



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 23-Apr-18

General Studies-2

National Commission of Minorities:

Why in News?

The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) has decided to approach the government for granting it Constitutional status to protect the rights of minority communities more effectively.

If granted such a status, the NCM will be able to act against errant officials who do not attend hearings, follow its order or are found guilty of dereliction of duty,

In its present form, the NCM has powers to summon officials, including chief secretaries and director generals of police, but has to rely on departments concerned to take action against them

Earlier, the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2017-18), in its 53rd report noted that the NCM is "almost ineffective" in its current state to deal with cases of atrocities against minorities. The committee recommended constitutional status to the body "without any delay".

About NCM:

- The Union Government set up the **National Commission for Minorities** (NCM) under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.
- Six religious communities, viz; Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains have been notified in Gazette of India as minority communities by the Union Government all over India

The NCM adheres to the [United Nations](#) Declaration of 18 December 1992 which states that "States shall protect the existence of the National or Ethnic, Cultural, Religious and Linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity

The Commission shall consist of

- a Chairperson,
- a Vice Chairperson and



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- Five Members to be nominated by the Central Government from amongst persons of eminence, ability and integrity; provided that five members including the Chairperson shall be from amongst the minority communities.

National Pension Scheme:

Why in News?

The total assets under management (AUM) of the pension fund players — operating under the National Pension System (NPS) and regulated by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) — have increased 38 per cent to Rs 2.40 lakh crore in 2017-18.

About NPS:

National Pension Scheme (NPS) is a government-sponsored pension scheme. It was launched in January 2004 for government employees.

However, in 2009, it was opened to all sections including NRI's.

The scheme allows subscribers to contribute regularly in a pension account during their working life.

On retirement, subscribers can withdraw a part of the corpus in a lumpsum and use the remaining corpus to buy an annuity to secure a regular income after retirement.

Any Indian citizen between 18 and 60 years can join NPS. The only condition is that the person must comply with know your customer (KYC) norms.

AFSPA:

Why in News?

The Union Home Ministry on Monday completely revoked the controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act from Meghalaya while diluting it in other regions of Arunachal Pradesh.

Till September 2017, 40 per cent of Meghalaya was under AFSPA. However, after recent review in consultations with the state government, AFSPA was removed completely from Meghalaya



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What is AFSPA?

Afspa, which was enacted in 1958 amid the nascent Naga insurgency, gives powers to the army and state and central police forces to shoot to kill, search houses and destroy any property that is "likely" to be used by insurgents in areas declared as "disturbed" by the home ministry.

Security forces can "arrest without warrant" a person, who has committed or even "about to commit a cognizable offence" even on "reasonable suspicion". It also protects them from legal processes for actions taken under the act.

Which states are under AFSPA?

It is in force in Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland, Manipur (except the Imphal municipal area).

In Arunachal Pradesh, only the Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts plus a 20-km belt bordering Assam come under its purview.

And in Meghalaya AFSPA was confined to a 20-km area bordering Assam.

What are 'disturbed' areas?

The state or central government considers those areas as 'disturbed' "by reason of differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities."

How is a region declared 'disturbed'?

Section (3) of the Afspa empowers the governor of the state or Union territory to issue an official notification in The Gazette of India, following which the Centre has the authority to send in armed forces for civilian aid.

Once declared 'disturbed', the region has to maintain status quo for a minimum of three months, according to The Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Act, 1976.

What is state government's role?

The state governments can suggest whether the act is required to be enforced or not. But under Section (3) of the act, their opinion can be overruled by the governor or the Centre.

International Relations:

Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)



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The 6th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) and Conclave of Chiefs is being hosted by Iran at Tehran from 23 to 25 April 2018. The Chief of the Naval Staff is leading a four member Indian delegation for the event.

About IONS:

- The IONS was conceived by the Indian Navy in 2008.
- The forum seeks to enhance maritime cooperation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion on regionally relevant maritime issues that would lead to common understanding on the way ahead.
- The inaugural edition of IONS was held in February 2008 at New Delhi, with Indian Navy as the Chair for two years. This was followed by UAE from 2010 - 2012, South Africa from 2012 - 2014, Australia from 2014 - 2016 and Bangladesh from 2016 - 2018.

The IONS Charter of Business was agreed upon by the Conclave of Chiefs and brought into effect in February 2014. A relatively young forum, barely in its 10th year of existence, it has grown into a formidable organisation with 23 members and 09 observers. As the founder nation, India will also be conducting commemorative activities in November 2018 at Kochi, for celebrating its 10th Anniversary this year.

General Studies-3

New Electronic Policy to be announced:

In a bid to make India an export hub for electronics, the government plans to set up at least one SEZ or special economic zone in every State under the proposed electronic policy.

The new policy will focus on making India an export hub," a senior IT Ministry official said. "It has been proposed that at least one mega SEZ be set up in each state, with emphasis on coastal economic zones.

Under the new policy, which was earlier expected to be out by March 2018, the government also plans to sign free trade agreements (FTAs) with countries, including those in Africa and Europe, to which India can export smaller electronic products

NITI Aayog also recommended that Coastal Economic Zones (CEZs) be set up, similar to what China has done. Pointing out that India's numerous SEZs have not taken off in the way they did in China due to issues such as size and location, the Aayog had said large areas near the coast can be set aside for CEZs.



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India has set a target of net zero imports in electronics by 2020, in the meeting of which the new policy will play a crucial role.

Coastal Economic Zone (CEZ)

- CEZs are spatial economic regions comprising group of coastal districts or districts with strong linkage to ports in region to tap into synergies with planned industrial corridor projects.
- These zones are expected to provide business-friendly ecosystem including ease of doing business, ease of exporting and importing, swift decisions on applications for environmental clearances and speedy water and electricity connections.

Key Facts

- CEZ will be developed as part of plan for developing 14 such industrial clusters to spur manufacturing and generate jobs.
- The plan envisages total investment of Rs 15,000 crore in first phase and creation of more than 1.5 lakh jobs.
- The idea is to attract large firms interested in serving export markets as they will bring with them capital, technology, good management practices and links to world markets.
- This in turn will help create ecosystem around them in which productive small and medium firms will emerge and flourish.

Environment & Biodiversity

Olive Ridley Turtles:

Why in News?

The late recurrence of mass nesting of Olive Ridley turtles at the Rushikulya rookery coast in Odisha may be due to inter-rookery migration of these endangered marine reptiles.

While the turtles appeared for two spells of mass nesting at the Rushikulya rookery coast this year, they gave the Devi river mouth, another nesting site to the north of Rushikulya, a miss.

According to reptile experts, female Olive Ridelys have the capacity to store fertilised eggs inside their body for a long period ranging up to two years. They do not lay eggs if they do not find suitable location for the purpose.



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About Olive Ridley turtles:

Also known as the Pacific ridley sea turtle, Olive turtles are a medium-sized species of sea turtle found in warm and tropical waters, primarily in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

- They are best known for their behavior of synchronized nesting in mass numbers.
- The olive ridley is classified as Vulnerable according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), and is listed in Appendix I of CITES.
- The Convention on Migratory Species and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles have also provided olive ridleys with protection, leading to increased conservation and management for this marine turtle.