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B. GS2 Related

Category: *POLITY*

1. [It's time to enact an anti-lynching law](#)

Context

- The data website India Spend has compiled instances of cow-linked violence from 2010 to 2017. It found that during this period, 28 people were killed in 63 such incidents.

Statistics

- An overwhelming 97% of these attacks took place after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government came to power in May 2014.
- About 86% of those killed were Muslims. In 21% of the cases, the police filed cases against the victims/survivors.
- Cow-related lynchings rose sharply in 2017. This marks a 75% increase over 2016, which had been the worst year for mob lynchings since 2010.

National Campaign Against Mob Lynching (NCAML)

- It has initiated a campaign for a law against mob lynching.
- Also known as "Masuka", short for **Manav Suraksha Kanoon** (law to protect humans)
- A draft of the proposed legislation is currently up on the Internet, awaiting suggestions from the public.

Why anti-lynching law is necessary?

- It fills a void in our criminal jurisprudence.
- At present there is no law that criminalises mob killings. The Indian Penal Code has provisions for unlawful assembly, rioting, and murder but nothing that takes cognisance of a group of people coming together to kill (a lynch mob).
- Under **Section 223 (a) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC)**, to prosecute together two or more people accused of the same offence committed in the course of the "same transaction".
- But the provision falls far short of an adequate legal framework for prosecuting lynch mobs

Apprehensions

- The potential for abuse

- the underlying premise that a generic anti-lynching law could address India's lynching problem.

Reason for the rise in lynchings

- Major reason for the recent rise in lynchings is impunity.
- The lynch mobs that murdered several people were confident of getting away with it. So far, the state has done little to shake that confidence.
- The problem is not mob lynching per se but the mob lynching of minorities, for that is where impunity kicks in.
- In the case of cow-linked lynchings, a lot depends on whether the incumbent in power considers it compatible with its political interests to crack down on such attacks.

Communalism

- Advocates of Masuka appear reluctant to name the problem as "targeted communal lynchings."
- It actually is a minority issue, and that is why the majority needs to take it up.
- Any political mobilisation for the protection of minorities would be anxious about the bogey of minority appeasement.
- It could even mean that an anti-lynching Bill stands less chance of making it through Parliament

Protect minorities

- A truly "civil" society should feel no hesitation in demanding that the state protect its minorities because protection of minorities is one of the biggest responsibilities of any democracy.
- The UN has a Special Rapporteur for minority issues precisely because it recognises that "minorities in all regions of the world continue to face serious threats"

Ways to combat the impunity enjoyed by anti-minority lynch mobs

- Prevention of Communal and Targeted Violence (Access to Justice and Reparations) Bill, 2011, or the Anti-Communal Violence Bill
- Police reforms, which are pending despite the Supreme Court ordering their implementation
- But the Anti-Communal Violence Bill was buried because it was felt that it threatened the autonomy of States by mooting a parallel structure that undermined federalism.

Anti-Communal Violence Bill

- It fixes command responsibility for communal incidents
- It recognises that targeted communal violence disproportionately victimises minorities
- It creates a mechanism to insulate investigations of communal violence from political interference

Way forward

- The draft anti-lynching law needs to be revised to incorporate key elements of the Anti-Communal Violence Bill.
- Demand for an anti-lynching law needs to be buttressed by a parallel campaign for police reforms.

2. [Aadhaar will be required for death certificates](#)

In news

- From October 1 onwards, **Aadhaar number** will be required to establish identity of a deceased person for registration of his/her death.
- **Why such a move?** Registrar General of India (RGI) said it would effectively prevent **identity-fraud**.
- Applicant is not aware of the Aadhaar No. or enrolment ID No. of the deceased: he shall have to declare that the latter did not possess Aadhaar number to the best of his knowledge.
- Any false declaration to this effect will be treated as an **offence under the Aadhaar Act, 2016 and Registration of Birth and Death Act, 1967**.
- A reading of the Aadhaar Act indicates that the **penalty** for the said offence may be imprisonment up to one year and/or fine up to **Rs 25,000**.

3. [Cattle trade ban rules were not placed before Parliament](#)

Context:

- **Prevention of Cruelty to Animal** (Regulation of Livestock Market) Rules of

Drawing flak

The fact that the rules on cattle slaughter were never placed before Parliament, as per the RTI reply, has earned the SC's censure

- Chapter 11 of the Manual of Parliament Procedure states that all new rules/laws must be effected after the approval of the Parliament

- As per Section 38A of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, it is mandatory that any new rule/law made by the concerned Ministry has to be placed before the Parliament

- The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), the nodal Ministry for the "Regulation of Livestock Market Rules", notified the draft rules on January 16, 2017, inviting suggestions within 30 days

- The final rules, "Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Regulation of Livestock Market) Rules, 2017", were notified on May 26, 2017



A simple reading of Section 38A tells us that you [government] cannot say 'I will not place the rules before the Parliament'

J.S. KHEHAR,
Chief Justice of India



Laying a law before the Parliament is important. It is an exercise of parliamentary control over the laws of the land

D.Y. CHANDRACHUD,
Supreme Court Judge



2017-notified on May 23, bans the

sale of cattle in livestock markets for the purpose of slaughter or animal sacrifice.

- The rules mandate that cattle should only be sold in animal markets for farming purposes

In news

- **RTI reply by the Lok Sabha Secretariat :**
- The rules banning cattle slaughter were never placed before Parliament
- **What does the law say?**
- Section **38A of the Prevention of Cruelty Act of 1960** mandates that any rule made by the Centre under it ought to be laid before each House of Parliament "as soon as it is made."
- The rules are to be placed before Parliament for a total of 30 days.
- Any modification agreed upon by both the Houses should be incorporated in the rules or else they would have no effect.

4. [Ordinance to give quota in promotions for SC/ST staff likely](#)

In news:

- The Karnataka State government is likely to **promulgate an ordinance** to give reservation in promotions for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe employees.
- This move comes in the backdrop of a Supreme Court order that struck down reservation in promotions for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe employees.

Key Fact: The State has had reservation in promotions for SC/ST employees since 1978 "15% for SCs and 3% for STs" which has been struck down by the apex court.

5. [Restoring Parliament's primacy](#)

Context

- Relevance of "Parliamentary Budget Office" in Indian Parliamentary system

What is a Parliamentary Budget Office(PBO)?

- A PBO is an independent and impartial body linked directly to Parliament
- A PBO is comprised of independent and specialised staff, such as Budget analysts, economists, public finance experts
- It provides technical and objective analysis of Budgets and public finance to the House and its committees
- Its core functions include Budget approval, scrutiny of its implementation
- The PBO must be non-partisan, independent and mandated to serve all parliamentarians
- Its output, and the methods by which those outputs are prepared must be transparent, accessible and understandable

Why PBO?

- Some experts have argued that Parliament does not require a functioning PBO
- But this argument is flawed because Parliament is a Budget-approving body and its members must be well-informed for a legitimate approving process
- PBO is an instrument for addressing bias towards spending and deficits
- It can generate quality public debate on Budget policy and public finance, enabling parliamentarians to engage meaningfully in the Budget process

Functioning PBOs in other countries

- The functioning PBOs are in countries such as the U.S., Canada, Australia, Austria, South Korea, Italy, and Mexico
- There are PBOs established in subnational legislatures, such as California, Ontario, Scotland, and New South Wales
- Also, New York City has a well-functioning Independent Budget Office (IBO)

Core functions of PBOs

- The majority of PBOs have four core functions:
 1. Independent and objective economic forecasts

2. Baseline estimate survey
3. Analysing the executive's Budget proposal
4. Providing medium- to long-term analysis

The core functions of the PBO should be codified in law.

The way forward

- Parliamentary scrutiny of public finance is an important aspect of governmental accountability
- There is a legitimate democratic need in this country to strengthen the capacity of Parliament and its members
- Parliamentarians have a role in establishing the PBO
- As representatives of the people, Parliamentarians can help improve Budget policies by providing inputs on public needs and priorities

6. [SC for centralised system to select judicial officers](#)

In news

- The Supreme Court indicated a favourable attitude towards a centralised selection mechanism for appointment of judicial officers in the subordinate judiciary.

~No breach™: The Bench tried to assuage the concern of various States and High Courts, saying there would be no breach and interference in the federal structure.

7. [New Bill to allow States to drop no-detention policy](#)

In news:

- Ministry of Human Resource Development is looking to introduce a Bill to amend the **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009**, to enable States to do away with the **no-detention policy** if they wish.
- **Key Fact:** Twenty-five States had recently agreed with the idea of doing away with or tweaking the no-detention policy "wherein a child is not detained till Class 8" to give a boost to levels of learning.
- The Bill is expected to permit States to introduce exams in Classes 5 and 8.
- Students who fail in the exams "to be held in March" will be given remedial training and offered another chance to pass in May. Those who still fail will be detained in the same class.

Why to remove no-detention policy?

- **Falling standards: no-detention policy** aimed at retaining students in school and giving a fillip to education "led to learning levels taking a dip.
- **Key Fact:** Dropout rates till Class 8 are just 4%, but they rise to above 20% after that. This is because of the no-detention policy.

8. [A half-done reform: On LPG subsidy](#)

Context:

- The government decided to completely do away with the subsidy offered to cooking gas used for household purposes
- Public sector oil companies were authorised to incrementally hike the "effective price" of LPG cylinders until the entire subsidy is wiped off by March next year.

Burden of government

- Fall in global crude oil prices, has already eased the burden on the government.
- In the latest Union budget, the government allocated about ₹25,000 crore towards oil subsidy, which is a fourth of the total oil subsidy bill (of almost ₹1 lakh crore) incurred in fiscal year 2013.
- The implementation of the direct transfer of cash benefits has already helped in the better targeting of subsidies to the poor, thus substantially reducing wasteful spending.

Subsidy Cut:

- The cut in subsidy would further strengthen **fiscal discipline**.

Way forward:

- Sustainably lower the price of cooking gas once and for all, getting the government out of the business of managing subsidies.
- Deregulating the market for cooking gas, thus opening it up to more widespread market competition, would also help.

Category: ECONOMICS

1. [8.8 million blind in India in 2015, says study in Lancet](#)

Highlights of a Study by the Lancet Global Health journal

- According to the study, **8 million people** in India were found to be blind in 2015
- And another **7 million people** had moderate and severe vision impairment

Level of Problem around the world

- According to the study, there are an estimated **36 million people** worldwide, who are blind and this is set to increase to almost **115 million people** by 2050
- This increase will be seen in developing countries in **Asia and sub-Saharan Africa**

Problem trend:

- The rates of blindness and vision impairment have decreased in recent years
- The number of cases has risen as the world population has aged

C. GS3 Related

Category: **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

1. [ISRO to rely on CSIR for keeping satellite clocks accurate](#)

In news

A step towards self-reliance

- India's **indigenously-developed** global positioning system, called **NavIC**, will **synchronise** its clocks to time provided by the National Physical Laboratory, a Council of Scientific and Industrial Research body.
- **Until now:** the satellites on NavIC " managed by the Indian Space Research Organisation " relied on the **United State's GPS** to ensure that the clocks aboard were working at the high-precision required in satellite-based communication.
- A memorandum was signed between the CSIR and ISRO to initiate this activity that will now require NPL to upgrade its time-keeping infrastructure and ISRO to make changes that will make NPL-provided time the default time source aboard the seven-satellite constellation.

Replacement

- Atomic clocks aboard NavIC, more formally called the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), are foreign-made and ISRO's forthcoming satellite, **IRNSS-1H**, will continue using the same clocks.
- **IRNSS-1H** satellite is being launched as a replacement for one of the seven satellites, IRNSS-1A, which has had problems with the accuracy of its clocks.

About NavIC

- NAVIC is an autonomous regional satellite navigation system that provides accurate **real-time positioning and timing services**.
- NavIC is designed to provide accurate position information service to users in India as well as the region extending up to 1500 km from its boundary, which is its primary service area.
- NAVIC will provide two levels of service, the "standard positioning service" will be open for civilian use, and a "restricted service" (an encrypted one) for authorized users (including military).

National Physical Laboratory (NPL):

- The National Physical Laboratory (NPL), part of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research, is host of the most accurate clocks in the country, and the only agency in India authorised to maintain Indian Standard Time (IST).
- The NPL maintains accuracy of ± 20 nanoseconds through the Primary Time Scale, an ensemble of five **caesium clocks** and one **hydrogen maser**.
- The rest of the world connects to these via tele-clocks, satellite links, and Network Time Protocol services.

D. GS4 Related

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F. Bills/Acts/Schemes/Orgs in News

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G. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper II

1. Direct cash transfers have the potential to improve the economic lives of the poor by transferring benefits to households quickly and directly. Achieving these benefits requires thoughtful design of schemes, and careful, rigorous analysis of ongoing programmes is an important input to the design process. Discuss
2. "Advancing rights of women farmers can revolutionise the rural ecosystem." Discuss the relevance of this statement in the current Indian context.

3. Explain the need for Anti-lynching law in India, what are the challenges involved?

GS Paper III

1. “Multiple indicators suggest that executive-led budgetary governance has not been successful in India.” Critically examine.

GS Paper IV

1. Some people feel that values keep changing with time and situation, while others strongly believe that there are certain universal and eternal human values. Give your perception in this regard with due justification.
2. You are recently posted as district development officer of a district. Shortly thereafter you found that there is considerable tension in the rural areas of your district on the issue of sending girls to schools. The elders of the village feel that many problems have come up because girls are being educated and they are stepping out of the safe environment of the household. They are of the view that the girls should be quickly married off with minimum education. The girls are also competing for jobs after education, which have traditionally remained in boys’ exclusive domain, adding to unemployment amongst male population. The younger generation feels that in the present era, girls should have equal opportunities for education and employment, and other means of livelihood. The entire locality is divided between the elders and the younger lot and further sub-divided between sexes in both generations. You come to know that in Panchayat or in other local bodies or even in busy crossroads, the issue is being acrimoniously debated. One day you are informed that an unpleasant incident has taken place. Some girls were molested, when they were en route to schools. The incident led to clashes between several groups and a law and order problem has arisen. The elders after heated discussion have taken a joint decision not to allow girls to go to school and to socially boycott all such families, which do not follow their dictate.
 1. What steps would you take to ensure girls’ safety without disrupting their education?
 2. How would you manage and mould matriarchic attitude of the village elders to ensure harmony in the inter-generational relations? (250 words)