosystems, the marine and the tropical forests resulting in astonishing diversity of species with high degree of endemism specially in forest areas While a **large number of migratory birds visit** Goa's coastal and seascapes **during winter**.

8. TELECOM COMMISSION FAVOURS RAISING SPECTRUM HOLDING LIMIT

- ❑ Telecom Commission has concurred with Trai's suggestion to raise spectrum holding limit of mobile operators which will ease the exit route for operators under stress.
- ❑ Telecom Commission accepted recommendations by the industry regulator to ease current spectrum holding caps, smoothening the way for consolidation triggered by Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd's September 2016 launch.
- ❑ The commission, the **highest decision-making body** at the **department of telecommunications**, approved raising the overall spectrum cap per operator in a telecom circle, or zone, **to 35% from the current limit of 25%**.
- ❑ It suggested scrapping the current intra-band cap on operators that limited them to hold only up to 50% spectrum in a single band in a circle.
- ❑ The commission also accepted the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's suggestion to set a cap of 50% on the combined spectrum holding in the sub-1 GHz bands (700MHz, 800MHz and 900MHz bands) in a circle
- ❑ The proposals need to be approved by the cabinet. If they receive cabinet approval, Vodafone India Ltd and Idea Cellular Ltd, which propose to merge, will not have to surrender spectrum in seven circles where they would have breached the caps as a combined entity.

Questions:

1. Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary located in-

- A) Gujarat B) Goa C) Maharashtra D) Karnataka

2. Which of the following are Fundamental Duties?

- 1) Safeguard public property
 - 2) Have compassion for living creatures
 - 3) Provide opportunities for education to his child or ward between the age of 6 and 14 years
- A. Only 1 and 2
B. Only 1 and 3
C. Only 2, 3
D. All of the above

3. Match the harappan cities and their location

1. Lothal - a. Gujarat
2. Rakhigarhi – b. Rajasthan
3. Banawali - c. Haryana

- A. 1-a 2-b 3-c
B. 1-b 2-c 3-a
C. 1-a 2-c 3-b
D. 1-c 2-a 3-b