

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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## PM RECALLS 1948 DEBATE ON UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

### Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi renewed his pitch for a **nationwide Uniform Civil Code (UCC)**, recalling the views of Dr BR Ambedkar and KM Munshi on the matter.

### Uniform Civil Code

- **Definition:** It is conceptualised as a set of laws that govern personal matters, including marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance, and succession, for all citizens regardless of their religion.
- **Aim:** To replace the existing diverse personal laws that vary based on religious affiliations.
- **Article 44:** The code comes under Article 44 of the Constitution, which lays down that the **state shall endeavour to secure a Uniform Civil Code for the citizens throughout the territory of India.**

### Do you know?

- Post Independence, Goa retained a common family law known as the **Goa civil code** and thus was the only state in India with a uniform civil code prior to 2024.
- In 2024, The **Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly** passed The Uniform Civil Code of Uttarakhand Act, 2024, becoming the first Indian State to adopt a UCC post-independence.

### Background of Article 44

- Dr. B R Ambedkar, while formulating the Constitution had said that a UCC is desirable but for the moment it should remain voluntary, and thus the **Article 35 of the draft Constitution** was added **as a part of the Directive Principles of the State Policy as Article 44.**
- It was incorporated in the Constitution as an aspect that would be **fulfilled when the nation would be ready** to accept it and the social acceptance to the UCC could be made.

### Arguments in Favor of UCC

- **Equality Before Law:** UCC would ensure that all citizens, regardless of religion, are subject to the same laws, promoting equality and justice.
- **National Integration:** A uniform set of laws help promote national unity by eliminating religious and cultural divisions.
- **Gender Justice:** Personal laws often have provisions that disadvantage women, especially

in matters of marriage, divorce, and inheritance, a uniform code will eliminate discriminatory practices.

- **Secularism:** India is a secular state, and a Uniform Civil Code would uphold the principle of secularism by ensuring that religion does not influence legal matters.
- **Modernization:** A UCC would reflect contemporary values and ensure that laws are in line with modern concepts of human rights, equality, and justice.
- **Efficiency and Clarity:** It would simplify the legal system and promote a more streamlined judicial process.

### Arguments Against UCC

- **Cultural and Religious Diversity:** Imposing a UCC may be seen as an infringement on the personal laws and practices of various communities, threatening their cultural identity and freedom of religion.
- **Violation of Religious Freedom:** A UCC could be perceived as interfering with the right to follow one's religion, violating the freedom of religion guaranteed by the Indian Constitution.
- **Lack of Consensus:** Diverse beliefs and practices make it difficult to create a single code that is acceptable to all, potentially leading to social unrest.
- **Political and Social Sensitivities:** The UCC is a politically charged issue and has the potential to polarize communities.
- **Gradual Reform:** Critics argue that reforming personal laws gradually, with community consensus, would be more effective than imposing a uniform code.
- **Potential for Discrimination:** Some fear it could lead to the imposition of a "majority" or "mainstream" culture, marginalizing minority communities.

### Recommendations of Various Committees

- **B.N. Rau Committee (1947):** The committee, formed to draft the Constitution of India, recommended a uniform civil code but deferred its implementation, stating that it should be introduced only after the country has achieved unity and consensus.
- **Sachar Committee (1986):** It emphasized the importance of a UCC, arguing that it would promote equality and social justice. However, it

did not press for an immediate implementation, citing the need for social readiness.

- **Law Commission Reports (1986, 2018):**
  - ♦ **1986 Report:** The implementation of a UCC should be approached cautiously and progressively, given the religious diversity in India. It highlighted the need for reforms within personal laws before moving toward a uniform code.
  - ♦ **2018 Report:** The UCC be implemented only when there is greater social consensus. It suggested reforming existing personal laws to align them with modern values and human rights instead of rushing into a UCC.

### Supreme Court's Important Judgments Relating to Personal Laws

- **Shah Bano Case (1985):** The Supreme Court ruled that Muslim women have the right to seek alimony from their husbands under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code, irrespective of their personal law.
  - ♦ The judgment highlighted the need for gender equality, although it was criticized for indirectly pushing for a UCC.
- **Sarala Mudgal Case (1995):** The Supreme Court urged the government to consider enacting a UCC to remove legal discrepancies and bring uniformity in marriage and divorce laws.
- **Triple Talaq Judgment (2017):** The Supreme Court struck down the practice of triple talaq (instant divorce) among Muslims, declaring it unconstitutional. This judgment was seen as a step toward reforming personal laws to ensure gender equality, a principle that would be aligned with a potential UCC.
- **Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala (2018) (Sabarimala Case):** While the case did not directly address UCC, it touched upon the issue of gender equality in religious practices. The judgment emphasized that personal laws should not be used to discriminate based on gender, setting a precedent for reforming discriminatory practices within personal laws.

### Way Ahead

- The implementation of UCC in India, involves a balanced approach, focusing on gradual reforms, inclusivity, and ensuring gender justice.
- This shall be done while taking into account the religious and cultural diversity of India.

Source: IE

## IMPLEMENTATION OF POSH ACT TO POLITICAL PARTIES

### Context

- The Supreme Court on disposed of a PIL seeking the application of the **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act)** to political parties by asking the petitioner to first approach the Election Commission of India.

### Background

- In **Centre for Constitutional Rights Research and Advocacy v State of Kerala & Ors (2022)** the Kerala High Court ruled that political parties do not have a conventional employer-employee relationship and cannot be mandated to set up **Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs)**.
- This ambiguity, combined with the decentralised and informal nature of political party structures, has often been cited as a reason for non-compliance.

### Key Features of the PoSH Act

- **Clear Definition of Sexual Harassment:** The Act defines sexual harassment to include **unwelcome acts** such as physical contact and sexual advances, a demand or request for sexual favours, making sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography, and any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.
- **Applicability:** The Act is applicable to all workplaces, including the organized and unorganized sectors, the public and private sectors, and government and non-government organizations.
- **Employee:** All women employees, whether employed regularly, temporarily, contractually, on an ad hoc or daily wage basis, as apprentices or interns or even employed without the knowledge of the principal employer, can seek redressal to sexual harassment in the workplace.
- **Constitution of Internal Complaints Committee (ICC):** Employers are required to constitute an ICC at each office or branch with 10 or more employees.
  - ♦ It has to be **headed by a woman**, have at least two women employees, another employee, and a third party such as an NGO worker with five years of experience.

- **Local Committee (LC):** It mandates every district in the country to create a local committee (LC) to receive complaints from women working in firms **with less than 10 employees**.
- **Procedure for Filing Complaints:** Woman can file a written complaint **within three to six months** of the sexual harassment incident.
  - ♦ There are two ways to resolve the issue by the committee- **through conciliation** between the complainant and the respondent (which cannot be a financial settlement), or committees could **initiate an inquiry**, taking appropriate action based on what it finds.
- **Annual Audit Report:** The employer has to file an annual audit report with the district officer about the number of sexual harassment complaints filed and actions taken at the end of the year.
- **Penalty:** If the employer fails to constitute an ICC or does not abide by any other provision, they must pay a fine of up to 50,000, which increases for a repeat offence.

#### Arguments in Favor of Extending the POSH Act to Political Parties

- **Gender Equality:** Addressing harassment in political settings will set a precedent for improving gender equality across society.
- **Enhancing Women's Participation in Politics:** Implementing POSH mechanisms will create a safer environment, encouraging more women to join and participate.
- **Addressing Informal Roles:** Many women associated with political parties serve in informal or unpaid capacities, making them particularly vulnerable to harassment.
- **Consistency with Other Institutions:** Institutions with more than 10 members are required to implement POSH mechanisms. Excluding political parties is inconsistent with the intent of the law.
- **Independent Oversight:** Activists argue that independent bodies, such as courts, are better equipped to handle sexual harassment cases involving politicians, as internal party mechanisms may face biases.

#### Arguments Against extending the POSH Act to Political Parties

- **Absence of Employer-Employee Relationship:** Political parties operate on informal structures and lack a clear employer-employee relationship,

which complicates the applicability of the POSH Act.

- **Decentralized Party Structures:** The diverse and decentralized nature of political parties makes it difficult to implement centralized ICCs or ensure uniform compliance.

#### Way Ahead

- **The Election Commission of India (ECI)** can mandate political parties to set up independent grievance redressal bodies, ensuring compliance with the POSH Act.
- **The Act requires amendments** to explicitly include political parties, removing ambiguity regarding their obligations.
- **Independent Committees:** Committees to address sexual harassment in political parties must operate independently, free from political influence.
- **Regular awareness programs** must be conducted by the Political parties on gender sensitivity and the provisions of the POSH Act.

#### Concluding remarks

- The implementation of the POSH Act in political parties is not only a legal necessity but also a moral obligation.
- Political parties must lead by example, fostering gender equality and ensuring the safety of women in their ranks.

Source: IE

## UK JOINS THE COMPREHENSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AGREEMENT FOR TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP (CPTPP)

#### In News

- Britain became the **12th member of the CPTPP**, marking its most significant trade deal since Brexit.
  - ♦ Britain joins Japan, Australia, Canada, and eight other nations in this trans-Pacific trade pact.

#### What is the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership?

- **Historical Context:** Originated as the **Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)**, a U.S.-led trade pact.
  - ♦ Renamed the CPTPP after the **U.S. withdrew in 2017 under President Donald Trump**.

- ♦ The agreement now includes **12 members** and aims to foster economic cooperation across the Pacific.
- ♦ These **countries were** - Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.
- **Objective:** The pact requires countries to eliminate or significantly reduce tariffs and make strong commitments to opening services and investment markets.
- ♦ It also has rules addressing competition, intellectual property rights and protections for foreign companies.
- ♦ The bloc accounts for about **15% of global GDP** and provides trade access to a market of more than **500 million people**.

### Implications of Joining

- **Expanded Market Access:** The CPTPP provides the UK with preferential access to a large and growing market in the Indo-Pacific region. This can boost exports and create new opportunities for British businesses.
- **Diversification:** Joining the CPTPP helps the UK diversify its trade relationships beyond Europe, reducing its reliance on traditional markets.
- **Rules of Origin:** The agreement offers more flexible rules of origin, allowing UK businesses to source components from a wider range of countries within the CPTPP, potentially lowering production costs.
- **Limited Impact on GDP:** While the estimated economic gains are relatively small in terms of GDP percentage, the deal's long-term impact on trade patterns and investment could be more significant.
- **Indo-Pacific Tilt:** Joining the CPTPP signals the UK's commitment to engaging more deeply with the Indo-Pacific region, a key area of economic and strategic importance.
- **Countering China:** The CPTPP is seen as a way to counter China's growing economic influence in the region. The UK's membership strengthens the bloc and its ability to set trade standards.
- **Influence over Membership:** The UK now has a voice in deciding whether to admit new members, including China and Taiwan, which has significant geopolitical implications.

### Challenges

- **Competition:** UK businesses will face increased competition from other CPTPP members, particularly in sectors like agriculture.

- **Regulatory Alignment:** While the CPTPP does not require full regulatory harmonization like the EU, there will be some adjustments needed for UK businesses to comply with the pact's rules.

### Challenges and Considerations

- **Competition:** UK businesses will face increased competition from other CPTPP members, particularly in sectors like agriculture.
- **Regulatory Alignment:** While the CPTPP does not require full regulatory harmonization like the EU, there will be some adjustments needed for UK businesses to comply with the pact's rules.
- **Impact on Existing Agreements:** The UK needs to ensure that its CPTPP membership complements its existing trade agreements with other countries.

### Way Ahead For India

- Recently, **NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam** also advocated that India should be a part of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.
- India can get access to a **wider range of markets** with reduced tariffs can boost India's exports, particularly for its MSME sector, which is crucial for employment and economic growth.
- Joining these trade blocs can help India integrate more deeply into **global value chains**, leading to increased investment, technology transfer, and productivity gains.

Source: LM

## SWITZERLAND SUSPENDS MFN AND ITS EFFECT FOR INDIA

### In News

- Switzerland will suspend the **Most Favoured Nation (MFN) clause** in its **double taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA)** with India starting January 1, 2025.
- This will double the withholding tax rate on dividends paid to Indian tax residents from 5% to 10%.

### Do you know ?

- A Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) is a treaty signed between two or more countries to prevent income earned in one country from being taxed twice.
- It aims to provide relief to taxpayers, ensure tax fairness, and foster international trade and investment.

### What is the MFN Clause?:

- The MFN clause ensures **equal treatment in international treaties**, requiring countries to extend favorable tax rates or conditions to all other parties under the treaty.
  - ♦ It guarantees that no country is treated less favorably than any other in trade or taxation matters.

### The 2023 Nestlé Case:

- Swiss company Nestlé sought a refund on withholding tax, claiming the benefit of the MFN clause under the India-Switzerland tax treaty.
  - ♦ The Supreme Court ruled in 2023 that the MFN clause does not automatically apply without formal notification, which led to Switzerland re-evaluating its tax treaty with India.

### Why Switzerland Suspended the MFN Clause:

- The Supreme Court ruling clarified that automatic adjustments in tax rates under the MFN clause require formal notification under Section 90 of the Indian Income Tax Act.
- Switzerland suspended the MFN clause after this clarification, impacting the withholding tax rate.

### Impact of the Suspension:

- **Higher Tax Liabilities for Indian Companies:** Indian companies receiving dividends from Switzerland will face a higher withholding tax of 10% instead of 5%.
- **Swiss Investments in India:** Swiss companies will continue to face the 10% withholding tax on dividends received from Indian subsidiaries.
- **EFTA Investments Unaffected:** Investments from the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) will not be impacted, as they are already subject to the 10% tax rate.
- **No Change for Other DTAA Benefits:** Indian companies operating in Switzerland can still benefit from other provisions in the DTAA, such as tax relief on royalties and technical service fees.

### Reevaluation of MFN Clauses by Other Countries:

- Switzerland's decision may prompt other countries to reconsider how the MFN clause is applied in their tax treaties with India, especially after similar legal rulings.

### Conclusion and Way Forward

- The decision highlights the need for clear mutual agreement in interpreting international tax agreements.

- The suspension reflects a shift towards careful and clearly defined interpretations of tax treaty provisions.
- India's double taxation treaty with Switzerland may need renegotiation due to its trade pact with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) member states.

Source: BS

## JALVAHAK SCHEME TO BOOST INLAND WATERWAYS

### Context

- The Union government launched the 'Jalvahak' scheme to **incentivise cargo movement via inland waterways**, across National Waterways 1 (Ganga), 2 (Brahmaputra), and 16 (Barak river).

### About Jalvahak scheme

- **Cargo Promotion and Incentives:** The scheme offers direct incentives to cargo owners for transporting goods via inland waterways for distances exceeding **300 km**.
  - ♦ **Reimbursement of up to 35%** of total operating expenditure incurred during cargo transportation is provided.
- **Implementing Agencies:** The scheme is a joint effort of the **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)** and the Inland & Coastal Shipping Limited (ICSL).
- **Private participation:** Cargo owners are encouraged to hire vessels owned or operated by organisations outside IWAI or ICSL to boost private participation in inland waterways transportation.
- **Duration:** The scheme is initially valid for a period of **three years**.

### Current Status of Inland Waterways in India

- India has an extensive inland waterways network of **20,236 km**, comprising **17,980 km of rivers** and 2,256 km of canals suitable for mechanised crafts.
- India currently has **111 National Waterways (NWs)**, as declared under the National Waterways Act, 2016.
- **Cargo transported on national waterways** increased from 18.07 Million Metric Tonnes (MT) in 2013-14 to **132.89 Million MT in 2023-24** — a growth of over 700%.
- India aims to achieve **200 Million MT** of cargo movement via waterways by **2030** and **500 Million MT** by **2047**.

### Significance of the Inland Waterways

- **Reducing Logistics Costs:** Logistics costs in India account for 14% of GDP, significantly higher than the global average of 8-10%.
- **Decongestion:** Promoting inland waterways will help alleviate congestion and reduce the burden on these critical transport networks.
- **Eco-Friendly Transport:** Reduced fuel consumption and emissions align with India's commitment to **sustainable development goals (SDGs)** and its climate action targets.
- **Economic Benefits:** Increased cargo movement via inland waterways will bolster trade and commerce, especially in regions adjoining National Waterways.

### Challenges in Boosting Inland Waterways

- **Infrastructure Deficiencies:** Limited availability of modern terminals, jetties, and navigational aids hampers seamless cargo transportation.
- **Depth and Navigability Issues:** Many river stretches suffer from seasonal fluctuations, affecting their navigability.
- **Competition from Road and Rail:** Despite incentives, the established dominance of road and rail transport limits the shift towards waterways.
- **Regional Disparities:** Inland waterways infrastructure is largely concentrated in certain regions, leaving others underdeveloped.

### Government Initiatives

- **Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP):** Developing NW-1 with modern infrastructure and terminals.
- **Sagarmala Project:** Integration of inland waterways with coastal shipping and ports.
- **Freight Village Development:** Establishing logistic hubs near key waterways to boost multimodal transport.

### Way Ahead

- Encouraging greater **participation of private players** in vessel operations and cargo handling.
- **Integration of inland waterways with railways, roads,** and coastal shipping to ensure seamless transportation.

### Concluding remarks

- India's inland waterways hold immense potential to transform the country's logistics landscape.
- The Jalvahak scheme is a crucial step in this direction, offering incentives to reduce costs and increase cargo movement.

### National Waterway-1 (NW-1)

- **Rivers:** Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly River System
- **Route:** Haldia (West Bengal) to Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh)
- **Length:** 1,620 km
- **States Covered:** Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal

### National Waterway-2 (NW-2)

- **River:** Brahmaputra River
- **Route:** Dhubri (Assam) to Sadiya (Assam)
- **Length:** 891 km
- **State Covered:** Assam.

Source: PIB

## PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (PDS) IN INDIA

### Context

- Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has released its report on the 'Performance Audit on Supply Chain Management of Public Distribution' of Karnataka's Public Distribution System.

### About

- **Use of Unauthorised Vehicles:** There was the use of passenger vehicles and light goods vehicles in transporting foodgrains.
  - ◆ The vehicles used for transporting food grains should be in accordance with the list of vehicles submitted to the Department (of Food and Civil Supplies).
- **Wholesale Depot (WSD):** Audit observed that poor maintenance of WSDs increased the risk of contamination and pest infestation of foodgrains leading to loss and degraded foodgrain quality.

### Public Distribution System:

- It is a government-run food distribution program aimed at providing essential commodities, such as rice, wheat, sugar, and kerosene, to the economically vulnerable sections of society at subsidized rates.
- **Objectives:**
  - ◆ **Food Security:** Ensure the availability of essential food items to the poorer sections of society.

- ♦ **Poverty Alleviation:** Provide subsidized goods to low-income households, reducing the financial burden on them.
- ♦ **Price Stabilization:** Control the prices of essential commodities in the market, ensuring affordability.

### Evolution of the Public Distribution System

- **1940s-1950s:** Initially, PDS was launched to tackle food shortages in times of war and famines.
- **1960s-1970s:** The Green Revolution increased food production, which enabled the government to expand the system to reach more people.
- **1980s:** The introduction of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) in 1997, aimed at improving the targeting of food assistance to the poor, began to streamline the allocation of food grains.
- **2000s:** Digitization and reforms to improve transparency, such as the introduction of electronic ration cards.
- **2010s and Beyond:**
  - ♦ **The National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013,** aimed at covering more than 80 crore (800 million) people under the PDS.
  - ♦ It introduced a legal entitlement to subsidized food for eligible households, emphasizing nutritional security.

### Key Features of PDS in India

- **Targeted Distribution:**
  - ♦ NFSA covers upto 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population under Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and priority households.
  - ♦ While AAY households, which constitute the poorest of the poor are entitled to 35 kg of foodgrains per family per month, priority households are entitled to 5 kg per person per month.
- **Role of the Government:**
  - ♦ The **Central Government**, through the **Food Corporation of India (FCI)**, handles procurement, storage, transportation, and bulk allocation of food grains.
  - ♦ **State Governments** are responsible for distributing these grains to eligible families through a network of **Fair Price Shops (FPS)**.

### Challenges in the Public Distribution System

- **Leakage and Diversion:** A significant amount of food grains are diverted from the intended

beneficiaries to the open market, leading to inefficiencies.

- **Exclusion Errors:** Some of the poorest households are excluded from the PDS due to issues in the identification process.
- **Quality Control:** The quality of food grains distributed is sometimes poor, which undermines the effectiveness of the system.
- **Corruption and Fraud:** Fraudulent practices by fair price shop owners, such as selling PDS items at higher prices or diverting them for personal gain, have been a persistent issue.
- **Storage and Transportation:** The logistical challenge of transporting food grains to remote and difficult-to-reach areas continues to affect the efficiency of the system.
- **Digitization Issues:** While the digitization of the PDS has improved transparency, the process has been slow and is still prone to errors, such as technical glitches and discrepancies in data.

### Reforms and Modernization Efforts

- **National Food Security Act, 2013:** Enacted to provide legal entitlement to subsidized food grains to two-thirds of India's population.
  - ♦ Ensures the coverage of 75% of rural and 50% of urban population.
- **Digital Ration Cards:** The introduction of digital ration cards and Aadhaar-based biometric authentication aims to eliminate fake and duplicate ration cards.
- **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT):** In some regions, DBT has been implemented, where money is transferred directly to the bank accounts of beneficiaries instead of providing food grains.
- **End-to-End Computerization:** The PDS system is being computerized to improve transparency, minimize leakages, and make distribution more efficient.
- **Food Safety and Quality Monitoring:** Various measures have been taken to improve the quality control of food grains provided under the PDS.

### Way Ahead

- **Implement social audits and public grievance redressal mechanisms** to hold PDS stakeholders accountable and address issues like corruption and leakages.
- **Increase awareness** among the public about their entitlements under the PDS and involve local communities in monitoring and decision-making.



- **Extend the PDS to include more nutritious food items** such as pulses, oil, and fortified grains to improve the overall nutritional status of the population.
- These measures, if implemented effectively, can help ensure that the PDS continues to serve as a **crucial tool for addressing food insecurity and poverty in India.**

Source: IE

## EKLAVYA

### Context

- Congress leader Rahul Gandhi spoke of the Mahabharata character Eklavya in Parliament, comparing him to the youth, small businesses, and farmers of the country.

### About Eklavya

- He was a Nishad boy, he went to Dronacharya, teacher to the Kaurava and Pandava princes, and asked to be his disciple.
- Dronacharya refused. Eklavya then made a clay idol of Drona, considering him his guru, and practised archery on his own, becoming greatly proficient.
- Drona then asks for 'guru dakshina', the mandatory fee a disciple is to pay his teacher.
- He demands Eklavya's right thumb as his fee, which Eklavya promptly pays.

### Ethical values of Eklavya in Mahabharata:

- **Dedication and Commitment:** Eklavya's unwavering dedication to mastering archery, despite being denied formal training, showcases the value of persistence and self-discipline in achieving one's goals.
- **Respect for Authority:** Although he was denied Drona's teachings, Eklavya still respected Drona as his teacher. He created a statue of Drona to practice in front of, demonstrating respect for his guru.
- **Self-reliance:** He didn't wait for others to help him; instead, he trained himself through sheer effort and determination.
- **Sacrifice:** His act of sacrificing his thumb to Drona to prove his loyalty and to prevent Arjuna from losing his position as the greatest archer is an example of self-sacrifice for the greater good, even when faced with personal harm.

Source: IE

## NEWS IN SHORT

### SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

#### In News

- The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid tributes to **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel** on his death anniversary.

#### About Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

- **Early Life and Career:** Born on 31st October 1875 in Nadiad, Gujarat.
  - ♦ A successful lawyer who became involved in public service through his leadership in the Kheda Satyagraha (1918).
- **Public Service and Leadership:** Elected President of the Ahmedabad Municipal Board in 1924; improved sanitation, drainage, and cleanliness in the city.
  - ♦ **Led the Bardoli Satyagraha in 1928**, gaining national fame and earning the title "Sardar" for his leadership.
  - ♦ Served as India's first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister from 1947 to 1950.
  - ♦ Known as the "Iron Man of India" for his commitment to national integration.
- **Role in National Struggle for Independence:** Elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1931 during a turbulent time for the nation.
  - ♦ Played a pivotal role in the independence movement and became one of the foremost leaders in India's freedom struggle.
- **Integration of Princely States:** After India's independence in 1947, the country had over 560 princely states that needed to be integrated into India.
  - ♦ Sardar Patel formed the States Department to manage the integration process and overcame challenges with diplomacy and negotiation.
- **Notable Integration Efforts:** Successfully negotiated with the Raja of Jodhpur and Travancore, ensuring their accession to India.
  - ♦ Resolved the Junagadh issue despite opposition from its ruler, leading to a plebiscite in favor of India.
  - ♦ Played a key role in the integration of Kashmir after Pakistan's attack in 1947.
  - ♦ Oversaw the integration of Hyderabad through military intervention (Operation Polo) in September 1948.

- **Creation of All India Services:** He is credited with establishing the All India Services (Article 312 of the Constitution) to maintain national unity and merit-based administration.
  - ♦ Civil Services Day (21 April) commemorates Sardar Patel's address to the first IAS batch in 1947.
- **Legacy :** Passed away on 15 December 1950, having integrated 565 princely states into India.
  - ♦ In 2019, Article 370 was abrogated, completing Sardar Patel's vision of full integration of Jammu and Kashmir.
- **National Unity Day and Statue of Unity:** Sardar Patel's birth anniversary, 31st October, has been celebrated as National Unity Day since 2014.
  - ♦ On 31st October 2018, Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the Statue of Unity in Gujarat, a 182-meter statue dedicated to Sardar Patel's legacy of national unity.
- **Vision for Separate State:** After Gandhiji's death in 1948, Sriramulu proposed a separate state for Telugu-speaking regions, but it was initially rejected by political leaders.
  - ♦ On October 19, 1952, Sriramulu began an indefinite fast demanding a separate Andhra state. Despite initial indifference from leaders, growing unrest led to political attention.
  - ♦ Sriramulu died on December 15, 1952, after 58 days of fasting.
    - His death led to widespread protests, and Nehru formally announced the creation of **Andhra Pradesh on December 19, 1952.**
- **Formation of Andhra State:** On October 1, 1953, the Telugu-speaking region of Andhra Pradesh was formed, with Kurnool as its capital.
- **Legacy:** Sriramulu was posthumously honored with the title "**Amarajeevi**" for his ultimate sacrifice. Sri Potti Sriramulu Nellore district in Andhra Pradesh is named in his honor.

Source :PIB

## POTTI SRIRAMULU

### In News

- The Chief Minister of AP affirmed the government's commitment to establish a Telugu university in honor of **Potti Sriramulu**.

### Potti Sriramulu

- **Early Life:** Born on March 16, 1901, in Madras (now Chennai), Sriramulu came from a family originally from Guntur, Andhra Pradesh.
  - ♦ Despite having a stable job, he became deeply involved in India's freedom struggle.
- **Personal Tragedies:** After losing his wife, child, and mother between 1928 and 1930, Sriramulu gave up his job and **joined Mahatma Gandhiji's Sabarmati Ashram**.
- **Involvement in Freedom Struggle:** Sriramulu participated in the Salt Satyagraha and was imprisoned. In 1942, he joined the Quit India Movement and was jailed alongside Gandhiji.
- **Work for Social Justice:** After 1946, Sriramulu returned to Nellore to work for the welfare of downtrodden communities, particularly advocating for the rights of the Dalit community.
- **Advocacy for Temple Entry:** Sriramulu led a movement to open all temples in Madras Province to the Dalits, refusing to break his fast until Gandhiji persuaded him.

Source :TH

## SANTA ANA WINDS

### Context

- The Santa Ana winds and climate change are fueling wildfires in Malibu, California.

### Santa Ana winds

- Santa Ana winds are **dry, warm, and powerful winds** that originate in the Great Basin, a region between the **Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada**.
- They occur when high-pressure systems develop over the inland deserts, while low-pressure conditions prevail over **California's coastal areas**.
- This pressure difference forces strong winds to **flow westward**, descending the mountains toward the **Pacific Ocean**.

### Impact

- As these winds descend, they compress, heat up, and lose humidity—sometimes reducing moisture levels to below 10%.
- The resulting hot and dry conditions desiccate vegetation, making it highly flammable and prone to wildfires.

Source: IE

## SAMARTH UDYOG BHARAT 4.0

### Context

- The Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) has set up 4 Smart Advanced Manufacturing and Rapid Transformation Hub (SAMARTH) Centres.

### What is SAMARTH Udyog Bharat 4.0?

- It is an **Industry 4.0** initiative of the Ministry of Heavy Industry & Public Enterprises, under its scheme on “**Enhancement of Competitiveness in the Indian Capital Goods Sector**”.
- It is aimed at promoting smart and advanced manufacturing technologies, boosting digital transformation, and strengthening India’s manufacturing sector.

#### What is Industry 4.0?

- Industry 4.0** refers to the **fourth industrial revolution**, characterized by the integration of technologies such as **Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, and data analytics** into manufacturing processes.

### SAMARTH Centres

- The established Centres are as;**
  - Centre for Industry 4.0 (C4i4) Lab, Pune,
  - IITD-AIA Foundation for Smart Manufacturing, IIT Delhi,
  - I-4.0 India @ IISc, Bengaluru, and
  - Smart Manufacturing Demo & Development Cell, CMTI, Bengaluru.
- Further, **10 cluster Industry 4.0 experience centres** have been approved under the Hub and Spoke model to be established across India by Centre for Industry 4.0 (C4i4) Lab, Pune.

### Objectives of SAMARTH Udyog Bharat 4.0

- Organizing awareness seminars**, workshops, and knowledge-sharing events on Industry 4.0 technologies.
- Providing training programs** to industries, including MSMEs, for capacity building.
- Offering consultancy in IoT hardware, software development, and data analytics.

### Key achievements of the SAMARTH Centres

- C4i4 Lab, Pune** developed an Industry 4.0 solutions-enabled Model Factory.
- CMTI, Bengaluru** created a production-based Smart Factory.

- Development of the **Industry 4.0 Maturity Model (I4MM)** to assess the readiness and progress of industries.
- C4i4 Lab launched a **Free Online Assessment Tool** to help MSMEs evaluate their Industry 4.0 readiness.

Source: PIB

## REVISED THE GRADED RESPONSE ACTION PLAN (GRAP)

### In News

- The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in Delhi-NCR has revised the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) for December 2024 to address worsening air quality during the winter months.

### Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)

- The **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** is an emergency response mechanism for Delhi-NCR, designed to address deteriorating air quality based on the average AQI levels.
- It involves multiple stakeholders and authorities to take action.
- Stages** : It has four stages based on AQI thresholds: Stage I for “poor” air (201-300), Stage II for “very poor” (301-400), Stage III for “severe” (401-450), and Stage IV for “severe+” (above 450).
- The revised GRAP incorporates targeted actions from the earlier Stages III and IV into Stages II and III, based on scientific data, expert recommendations, and past experiences.

### Recent Developments

- The updated plan imposes stricter measures when air quality worsens. Currently, Stage II restrictions, for an AQI of 201-300 (“very poor”), are in effect.
- Key changes include:** A ban on inter-state buses from entering Delhi, except electric, CNG, or BS-VI diesel buses, now moved from Stage III (AQI 301-400) to Stage II.
- Schools and colleges will switch to a hybrid mode (in-person and online classes) during high pollution, rather than closing entirely. This applies to schools in Delhi, Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, and Gautam Buddha Nagar when AQI reaches ‘severe’.

- ◆ For Stage IV (AQI over 450), hybrid classes will be implemented for students in Classes 6-9 and 11.

Source :PIB

## NATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION DAY

### Context

- December 14 is designated as the National Energy Conservation Day in India.

### About

- It was introduced in **1991**, by the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)** under the Ministry of Power.

- It serves as a reminder of the vital role energy plays in our lives and the urgency of conserving it.

- **National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA):**

- ◆ Instituted in **1991**.
- ◆ These awards honour the efforts of industrial units, and establishments that have significantly reduced energy consumption while maintaining their operational efficiency.
- ◆ Each year the Awards are presented on 14th December.

Source: PIB

