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General Studies-1

Misuse of PIL for Vested Interests:

Supreme Court says it is a travesty of justice for the resources of the legal system to be consumed by an avalanche of misdirected public interest petitions.

The Supreme Court on Thursday derided the Loya PIL petitions as a case in point of how public interest litigation has become an "industry of vested interests" rather than a powerful tool to espouse the cause of the marginalised and oppressed.

The judgment said PIL had now become a façade for people hungry for publicity or those who wanted to settle personal, business or political scores. The true face of the litigant behind the façade was seldom unravelled.

About PIL

- The PIL was envisioned by the Supreme Court's legendary judges as "a powerful instrument to preserve the rule of law and to ensure the accountability of and transparency within structures of governance".
- Public Interest Litigation is directly filed by an individual or group of people in the Supreme Court of India.
- It was felt that their interests are undermined by the government. In such a situation, the court directly accepts the public good.
- It is a new legal horizon in which court of law can initiate and enforce action to serve and secure significant Public Interest.
- The concept of public interest litigation (PIL) is in consonance with the principles enshrined in Article 39A of the Constitution of India to protect and deliver prompt social justice with the help of law.
- Before the 1980s, only the aggrieved party could approach the courts for justice. After the emergency era the high court reached out to the people, devising a means for any person of the public (or an NGO) to approach the court seeking legal remedy in cases where the public interest is at stake.

Justice [P. N. Bhagwati](#) and Justice [V. R. Krishna Iyer](#) were among the first judges to admit PILs in court



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PIL can be filed against govt only, not individuals

Importance of PIL

- Public interest litigation gives a wider description to the right to equality, life and personality which is guaranteed under part III of the Constitution of India.
- It has introduced some kinds of reliefs or remedies under the writ jurisdiction.
- It also functions as an effective instrument for changes in the society or social welfare.
- Through public interest litigation, any public or person can seek remedy on behalf of the oppressed class by introducing a PIL.

National Anthem in Cinema Halls:

Why in News?

The inter-ministerial committee, set up to “frame guidelines describing circumstances and occasions on which the national anthem is to be played or sung”, is likely to suggest that cinema halls should not play the national anthem before screening a film.

Rationale Behind Decision:

The committee, according to sources, is of the view that playing the national anthem will interrupt the screening of the film, and create disorder and confusion instead of adding to the dignity of the anthem.

The 12-member panel, set up on December 5, 2017, was given six months time to come up with statutory requirements on playing the national anthem in cinema halls and public places.

Other Recommendations:

The committee, sources said, is likely to suggest that the national anthem should be played before and after:

- The President’s address to the nation on All India Radio, arrival of the Governor/ Lieutenant Governor at formal state functions,
- When the national flag is brought out on parade, when the regimental colours are presented, and



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- During morning assembly in schools. Whether or not the national anthem should be sung while unfurling the national flag should be left to the good sense of the people.

The shorter version of the anthem (20 seconds), according to the committee, should be played before raising toasts in the officers' mess. Also, when the national anthem is played by a band, it should be preceded by a roll of drums.

Background:

The Centre's decision to set up the committee came after a Supreme Court bench, comprising Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud, in October last year observed that people "cannot be forced to carry patriotism on their sleeves" and it cannot be assumed that if a person does not stand up for the national anthem, he or she is "less patriotic".

Earlier Decision:

On January 9 this year, a bench headed by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra Tuesday modified the November 30, 2016 order which had made the playing of national anthem in cinema halls mandatory.

The bench said it would be up to cinema hall owners whether or not to play the national anthem. The bench, also comprising Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud, made it clear, however, that movie-goers will have to show respect to the anthem in case it is played, and they will have to stand.

Gram swaraj abhiyan

About Gram Swaraj Abhiyan:

"Gram Swaraj Abhiyan" is being organised between 14th April to 05th May, 2018.

- The campaign, undertaken under the name of "Sabka Sath, Sabka Gaon, Sabka Vikas", is to promote social harmony, spread awareness about pro-poor initiatives of government, reach out to poor households to enroll them as also to obtain their feedback on various welfare programmes.



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- As a special endeavour during the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, ***saturation of eligible households/persons would be made under seven flagship pro-poor programmes*** in 21,058 identified villages.
- ***The programmes covered*** are Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Saubhagya, Ujala scheme, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and Mission Indradhanush.

General Studies-3

High Security Registration Plates (HSRP) Mandatory

From January 1, 2019 onward, all classes of motor vehicles hitting the roads will come fitted with tamper-proof High Security Registration Plates (HSRP) that have a host of in-built security features.

They are expected to offer increased protection against theft.

The HSRP was first made mandatory in some States 13 years ago but failed to take off.

About HSRP's:

HSRPs will come with a 15-year guarantee.

They will have in-built security features such as a self-destructive sticker with the engine and chassis number of the vehicle.

The plates will be fitted on the front and rear of the vehicles and windscreens will have a number plate tag with hologram.

A permanent identification number with a minimum of 10 digits will be laser-branded into the reflective sheeting on the bottom left of the registration plate.

The permanent number will be preceded by two alphabets indicating the name of the vendor, manufacturer, or supplier, for whom the Type approval certificate was issued by the testing agencies.

The registration plate fitted in the rear of the vehicle will be fastened with a non-removable/non-reusable snap lock system.



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For enhanced security, two snap locks will be used in the HSRP affixed in the rear. The replacement of an existing registration plate will also be done through the agency responsible for affixing the new plate.

First Ever International SME Convention-2018 in New Delhi

One hundred and fifty participants from 31 countries and 400 entrepreneurs from India will participate in the four day International SME convention being held in New Delhi from 22nd to 24th April.

The Ministry of MSME has engaged with over 35 International Trade Development organisations to attract and invite able and willing entrepreneurs and encourage people to people contact with select Indian Entrepreneurs from key sectors of the International counterparts.

The convention has specific focus on inclusion of MSMEs in the Make in India program & empowering women entrepreneurs.

The MoMSME recognizing the potential of sustainable Indian SMEs in collaborating with International Companies not only for setting up manufacturing operations in India but also for utilizing the reach and market access of International Counterparts for promoting and exporting Made in India products and services.

Need was felt to create a platform which could allow Entrepreneur – to – Entrepreneur exchange of ideas, free and fair business discussions, mutual sizing of opportunities and ways to address them.

About MSME's:

India is home to more than 60 million MSMEs, majority of who are in low-tech areas and serve the local domestic markets.

Of these, a small percentage, have the ability and capability to derive access to International Markets, with the vast majority of enterprises working as ancillaries.

Together the MSMEs constitute a single largest employer after the Agriculture sector in India. Highly developed economies have banked on their small and medium enterprises for both GDP Growth as well as higher employment resulting in higher per capita incomes.



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Cybersecurity Tech Accord.

A group of 34 major tech companies, including Cisco, Facebook, Microsoft, HP, RSA, and Oracle, have signed the [Cybersecurity Tech Accord](#).

About the Accord:

This accord promises to establish partnerships to share vulnerabilities, provide consumers with better ways to protect themselves, and refuse to assist governments in carrying out state sponsored cyberattacks.

Regarding partnerships, the companies seek to build relationships with major players in the cybersecurity field to share vulnerabilities and threats as well as improve technical collaboration.

The accord mentions that cyberattacks could potentially cost around \$8 trillion by 2022 and can hurt small businesses, [governments](#), and [hospitals](#). To assist in this partnership, big security companies like RSA, Avast, FireEye, and Symantec have pledged their support for the accord.

The companies made commitments in four areas.

Stronger defense

The companies will mount a stronger defense against cyberattacks. As part of this, recognizing that everyone deserves protection, the companies pledged to protect all customers globally regardless of the motivation for attacks online.

No offense

The companies will not help governments launch cyberattacks against innocent citizens and enterprises, and will protect against tampering or exploitation of their products and services through every stage of technology development, design and distribution.

Capacity building

The companies will do more to empower developers and the people and businesses that use their technology, helping them improve their capacity for protecting themselves.

Collective action

The companies will build on existing relationships and together establish new formal and informal partnerships with industry, civil society and security researchers to improve technical collaboration, coordinate vulnerability disclosures, share threats and minimize the potential for malicious code to be introduced into cyberspace.



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Defence planning committee

[Defence planning committee](#), which will include service chiefs and heads of important ministries — chaired by National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval — is set to be created.

Functions of the committee:

- Prepare drafts of national security strategy and doctrines, international defence engagement strategy and roadmap to build defence manufacturing ecosystem.
- Work on strategy to boost defence exports, and prioritised capability development plans for the armed forces.
- Analyse and evaluate all relevant inputs relating to defence planning and foreign policy imperatives besides focusing on defence acquisition and infrastructure development plans including the 15-year-long integrated perspective plan.
- Work on development of Indian defence industry and technology advancements.

Benefits:

- First, the chair of the committee, Doval, is a person of formidable capability, who as NSA is one of the few with an overarching knowledge of the direction of the country's national security needs.
- The fact that he is a highly trusted aide to the prime minister helps considerably. Heads of ministries or their representatives are less likely to oppose and delay decision making when there oversight at such levels.
- The inclusion of all the relevant ministries in the committee will permit 'across the table decision making' up to a point.
- Considering the complex security environment and volume of expenditure on national defence, it was imperative to have strong defence planning mechanism.