

**01 APRIL 2019****Ballot papers in Nizamabad**

- The Election Commission of India announced on Sunday that only Electronic Voting Machines will be used in Nizamabad Lok Sabha constituency.
- Earlier there were speculations that the ballot papers may be used for the polling in this constituency, where a large numbers of farmers are contesting as Independent candidates to highlight their problems.
- This resulted in 185 candidates contesting this particular constituency.
- The Election Commission of India instructed the Chief Electoral Officer of Telangana to make arrangements for conduct of elections using M3 EVMs, which can accommodate names and symbols of all 185 candidates.

**India Africa health sciences collaborative platform**

- India and African Union recently signed an agreement to establish an India-Africa health science collaborative platform to initiate and strengthen the cooperation in health sector in a structured and organised manner.
- It will be established to carry forward the strategic vision of India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) III.

**About India-Africa Forum Summit:**

The India–Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) is the official platform for the African-Indian relations. IAFS will be held once in every three years.

First India-Africa Forum Summit held in 2008 in New Delhi, India.

Second India-Africa Forum Summit held in 2011 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Third India-Africa Forum Summit held in 2015 in New Delhi, India

**SC suspends eco clearance for international airport in Goa****In brief:**

The Supreme Court suspended the environmental clearance granted for an international airport at Mopa in Goa and directed Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) to revisit the decision in light of its impact on ecology.

**In brief:**

The glaring deficiency emerged from the EIA report is its failure to notice the existence of Ecologically Sensitive Zones of Western Ghats within a buffer distance of 10 km of the project site.

The top court was hearing an appeal filed against the National Green Tribunal's August 21, 2018 judgement which had refused to quash the environmental clearance for development of Greenfield International Airport.

The tribunal said it was not a case where the project compromises with the environment, as claimed by the appellants but at the same time further safeguards for environment protection need to be incorporated.

According to the appellants in SC:

**Note**

- Goa's water resources are facing severe crisis, Goa has scarcity of land for housing and food or for buffer zones.
- The Project Proponent concealed vital facts regarding the need for the environmental and socio-economic aspects.
- The report of the public hearing was not made available to the inhabitants. The same was in English language.

### Arab leaders condemn U.S. move on Golan

#### Why in News:

- No country in the world recognizes Israel's rule over the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel in 1967 and unilaterally annexed in 1981 – no country, that is, until now.
- Recently, President of the United State, Mr, Donald trump proclaimed Israel's sovereignty over occupied Syrian land.
- Arab leaders, long divided by regional rivalries, condemned U.S. decision to recognise Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights and said West Asia's stability depended on creating an Palestinian state.

#### In Brief:

- The President has earlier recognised the **disputed city of Jerusalem as Israel's capital**, moved the American Embassy there from Tel Aviv, and stopped aid to Palestinian refugees.
- Last year, the US voted against a ritual annual **UN resolution condemning Israel's continued seizure of the Golan Heights**.

#### About Golan Heights

- The Golan Heights, a rocky plateau in south-western Syria, has a political and strategic significance which belies its size. Whoever controls this area has a major strategic advantage.
- Golan Heights is the area captured from Syria and occupied by Israel during the Six-Day War, territory which Israel annexed in 1981.
- Israel unilaterally annexed the Golan Heights in 1981. The move was not recognised internationally.

#### Why Golan Heights is important?

- Having control of the Golan gives Israel a vantage point from which to monitor any Syrian military movements towards Israel.
- The area is a key source of water for an arid region. Rainwater from the Golan's catchment feeds into the Jordan River. The area provides a third of Israel's water supply.
- The land is fertile, with the volcanic soil being used to cultivate vineyards and orchards and to raise cattle. The Golan is also home to Israel's only ski resort.

#### UN:

- **UNDOF (the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force)** was established in 1974 to supervise the implementation of the Agreement on Disengagement and maintain the ceasefire with an area of separation known as the UNDOF Zone.
- A UN peacekeeping force continues to monitor the cease-fire agreement's implementation, patrolling a narrow buffer between them.

#### Criticism:

- Russian Foreign Ministry condemned the move, calling it a "direct violation of UN decisions."
- They highlighted that changing the status of the Golan Heights bypassing

#### Note



the Security Council is in direct violation of UN decisions.

- The Syrian government said in a statement it is now more intent on liberating the Golan, “using every possible means.”
- The announcement was the latest in a series of steps under the Trump administration that have reshaped the United States role in conflicts between Israel and its Arab neighbors, to the benefit of Israel’s right-wing government.

### Release list of convicted officials, CIC orders Customs Department

#### Why In News:

The Central Information Commission (CIC) has directed the Customs Department to make public a list of officers caught red-handed for smuggling gold and heroin, and other illegal activities.

The CIC also called for making public details of officers convicted or jailed for giving false statements or evidence. Because such data cannot be considered personal information, as held by the Customs Department, and should be made available in the public interest.

#### In Brief:

#### Background:

Right To Information request was filed to the Chief Commissioner of Customs in Amritsar, asking for information on officers caught, convicted or jailed for smuggling over the last 10 years.

#### Central Information Commission:

- CIC was established in 2005 by Central Government under provisions of Right to Information (RTI) Act (2005).
- The Chief Information Commissioner heads the Central Information Commission.
- The general superintendence, direction and management of affairs of Commission are vested in Chief Information Commissioner who is assisted by Information Commissioners.
- CIC hears appeals from information-seekers who have not been satisfied by the public authority, and also addresses major issues concerning the RTI Act.
- CIC submits annual report to Union government on the implementation of the provisions of RTI Act.
- The central government in turn places this report before each house of Parliament.
- The Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a committee consisting of—
  - \* The Prime Minister, who shall be the Chairperson of the committee.
  - \* The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha.
  - \* A Union Cabinet Minister to be nominated by the Prime Minister.

#### Note

#### Functions and Powers of CIC

- It can order inquiry into any matter if there are reasonable grounds.
- It can secure compliance of its decisions from the public authority.
- It can recommend steps to be taken for promoting such conformity, if public authority does not conform to provisions of RTI Act.
- It receives and inquire into a complaint from



- It examines any record which is under control of the public authority and which may be withheld from it on any grounds during the enquiry. While inquiring, it has powers of civil court

### Right to Information

- Right to Information (RTI) is an Act of the Parliament of India to provide for setting out the practical regime of right to information for citizens.
- It replaces the erstwhile Freedom of information Act, 2002.
- Under the provisions of the Act, any citizen of India may request information from a “public authority” (a body of Government or “instrumentality of State”) which is required to reply expeditiously or within thirty days.
- The Act also requires every public authority to computerize their records for wide dissemination and to proactively certain categories of information so that the citizens need minimum recourse to request for information formally.
- Information disclosure in India was restricted by the Official Secrets Act 1923 and various other special laws, which the new RTI Act relaxes.

### Plea to ensure prescription of generic drugs

#### In news:

- The Delhi High Court on Monday declined to entertain a petition seeking directions to the Centre and the Medical Council of India (MCI) to ensure that doctors prescribe generic medicines.

#### In brief:

MCI had on January 21, 2013, issued a circular addressed to the deans of all medical colleges, director of all hospitals, president of all State medical councils, whereby the doctors practising medicines were called upon to prescribe drugs with generic name as far as possible.

- The plea said that
- The authorities have failed to ensure that doctors write only generic medicines in their prescription despite clear statutory directions.
- The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushdhi Pari yojana (PMBJP) was introduced in 2008 to lower healthcare costs by providing quality generic medicines at affordable prices.
- Generic medicine works and provides the same clinical benefit as brand-name versions, and added that generic medicine cost between 5% to 60% less than their branded counterparts.

#### What are Generic medicines?

- When a company develops a new drug often after years of research and it applies for a patent, which prohibits anyone else from making the drug for a fixed period. To recover the cost of research and development, companies usually price their brand- name drugs on the higher side.
- Once the patent expires, other manufacturers duplicate and market their own versions of the drug. Since the manufacture of these generic drugs do not involve a repeat of the extensive clinical trials to prove their safety and efficacy, it costs less to develop them.
- Thus,Generic medicines are unbranded medicines which are equally safe and having the same efficacy as that of branded medicines in terms of their therapeutic value.
- 

#### Note



**Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushdhi Pari yojana (PMBJP):**

- “Jan Aushadhi” is the novel project launched by Government of India in the year 2008.
- **Objective:** Making quality medicines available at affordable prices for all, particularly the poor and disadvantaged, through exclusive outlets “PradhanMantriBhartiyaJanaushadhiKendras”, so as to reduce out of pocket expenses in healthcare.
- It is a direct market intervention scheme of the Department of Pharmaceuticals.
- In addition to medicines and surgical items supplied by BPPI, Jan Aushadhi stores also sell allied medical products commonly sold in chemist shops so as to improve the viability of running
- State Governments or any organization / reputed NGOs / Trusts / Private hospitals / Charitable institutions / Doctors / Unemployed pharmacist/ individual entrepreneurs are eligible to apply for new Jan Aushadhi stores. The applicants shall have to employ one B Pharma / D Pharma degree holder as Pharmacist in their proposed store.
- **Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI)** is the implementing agency which will provide one-time assistance in furnishing and establishment costs of the outlet.
- It is a self-sustaining business model not dependent on continuous government subsidies or assistance.



Note

