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**Category: POLITY**

#### 1. [Centre keen on having court administrators](#)

##### **In news:**

- The Union Law Minister has written to the Chief Justices of all the High Courts to seek their views on **developing a permanent cadre of administrators for court management and administration**.
- The move is aimed at allowing the judiciary to devote more time on judicial work and free them from administrative, managerial and financial work.
- **Tasks assigned** : these managers are meant to assist the Registrars in High Courts and Judges in District Courts in administrative tasks.

##### **Present Scenario:**

##### **Judges overburdened:**

- The situation is particularly bad in **lower judiciary** where judges are burdened with substantial administrative work.
- Key Fact: As per the **Indian Judiciary Annual Report 2016** , pendency of cases across district courts is a staggering 2.81 crores and as many as 5,000 judges' posts are vacant.
- Administrative work only added to the workload of existing judges.

**13th Finance Commission recommendations:** creation of the post of Court Managers in every district court and High Court.

**Problems associated with creation of separate posts:** Recruitment on contract basis, low remuneration package, reluctance on the part of the judiciary to accept Court Managers to participate in the judicial process have been identified as some of the reasons for failure to attract suitable candidates.

#### 2. [Air programme on dangers of Blue Whale game: SC tells DD](#)

##### **Context:**

- Supreme Court views on Blue Whale game.

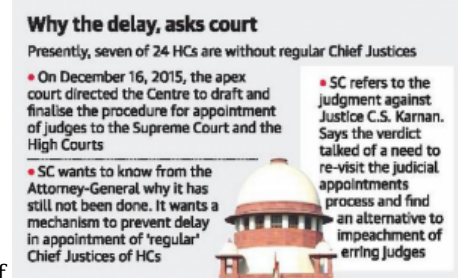
#### In news:

- Declaring the Blue Whale online game a threat to life, the Supreme Court directed **public broadcaster Doordarshan** to conceive a cautionary and educational programme about the dangers of the online game which goads players, mostly students, to commit suicide.
- The Supreme Court gave the public broadcaster a week's time to prepare the programme and air it on prime time for an appropriate duration, possibly not less than 10 minutes.
- **The court also directed the competent authority in the government to see to it that private channels also telecast the programme.**
- **Motive behind the programme:** The idea behind the programme is to make parents and children aware of the dangers of online games like Blue Whale. The message of the programme should be that children should not be trapped into the game.

### 3. SC questions Centre on judicial posts

#### Context:

- Judicial appointments to the Supreme Court and the high courts.
- Six of the 24 high courts have been without regular Chief Justices for months.
- **Key Fact:** Judicial vacancies continue to be a formidable problem across the 24 high courts. Out of an approved total



strength of 1079 high court judges, there are 387 vacancies as of 2017.

October 1,

#### Background Information:

- The Constitution Bench's historic decision, in **October 2015** : strike down the government's **National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) law** . The NJAC law had given politicians an equal say in judicial appointments to constitutional courts.
- **December 2015: five-judge Constitution Bench, tasked the Centre with the drafting and finalisation of the MoP (Memorandum of Procedure).**
- **Decisions taken:** Over a year and 10 months after a Constitution Bench placed its faith in the government to iron out the dos and don'ts of judicial appointments to the Supreme Court and the high courts, the **Centre is yet to deliver** .

#### The Supreme Court wants to know the reasons:

- The Supreme Court issued notice to the Attorney-General of India, to explain why the finalisation of the Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) for appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and the high courts continues to be eluding.
- The Supreme Court also wants Attorney General, to address it on the delay in appointment of 'regular' Chief Justices to various high courts.
- The apex court underlined that the 'arrangement' of Acting Chief Justices in high courts should not continue for more than a month.

#### Basic Information:

**Amicus curiae** : An amicus curiae (literally, 'friend of the court') is someone who is not a party to a case and is not solicited by a party, but who assists a court by offering information that bears on the case. The decision on whether to admit the information lies at the discretion of the court.

### 4. Centre can now shift troops from Bengal

#### Context:

- The Union Government had appealed to the Supreme Court against a recent Calcutta High Court order restraining it from withdrawing troops deployed in the two districts (Darjeeling and Kalimpong) of West Bengal.

#### In news:

#### Supreme Court observation:

- "Law and order is your problem," the Supreme Court told the Mamata government.
- It allowed the Centre to withdraw seven companies of the Central police forces stationed in the restive Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts of West Bengal for deployment in poll-bound States.
- Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat go to the polls in November and December.
- The Supreme Court ordered to withdraw seven companies of the Central police forces from the two districts, while eight of the total 15 deployed there stay back.
- **Why troops were deployed?** The districts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong, had witnessed a spate of violence following

the resurgence of the Gorkhaland movement.

### Calcutta High Court orders:

- Calcutta High Court had ordered Center not to withdraw troops deployed in the two districts.

### Centers argument:

- If all 24 High Courts start dictating to us where and where not to deploy troops, there will be utter confusion. Deployment of troops is the executive's exclusive domain.

### Proceedings stayed in Calcutta High Court:

- The Supreme Court stayed the proceedings in the Calcutta High Court and recorded that the Supreme Court would comprehensively hear the issue.
- The Supreme Court would decide on two issues: **whether courts can intervene in the placement of troops; and whether courts can intervene with the government in the placement of forces in order to protect the lives of citizens**.

## 5. [Panel to review orders of additional judges](#)

### Context:

- Practice of evaluating the judicial performance of additional judges.

### Background information:

- **Procedure:**
  - A candidate is first appointed as additional judge of a High Court.
  - He or she serves a probationary period before being appointed a permanent judge.
- **October 2010 guidelines:** the Supreme Court had issued guidelines for constitution of **Judgment Committees** by **Chief Justices of High Courts** for assessment/evaluation of judgments of **Additional Judges of high courts** for the purpose of determining their suitability for appointment as permanent judges.
- **On March 3, 2017**, the Supreme Court Collegium withdrew the guidelines issued earlier.
- The government had recently urged the Collegium to have a relook at its decision to end the practice of evaluating the judicial performance of additional judges.
- **Practice revived:** Chief Justice Misra's Collegium, which met on October 26, unanimously found that there is indeed a "necessity" to assess the judgment of Additional Judges before they are made permanent.
- The Collegium has, however, tweaked their predecessor's guideline to ensure that **"peers are not judged by peers"** and **appointed the panel**.

## Category: INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/BILATERAL RELATIONS

### 1. [Spain sacks Catalonia's government](#)

#### In news:

- The Catalan parliament had voted in the afternoon to make a unilateral declaration of independence
- The Madrid government sacked Catalonia's President and dismissed its parliament on October 27, hours after the region declared itself an independent nation.
- Central government ministries will take over the Catalan administration.
- A new regional election will be held in Catalonia on December 21.
- Several European countries, including France and Germany, and the United States also rejected the independence declaration and said they supported Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's efforts to preserve Spain's unity.

### 2. [Tokyo for quadrilateral talks](#)

#### Context:

- Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono declared in a media interview that Tokyo would call for a **quadrilateral dialogue** with Australia, India and the U.S.
- **External Affairs Ministry response:** India is "open" to work with partner countries for regional issues that are "relevant".

**Key Facts:** India did the trilateral meeting with Russia and China on the topic of Asia-Pacific last year. India also did an India-Sri Lanka-Maldives trilateral on security matters

### 3. [Act on terror, or we'll do it our way, US tells Pakistan](#)

#### Context:

- **US Secretary of States Rex Tillerson, visit to Pakistan.**

#### In news:

- The United States issued its direst warning to Pakistan to roll up terrorist groups operating in the country and end the establishment support for such groups, warning that if Islamabad chose not to act, Washington will find ways to achieve its objectives.
- American support to Pakistan was "conditions-based"
- Dismissing Pakistan's bogus narrative "largely for its domestic consumption" that India and US are backing

terror groups in Afghanistan that are attacking Pakistan, Washington wanted Pakistan to show the same commitment it made to defeat militant groups domestically to those threatening Afghanistan or India.

- The US fears for Pakistan's own future if the country remains in denial about its continued support to terror groups. Pakistan keeps repeating the claim that it has taken a lead role in the war on terror and has suffered as a consequence, although its establishment still nurtures US and UN designated terrorists such as Hafiz Saeed, Maulana Masood Azhar, and Dawood Ibrahim.

## Category: HEALTH ISSUES

### 1. [43 urban health centres go to pvt hands](#)

#### In news:

- The Rajasthan health department has signed a MoUs with **private players** for operating urban primary health centres (PHC) in the state.
- Health department has handed over 43 urban PHC to 14 private players for operating it.
- These PHCs will be operated on **public private partnership (PPP) mode**.
- The responsibility of functioning of PHCs for which MoU had been signed will be of the private players.
- In the urban PHCs, the facilities of free medicines schemes, free diagnostic test schemes, immunization would remain available like they were available earlier.

### 2. [Scientists link new virus to kala-azar](#)

#### In news:

- Researchers have stumbled upon tantalizing evidence of **an unknown virus** that may be responsible for the persistence of kala-azar or visceral leishmaniasis.
- Historically, the parasite *Leishmania donovani* is believed to be responsible for the dreaded infection. People get infected when bitten by an insect called the sandfly, which harbours the disease-causing parasite.
- **New discovery:** a group of scientists from West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh said that another parasite- **Leptomonas seymouri** may also be involved in the spreads of the disease.
- **The fact is still not clear:** Scientists are still not clear how the parasites cause the infection and how they manage to hide within the body.
- **Endemic to subcontinent**
- Kala-azar is endemic to the Indian subcontinent in 119 districts in four countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal)
- India itself accounts for half the global burden of the disease.
- If untreated, kala-azar can kill within two years of the onset of the ailment, though the availability of a range of drugs has meant that less than one in 1,000 now succumbs to the disease.

#### Basic information:

#### About Kala-azar:

- Visceral leishmaniasis (VL), also known as kala-azar, black fever, and Dumdum fever, is the most severe form of leishmaniasis and, without proper diagnosis and treatment, is associated with high fatality.
- Leishmaniasis is a disease caused by protozoan parasites of the *Leishmania* genus.
- The parasite migrates to the internal organs such as the liver, spleen (hence "visceral"), and bone marrow, and, if left untreated, will almost always result in the death of the host.
- Signs and symptoms include fever, weight loss, fatigue, anemia, and substantial swelling of the liver and spleen.
- This disease is the second-largest parasitic killer in the world (after malaria), responsible for an estimated 200,000 to 400,000 infections each year worldwide.

## Category: ECONOMICS

### 1. [WTO's Decision on fishing subsidies certain in WTO's Dec. meet](#)

#### Context:

- WTO's Ministerial Conference meeting at Buenos Aires (Argentina) in December 2017.
- **Expected agreement** : An agreement on elimination of **harmful fisheries subsidies** is likely to be the only major outcome at the forthcoming meeting, according to the head of the principal United Nations (UN) agency handling issues related to trade, investment and development.

**Key Fact:** Harmful fishing subsidies (globally) that contribute to overfishing are estimated to be as high as \$35 billion.

## Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

### 1. [Arctic sea ice waning faster than predicted, says study](#)

#### Context:

- Climate Change and its impacts.

#### Highlights of the study by University of Calgary, Canada:

- Arctic sea ice, a key indicator of climate change, could be dwindling faster than predicted.
- Research undertaken by the Cryosphere Climate Research Group under the Department of Geography at the

university has found that satellite measurements over the years have overestimated the thickness of Arctic sea ice by as much as 25% because of the presence of salty snow.

### Impacts:

- Dwindling ice cover hastens the warming of oceans, and has an impact on weather phenomena like the El Nino that influences the Asian monsoon.
- The thinning ice would make it difficult for animals like polar bears and seals and organisms like phytoplankton to survive

### Basic Information:

### Cryosphere:

- There are places on Earth that are so cold that water is frozen solid.
- These areas of snow or ice, which are subject to temperatures below 32°F for at least part of the year, compose the cryosphere.
- The term "cryosphere" comes from the Greek word, "krios," which means cold.
- Ice and snow on land are one part of the cryosphere. This includes the largest parts of the cryosphere, the continental ice sheets found in Greenland and Antarctica, as well as ice caps, glaciers, and areas of snow and permafrost. When continental ice flows out from land and to the sea surface, we get shelf ice.
- The other part of the cryosphere is ice that is found in water. This includes frozen parts of the ocean, such as waters surrounding Antarctica and the Arctic. It also includes frozen rivers and lakes, which mainly occur in polar areas.
- The components of the cryosphere play an important role in the Earth's climate. Snow and ice reflect heat from the sun, helping to regulate our planet's temperature. Because polar regions are some of the most sensitive to climate shifts, the cryosphere may be one of the first places where scientists are able to identify global changes in climate.

### Category: ETHICS, INTEGRITY AND APTITUDE

#### 1. [Bihar may sack staff who take dowry](#)

### Context:

- Dowry and Child marriage Issue
- Quote as an example

### In news:

- The Bihar government has decided to take action against government employees who demand or promote dowry and child marriage.

### Child Marriages :

- **"Bandhan Tod"**: a mobile app was launched to raise awareness on resisting child marriage and providing assistance to adolescent girls in need of help.
- Strict action would be taken against priests and religious leaders who facilitated child marriages. Even the managers of banquet halls and hotels would be asked to take assurances at the time of booking.

***Nothing here for Today!!!***

### F. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

### G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

#### GS Paper I

1. "We need an external, independent body to determine parliamentary salaries" Examine?

#### GS Paper II

1. What do you know by Internet-of-things? Discuss its various applications in everyday life?