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Nothing here for Today!!!

Category: POLITY

1. [SC ruling on age of consent today](#)

In news:

- The Supreme Court will on Wednesday pronounce its verdict on whether or not an exception to rape, sanctioned by the Indian Penal Code that allows a man to have sexual intercourse with his wife aged above 15 is valid.

Ambiguity:

- Section 375 (rape) of the IPC, allows a husband to have sexual relationship with his 15-year-old wife.
- Definition of "child" in recent laws such as the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, which includes any person below the age of 18.
- The court has repeatedly questioned the continued existence of this exception to rape when the other parliamentary laws have uniformly said that the age of consent of a girl is 18.

Government's response: doing away with this exception clause in the IPC would open a **Pandora's box** on marital rape, which does not exist in India.

NGO, Independent Thought's contention : the exception clause was "violative of Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution to the extent that it permits intrusive sexual intercourse with a girl child aged between 15 and 18 years, only on the ground that she has been married.

Basic Information:

Section 375 in The Indian Penal Code

375. Rape ."A man is said to commit "rape" who, except in the case hereinafter excepted, has sexual intercourse with a woman under circumstances falling under any of the six following descriptions:"

(First) " against her will.

(Secondly) "Without her consent.

(Thirdly) " With her consent, when her consent has been obtained by putting her or any person in whom she is interested in fear of death or of hurt.

(Fourthly) “With her consent, when the man knows that he is not her husband, and that her consent is given because she believes that he is another man to whom she is or believes herself to be lawfully married.

(Fifthly) “With her consent, when, at the time of giving such consent, by reason of unsoundness of mind or intoxication or the administration by him personally or through another of any stupefying or unwholesome substance, she is unable to understand the nature and consequences of that to which she gives consent.

(Sixthly) “With or without her consent, when she is under sixteen years of age. Explanation. “Penetration is sufficient to constitute the sexual intercourse necessary to the offence of rape.

(Exception) “Sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape.]
STATE AMENDMENT

(Manipur) “(a) in clause sixthly, for the word “sixteen” substitute the word “fourteen”;

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012: The Act is gender-neutral and defines a child as any person below the age of eighteen years.

It provides:

- Precise definitions for different types of Child abuse crimes
- Stringent punishments
- Mandatory reporting
- Child-friendly procedures
- Under Section 45 of the Act, the power to make rules rests with the Central Government
- Qualifications and experience of interpreters
- Arrangements for care and protection
- Criteria for award of compensation by the Special Court

The National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and State Commissions for the Protection of Child Rights (SCPCRs) have been made the designated authority to monitor the implementation of the Act

2. [Law officers can take up private practice: Prasad](#)

In news:

Union Law and Justice Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said that **government law officers** were allowed to take up private suits depending on the nature of the case. But they are disallowed from suits in which the state is party.

3. [Passive euthanasia already a law, says govt.](#)

Government response to the Supreme Court Constitution Bench:

- Passive euthanasia, the act of withdrawing life support to a terminally-ill patient, is already the law of the land.
- **Aruna Shanbaug case:** The government pointed out that the Supreme Court itself, in 2011, had issued comprehensive guidelines allowing passive euthanasia in the tragic case of the bed-ridden former Mumbai nurse Aruna Shanbaug.
- The government said it was finalising a draft law on passive euthanasia called “**The Management of Patients With Terminal Illness – Withdrawal of Medical Life Support Bill**”, which was drawn up in line with the recommendations of the Law Commission of India that life support can be withdrawn for patients in **persistent vegetative state** (PVS) or suffering an irreversible medical condition.
- **Centre’s objection:** The Centre, however, objected to legalising the **concept of “Living Will”** an advance written directive to physicians for end-of-life medical care. Reason: this may lead to the abuse and neglect of the elderly, especially if they were financially well-off. The government pointed out that the living will was a concept which contradicts a person’s instinctive urge to survive.

Social and philosophical aspects

Forcing a person to take medical treatment against their will is also a social issue

- On one hand, country is short of medical facilities etc, and on other hand, we force those who are in a hopeless situation to take treatment
- This also raises a “philosophical question” on whether a person can refuse treatment
- An individual who refuses to undergo treatment may become a burden on the resources of the state

Way forward

- As laid down in the Shanbaug case, the way ahead was to allow medical boards to decide whether to allow passive euthanasia or not

Basic Information:

Passive euthanasia:

- Passive euthanasia is the acts of hastening the death of a terminally-ill patient by altering some form of support and letting nature take its course.
- Passive euthanasia can involve turning off respirators, halting medications, discontinuing food and water so the patient dies because of dehydration or starvation.
- Passive euthanasia can include giving the patient large doses of morphine to control pain in spite of the likelihood that the painkiller can cause fatal respiratory problems.

Active euthanasia: Active euthanasia involves helping the patient to die on the basis of a request by either the patient or those close to him or her, usually direct family members.

Living Will:

- A Living Will is a document that allows a person to explain in writing which medical treatment he or she does or does not want during a terminal illness.
- A terminal illness is a fatal illness that leads ultimately to death.
- A Living Will takes effect only when the patient is incapacitated and can no longer express his or her wishes. The will states which medical treatments may be used and which may not be used to die naturally and without the patient's life being artificially prolonged by various medical procedures.

4. [East, NE States score high in curbing infant mortality](#)

In news:

- **IMR:** Infant Mortality Rate(IMR) is counted as the number of deaths per 1,000 live births
- **Data released by the Sample Registration Survey (SRS) bulletin:**
 - According to the SRS's data, states from the east and northeastern part of the country have registered a significant drop in IMR
 - The all-India IMR has also decreased from 37 in 2015 to 34 in 2016
 - The SRS bulletin, published by the office of Registrar General of India

State wise performance:

- Bihar, which has the highest density of population in the country, has recorded a drop of four points in IMR from 42 in 2015 to 38 in 2016
- In Assam, the IMR has dropped from 47 to 43 and in Jharkhand, it has dropped from 32 to 29
- In Odisha, the IMR have dropped from 46 to 44
- West Bengal, which has been showing a steady decline over the past few years, has recorded a drop of one point from 26 in 2015 to 25 in 2016

Category:Â INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. [Post-Doklam, the healing touch of yoga](#)

Key Points:

- China's Minzu University is offering the country's first master's degree in Yoga.
- **Significance** : It appears to be a clear signal that soft power is being deployed to reactivate China-India ties in the aftermath of the tense Doklam standoff.
- The programme is being sponsored by the China-India Yoga College at the University, and India's Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana.
- The three-year course includes two years in China and a final year in India.
- Classes will cover lessons on yoga asanas, yoga physiology, yoga anatomy, yoga therapy as well as meridian theory.
- **The curriculum includes courses in Hindi and Sanskrit.**

Category:Â ECONOMICS

1. [IMF lowers India's growth projection, attributes it to demonetisation, GST](#)

International Monetary Fund (IMF) predictions:

- In the latest **World Economic Outlook** released on October 10, IMF has projected India to grow at 6.7% in 2017 and 7.4% in 2018.
- **Reasons:** The report cited "lingering impact" of demonetisation and the Goods and Services Tax for the expected slow down during the current and the next year.

World economy is picking up steam:

- The IMF has revised upwards "global growth projections to 3.6% for this year and 3.7% for next.
- Pickups in investment, trade, and industrial production, coupled with strengthening business and consumer confidence, are supporting the recovery

2. [No respite for Indian banks as bad loans hit record \\$146 billion](#)

Context:

- Indian banks' sour loans hit a record **5 trillion rupees** (\$145.56 billion) at the end of June.
- **Key Fact:** Asia's third-largest economy is no nearer to bringing its bad debt problems under control.

In news:

- A review of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data obtained through right-to-information requests shows banks' total stressed loans "including non-performing and restructured or rolled over loans" rose 4.5 percent in the six months to end-June. In the previous six months they had risen 5.8 percent.
- The bulk of India's sour loans are in the **state banks** and stem from lending to large conglomerates, especially in steel and infrastructure.
- **Key Fact:** Stressed loans as a percentage of total loans reached 12.6 percent at end-June, according to the RBI data,

- the highest level in at least 15 years.
- According to RBI data, new loans grew at just about 5 percent in the year to March, the lowest growth rate in more than six decades. Several banks have already cut back their loan books to conserve capital.
- Negative impact:**
- The stubborn bad debt problem has eaten up bank profits and choked off new lending, especially to smaller firms.
- Banks are having to take higher provisions to account for more defaulters being pushed into bankruptcy. And margins are likely to be squeezed further by proposed new rules to encourage commercial banks to pass on central bank interest rate cuts.

Bank Recapitalization:

- Fitch Ratings estimates Indian banks will **need \$65 billion** of additional capital by March 2019 to **meet Basel III** global banking rules.
- Moody's expects the top 11 state lenders alone will need nearly \$15 billion. The government has just \$3 billion left in its budget for bank recapitalization.

3. [Stressed companies to delay investment recovery by 2-3 yrs: India Ratings](#)

Context:

- Report by India Ratings limited on the stressed assets scenario in the Indian industry.
- Main theme:** Stressed corporates could derail the overall investment recovery for another two-to-three years in the wake of moderate consumption demand, global overcapacity and working capital disruptions due to the goods and services tax.
- The main concern expressed by the report is decline in capital expenditure in the Indian industry.**

Key Findings:

- There are 75 stressed corporates who constitute 20 per cent of the total capital expenditure spending over FY12-17.
- These corporates are from key investment-linked sectors, such as metals and mining, infrastructure, and power.
- The majority of stressed corporates would require another 4-5 years to deleverage (the process of reducing the level of one's debt by rapidly selling one's assets) to a sustainable level of 4-5 times from their current leverage of 9-10 times

Reasons:

- Key Areas of Stresses:** There are pockets of stress within sectors, especially infrastructure, metals and power (particularly thermal) owing to high leverage and weak cash flow.
- These sectors witnessed a significant decline in capacity utilisation.
- Corporates are likely to show an unwillingness to invest in long-term projects due to muted demand and significant leverage, despite a low interest rate environment.

Way forward: The core sectors need to focus on selling stressed assets and equity infusion in order to make efforts in incurring capital expenditure.

Basic Information:

- Capital Expenditure** : Money spent by a business or organization on acquiring or maintaining fixed assets, such as land, buildings, and equipment.
- EBITDA:** Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) is a measure of a company's operating performance. Essentially, it's a way to evaluate a company's performance without having to factor in financing decisions, accounting decisions or tax environments.

4. [Is deep sea fishing the silver bullet?](#)

Context:

- Steps taken by the government of India and the state of Tamilnadu to promote deep sea fishing.

Issue:

- The main issue is to do with the oversized fleet of Tamil Nadu trawlers that fish regularly in Sri Lankan waters, often damaging the boats and gear of small-scale Tamil fishers from the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.
- The Sri Lankan government has not only passed a legislation banning trawling but its navy has also been vigilantly patrolling the International Maritime Boundary Line.

A new strategy:

- The plan is to remove as many trawl vessels from the Palk Bay as possible. And replace them with deep sea vessels that fish in the Bay of Bengal and Gulf of Mannar, in 2017-2020.
- The plan in the Palk Bay is to extract 2,000 trawlers from the bay. Each vessel will cost Rs 80 lakhs of which only 30 per cent (10% upfront+ 20% loan) is to be paid by the trawl owners, while rest will be paid by state and central government as subsidy.
- The Central and Tamil Nadu governments are jointly providing finance for the project.
- The new replacement tuna long liner boats cannot trawl or operate in the Palk Bay.
- The government is now creating a new deep-sea fishing harbour at Mookaiyur, located just south of the Palk Bay in the Gulf of Mannar, where many of these vessels are likely to be berthed.
- Priority is to be given to owners who have had their boats apprehended or damaged in Sri Lanka

Challenges:

- There is a question whether there are sufficient stocks of fish in the adjacent waters of the Bay of Bengal and Gulf of Mannar to make deep sea fishing economically viable for a large and new fleet of vessels.
- Are the trawl owners interested: do Palk Bay trawl fishers, who are used to one-day fishing, have sufficient skills and an interest for deep sea fishing.
- The question of what will become of trawl crews (who might not have the required skills for deep sea fishing) remains largely unaddressed, potentially jeopardising the local economy of the region.
- The main concern for the trawl owners is whether deep sea fishing is a sound investment or not.
- Some fishermen have doubts about the high operational costs of deep sea fishing and the loan repayment schedule.
- Equally of concern is the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Department's capacity to monitor, control and carry out surveillance (MCS) of the process of decommissioning.

Way forward:

- Whether deep sea fishing will reduce the Palk Bay fishing conflict depends entirely on the downsizing of the existing trawl fleet. This means actual implementation of rules on the ground is the most important thing to look into.
- Various other solutions such as buy-backs, alternative livelihoods and skill development need to be rolled out with a simultaneous focus on a strong MCS system. Only then can this intransigent fishing conflict be finally resolved.

Basic Information:

- **Trawling:** Trawling is a method of fishing that involves actively dragging or pulling a trawl through the water behind one or more trawlers. Trawls are fishing nets that are pulled along the bottom of the sea or in midwater at a specified depth.
- **Deep Sea Fishing:** Deep sea fishing is a form of angling that requires deep waters and usually takes place further away from land. The water depth should be at least 30 meters to be considered deep sea fishing territory.

5. [Petroleum ministry to seek Cabinet approval for domestic gas trading hub](#)

In news:

- Petroleum ministry is seeking approval from the Union Cabinet for a domestic gas trading hub
- It help India adopt a better mechanism for price discovery of both domestic as well as imported gas
- Ministry is in the process of creating an internal think-tank to assist in priority areas like
 - (1) Foreign investment
 - (2) Moving towards gas-based economy
 - (3) Financing models
 - (4) Using technology and curbing hydrocarbon imports
- **Current Scenario:**
Currently, the price of natural gas in the country is determined through a government-mandated formula that links the local price to rates prevailing in gas-surplus nations
- **Plans ahead:**
Currently, India imports almost 60 per cent of its petroleum requirements
India also plans to double its network of pipelines to transport natural gas to 30,000 km within the next three-four years which will help in shifting to a gas-based economy, reduce greenhouse emissions and cut oil import.

6. [A new industrial policy for Bharat](#)

Context:

- A recent report by Deloitte LLP pointed out that India's young population will drive its economic growth to overtake China and other Asian tigers in the next few decades.
- The potential workforce in India is set to increase to 1.08 billion in the next 20 years and hold above the billion mark for 50 years.
- This requires enabling conditions for growth are created and sustained.

About Industrial Policy, 2017:

- The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), released the discussion paper on Industrial Policy 2017.
- It highlights the progress made in the last 25 years and facilitates discussions for the formulation of new industrial policy aimed at building a globally competitive Indian industry equipped with skill, scale and technology.
- It recognizes the need to gainfully employ a growing workforce and lists long-term and medium-term measures and related challenges.

Economic Survey 2017 opinion about rising workforce:

- It points out that the richer peninsular states in India will initially witness a sharp increase in working age populations, followed by a sharp decline.
- In contrast, the poorer hinterland states will remain young and dynamic, characterized by a rising working age population for some time, plateauing towards the middle of the century.

What needs to be done to cash upon demographic dividend?

- The poorer states in the hinterland are characterized by a substantial rural, informal economy where agriculture and allied non-farm activities are the principal sources of livelihood.
- For India to realize its economic potential, it is this population which needs to be tapped and provided opportunities.
- Significant migration in search of better sources of livelihood is also being witnessed from such areas towards urban centres, which needs to be carefully managed.

Issues:

- The policy does not discuss ideas for creating jobs for and in Bharat.
- It follows conventional approach that confines the scope of industrial policy to “manufacturing enterprises”, unrelated to agriculture and the services sectors.
- This myopic industrial policy can have adverse consequences in the longer term.
- It recognizes the importance of competition and strengthening global linkages and value chains. But incentives to select sunrise sector will potentially disincentivize competition and innovation, and curb the growth of other sectors
- This sector specific approach might result in policies soon becoming out of sync with dynamic economic developments and with our World Trade Organization (WTO) obligations.
- An effective industrial policy cannot be merely a collection of sectoral policies.

Way Forward:

- It must appreciate its linkages with agriculture, services policies and with trade, competition and sector-specific policies at a broader level.
- A systems™ view informed by a whole-of-government approach is needed.
- It will treat the economy like a complex human body, composed of many sub-systems, each of which performs a function to enable the entire system to remain healthy and grow.
- The Indian economy has suffered from several ill-advised medications in the past, and more recently as well. Such experiments need to be prevented.
- It requires different actors and government departments engaged in specific sub-systems to work with each other.
- Stakeholders involved in the design of specific policies must interact with each other and optimize the functioning of crucial sub-systems.
- A powerful nodal department in the prime minister™s office should be authorized to ensure coherence through coordination with different departments and related stakeholders, and enable swift decision making within predetermined time frames.
- A new forward-looking industrial policy for India must have Bharat as its soul.
- A long-term view needs to be taken on competition and trade-related issues, and the industrial policy should avoid the temptation of short-term benefits of over-protectionism.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY/HEALTH ISSUES

1. [WHO releases new guidelines to manage obesity in children](#)

Context:

- Childhood obesity a “**Global epidemic**”.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has released new guidelines on how trained professionals can better identify youngsters in need of help.

In news:

- India has the second highest number of obese children in the world after China, according to a study published in The New England Journal of Medicine in June this year.
- **Key Point** : Doctors say identification of obesity in children is the main issue as often parents think a chubby child is a healthy child.

Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI):

- The WHO guidelines titled “**Assessing and managing children at primary healthcare facilities to prevent overweight and obesity in the context of the double burden of malnutrition**” provides updates for the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI).
- The guideline includes counselling, dieting and assessment of eating habits along with the usual weight and height measurements.

Double-burden of malnutrition:

- In 2016, one half of all children overweight or obese lived in Asia and one quarter lived in Africa.
- Paradoxically, overweight and obesity is found in populations where under-nutrition remains common “this phenomenon is sometimes termed as “double-burden of malnutrition”.

Key Fact:

- A study published in **Paediatric Obesity** says India will have over 17 million children with excess weight by 2025.
- **Reasons for the increasing trend of Obesity among children:** urbanisation, increased income, availability of fast foods, educational demands, television viewing and gaming have led to a rise in the consumption of foods high in fats, sugar and salt and low physical activity.

What needs to be done?

Diagnose at early stage: Early prevention is the need of the hour to avoid an entire generation from falling prey to heart ailments, hypertension and diabetic complications.

Nothing here for Today!!!

F. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper II

1. What is Conference of Governors? What is its importance?

GS Paper IV

1. Critically analyze the various ethical issues associated with euthanasia?