



General Studies-2

Sabarimala Judgement:

Why in News?

The Supreme Court on Tuesday fixed the date for [hearing the review petitions](#) against its September 28 majority judgment allowing women of all ages entry into the hill shrine at Sabarimala in Kerala, on November 13, 2018.

On Monday, Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi said the date would be fixed for a hearing on a mentioning made by the National Ayyappa Devotees Association.

Basis of Petition:

The petitions argued that 'reform' does not mean rendering a religious practice out of existence on the basis of a PIL petition filed by "third parties" who do not believe in the Sabarimala deity.

Background:

- A Constitution Bench of the court, [in the 4:1 majority judgment](#), upheld the 12-year-old PIL plea filed by the Indian Young Lawyers Association challenging the prohibition of women aged between 10 and 50 from [undertaking the pilgrimage](#) to the temple.
- The Bench found that a restriction on women solely based on her menstrual status was a smear on her individual dignity.
- It was like "treating women as the children of a lesser God is to blink at the Constitution." It was a "form of untouchability" abolished decades ago.
- The ban on women was derogatory to equal citizenship. The right to practise religion should yield to the right of dignity of women aged between 10 and 50.

Provisions for Review Petition

- In [India](#), a binding decision of the [Supreme Court/High Court](#) can be reviewed in **Review Petition**.



- [Article 137](#) of the [Constitution](#) provides that subject to provisions of any law and rule made under [Article 145](#) the [Supreme Court of India](#) has the power to review any judgement pronounced (or order made) by it.
- Under Supreme Court Rules, 1966 such a petition needs to be filed within 30 days from the date of judgement or order.
- It is also recommended that the petition should be circulated without oral arguments to the same bench of judges that delivered the judgement (or order) sought to be reviewed.
- Furthermore, even after dismissal of a review petition, the [SC](#) may consider a [curative petition](#) in order to prevent abuse of its process and to cure gross [miscarriage of justice](#).

Election Commission Of India:

In a major step months before the General Elections, the Supreme Court on Tuesday found ambiguity in the appointment process of [Election Commissioners](#) and referred the question to a Constitution Bench for a “close look.”

The order passed by a Bench of Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Justice S.K. Kaul came on a PIL filed by Anoop Baranwal seeking an “independent mechanism for appointment of ECs” outside the exclusive power of the government.

Lacunae in Appoinment:

- Appointments of ECs should be made under a “collegium system.
- The appointment process of ECs should be in tandem with that of other top constitutional functionaries.
- There is a “gap in the law” as far as appointment of ECs are concerned.
- The appointments were made by the President solely on the basis of the advice given by the political-executive at the Centre. This situation allegedly gives “ample room for the ruling party to choose someone whose loyalty is ensured and renders the selection process vulnerable to



manipulations and partisanship which is violative of Article 14 of the Constitution.”

- It is necessary to “plug the gap to ensure the independence and dignity of the institution.”

Early Observation by SC:

- The [Supreme Court](#) had told the government that though so far the election commissioners appointed have been “outstanding people, very fair and politically neutral,” there is still a legitimate expectation that they should be selected through the “most transparent and just process” formalised in a law enacted by the Parliament.
- The Election Commissioners supervise and hold elections in our democracy... such is the significance of their office. Their selection has to be made in the most transparent manner,” the Supreme Court had observed in the 2017 hearing.
- The court had indicated to the government that it may intervene in the issue to achieve the constitutional objective under Article 324 (2) of the Constitution.

INF Treaty

Why in News?

U.S. President Donald Trump has announced that he would “terminate” the INF Treaty in response to a long-running dispute over Russian noncompliance with the treaty.

What’s the issue?

The United States first alleged in its July 2014 Compliance Report that Russia is in violation of its INF Treaty obligations “not to possess, produce, or flight-test” a ground-launched cruise missile having a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers or “to possess or produce launchers of such missiles.”

Subsequent State Department assessments in 2015, 2016, and 2017 repeated these allegations. Russia denies that it is in violation of the agreement.



On December 8, 2017, the Trump administration released a strategy to counter alleged Russian violations of the Treaty.

About the Intermediate- Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty:

The 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty required the United States and the Soviet Union to eliminate and permanently forswear all of their nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges of 500 to 5,500 kilometers.

- The treaty marked the first time the superpowers had agreed to reduce their nuclear arsenals, eliminate an entire category of nuclear weapons, and utilize extensive on-site inspections for verification. As a result of the INF Treaty, the United States and the Soviet Union destroyed a total of 2,692 short-, medium-, and intermediate-range missiles by the treaty's implementation deadline of June 1, 1991.
- Despite its name, the INF Treaty covers all types of ground-launched cruise and ballistic missiles — whether their payload is conventional or nuclear. Moscow and Washington are prohibited from deploying these missiles anywhere in the world, not just in Europe. However, the treaty applies only to ground-launched systems. Both sides are free to deploy air- and sea-launched missiles within the 500-to-5,500-kilometer range.

Drought Resistance of India:

A study was carried out in India to assess the resilience of terrestrial ecosystem to drought at the district and State level.

Observations Made:

- Based on data from 2000 to 2014, only 241 of 634 (about 38%) districts were found to be resilient to drought or dry conditions.
- The remaining 62% of districts were non-resilient to varying degrees — slight (180 districts), moderate (80 districts) and severe (133 districts).
- While the resilient districts covered nearly 32% of the area of India, the remaining 68% was non-resilient, with the severely non-resilient districts



alone covering nearly 30% of India. And only 10 of the 29 States and Union Territories had more than 50% resilient area.

- In general, districts with predominant forest cover had better resilience than those districts were cropland dominated.
- Despite the dense forest cover in the Western Ghats, Kerala had only about 19% resilience while Sikkim had 100%. At 17%, Karnataka had even lesser resilience than Kerala. "Solar radiation has much more controlling factor in the Western Ghats.
- Also, the evapotranspiration is higher in the Western Ghats than in northeast.
- In general, States in the lower Himalayan regions had higher resilient areas.

General Studies-3

Flood Forecasting System:

In 2015, unprecedented and sudden floods paralysed Chennai with over 18 lakh people being displaced.

Following this National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), Chennai, and IITs, got together to build a flood warning system customised for use in Chennai.

Carrying the acronym C-FLOWS, which stands for Chennai FLOod Warning System, the six-module ensemble can predict flooding due to heavy rainfall, sea-level rise and increase in water levels of the three rivers — Cooum, Adyar and Kosasthalaiyar — that traverse the city.

How will it Work?

- Knowing the elevation at different spots, the system can predict the way the area would flood based on different scenarios that have been simulated.
- Inputs were taken from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on forecast and National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), which gives the prediction for rain 10 days in advance.



इशोइशा
IAS ACADEMY
Your Dreams, Our Mission!

- Similarly, INCOIS gives the hydrodynamic congestion such as storm surge and tide etc.

Effectiveness of System:

- Using this, the system can, two weeks ahead of the event, simulate the scenario.
- The system can predict what would happen at the level of individual wards.
- Thus, early warnings could be issued..
- There are many precomputed scenarios of flooding based on the forecast rainfall and tidal conditions, in a library.
- From this the most appropriate one may be selected for superimposing on the geomorphology.
- The 3D visualisation module makes possible a realistic visualisation of the flooding in various places such as infrastructure, buildings, roads, ward boundaries etc, by superimposing the model outputs on the layers of data.

Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali" campaign

Why in News?

Ministry has initiated the campaign, and this year the campaign has been extended Pan-India.

The "Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali" campaign is now merged with "Green Good Deed" movement that has been initiated as a social mobilization for conservation and protection of environment. The Ministry encourages all schools and colleges to be part of this campaign.

Reasons for Launch of Campaign:

- Air pollution is a serious health issue in the country especially in the northern parts during winter seasons.
- Diwali which is a festival of lights falls during the same period.
- As a matter of practice people have been celebrating Diwali by bursting crackers.
- Crackers contains combustible chemicals that include potassium chlorate powdered aluminum, magnesium, salts of barium, copper, sodium, lithium, strontium etc. and emits smoke on combustion of these chemicals along with sound.



इशोरइशा
I A S A C A D E M Y
Your Dreams, Our Mission!

- This smoke and sound has health impacts on children, aged people and also animal and birds.
- Apart from these compounds large amount of waste is also generated after bursting of crackers.
- Keeping in view the above detrimental effects and also the importance of the festival, Ministry has initiated a "Harit-Diwali" campaign.
- This campaign was initiated in 2017-18 wherein large number of school children especially from eco-clubs participated and took pledge to minimize bursting of crackers and also discouraged the neighborhood and their friends from bursting of crackers.