



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

DECEMBER, 2021

Week-3

15-21 Dec, 2021

★★ Useful for ★★

**CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Services Exams,
SSC and Banking Exams**

15th DECEMBER 2021

High Court and Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021

- Rajya Sabha has recently approved The High Court and Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021.

Key Highlights:

- The Bill seeks to amend “Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act, 1958” as well as “High Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act, 1954”. These Acts regulate the conditions of services and salaries of High Courts & Supreme court judges in India.
- Bill provides for additional quantum of pension or family pension. Under it, all the retired judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts including their family members are authorized to pension or family pension.
- They are also authorized to an additional quantum of pension or family pension, after they attain a certain age in line with a specified scale.
- Specified scale comprises five age brackets, with minimum age of 80, 85, 90, 95, and 100 years.
- The additional quantum increases with increasing age, from 20% to 100% of the pension or family pension.
- As per bill, a person will be authorized to the additional pension or family pension from the first day of that month in which they complete the minimum age under the concerned age bracket.

Constitutional Provisions for Appointment of Judges

- Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts are appointed by the President under Articles 124(2) and 217 of the Constitution.

- Article 124(2) says: “Every Judge of the Supreme Court shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal after consultation with such Judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Courts in the States as he may deem necessary.
- **Article 217:** “Every Judge of a High Court shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, the Governor of the State, and, in the case of appointment of a Judge other than the Chief Justice, the Chief Justice of the High Court.”

Kashi Vishwanath Corridor

- Recently, the Prime Minister inaugurated the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor connecting the ancient Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi to the ghats of the Ganga.

Key Points:

- It is a 400-meter long corridor that will facilitate the pilgrims and devotees of Baba Vishwanath, who had to encounter congested streets and surroundings with poor upkeep, when they practised the age-old custom of taking a dip in the holy river, collecting Gangajal and offering it at the temple.
- It will provide easy access for the disabled and old age people with the provision of ramps, escalators, and other modern facilities.

About Kashi Vishwanath Temple

- It is situated on the West bank of river Ganga which follows Uttar Vahini or north direction in Varanasi, the Temple is regarded as 7th amongst 12 Jyotirlingas.
- The main deity is known by the name Vishvanatha or Vishveshvara meaning Ruler of The Universe.
- The Temple was renovated in its present form in 1780 by Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore and Maharaja Ranjit Singh donated gold for temple shikhara in 1835.
- It is constructed following the Nagara style of temple architecture, mostly prevalent in northern India.

Jammu and Kashmir Delimitation Panel

- **Context:** National Conference (NC) leader likely to attend the next meeting of the Delimitation Commission scheduled in last week of December.
- Delimitation exercises in J&K in the past have been slightly different from those in the rest of the country because of the region's special status which was scrapped by the Centre in August 2019.
- The commission has also sought feedback regarding each representation it has received to evaluate its implementation.

About Delimitation Commission

- It is appointed by the President of India and works in collaboration with the Election Commission of India.
- Its members are a serving or retired Supreme Court judge, Chief Election Commissioner or an Election Commissioner nominated by CEC and Election Commissioners of the respective state.
- Its function is to determine the number and boundaries of constituencies, to identify seats reserved for SC/ST.

16th DECEMBER 2021

Bank-NBFC Co-lending

- **Context:** Several banks have recently entered into co-lending 'master agreements' with the registered Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and more are on the way.
- The Reserve Bank of India allowed the co-lending model in 2020, subject to prior agreement. However, some criticisms of the co-lending model are present.
- Several banks have entered into co-lending master agreements with NBFCs, and more are in the pipeline.
- SBI signed a deal with Adani Capital, a small NBFC of a big corporate house, for co-lending to farmers to help them buy tractors and farm implements.

Co-Lending Model (CML):

- Under CLM, banks are permitted to co-lend with all registered NBFCs (including HFCs) based on a prior agreement.
- The co-lending banks will take their share of the individual loans on a back-to-back basis in their books.
- Lending to the priority sector: In 2018, the RBI had announced "co-origination of loans" by banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) for lending to the priority sector.
- Retain a minimum share: The RBI has clearly said that NBFCs shall be required to retain a minimum of 20 percent share of the individual loans on their books.
- The lenders have two options to choose to structure their co-lending products on the bank's part:
 - **Pre-disbursal contribution:** to a loan under a mechanism for ex-ante due diligence.
 - **Post disbursal takeover:** of banks share in the loan on a back-to-back basis.

Supersonic Missile Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART)

- Recently, the DRDO has successfully test-fired a long-range Supersonic Missile Assisted Torpedo (SMART) off the coast of Balasore in Odisha.

About SMART:

- The system has been designed to enhance anti-submarine warfare capability far beyond the conventional range of the torpedo.
- The system is a next generation missile based standoff torpedo delivery system.
- It was a textbook launch, where the entire trajectory was monitored by the electro optic telemetry system, various range radars, including the down range instrumentation and down range ships.
- The missile carried a torpedo, parachute delivery system and release mechanisms.

- This canister based missile system consists of advanced technologies — two-stage solid propulsion, electromechanical actuators and precision inertial navigation.
- The SMART system will help India enhance its anti-submarine warfare capability.
- In March 2019, Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose was appointed as India's first Lokpal and as a body, it is still growing and progressing.

17th DECEMBER 2021

LokpalOnline

- Recently, Lokpal of India inaugurated a Digital Platform for the Management of Complaints called 'LokpalOnline'.

Key Points:

- It is an end-to-end digital solution for the management of complaints against public servants filed under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013.
- It is a web-based facility, which will quicken the disposal of complaints in an accountable, transparent and efficient manner with benefits to all stakeholders.
- It provides a Dashboard for every Complainant, enabling him to view the status of his Complaints during its lifecycle.
- The Portal, hosted on NIC Cloud, has been developed on an Open Source Technology.
- Its security audit has been done by an agency empanelled by the CERT-In (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

About Lokpal

- It is the first institution of its kind in independent India, established under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013 to inquire and investigate allegations of corruption against public functionaries who fall within the scope and ambit of the above Act.
- The Lokpal of India is committed to addressing the concerns and aspirations of the citizens of India for clean governance.
- It shall make all efforts within its jurisdiction to serve the public interest and shall endeavor to use the powers vested in it to eradicate corruption in public life.

Sixth Schedule of the Constitution

- **Context:** The Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance seek constitutional safeguards for Ladakh on the lines of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.
- There is a demand to amend the Ladakh Hill Development Council Act, passed in 1997. Ladakh needs safeguards for land, employment and cultural identity on the lines under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.
- It aims to safeguard the demography, environment and unique culture of Ladakh.

About Sixth Schedule of the Constitution

- It provides for the administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram to safeguard the rights of the tribal population in these states.
- This special provision is provided under Article 244(2) and Article 275(1) of the Constitution.
- It seeks to safeguard the rights of the tribal population through the formation of Autonomous District Councils (ADC).
- ADCs are bodies representing a district to which the Constitution has given varying degrees of autonomy within the state legislature.

Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was passed by Lok Sabha.
- It seeks to replace the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021.

Key Amendments:

- **Drafting error**
 - The Bill amends the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 to correct a drafting error.
 - In 2014, the Act was amended and the clause number of the definition for such illicit activities was changed.
 - However, the section on penalty for financing these illicit activities was not amended and continued to refer to the earlier clause number.
 - The Act regulates certain operations (such as manufacture, transport, and consumption) related to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
- **Punishment for financing illicit activities or harbouring persons engaged in them**
 - Under the Act, financing certain illicit activities (such as cultivating cannabis or manufacturing narcotic drugs) or harbouring persons engaged in them is an offence.
 - Persons found guilty of this offence will be punished with rigorous imprisonment of at least ten years (extendable up to 20 years) and a fine of at least one lakh rupees.

Log4j Vulnerability

- A new vulnerability named Log4 Shell is being touted as one of the worst cybersecurity flaws to have been discovered.

Key Points:

- The vulnerability is dubbed Log4 Shell and is officially CVE-2021-44228. CVE number is the unique number given to each vulnerability discovered across the world).
- It is based on an open-source logging library used in most applications by enterprises and even government agencies.
- The exploits for this vulnerability are already being tested by hackers and it grants them access to an application, and could potentially let them run malicious software on a device or servers.

- The problem impacts Log4j 2 versions which is a very common logging library used by applications across the world. Logging lets developers see all the activity of an application.

18th DECEMBER 2021

Solar Hamam

- **Context:** 'Solar Hamam' takes care of heating in cold Himalayan regions especially in the villages of Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
- The Solar Hamam had won the "Himachal Pradesh State Innovation Award for 2016-17".

About Solar Hamam:

- The Solar Hamam provides an anti-freezing outlet. It provides 15-18 liters of boiling hot water, within the first solar illumination of 30-35 minutes, at a maximum temperature of 90°C in the morning.
- It aimed at providing clean energy solutions to households across mountainous regions. It seeks to conserve forests, free women from collecting fuel wood and mitigate carbon emission.
- **Significance:** In the higher Himalayan region, 50% of fuelwood is consumed for the purpose of heating and is one of the major reasons for forest degradation and also the main cause of drudgery of women.

Minimum Age of Marriage for Women

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet took the decision to raise the legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years.
- At present, the legal age of marriage for girls is 18 and the legal age of marriage for men is 21 years.

Jaya Jaitly committee and its recommendations:

- The Ministry for Women and Child Development set up a task force to look into the correlation between the age of marriage with issues of women's nutrition, prevalence of anemia, IMR, MMR and other social indices.

- The committee was to look at the feasibility of increasing the age of marriage and its implication on women and child health, as well as how to increase access to education for women.
- **Recommendations Made:**
 - **Age of marriage to be increased:** The committee has recommended the age of marriage be increased to 21 years, on the basis of feedback they received from young adults from 16 universities across the country.
 - **Increasing access to schools and colleges for girls:** The committee also asked the government to look into increasing access to schools and colleges for girls, including their transportation to these institutes from far-flung areas.
 - **Sex education:** Skill and business training has also been recommended, as has sex education in schools.
 - **An awareness campaign:** Undertaken on a massive scale on the increase in age of marriage, and to encourage social acceptance of the new legislation, which they have said would be far more effective than coercive measures.

Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

- **Context:** The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has inscribed 'Durga Puja in Kolkata' on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Key Points:

- In total, 14 Intangible Cultural Heritage elements from the country have now been inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List.
- Earlier, UNESCO announced the Harappan city of Dholavira in Gujarat as India's 40th world heritage site.
- The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity has 492 elements currently.

About Durga Puja:

- It is a five-day festival that begins on the fifth night of the nine-day Navratri festival and ends on the tenth day, which is Dashami.
- During this time, people collectively worship and invoke Goddess Durga, who is regarded as the feminine energy of the cosmos, also known as 'Shakti'.

NOTE:

Intangible Cultural Heritage elements from India: Buddhist Chanting, Kalbelia, Chhau Dance, Koodiyattam (Kerala), Kumbh Mela, Mudiyyett (Kerala), Nawruz, Ramlila, Ramman (Uttarakhand), Sankirtana (Manipur), Traditional Brass & Copper Craft (Punjab), Vedic Chanting and Yoga.

19th DECEMBER 2021

Rustom-2 Indigenous UAV

- **Context:** India's indigenous Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) development programme (Rustom-II) achieved an important milestone by reaching an altitude of 25,000 feet and an endurance of 10 hours.
- Medium-Altitude Long-Endurance (MALE) refers to an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) that flies at an altitude window of 10,000 to 30,000 feet for extended durations of time, typically 24 to 48 hours.

Key Points:

- Rustom-2 has been designed and developed by the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), Bengaluru with production partners being Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd and Bharat Electronics Limited.
- It is also known as Tapas-BH (Tactical Airborne Platform for Aerial Surveillance-Beyond Horizon 201).
 - It is being developed to carry out surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) roles and is capable of carrying different combinations of advanced payload and capable of auto-landing among others.

- It is being designed to acquire real-time, high-quality pictures and signal intelligence from fields of concern at medium to long ranges.

Algo Trading

- **Context:** Recently, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) proposed that all orders emanating from the Application Programming Interface (API) of stockbrokers should be treated as Algorithmic Trading or Algo.

Major highlights:

- All orders emanating from an API should be treated as an Algo order and be subject to control by the stockbroker.
- The APIs to carry out Algo trading should be tagged with the unique Algo ID provided by the stock exchange granting approval for the Algo .
- Stockbrokers need to take the approval of all Algos from the exchange.
 - Each Algo strategy, whether used by broker or client, has to be approved by exchange and as is the current practice
 - Each Algo strategy has to be certified by Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA)/ Diploma in Information System Audit (DISA) auditors.

About Algo Trading:

- It refers to orders generated at superfast speed by the use of advanced mathematical models that involve the automated execution of the trade.
- It automatically monitors live stock prices and executes a trade upon fulfilment of specific criteria. This frees the trader from having to monitor live stock prices and initiate manual order placement.
- It provides profit opportunities for the trader.

FDI inflow in India

- **Context:** India has registered the highest ever annual Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow of 81.97 billion dollars in 2020-21.

Key Points

- FDI inflows in the last seven financial years are over 440 billion dollars, which is nearly 58 per cent of the total FDI inflow in the last 21 financial years.
- The top five countries from where FDI Equity Inflows were received during 2014 to 2021 are Singapore, Mauritius, the USA, Netherlands and Japan.
- The computer software and hardware sector attracted the largest share of FDI inflows, followed by Service, Trading and Telecommunications.

About Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

- It refers to the conditions when a company or investor takes ownership and controls operation in a business entity in another country.
- With FDI, foreign companies are directly involved with day-to-day operations in the other country.
 - This means they aren't just bringing money with them, but also knowledge, skills and technology.
- It is an important non-debt monetary source for India's economic development.
 - Economic liberalization started in India in the wake of the 1991 crisis and since then, FDI has steadily increased in the country.

20th DECEMBER 2021

Samudrayaan Project

- **Context:** Under the Deep Ocean Mission, a manned scientific submersible has been proposed to be developed for deep ocean exploration. The project is named Samudrayaan.

Key Points:

- Samudrayaan Project is a part of the Ministry of Earth Sciences' pilot project for deep ocean mining for rare minerals.
- National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) had developed and tested a 'personnel sphere' for a manned submersible system for a 500-meter water depth rating. One Titanium alloy personnel sphere for

a manned submersible system for 6000-metre water depth rating is under development in association with Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, ISRO, Thiruvananthapuram.

- **The Matsya 6000:**

- It is the deepwater manned submersible under the Samudrayan project. It aims to send humans underwater for deep-sea exploration; it is a five-year project at an estimated cost of ₹350 crores.

■ **NOTE:** _____

With the success of the 'Samudrayaan', India joins the elite club of nations such as the USA, Russia, Japan, France and China to have such underwater vehicles for carrying out subsea activities.

Vikas Portal

- Recently, the Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj launched MIS (Management Information System) Vikas Portal for rankings of States/UTs in Land Acquisition Projects under RFCTLARR Act, 2013.
- This portal is a result of the vision of the Prime Minister of India to give impetus to the government's Gati Shakti Mission.

Key Points:

- The Department of Land Resources developed this MIS portal to capture information on various parameters of land acquisition, required for ranking of the State/UTs, which is a software-driven program to submit information by respective State/UTs on land acquisition for developmental projects.
- The portal is developed in house by the NIC team of the department with zero cost.
- MIS portal will show data and figures and it will show the speed of the development in the country.
- In the first phase, land acquisition under RFCTLARR Act, 2013 undertaken from 01.01.2014 onwards will be covered for ranking purposes and this will be a continuous process.

- The suggestions/inputs received from the States/UTs have been considered and incorporated in the parameters for rankings.

About RFCTLARR Act, 2013:

- Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013(RFCTLARR Act, 2013) replaces the colonial Land Acquisition Act, 1894.
- The new law gives people a say in land acquisition and makes the process participative, humane and transparent.
- It promises to put an end to forcible acquisitions, enhances compensation to landowners, resettles and rehabilitates families displaced by land acquisition and gives the gram sabha decision-making powers in land acquisition.
- It puts a check on the government from indiscriminately acquiring land for uncertain public purposes.

Right to Be Forgotten

- **Context:** The Centre told Delhi High Court in a response to a plea that the Data protection Bill has provisions for 'right to be forgotten'.

Right to Be Forgotten (RTBF) in India:

- RTBF is a fairly new concept. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in an affidavit, stated that the international legal concept of 'right to be forgotten' is evolving in India.
- It is the right to have personal information removed from publicly available sources, including the internet and search engines, databases, websites etc. once the personal information in question is no longer necessary, or relevant
- The Right to be Forgotten falls under the purview of an individual's right to privacy, which is governed by the Personal Data Protection Bill that is yet to be passed by Parliament.

Biological Diversity Amendment Bill 2021

- **Context:** The legal experts are concerned about the Biological Diversity Amendment Bill 2021.
- The Biological Diversity Amendment Bill 2021, introduced in the Lok Sabha, exempts Ayush practitioners from the ambit of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

About Biological Diversity Amendment Bill 2021

- The Biological Diversity Act, 2002 was enacted for the conservation of biological diversity and fair, equitable sharing of the monetary benefits from the commercial use of biological resources and traditional knowledge.
- **Wild medicinal plants:** It seeks to reduce the pressure on wild medicinal plants by encouraging the cultivation of medicinal plants:
- **Ayush practitioners:** It exempts Ayush practitioners from intimidating biodiversity boards for accessing biological resources or knowledge. It is a huge move because the Ayush industry benefits greatly from biological resources in India.
- **Research and offences:** It facilitates fast-tracking of research, simplify the patent application process, decriminalises certain offences.
- **Investments:** To bring more foreign investments in biological resources, research, patent and commercial utilisation, without compromising the national interest.

Biological Diversity Act, 2002:

- The Act was introduced to achieve the objectives of United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992.
- The Act covers conservation, use of biological resources and associated knowledge occurring in India for commercial or research purposes or for the purposes of bio-survey and bio-utilisation.

- It provides a framework for access to biological resources and sharing the benefits arising out of such access and use.
- The Act also includes in its ambit the transfer of research results and application for intellectual property rights (IPRs) relating to Indian biological resources.

21th DECEMBER 2021

Kalibari Temple

- Recently, the President inaugurated the reconstructed Ramna Kali temple in Ramna, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

About the Temple

- It is a Hindu Temple located in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka where the landmark Suhrawardy Udyan (the former Ramna Race Course) is located.
- The temple was destroyed by Pakistani forces during their Operation Searchlight in March 1971, the brutal crackdown that led to the genocide and the Bangladesh War of Liberation.
- The temple is dedicated to the Goddess Kali, and is believed to have been built during the Mughal period.
- It is the second oldest Hindu temple in Bangladesh after the Dhakeshwari Temple.
- **Brief History:**
 - The history of the area called Ramna ('lawn' in Persian) can be traced back to the early 1600s, when it was occupied by high officials of the Mughals.
 - There was a Mughal garden, open green spaces, and garden houses. After Dhaka passed under British rule in 1858, the "jungle of Ramna" was cleared, and a race course and boulevard were built for the pleasure of the Raj elite.

Parvovirus

- **Context:** Nearly 2,000 pets and stray dogs in Amravati city of Maharashtra were affected by canine parvovirus virus.

About Parvovirus

- It is a highly contagious viral disease that can also be life-threatening in puppies and dogs.
- Parvovirus affects the intestinal tract of canines with puppies being more susceptible.
- **Symptoms:**
 - Bloody diarrhoea, vomiting, drastic weight loss, dehydration and lethargy are some of the symptoms. The virus has reported a 90 per cent mortality rate.
 - The virus has reported a 90 per cent mortality rate.
- The highly contagious virus spreads through direct contact with an infected dog or by indirect contact with a contaminated object, including the hands and clothing of people who handle infected dogs.
- It has no cure and inoculating a puppy or a dog gives them a fighting chance against the infection.

Order of the Druk Gyalpo

- **Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi was honored with Bhutan's highest civilian award "Order of the Druk Gyalpo".

Key Points:

- It was conferred with the award on the occasion of Bhutan's National Day (December 17).
- It marks the crowning of Ugyen Wangchuck as the first Druk Gyalpo of modern Bhutan.

About Druk Gyalpo

- He is the head of state of Bhutan. Bhutan is also known as Drukyl, in the Dzongkha language.

- It translates to "The Land of Thunder Dragon". Kings of Bhutan are called Druk Gyalpo (Dragon King) while, Bhutanese people call themselves Drukpa (people of Druk).

Agni Prime Missile

- **Context:** New generation nuclear-capable ballistic missile Agni-P was successfully tested from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam island off the coast of Odisha.
- This is the second test of the missile. The first test took place in June last.

About Agni Prime Missile

- Agni-P is a two-stage canisterised solid propellant missile with dual redundant navigation and guidance system.
- It has a range of up to 2000 km.
- It is a canisterised surface-to-surface ballistic missile.
- Canisterisation lessens the time required for launch & improves storage and mobility.
- Improved parameters: It is a new generation advanced variant of the Agni class of missiles with improved parameters, including manoeuvring and accuracy.
- Fully made up of composite material.
- **Significance:** Strengthen India's credible deterrence capabilities, improved manoeuvring and accuracy, unlike earlier Agni missiles.

