

**Regent Education and Research Foundation Group of Institutions**  
**Daily Current Affairs Synopsis**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> Dec 2023**

**(Useful for UPSC/WBPS/SSC Exams.)**

New draft legislations incorporate recommendations of **Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs**.

New Bills	Key Changes
<b>Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita Bill, 2023 to Replace IPC</b>	<p><b>Streamline provisions</b> relating to offences and penalties.</p> <p>Proposed to provide <b>first time community service</b> as one of the punishments for petty offences.</p> <p>A <b>new offence</b> on acts of <b>armed rebellion, subversive activities, separatist activities</b> or endangering <b>sovereignty or unity and integrity of India</b>.</p>
<b>Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita Bill 2023 to Replace CrPC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊙ <b>Summary trial has been made mandatory</b> for petty and less serious cases. Use of</li> <li>⊙ <b>technology and forensic sciences</b> in the investigation of crime.</li> <li>⊙ <b>Specific time-lines</b> have been prescribed for <b>time bound investigation</b>, trial and pronouncement of judgements.</li> <li>⊙ <b>Where punishment is 7 years</b> or more, victims shall be given an opportunity of being heard before withdrawal of the case.</li> <li>⊙ <b>Magisterial system</b> has also been streamlined.</li> </ul>
<b>Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Bill 2023 to Replace IEA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊙ Admissibility of an <b>electronic or digital record as evidence</b>.</li> <li>⊙ Seeks to expand <b>scope of secondary evidence</b> to include copies made from original by mechanical processes.</li> </ul>

## Golden Triangle Opium Economy Sees Steady Growth in 2023 Reported United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)


- Report “**Southeast Asia Opium Survey 2023: Cultivation, Production, and Implications**” assess opium poppy cultivation in Southeast Asia.
  - ⊕ **Golden Triangle** comprises illicit opium production region covering **Myanmar, Thailand and Laos**.
  - ⊕ Whereas **Golden Crescent** comprises illicit opium production areas in **Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan**.

### ➤ Key Findings


- ⊕ **Myanmar** is now **world’s top opium source** after the decline in **Afghanistan**.
- ⊕ A targeted assessment also found indications of **substantial opium cultivation in Sagaing, along Myanmar’s border with India**.

### ➤ Drug Trafficking a Challenge to India's Security

- ⊕ **Cross-Border Smuggling:** Illicit narcotics are often trafficked from neighbouring countries like **Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Myanmar**.
- ⊕ **Organized Crime and Violence:** Drug trafficking often associated with organized criminal networks that engage in violent activities.
- ⊕ **Threat to national security:** Routes used by **drug traffickers** could be used for **smuggling in weapons** as well as **terrorists**.
- ⊕ **Corruption and Money Laundering:** Drug money may be laundered through the formal financial system, undermining economic integrity.
- ⊕ **Healthcare Burden:** Drug abuse places a strain on the healthcare system.



## UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME



---

**Genesis:** UN agency established in 1997.

**About:** Addressing issues related to **drugs, transnational organized crime, corruption, and terrorism** on a global scale.

**Functions:** UNODC is mandated by its member States to assist in implementation of:

- **United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)**
- **United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)**

## International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) released an updated Red List of threatened species

### Key-findings


- ⊕ Around **44000 species are threatened with extinction**, which increased by 2000 from last year.
- ⊕ **Saiga**, an antelope that have roamed the earth since the **last Ice Age**, was **moved from Critically Endangered to Near Threatened**.
- ⊕ **25% of freshwater fish** are at risk of extinction, with at least 17% affected by climate change.
  - ◆ This is the **first global freshwater fish assessment**.
- ⊕ **Four freshwater subterranean fish species** (found in water bodies under the surface) **from Kerala** included in list are:
  - ◆ **Endangered:** Shaji's Catfish, Abdulkalam's Blind Cave Catfish, Pangio Bhujia
  - ◆ **Vulnerable:** Gollum snakehead

### About Red list


- ⊕ It is a **critical indicator of the health** of the world's biodiversity.
- ⊕ Provides information about **range, population size, habitat and ecology, use and trade, threats, and conservation actions**.
- ⊕ **Categories (Decreasing order of risk):** Extinct, Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, Near Threatened, Least Concern, and data deficient.

### Criteria used to determine the risk of species

- ⊕ **Population size reduction.**
- ⊕ **Restricted geographical range.**
- ⊕ **A small population and declining. Very small or lives in a restricted area.**
- ⊕ **Quantitative analysis of extinction risk.**



International Union for Conservation of Nature



Gland, Switzerland

## International Union for Conservation of Nature

- Genesis:** Created in **1948** (It is **not an organ of the United Nations**).
- About:** It is a membership Union composed of both **government and civil society** organizations.
- Function:** It provides public, private, and non-governmental organizations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development, and nature conservation.

## Declaration of State emergency and subsequent actions of the President should have reasonable nexus: Supreme Court (SC)

- **Relying on judgement in S R Bommai case**, SC while hearing revocation of Article 370 also held that 'actions of President during a State emergency was open to judicial scrutiny'.
- However, SC also observed that the **Court ought not to review every decision made by President** during State emergency proclaimed as:
  - ⊕ **Most actions taken by President** for State's interim governance **can be reversed** by State Government when it returns to power.
  - ⊕ **Legislations enacted by Parliament** on behalf of the State Legislature **could subsequently be repealed by State Legislature** when such emergency ceases to operate.

### State emergency under Article 356

- ⊕ **Article 356** allows President, when convinced that state government can't function as per the Constitution, to:
  - ◆ take over **all or any functions of State Government** or **powers of Governor** or any other state authority other than the Legislature;
  - ◆ **declare that powers of State Legislature** shall be exercised by **Parliament**; and
  - ◆ **make necessary provisions for the Proclamation's objectives** like suspension of certain constitutional provisions related to state bodies.
- ⊕ However, these powers are **not automatically invoked** and **President must stipulate the scope of the powers** exercised by the Union when such Proclamation is issued.

### SR Bommai Vs Union of India (1994) Case

- A nine-judge bench of the SC **unanimously held that the President's proclamation under Article 356** can be subject to **judicial review** on grounds of **illegality, malafide, extraneous considerations, abuse of power, or fraud**.
- The verdict also made **Parliamentary approval necessary** for imposing President's rule.
  - ⊕ If the Parliament does not approve the proclamation within two months, then the **government that was dismissed would automatically stand revived**.

## Guidelines on Acceptance of Awards by Government Servants issued by Department of Personnel and Training

- Instructions have been issued regarding acceptance of awards by **Government servants from Private Bodies and Institutes**, in accordance with **Rule 14 of Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964**.
  - Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964 govern the conduct of government employees in India.
- Key Provisions of Guidelines**
  - Awards given by **Private Bodies or Organizations** may be accepted only with prior approval of **Competent Authority**.
  - Competent Authority** would be **Secretary of the concerned Ministry/Department**. Competent Authority may grant approval **subject to the following conditions**:
    - Award should not have any monetary component.
    - Credentials of Private Bodies should be trustworthy.
- Significance of Guidelines**
  - Ethical Conduct**: Guidelines ensures that government servants uphold ethical standards in their conduct.
  - Preventing Conflicts of Interest**: Awards or gifts received by government servants could potentially lead to **conflicts of interest**.
  - Transparency and Accountability**: By having clear rules, public and other **stakeholders** can be assured that **decisions made by government officials** are not influenced by personal benefits.
  - Maintaining Public Trust**: Public trust is essential for the smooth functioning of government institutions.

## Rajya Sabha Passes Bill On Appointment Of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs)

- CEC and other ECs (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023 will **replace the Election Commission** (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991.
- The Bill provides for the **appointment, salary, and removal of the CEC and ECs**.
- Key highlights**
  - Appointment**: CEC and ECs will be **appointed by the President** upon the recommendation of a **Selection Committee** consisting of
    - Prime Minister**,
    - a **Union Cabinet Minister**, and
    - Leader of Opposition**/leader of the largest opposition party in Lok Sabha.
  - Search Committee**: Headed by the **Law Minister** would propose a panel of names to the selection committee.
  - Allowance**: Allowances and service conditions of the CEC and ECs would be **on par with those of Supreme Court judges**.
  - Removal**: CEC removal should follow the process akin to the **removal of Supreme Court judges**.
    - Also, **ECs cannot be removed from office without the CEC's recommendation**.
  - Protection of CEC and EC**: If the CEC and EC give **orders during duty**, the court cannot take action against them.

### Election Commission of India

- It is an **autonomous constitutional authority** consisting of a CEC and two ECs.
- It administers elections to the **Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies**, and the offices of the **President and Vice President** in the country.
- It operates under **Article 324 of the Constitution** and subsequently enacted the **Representation of the People Act**.

## Also in News



### Women's reservation in legislations

- Centre introduced the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Second Amendment) Bill, 2023** to reserve **33% of seats** in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly for women.
- Centre also introduced the **Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill, 2023** to reserve **33% of seats** in the Puducherry Assembly for women.
- Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023**, passed recently, provides **33% reservation** to women in the **Lok Sabha and State Assemblies**.



### Pliosaurus Fossil

- Recently, skull of an **ancient sea animal** called a **Pliosaurus** has been extracted from U.K.'s **Jurassic Coast**.
- About Pliosaurus**
  - Pliosaurus** were **large carnivorous marine reptile** characterized by **massive heads, short necks, and streamlined tear-shaped bodies**.
  - Pliosaurus** have been found as fossils from **Jurassic and Cretaceous periods** (about 200 million to 65 million years ago) of the **Mesozoic Era**.



## Anthrax

- WHO reported that five countries in East and Southern Africa have anthrax disease outbreak.
- About Anthrax
  - ⊕ Nature: Infectious disease caused by spore-forming bacteria called **Bacillus anthracis**.
  - ⊕ Affect: Livestock like cattle, sheep and goats, as well as wild herbivores.
    - ◆ Humans can catch the disease from infected animals or through contaminated animal products.
  - ⊕ Treatment: Anthrax vaccines for livestock and humans exist.
  - ⊕ Biological Weapon: In 2001, anthrax-laced letters killed 5 and sickened 17 in United States.



## Biocomputer

- Some researchers have built a hybrid biocomputer that can complete tasks such as voice recognition.
- In “biocomputers” brain cultures grown in the lab are coupled to real-world sensors and input/output devices.
  - ⊕ A new area of research called “organoid intelligence” aims to create “biocomputers”
- The scientists expect the technology to harness the processing power of the brain and understand the biological basis of human cognition, learning, and various neurological disorders.



## Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Report on Food Security

- Report titled Asia and the Pacific - Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023: Statistics and Trends released.
- Key Highlights
  - ⊕ 74.1% of Indians were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021.
  - ⊕ 16.6% of the India’s population is undernourished.
  - ⊕ 31.7% & 18.7% of children of the country under five years of age suffered with stunting and wasting respectively.
  - ⊕ 53% of the country’s women aged between 15 to 49 had anaemia in 2019.



## National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited (NARCL)

- Government informed that 10 Public Sector Banks transferred Non-Performing Assets (NPA) of over Rs 11,617 crore to NARCL between January and November this year.
  - ⊕ NPA refers to credit for which payment of interest or principal has remained 'past due' for a specific period.
- NARCL is registered with the RBI as an Asset Reconstruction Company under SARFAESI Act, 2002.
  - ⊕ It was established to clean up the legacy stressed assets with an exposure of Rs 500 crore and above in Indian Banking system.
  - ⊕ It intends to acquire these through 15% Cash and 85% in Security Receipts.



## Khan Yunis City

- Recently, Israel bombed Khan Yunis city after a hostage threat by Hamas.
- This city is located in the south of the Gaza Strip in the southwestern part of Palestine near the Sinai Peninsula.
- It dates back to the Mamluk era, where Barquq Castle was built in its center in 1387 AD. It was also a rest for merchants coming from the Levant to Egypt and vice versa serving the southern region.



## Enhancing Nature-based Solutions for an Accelerated Climate Transformation (ENACT) Partnership

- Six new countries and UN Environment Programme have joined ENACT Partnership recently.
- About ENACT Partnership
  - ⊕ Launched by Germany and Egypt along with the IUCN at COP27, which took place at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt in 2022.
  - ⊕ It aims to coordinate global efforts to address climate change, land and ecosystem degradation, and biodiversity loss through Nature-based Solutions (NbS).
  - ⊕ NbS includes wastewater management, sustainable agriculture, forestry and fishing, pollution abatement etc.

## Personality in News



## Pa Togan Nengminja Sangma

- He was remembered on his death anniversary.
- He was a Garo tribal leader from Garo Hills (Meghalaya).
- Contributions:
  - ⊕ After first Anglo-Burmese war (1824-1826), British decided to occupy Brahmaputra valley.
    - ◆ In 1872, British took extreme measure of occupying the entire Garo Hills.
  - ⊕ He organised people of his community from both hills and plains.
  - ⊕ In 1872, he launched attack against British troops at Rongrengiri and refused to bow down to British forces.
- Values: Courage, Inclusive leadership, Selflessness etc.



Pa Togan Nengminja Sangma