

1. Government to revisit Malimath report on criminal justice system

The Committee on Reforms of the Criminal Justice System, or the Justice Malimath Committee, was constituted by the Home Ministry in 2000 by then Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani, who also held the Home portfolio. It was headed by Justice V.S. Malimath, former Chief Justice of the Karnataka and Kerala High Courts.

Important recommendations

1. A 2003 report of a Committee on reforms in the criminal justice system that recommended admissibility of confessions made before a police officer as evidence in a court of law
2. The Committee also suggested constituting a National Judicial Commission and amending Article 124 to make impeachment of judges less difficult
3. Aberrations in the conduct of judges can be checked or even corrected if the problem is noticed at the earliest and efforts made to correct them.
4. In the high court, the chief justice is regarded as only the first among the equals. Except constituting benches and assigning work, he does not exercise any authority over his colleagues. This has considerably eroded discipline which is so necessary for any institution

Prelims bit

e-way bill is a document required to be carried by a person in charge of the conveyance carrying any consignment of goods of value exceeding fifty thousand rupees as mandated by the Government in terms of section 68 of the Goods and Services Tax Act read with rule 138 of the rules framed thereunder. It is generated from the GST Common Portal by the registered persons or transporters who causes movement of goods of consignment before commencement of such movement.

2. Missing the grass for the trees in Western Ghats

- Timber plantations, expanding agriculture and the spread of invasive species have eaten into as much as two-thirds of natural grasslands in the Palani Hill range of Western Ghats, shows a recently published study.
- It seems to be a natural march of invasive species such as prolific-seed-producer, Acacia in grassland
- The grasslands are in trouble, much more than the forests. It is important to preserve whatever patches are remaining and push back invasive species.

3. Megalithic era sarcophagus unearthed at Viyur

- A rare sarcophagus (stone coffin), said to be 2,000-year old from the Iron Age-Megalithic era, was discovered from a rock-cut cave at Viyur village of Kollam, near Koyilandy, in Kozhikode district on Monday.

4. Online degree in non-tech courses

- The Centre would soon finalise regulations enabling universities with high National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) scores to offer degree, certificate and diploma courses for non-technical subjects in online mode.
- The UGC will approve their course structure. There will be online lectures, tutorials and also a weekly online discussion forum where professors will answer queries of the enrolled candidates
- There will be an online examination in six months or one year. They will be granted certificates if they pass
- CABE had resolved to increase Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education from the present 25.2-% to 30-32-% in five years. It was believed that online education would help improve enrolment figures

5. Water scarcity may hit thermal power'

- India's thermal power plants, about 90% of which rely on fresh water for cooling, risk facing serious outages because of shortage of water, according to a new report by the World Resources Institute (WRI)

Problem?

- According to the report, not only does high water stress result in equipment shutting down, it also results in a lower level of efficiency when it is running.
- Power plants rely on water sourced from scarce regions, they put electricity generation at risk and leave less water for cities, farms and families. Without urgent action, water will become a choke point for India's power sector

way forward?

The Government of India has recently mandated limits for specific water consumption at thermal power plants, which is a critical step forward. However, they should also create policy incentives for water conservation. This will help encourage water efficiency and innovation across the power sector

6. Australia to offer payment for Great Barrier Reef rescue ideas-Environment Minister appeals to scientists, innovators and business leaders

- The UNESCO World Heritage-listed reef is reeling from significant coral bleaching due to warming sea temperatures linked to climate change.
- Australia is calling on the world's top scientific minds to help save the Great Barrier Reef, offering hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund research into protecting the world's largest living structure.
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- Solutions could focus on anything from reducing the exposure of corals to physical stressors, to boosting coral regeneration rates by cultivating reef-building coral larvae that attract other important marine species

EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

Following the grain trail: on India's public distribution system-Many States have initiated 'reforms' of the public distribution system that are hurting millions of people

ISSUE

Recent disruptions of the PDS have taken different forms, from compulsory biometric authentication to so-called direct benefit transfer (DBT)

JHARKHAND example

- The Jharkhand government made Aadhaar-based biometric authentication compulsory for PDS users
- Large numbers of people, especially among vulnerable groups such as widows and the elderly, found themselves excluded from the PDS. Those who were still able to buy their food rations faced considerable inconvenience due to connectivity and biometric failures. Worse, there was a revival of corruption, as PDS rice meant for those who failed the biometric test was siphoned off with abandon.
- The damage was made worse in mid-2017, when the Jharkhand government mass-cancelled ration cards not linked with Aadhaar.
- Many of the cancelled ration cards actually belonged to families that had been unable to link their card with Aadhaar for no fault of their own. The family of Santoshi Kumari, an 11-year old Dalit girl who died of hunger on September 28, was among them.

Direct benefit transfer

- Under the DBT system, people have to collect their food subsidy in cash from the bank before using it to buy rice from the ration shop at ₹32 per kg. Until now, they were able to buy rice from the ration shop at ₹1 per kg. Direct benefit transfer is an odd term for the new system, whereby the food subsidy is provided in a very roundabout way.
- At every step, there are long queues, and for many people the bank or pragra kendra is also far away. For people with mobility problems, like the elderly or disabled, this entire process is a nightmare

Problems faced

1. The most disturbing aspect of this trend is a lack of concern for the hardships that people face.
2. Aadhaar-less ration cards are cancelled without notice.
3. Pensions are discontinued without the victims being told what the problem is.
4. Job cards are cancelled just to meet the "100% seeding" targets.
5. Elderly persons with rough fingerprints are deprived of food rations without compensation.

PRELIMS BIT

The Kalasa Banduri is a controversial canal project between Karnataka and Goa. Karnataka plans to divert a meagre 7.56 tmc of its Mahadayi basin contribution to the Malaprabha dam to meet the drinking water needs of the twin cities of Hubballi-Dharwad and the surrounding towns and villages. The plan is to channelise the diverted water through Kalasa- Banduri, two separate canals so that water could be supplied to the twin cities and Nargund, Navalgund, Badami, Ron, Gadag and 100 villages.

1. The **Mahadayi/Mandovi River** (*Mandovi*, pronounce, also known as **Mahadayi** or **Mhadei** river, is described as the lifeline of the Indian state of Goa.
2. It originates from a cluster of 30 springs at Bhimgad in the Western Ghats in the Belagavi district of Karnataka
3. With its cerulean waters, Dudhsagar Falls and Varapoha Falls, it is also known as the Gomati in a few places. The Mandovi and the Zuari are the two primary rivers in the state of Goa.
4. Panaji, the state capital and Old Goa, the former capital of Goa, are both situated on the left bank of the Mandovi. The river Mapusa is a tributary of the Mandovi.

The people connection: young Israelis in India-Young Israelis visit India in huge numbers each year, forging a stronger acquaintance

India is hosting Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for a four-day visit.

India-Israeleconomic ties

Over the last 25 years, bilateral trade between India-Israel has increased from \$200 million to more than \$4 billion (excluding defence) in 2016-17.

- Given India's large market and huge consumer base, the numbers are low compared to India's economic relations with other countries.
- Currently, India is the largest arms buyer from Israel, trade is to the tune of approximately \$600 million.
- India signed a biggest weapon with Israel in 2017 for procuring advanced defence system of medium-range surface-to-air missiles, launchers and communications technology.
- MoU between India and Israel on the "India-Israel Industrial R&D and Technological Innovation Fund" was also approved by cabinet in 2017.

Significance:

- Recently India voted in the UN General Assembly against recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital
- Israel Prime minister visit comes despite New Delhi opposing Israel's move to make Jerusalem its capital.

- A 130-member delegation is accompanying the Israeli prime minister, constituting businessmen from 102 Israeli companies.
- The impending visit clears apprehensions of a road block in India-Israel relations.

Open trafficking-Employment opportunities should be created in Nepal to prevent cross-border trafficking between Nepal and India

Human trafficking from Nepal to India witnessed “a three-fold jump”. The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) reported that most of the victims were minors, with girls and boys in equal numbers, and many were from the earthquake-affected districts of Nepal

Favouring factor

1. The Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950 provides for an open border between Nepal and India.
2. Poverty and unemployment in Sindhupalchowck have left young people vulnerable to internal and cross-border trafficking through the Rasuwagadi-Kerung border

Way forward

1. It is imperative to create economic opportunities, particularly for the youth, within the country.
2. The Nepal-India border needs to be equipped with enhanced intelligence networks and effective monitoring mechanisms.

Question

1.. Consider the following statements.

1. Under the Kalasa Bandura project, Maharashtra government through dams and canals proposed to divert Mahadayi river to address water shortage in Malprabha basin.
2. Kalasa and Bandura are the tributaries of Mahadayi river.
3. Mahadayi river is also known as Mandovi river in Goa.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3