

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Questioning the Centre's commitment towards the speedy trial and prosecution of criminal politicians, the Supreme Court directed that a criminal case against an MP or MLA can be withdrawn only after getting the consent of the State High Court concerned. Supreme court said-"We deem it appropriate to direct that no prosecution against a sitting or former MP/MLA shall be withdrawn without the leave of the High Court... Various State governments have resorted to withdrawal of numerous criminal cases pending against MP/MLA by utilising the power vested under Section 321 CrPC. The power under Section 321 CrPC is a responsibility which is to be utilised in public interest, and cannot be used for extraneous and political considerations.

The Supreme Court warned Parliament that the nation is losing patience with the advent of criminals in politics even as it imposed fines on major political parties, including the BJP and the Congress, for covering up from voters the criminal past of the candidates they fielded in the Bihar Assembly poll last year. The court had directed political parties to publish the criminal history, if any, of their election candidates on the homepage of their websites under the caption 'Candidates with criminal antecedents' within 48 hours of their selection.

More than 29% of students in India were exposed to second hand smoke, said the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS4), India, 2019, which was released by Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya. The National Fact Sheet said there has been a 42% decline in tobacco use among 13-15 year old school children in the past decade. It added that use of any form of tobacco was higher among boys and tobacco use among school-children was highest in Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram and lowest in Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka.

There are reports of some Rohingya migrants indulging in illegal activities, according to a written reply from the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Lok Sabha. The Ministry said the Centre had issued instructions to the State govern-

RISE IN FREQUENCY AND INTENSITY OF CYCLONES IN ARABIAN SEA

1.The frequency and intensity of cyclones developing over the Arabian Sea has increased in the last two decades, while fewer such storms have been seen over the Bay of Bengal.

2.**52% increase was noticed in the frequency of cyclones over the Arabian Sea between 2001 and 2019 , and an 8% decrease over the Bay of Bengal.**

The number of very severe cyclones in the Arabian Sea has gone up by 150% during the last two decades.

3.**Factors responsible for this:**Surface temperatures in the Arabian Sea have increased rapidly during the past century due to global warming. Temp. Now is 1.2-1.4 °C higher than the temperature witnessed four decades ago. These warmer temperatures support active convection, heavy rainfall, and intense cyclones.

The rising temperature is also enabling the Arabian Sea to supply ample energy for the intensification of cyclones.The Arabian Sea is also providing conducive wind shear for cyclones. For instance, a higher level easterly wind drove the depression of Cyclone Ockhi from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea.

4.**Concerns:**This underlines the increasing risk of disasters hitting the west coast of India if the trend continues to hold over the years.

INDIA'S 5 POINT AGENDA TO ENHANCE MARITIME COOPERATION

1.Current challenges in maritime domain:

Sea routes are the lifeline of international trade. But:Sea routes are being misused for piracy and terrorism.There are maritime disputes between many nations and climate change, too, is linked to the maritime domain.

2.**Five-point agenda laid down by PM to increase maritime cooperation:Removal of barriers to legitimate maritime trade.Resolution of maritime disputes peacefully in accordance with international law.**Fight threats from natural disasters, non-state actors.Conservation of marine resources.Promoting responsible maritime connectivity.

3.Efforts by India to enhance maritime cooperation:'SAGAR' Security and Growth for All in the Region.Indian Navy has been patrolling to counter piracy in the Indian Ocean since 2008.WhiteShippingInformation Fusion Centre.Support for hydrographic surveying and training of maritime security personnel to several countries.India's 'Deep Ocean Mission'.

UNCLOS(UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA)

1.Overcoming resistance from China, an unprecedented India-led UN Security Council session recently highlighted the primacy of the UNCLOS. A concept note incorporating the framework was also circulated in this regard.

2.**Implications and significance of the move:**As per the UNSC Presidential statement, "UNCLOS is the legal framework applicable to activities in the oceans, including countering illicit activities at sea." The framework highlights the importance of enhancing international and regional cooperation to counter threats to maritime safety and security. It also calls for efforts by regional and sub-regional organizations and individual countries in this regard.

3.China's response:China submitted diplomatically to asserting the primacy of UNCLOS under severe international pressure.China's aggressive actions in the South China Sea and East China Sea, island building and bullying of countries by its fishing militia have been a source of international concern.

4.About UNCLOS:**Adopted and signed in 1982. It became effective in the year 1994.**

It replaced the four Geneva Conventions of April, 1958, which respectively concerned the territorial sea and the contiguous zone, the continental shelf, the high seas, fishing and conservation of living resources on the high seas.The Convention has become the legal framework for marine and

ments and Union Territory administrations, advising them to sensitise the law enforcement and intelligence agencies to take appropriate steps for prompt identification of illegal migrants.

China's anti-sanctions law will be implemented in some form in Hong Kong, the city's leader confirmed, a move that will add fresh regulatory pressure on international companies in the finance hub. Beijing's rubberstamp legislature passed the law in June in response to Western penalties that were imposed following crackdowns in Hong Kong and Xinjiang.

The Lok Sabha passed the 127th Constitution Amendment Bill, 2021, with unanimous support from the House and not a single vote against, with Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Virendra Kumar stating that there was a need for careful examination of the demand made by several Lok Sabha MPs to remove the 50% cap on reservation currently in place.

In a change of stance, the YSRCP and the Biju Janata Dal, both of whom have maintained a distance from the Opposition, are now supporting the demand to send the controversial General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 2021, to a select parliamentary committee. The Bill, one of the last pieces of legislation on the government's agenda for the monsoon session of Parliament, will come up for discussion. It seeks to enhance private participation in public sector insurance companies.

Eight protected archaeological sites at Ter in Maharashtra's Osmanabad district have become part of the State's revenue land records in a bid to preserve and conserve them.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the second phase of the Ujjwala gas connection scheme for the poor, and said that it would provide the biggest relief to lakhs of migrant worker families in the country. Under Ujjwala 2.0 (Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana), migrant workers would no longer have to struggle to get address proof documents to get the gas connections, Mr. Modi said.

The government has not taken any decision on preparing a National Register of Indian Citizens for the whole country, Union Minister Nityanand Rai said in Parliament. He, however, said the government had decided to update the National

maritime activities.

5. The Convention has created three new institutions on the international scene: The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. The International Seabed Authority.

The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

NASA'S PERSEVERANCE ROVER

1. NASA's Perseverance rover is exploring the Jezero Crater on Mars and attempting to collect its first rock samples. However, no rock samples were collected during the first attempt. About Perseverance Rover: It was launched in 2020 aboard a United Launch Alliance Atlas V.

2. Why is this mission significant? **It carried a unique instrument, MOXIE or Mars Oxygen ISRU Experiment: which for the first time manufactured molecular oxygen on Mars using carbon dioxide from the carbon-dioxide-rich atmosphere (ISRU means In Situ Resource Utilization: or the use of local resources to meet human needs or requirements of the spacecraft).** It carried Ingenuity, the first ever helicopter to fly on Mars.

3. It is the planned first step to bring back rock samples from Mars for analysis in sophisticated laboratories on Earth: with the goal of looking for biosignatures: or signatures of present or past life.

4. These are some of the key mission objectives: Look for signs of ancient microbial life. Collect Martian rock and dust samples for later return to Earth. Deliver an experimental helicopter. Study the climate and geology of Mars. Demonstrate technology for future Mars missions.

5. **What is the reason for the near-term interest in Mars?** Mars is located in the very near backyard (about 200 million km away). **It is a planet that humans can aspire to visit or to stay for a longer duration. Mars had flowing water and an atmosphere in the distant past:** and perhaps conditions to support life. It also has implications for commercial travel.

FUGITIVE ECONOMIC OFFENDER

1. UK High Court has granted fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi permission to appeal against a magistrates' court order, in favour of extradition to India to face charges of fraud and money laundering before the Indian courts, on mental health and human rights grounds.

2. The U.K.'s Home Department, in April 2020, approved the extradition of diamond merchant Nirav Modi to India in connection with the ₹13,758 crore Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud.

3. Fugitive economic offender: A special court, in December 2019, declared diamond businessman Nirav Modi a fugitive economic offender, on a plea of the Enforcement Directorate. **Definition- Fugitive Economic Offender: A person can be named an offender under the law if there is an arrest warrant against him or her for involvement in economic offences involving at least Rs. 100 crore or more** and has fled from India to escape legal action.

4. The procedure: The investigating agencies have to file an application in a Special Court under the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act containing details of the properties to be confiscated, and any information about the person's whereabouts.

5. Proceedings will be terminated if the person appears. If not the person would be declared as a Fugitive Economic Offender based on the evidence filed by the investigating agencies. **The person who is declared as a Fugitive Economic Offender can challenge the proclamation in the High Court within 30 days of such declaration according to the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018.**

INTERNATIONAL ARMY GAMES

1. Indian Army to take part in International Army Games 2021 to be held in Russia.

2. The International Army Games is an **annual Russian military sports event organized by the Ministry of Defense of Russia (MoD).**

3. The event, which was first staged in August 2015, **involves close to 30 countries taking part in dozens of competitions over two weeks to prove which is the most skilled.**

4. The games have been referred to as the War Olympics. Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force Act, 1992.

Population Register (NPR) under the Citizenship Act, 1955, along with the first phase of Census 2021.

Lawyers for a former Iranian prison official denied his involvement in the 1988 execution of thousands of political dissidents on the first day of a landmark case in Sweden likely to stoke tensions in the Islamic republic.

NATIONAL SCHOOL OF DRAMA

1. Set up by the Sangeet Natak Akademi as one of its constituent units in 1959.

In 1975, it became an independent entity and was registered as an autonomous organization under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860, fully financed by the Ministry of Culture.

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3. Bharat Rang Mahotsav, or the 'National Theatre Festival', established in 1999, is the annual theatre festival of National School of Drama (NSD), held in New Delhi, today it is acknowledged as the largest theatre festival of Asia, dedicated solely to theatre.