



## **General Studies-2**

### **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act**

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, which is reviewing the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, has also proposed to widen the definition of children to include adopted children or stepchildren, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, grandchildren and minors represented by their legal guardians.

At present, only biological children and grandchildren come under the Act.

The Ministry has drafted the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Draft Bill, 2018, which will supersede the existing Act.

The draft Act also proposes doing away with the upper limit of Rs. 10,000 a month in maintenance, thus making it variable.

Those who earn well can and should shell out higher amounts for the upkeep of their parents.

Also the definition of the term 'maintenance' should go beyond providing food, clothing, housing and healthcare and include safety and security of parents," the official said.

Elderly parents can approach a maintenance tribunal if their children neglect or refuse to maintain them.

### **The Domestic Violence Act**

#### **Why in News?**

The Domestic Violence Act — meant to punish men who abuse women in a relationship — extends to all man-woman relationships, and also protects divorced women from their former husbands, the Supreme Court has upheld.

A three-judge Bench of Justices Ranjan Gogoi, R. Banumathi and Naveen Sinha confirmed a Rajasthan High Court ruling of 2013 that the term 'domestic violence' cannot be restrained to marital relations alone.

#### **Order of SC:**

The Supreme Court's recent order, based on a question of law raised by advocate Dushyant Parashar, found no reason to differ with the High Court's conclusion that



'domestic relationship' includes "consanguinity, marriage, a relationship in the nature of marriage, adoption or as family members living together as a joint family".

The apex court did not intervene with the interpretation that 'domestic relationship' is not confined to the "relationship as husband and wife or a relationship in the nature of marriage, but it includes other relationship as well such as sisters, mother, etc.

Domestic relationship includes any relationship between two persons who either live at the present moment or have at any point of time in the past lived together in a shared household.

Absence of subsisting domestic relationship in no manner prevents the court from granting certain reliefs specified under the Act," the High Court's reasoning was upheld by the Bench.

The court held that domestic violence can continue even after divorce and the reach of the Act should not be shackled by confining only for the protection of women living in marriage.

It illustrated how a divorcee husband could resort to violence by entering the workplace of his former wife to commit an act of violence, or even attempt to communicate with her, or threaten or cause violence to her relatives or dependents or any other person. I

It amounts to domestic violence if the former husband tried to dispossess the woman from a jointly-owned property or refuse to return her 'stridhan' or valuable security or other property. The Act brings all these acts of violence within its ambit.

### **General Studies-3**

#### **ISRO develops Green Fuel**

Scientists at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) have reported progress in the development of an environment-friendly propellant to power satellites and spacecraft.

The effort is to replace the conventional hydrazine rocket fuel, a highly toxic and carcinogenic chemical, with a greener propellant for future missions.

Initial tests by a research team at the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) here have shown promising results in the formulation and associated tests of a propellant blend based on hydroxylammonium nitrate (HAN).



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Due to its high performance characteristics, hydrazine has dominated the space industry as the choice of propellant for over six decades, despite its environment and health hazards and the challenges faced in its manufacturing, storage, ground handling and transportation.

The in-house formulation consists of HAN, ammonium nitrate, methanol and water.

While methanol was added to reduce combustion instability, the choice of AN was dictated by its capacity to control the burn rate and lower the freezing point of the propellant.

In a paper presented at the national conference on Future Directions in Propulsion, organised by the Aeronautical Society of India here, the researchers said the propellant formulation was tested for compatibility with four metal samples over a period of six months.

The LPSC is planning further tests in flight configuration.

### **Dedicated web portal to facilitate Film Shooting**

The Film Facilitation Office is in the process of establishing a dedicated web portal that will disseminate information on filming locations and the facilities available in India for production/post production.

Accordingly, the portal will help potential production companies looking to shoot in India to obtain permissions, explore potential benefits (tangible and non-tangible) and obtain an overview of various locations in India that could benefit the storyline of the film under consideration.

**Application** - The portal will facilitate the acceptance of application for shooting feature films / TV & Web Reality shows and series and / or TV & Web shows and series in India, along with online payments and issuing permissions. Foreign Audio Visual Agencies intending to shoot documentary films / AV commercials in India would link to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Web portal.

**Locations** – The portal would also provide information on locations and link to all State portals. It would capture detailed information pertaining to a particular location, resources or facilities available in a standardized format that would include basic location description, map, best time to shoot, connectivity, photographs, digital walk tour, permissions required, previous movies shot etc.



**Co-production of Films:** Financial incentives will be provided to film makers for production of films under Audio Visual Co-production treaties other countries. Support for funding will be taken from the dedicated corpus funds. Policy guidelines for optimum and effective use of funds are being prepared.

### **A global environment compact**

#### **Why in News?**

The UN General Assembly has adopted a resolution to set up a working group for negotiations aimed at creating a Global Pact for the Environment, a legally binding international instrument.

#### **About the resolution:**

- The resolution requests UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to submit to the General Assembly a report that identifies and assesses possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments with a view to strengthening their implementation.
- It decides to establish an ad hoc open-ended working group to consider the report, and if deemed necessary, to consider the scope, parameters and feasibility of a Global Pact for the Environment.
- The resolution requests the current president of the General Assembly to appoint two co-chairs of the working group — one from a developing country and one from a developed country — to oversee its consultations.
  
- The resolution was sponsored by France and won the support of 143 countries.
- Iran, the Philippines, Russia, Syria, Turkey and the United States voted against it.
- Six other countries abstained while several states did not vote.

### **World Migratory Bird Day 2018**

World Migratory Bird Day 2018 is being celebrated on May 12<sup>th</sup> this year.



***World Migratory Bird Day 2018 theme:*** "Unifying Our Voices for Bird Conservation".

***About World Migratory Bird Day:***

World Migratory Bird Day is celebrated each year to highlight the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. More than 300 events in more than 60 countries to mark World Migratory Bird Day 2018 will include bird festivals, education programmes, media events, bird watching trips, presentations, film screenings and a benefit concert to raise funds for international nature conservation.

***Concerns:***

Forty percent of all migratory birds are seeing their number in decline, with one in eight being threatened with global extinction. Major threats include habitat loss and degradation, collision with badly placed wind turbines and power lines, unsustainable harvesting and the illegal killing and taking of birds.

***Conservation of migratory species:***

Efforts to conserve migratory birds both globally and regionally are internationally coordinated by the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS, also known as the Bonn Convention) and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA). The two UN Environment-administered treaties have been spearheading World Migratory Bird Day since 2006.

***About the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS):***

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range. CMS and its related Agreements on migratory birds bring together governments and other stakeholders to coordinate and further develop conservation policies, to ensure that all flyways in the world benefit from coordination mechanisms that promote cooperation at ground level among the countries involved.

It is under aegis of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).



### **About the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA):**

The Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) is an intergovernmental treaty dedicated to the conservation of migratory waterbirds that migrate along the African-Eurasian Flyway. The Agreement covers 254 species of birds ecologically dependent on wetlands for at least part of their annual cycle.

### **NASA to send helicopter on Mars:**

NASA currently has two cars roaming Mars — the Opportunity and Curiosity rovers. But the next one it will send there will carry a vehicle with a new approach for planetary exploration: a helicopter.

The space agency announced the decision Friday to add a small helicopter — about 4 pounds with a fuselage the size of a softball and blades that span just over 3 1/2 feet, tip to tip — to its Mars 2020 mission, which is to launch in July 2020 and arrive at Mars the following February.

For its trip to Mars, the helicopter will be packed on the underside of the rover. After the rover lands, the helicopter will be placed on the ground.

The rover will then drive some distance away — close enough to stay in radio contact, far enough to not be endangered by any mishaps.

Flying on the red planet is not easy. The thin air at the surface of Mars is the equivalent of being 100,000 feet above Earth — well beyond the limits of terrestrial helicopters — although the weaker gravity helps.

Two pairs of rotor blades will spin in opposite directions at nearly 50 revolutions per second. A prototype has been tested in a chamber that mimics the Martian atmosphere.

The \$55 million project is not part of the main Mars 2020 mission, which is to look for signs of past ancient life in the rocks of Mars. "It'll be interesting to see what it is actually capable of doing," Kenneth Farley, the mission's project scientist, said of the helicopter.

### **Scout of the future**



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After the 30 days of testing are over, the helicopter will be left behind, and the rover will move on. On future missions, a helicopter could act as a scout to help a rover navigate or even bring samples.

The Mars copter is not the only such proposal NASA has considered.

A candidate in NASA's New Frontiers competition would send a robotic drone to Titan, Saturn's largest moon.

The quadcopter would be able to perform detailed explorations of the moon's various terrains, including its seas of hydrocarbons. If NASA selects the mission over another finalist next year, it could possibly launch as soon as 2025. NY TIMES