



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023

Syllabus :GS 2/Polity and Governance

In News

Recently, a copy of the **Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023** was for the first time published on the Union Home Ministry's website.

- Ministry asked States to use **tracking devices on prison inmates released on parole**

About the Act

- The **Ministry of Home Affairs**, through the **Bureau of Police Research and Development**, in consultation with various stakeholders, including State Prison authorities, correctional administration experts, etc., had prepared a '**Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023**' and forwarded it to all States and UTs on 10th May, 2023, for adoption in their respective jurisdictions.

- It is a comprehensive document which covers all relevant aspects of prison management and It has appropriate provisions for reformation, rehabilitation and integration of prisoners in the society.
 - It also has provision for ‘Welfare Programs for Prisoners’ and ‘After-Care and Rehabilitation Services’, as an integral part of institutional care.

Features of the act

- **Wear electronic tracking devices:** “Prisoners may be granted prison leave on the condition of their willingness to **wear electronic tracking devices** for monitoring the movement and activities of such prisoners.
- **Cancellation of prison leave: Any violation by the prisoner** will attract **cancellation of prison leave**, in addition to disqualification from any prison leave being granted in future, as may be prescribed under the rules,”
- **Appropriate and advanced security infrastructure** and procedures shall be in place for the high-risk prisoner ward in all central and district prisons.
 - Such prisons shall also have appropriate provisions for an independent court complex for holding court hearings/trials
- **Appropriate technology:** The States shall ensure **integration and embedding of appropriate technology** for the effective management and superintendence of prisons and for the safety and security of prisons and the inmates, which may include biometrics, CCTV system, scanning and detection devices, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), video conference facilities, etc. in every prison for prisoners to attend court hearings/trials and to provide for seamless biometric access control system for movement of inmates.
- **Digitisation :**It also asks the **States to digitise the entire prison administration** and integrate the database with the Interoperable Criminal Justice System.
 - The States **should use advanced cellular jamming and cellular detection solutions** in the jails to prohibit unauthorised use of cellphones by the inmates and prescribes three year-imprisonment for usage of phones inside jails.
- **Committee :** It calls for a **classification and security assessment committee** that may segregate the prisoners according to age, gender, length of sentence, safety and security requirements, physical and mental health needs, correctional needs, repeat offenders etc, as may be prescribed under the rules.
- **Separate cells:** The prisoners classified into different categories may be lodged in separate barracks/enclosures/cells with a view to protect other prisoners from negative influence and radicalised thought processes of the hardened/habitual/high risk prisoners.
 - It also asked for segregation of male, female and transgender people.
 - the prisoners may be further segregated and lodged separately under other sub-categories such as drug addicts and alcoholic offenders, first time

offenders, foreign prisoners, old and infirm prisoners (65+ years); those suffering from infectious or chronic diseases; mental illness; prisoners sentenced to death; high risk prisoners; women inmates with children and young offenders.

- dangerous and high-risk prisoners should be accommodated in special cells or high security prisons. High-risk prisoners, hardened criminals and habitual offenders should not be entitled for parole, furlough, or any kind of prison leave in the normal course.

Objective and Need in current scenario

- The administration and management of prisons was till now regulated by two pre-Independence Acts namely, The Prisons Act 1894 and The Prisoners Act 1900.
- With the passage of time, many of the provisions of these colonial Acts were found to be outdated and obsolete.
- In the last few decades, an altogether new perspective has evolved about prisons and prison inmates, globally.
- Prisons today are not looked as places of retributive deterrence but are considered as **reformatory and correctional institutions** where the prisoners are transformed and rehabilitated back into society as law abiding citizens.
 - There is no provision for reform and rehabilitation of prisoners in the existing Act.
- Mindful of the legal position and the significance of prisons in the criminal justice system, the Home Ministry has **finalised a comprehensive Act to replace the obsolete and colonial legislation.**

Future Outlook

- Prisons”/ “persons detained therein” is a “State List” subject under Entry 4 of List II of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India therefore it is for the respective State Governments to make use of the guidance provided in the Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023 and enact a suitable legislation on Prisons in their jurisdictions for bringing improvement in prison management and administration of prisoners.

What is a GPS tracker, and how does it work?

- A GPS tracker is a small, wearable device like the GPS collars that have long been used to monitor the movements of animals.
- The device provides the exact location of the wearer at all times, and allows law enforcement and security agencies to monitor his/ her movement in real time.
- The device is tamper-proof, and any attempt at tampering with it sets off an alarm.
- It can also not be removed by the wearer or any unauthorised person without damaging it.
- The tracker can be put on the ankle or arm of a person. Thus, there are GPS

anklets and GPS bracelets.

Utility

- GPS devices are very common these days, and some people put them on pets.
 - The **movements of wild animals** such as rogue elephants in Kerala or the cheetahs in Kuno are monitored using these devices.
 - **Many new automobiles** are equipped with trackers to ensure they can be traced if stolen; owners can also have them installed separately.
- The **Jammu and Kashmir police** introduced a GPS tracker anklet for **monitoring a terror accused** out on bail.
 - GPS trackers are a precondition for bail in several countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Malaysia.

Source:[TH](#)

Community Rights and Forest Conservation

Syllabus: GS2/ Government Policies & interventions, GS3/ Conservation, Environmental Pollution & Degradation

Context

- Since 1865, the colonial forest laws have made substantial amendments like the recent passing of the Forest Conservation Amendment Act, 2023.
 - However, the Forest Conservation Amendment Act of 2023 has received limited attention and little discussion about its impact on forests and its inhabitants.

Why was the amendment brought in?

- In the **Godavarman case of 1996**, the Supreme Court halted nationwide tree felling, extending the Forest Conservation Act of 1980 to all areas resembling forests.
- In June 2022, the government amended Forest Conservation Rules, introducing a framework for developers to establish plantations on non-applicable FC Act land, exchanging them for compensatory afforestation needs.

Meaning of Community Forest Resource rights

- **Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA)** acknowledges Community Forest Resource rights, empowering communities to safeguard, regenerate, and manage forest resources. These rights enable self-determined forest use rules, fulfilling responsibilities outlined in Section 5 of the FRA.
- Upon Community Forest Resource Rights (CFRR) recognition, the **Gram Sabha** assumes ownership and management control, superseding the forest department. The Gram Sabha becomes the central authority, empowered to implement local traditional forest conservation practices within the designated community forest resource boundaries.

Overview of Amendment Objectives

The amendment primarily addresses climate change and deforestation, emphasizing effective management and afforestation to mitigate adverse effects.

- **Economic Utilization Focus:** The amendment aims to delineate forest use for economic gain. It focuses on excluding certain areas from legal jurisdiction to facilitate diverse forms of economic exploitation.
- **Jurisdictional Changes:** Under the amendment, the forest law is now exclusively applicable to regions categorized under the 1927 Forest Act and those designated as such from October 25, 1980. Exclusions include forests converted for non-forest use after December 12, 1996, and areas within 100 kilometers of the China and Pakistan border for central government linear projects.
- **Security Measures and Infrastructure:** The central government gains authorization to construct security measures within areas up to ten hectares, including regions (up to five hectares) identified as vulnerable. This provision extends to implementing security protocols with necessary approvals.
- **Development Initiatives:** Initiatives such as ecotourism, safari, and environmental entertainment are permitted in designated areas. The overarching aim is to enhance livelihoods for those dependent on forest resources, although this goal faces criticism from tribal communities and human rights activists.

Problems Associated with Amendment

- **Initial Perceptions vs. Practical Challenges:** While the law seems straightforward in addressing issues, its implementation introduces substantial complexities for both forest-dwelling communities and government agencies.
- **Afforestation Dilemma:** The law's promotion of afforestation projects with lucrative incentives for private entities contradicts the fundamental principles of forest governance, raising concerns about the clash between financial interests and sustainable forest management.
- **Decentralization and Federal Norms:** The conflict arises as the concurrent list governs forests, challenging the decentralized forest governance concept. This misalignment with federal norms poses a challenge to the intended spirit of governance.
- **Ambiguities in Strategic Linear Projects:** Defining strategic linear projects becomes intricate and vague under the law, posing challenges in identifying and executing initiatives that fall under this category. The ambiguity may impede effective planning and implementation.
- **Neglected Internal Environmental Security:** While external security threats receive due attention, internal environmental security, particularly in states prone to natural disasters, is not assured. This oversight raises concerns about the comprehensive protection of the environment in the face of consistent internal challenges.

Way Forward

- **Facilitate Inclusive Dialogues for Transparency:** Promote meaningful consultations with a diverse range of stakeholders, ensuring transparency and inclusivity in decision-making processes.
- **Emphasize Conservation in Ecologically Vital Areas:** Prioritize conservation initiatives in ecologically sensitive regions and biodiversity hotspots to safeguard crucial ecosystems and promote biodiversity preservation.

- **Promote Sustainable Development Practices:** Implement sustainable development strategies to mitigate forest degradation, ensuring that economic activities align with environmental conservation goals.
- **Enhance Institutional Capacity:** Strengthen institutional capabilities to efficiently manage forests, reinforcing regulatory enforcement mechanisms for more effective governance.

Source: [TH](#)

India's stand on Israel Palestine

Syllabus :GS 2/IR

In News

- India voted in favour of a resolution in the UN General Assembly that condemns Israeli settlement activities in the “**Occupied Palestinian Territory**”.

About resolution

- The draft resolution titled ‘**Israeli settlements in the “Occupied Palestinian Territory**’, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan’ was approved by the Special Political and Decolonisation Committee (Fourth Committee) of the UN General Assembly by a recorded vote of 145 in favour, seven against and 18 abstentions
 - India was among the **145 nations** that voted in favour of the resolution along with Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, France, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and the U.K.
- The resolution “Reaffirms that the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are illegal and an obstacle to peace and economic and social development.”
- The resolution reiterated “its demand for the immediate and complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in all of the “Occupied Palestinian Territory”,

India's Position on [Israel -Palestine](#)

- India voted in favour of five of the six resolutions, abstaining in one resolution that dealt with investigating Israeli practices and operations for human rights violations.
- India also reiterated India’s traditional position on the [Israel-Palestine conflict](#): “establishing a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine living within secure and recognized borders, side by side at peace with Israel.
- **Past Linkages :** Historically, India voted against the **partition of Palestine** and the creation of a separate state of Israel in 1948, and was the first non-Arab state to recognise the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the representative of the people, and to recognise Palestine in 1988, and consistently voted against Israel at the United Nations.

- In 1992, India established full diplomatic ties with Israel, while continuing to support the Palestinian cause.
- There has been a shift towards Israel's position, given increasingly close bilateral relations, trade, technological assistance, military procurement, and counter-terrorism cooperation.
- In 2016, India even voted against a UNHRC resolution that called for an International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation into Israeli war crimes, and voted with Israel at the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 2019 in stopping a Hamas-linked NGO from receiving observer status.
- In 2017, PM Narendra Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Israel, while in 2018, Mr. Netanyahu visited India.
- However, Mr. Modi was also the first Indian Prime Minister to make an official visit to Palestine.
- In 2017, India voted against the **U.S. and Israel** for an attempt to declare unilaterally all of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital.
- The policy lines New Delhi is continuing to draw seem clear: to abhor terrorism, but not to condone indiscriminate reprisal bombings, even as it holds its consistent position on Palestine.
- No claim to righting historical grievances can possibly be used by Hamas to explain its inhuman attacks on Israel.

Challenges for India

- Israel's latest demand, that more than a million Gaza residents must evacuate as it continues to pound the city and plans a possible ground offensive, will make Delhi's challenge at balancing policy even more complex.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- Terrorism is a malignancy and knows no borders, nationality or race. The world should not buy into any justification of terror acts.
 - There is need to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism
- India has always stood for a two-state solution, India is in sync with the Arab world in its normalisation with Israel, with groupings such as the I2U2 (India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States).
- Therefore, going forward, it is important for India to come out not just against terrorism but also more forcefully against the human tragedy playing out in Gaza.

Source: [TH](#)

Digital Advertisement Policy, 2023

Syllabus: GS2/Important aspects of governance

Context

- The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting approved the Comprehensive ‘**Digital Advertisement Policy, 2023**’

Key Features of the Digital Advertisement Policy, 2023

- **Role of Central Bureau of Communication (CBC):** Digital Advertisement Policy, 2023 enables and empowers the Central Bureau of Communication (advertising wing of the Union Government) to undertake campaigns in the Digital Media Space.
 - Central Bureau of Communication (CBC) will now be able to leverage the growing number of listeners to Podcasts and Digital Audio platforms through empanelment of Digital Audio platforms, and can channelize its public service campaign messages through Mobile Applications.
 - The policy will enable CBC to empanel agencies and organisations in the OTT and Video on Demand Space.
 - The policy streamlines the process through which CBC can place advertisements for government clients on Social Media Platforms.
 - The policy empowers CBC to onboard new and innovative communication platforms in the digital space with the approval of a duly constituted committee.

Central Bureau of Communication (CBC)

- It is a unit of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting that has the mandate of providing 360 degrees communication solutions to Ministries, Departments, Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), and autonomous bodies.
 - It acts as an advisory body to the Government on media strategy, and its chief mandate is to advance the Government’s image as the prime facilitator of people’s empowerment by positioning messages through Print Media, Audio-Visual, Outdoor and Digital Media.
 - CBC has been instrumental in creating awareness amongst masses about socio-economic themes, seeking their participation in developmental activities and for the eradication of social malpractices.
- **Citizen at Centre Stage:** Policy aims to facilitate effective delivery of citizen-centric messages in a targeted manner, resulting in cost efficiencies in public-oriented campaigns.
 - **Transparency:** The policy introduces competitive bidding for rate discovery, ensuring transparency and efficiency.
 - Rates discovered through this process will remain valid for three years and will be applicable to all eligible agencies.
 - **Creating Awareness:** The policy aims to disseminate information and create awareness regarding various schemes, programs, and policies of the Government of India.
 - It leverages the vast subscriber base in the Digital Universe and technology-enabled messaging options through Digital advertisements.

Conclusion

- The Digital Advertisement Policy, 2023 reflects a strategic and adaptive approach by the government to leverage the digital media landscape for effective communication. It aims to capitalise on the popularity of digital platforms, ensure transparency in advertising practices, and enhance the government's outreach in the dynamic digital age.

[Source: PIB](#)

Facts In News

Government e-Market (GeM) Portal

Syllabus: GS2/Governance

Context

- The procurement of goods and services from the government portal GeM has crossed ₹2 lakh crore so far this fiscal due to higher buying activities by different ministries and departments.

Government e-Market (GeM) Portal

- It was launched in 2016, for online purchases of goods and services by all the central government ministries and departments.
- It is hosted by the Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals (DGS&D) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry where common user goods and services can be procured. GeM is a dynamic, self-sustaining and user friendly portal for making procurement by Government officers.

Vision of GeM:

- To affect an evolution in public procurement promoting a transparent, efficient and inclusive marketplace.

Services offered through GeM:

- The portal provides a wide range of products from office stationery to vehicles.
- Services, including transportation, logistics, waste management, webcasting and analytical, are listed on the portal.

Advantages	
For Buyers	For Sellers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listing of products for individual categories of Goods/Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct access to all Government departments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Search, Compare, Select and Buy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One stop shop for marketing with

facility	minimal efforts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buying Goods and Services online, as and when required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One stop shop for bids/reverse auction on products/services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparent and ease of buying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Product Suggestion facility available to Sellers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous vendor rating system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic pricing: Price can be changed based on market conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User-friendly dashboard for buying and monitoring supplies and payments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seller friendly dashboard for selling and monitoring of supplies and payments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy Return policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent and uniform purchase procedures

Other Similar Platforms

- **KONEPS of South Korea** is the largest such platform in the world.
- Currently, **GeBIZ of Singapore** and **GeM of India** hold the second and third position respectively.

[Source: TH](#)

Insurance Surety Bond

Syllabus :GS 3/Economy

In News

State-owned National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has accepted the first insurance surety bond for the monetization program of the upcoming bid of Toll Operate Transfer (TOT) Bundle 14 to boost liquidity and capacity of bidders.

- This will be the first time this innovative instrument is being utilised as a Bank Guarantee (BG) in the road infrastructure sector for monetization of bids.

About Insurance surety bond

- Insurance Surety Bonds are instruments where insurance companies act as 'Surety' and provide the financial guarantee that the contractor will fulfil its obligation as per the agreed terms.
- The Ministry of Finance, Government of India has made e-BG and Insurance Surety Bonds at par with Bank Guarantees for all Government procurements.
- NHAI has been working closely with Highway Operators Association of India (HOAI), SBI General Insurance and AON India Insurance to implement this initiative.

Importance

- Instruments like Insurance Surety Bonds will help to strengthen National Highway Infrastructure development, which has a cascading positive impact on the Indian economy.
- This will translate into big savings for concessionaires, which will further enhance liquidity in the market, thereby fostering an environment conducive to the growth and development of the road sector.
- It will encourage private participation in the highway sector and will be a significant step towards facilitating 'Ease of Doing Business'

Source:[BS](#)

Ben Gurion Canal Project

Syllabus: GS2/ International Relations

In Context

- The Ben Gurion Canal Project is an alternative to the Egyptian-controlled Suez Canal that starts from the western arm of the Red Sea and passes to the southeastern Mediterranean through the northern Sinai peninsula.

Ben Gurion Canal Project

- The Ben Gurion Canal Project is a proposed canal project through the state of Israel.
- It is named after Israel's founding father David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973).
- It envisages the canal through the Israeli-controlled Negev Desert from the tip of the Gulf of Aqaba — the eastern arm of the Red Sea that juts into Israel's southern tip and south-western Jordan — to the Eastern Mediterranean coast.
- It was first envisioned in the 1960s
- If it were to be actually completed, it will transform global maritime dynamics by taking away Egypt's monopoly over the shortest route between Europe and Asia.

Suez Canal

- It was opened in 1869 and revolutionised global maritime trade by connecting the Mediterranean and Red Seas through the Isthmus of Suez.
- The canal, however, has its issues like despite being widened and deepened over the years, it remains perennially congested, with long queues at either end.
- It was estimated that the resulting "traffic jam" held up an estimated \$ 9.6 billion of goods every day.
- The Suez Canal was also the focal point of both the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars, and was shut from 1967-75.

Issues in completing the project

- Such a project would be extremely complex and almost prohibitively expensive.
- The estimated cost of such a project may be as high as the \$ 100 billion, much more than what it might take to widen the Suez Canal and solve its traffic problem.

- The risk of nuclear fallout for establishing the Ben Gurion Canal Project is extremely risky as well.

Source: IE

Lake Titicaca

Syllabus: Places in News

In News

- Experts say that Lake Titicaca is shrinking due to climate change.

About Lake Titicaca

- **Lake Titicaca** is a large freshwater lake in the **Andes mountains** on the **border of Bolivia and Peru**.
- Lake Titicaca lies between **Andean ranges** in a vast basin that comprises most of the Altiplano (High Plateau) of the **northern Andes**.
- It is often called the **highest navigable lake in the world**.

Source: [TH](#)