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5<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2022

The Mediation Bill, 2021 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on December 20, 2021, with the Parliamentary Standing Committee being tasked with a review of the Bill. The committee's report to the Rajya Sabha was submitted on July 13, 2022. The Bill proposes mandatory mediation before litigation. At the same time, it safeguards the rights of litigants to approach competent adjudicatory forums/courts for urgent relief. The mediation process will be confidential and immunity is provided against its disclosure in certain cases. It also establishes the Mediation Council of India and also provides for community mediation.

According to the Bill, prelitigation mediation is mandatory for both parties before filing any suit or proceeding in a court. Parties who fail to attend prelitigation mediation without a reasonable reason may incur a cost. However, as per Article 21 of the Constitution, access to justice is a constitutional right which cannot be fettered or restricted. Furthermore, the Bill considers international mediation to be domestic when it is conducted in India with the settlement being recognised as a judgment or decree of a court.

With limited funds to deal with the gargantuan task of restoring degraded land and reversing desertification in the country, the government is now planning to bring convergence between the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY). According to the Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas published by the Environment Ministry in 2021, at least 30% of India's total geographical area is under the category of "degraded land".

200 number of railway stations across India to be revamped with modern amenities, according to Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. The Minister said that overhead spaces would be created in stations which would have worldclass facilities including waiting lounges and food courts, besides amusement facilities for children.

3 lakh, the number of employment opportunities created during Durga Puja in West Bengal, with the grand affair involving transactions of at least ₹40,000 crore, according to stakeholders. With more than 40,000 community pujas happening

## RACE TO PROVIDE EXHAUSTIVE SATELLITE BROADBAND SERVICES IN INDIA

1.The demand for satellite broadband connectivity in India is increasing as companies like Jio, OneWeb, Hughes, and Tata-backed Nelco are preparing to provide these services. In Satellite Broadband Service (SBS), broadband services are delivered directly via satellites instead of optical fibre or mobile networks.

2.Two major developments in global satellite communication space are emergence of LEO (low-earth orbit constellations) to provide global coverage and lower latency service and, HTS (High Throughput Satellites Service) that offers unprecedented capacity and flexibility. In Sept 2022, Hughes Communications India (HCI), a satellite internet service provider launched India's first HTS broadband service powered by ISRO satellites.

3.Benefits of SBS-Provide internet services in remote areas where terrestrial networks cannot be set up. Ideal for quick deployment, immune to challenges posed by difficult terrain, remote locations, harsh weather, and terrestrial obstacles.

4.Challenges associated with SBS-Satellite internet latency depending on message length, status and availability of satellite network can affect real time application like video chats. Satellite data transfer may provide slow Internet speeds and limited satellite bandwidth because of distances the signals have to travel.

## 2022 NOBEL PRIZE FOR PHYSIOLOGY OR MEDICINE FOR RESEARCH ON GENOMES OF EXTINCT HOMININS AND HUMAN EVOLUTION

1.It was awarded to Swedish geneticist Svante Pääbo for sequencing the genome of the Neanderthal. Neanderthal is a species of humans that went extinct around 30,000 years ago. His research has resulted in the rise of a new scientific discipline called paleogenomics (study and analysis of genes of ancient or extinct organisms).

2.Sequencing of such extinct beings is difficult because over time DNA tends to degrade and modify chemically. To overcome this challenge, the mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) from Neanderthals was studied. Mitochondria (powerhouse of the cell) contains only a fraction of DNA as compared to nuclear DNA (nDNA).

3.However, mitochondrial DNA is present in thousands of copies enhancing the chances of sequencing. He also made discovery of previously unknown Hominin (extinct members of human lineage) Denisova. He concluded that "gene transfer had occurred from these extinct hominins to Homo sapiens following the migration out of Africa around 70,000 years ago".

4.Difference between nDNA and mtDNA nDNA is enclosed whereas mtDNA is not. mtDNA is circular, whereas Nuclear DNA is linear in shape. Also, mtDNA is of maternal source but nDNA is sourced from both the parents.

## MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (MI&B) ASKS OTT PLATFORMS, TV CHANNELS TO STOP BETTING SITE ADS

1.The MI&B has reiterated that Satellite TV, OTT platform and other digital media must immediately stop airing advertisements promoting gambling and betting. It poses a significant financial and socio-economic risk for consumers, especially youth and children.

2.The ministry said that since betting and gambling is illegal in most parts of the country, any direct or surrogate advertisements of online offshore betting platforms are also illegal. Surrogate advertising is the strategy of advertising a product that cannot be advertised openly as their advertising is otherwise prohibited or restricted by law.

3.They are banned under the Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements, 2022 under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. **Ministry also invoked: Advertising Code under Cable TV Network Regulation Act of 1995: It calls for ensuring**

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across the State, including 3,000 in Kolkata, the festival creates a scurry of economic activity for three four months every year.

800 number of Palestinians held captive by Israel, without trial or charge, the highest since 2008, according to Israeli rights group Ha Moked. The group said that 798 Palestinians are currently being held in so called administrative detention, a practice where prisoners can be held for months.

5.7 million, the number of people in Pakistan who will face a serious food crisis in the next three months, following the recent devastating floods, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in its latest report. Even before the floods, 16% of the population was living in moderate or severe food insecurity.

A factfinding team, comprising activists and advocates under the aegis of the Human Rights Defenders Alert (HRDA), Madurai, on Monday released its report on the alleged murder of environmental activist R. Jaganathan of Karur district. According to the report, he had played an active role in protecting the environment and Annai Blue Metal Quarry was sealed last month on his complaint. The HRDA wanted a special committee headed by Inspector General of Police, Tiruchi zone, to investigate the murder case, instead of the CBCID.

Fighter jets of the Indian Air Force (IAF) were scrambled on Monday after a bomb scare was reported on board a China bound Iranian airline transiting through Indian air space. The issue was resolved after a message from Tehran to “disregard the bomb scare”, following which the aircraft continued on its journey, the IAF said in a statement.

Induction of the indigenously designed and developed Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) adds unique capability to the combat potential of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and marks a new chapter, said Air Chief Marshal (ACM) V. R. Chaudhari on Monday as the twin-engine helicopter was formally inducted into the 143 Helicopter Unit ‘Dhanush’ at the Jodhpur Air Force Station.

Over 69% of houses constructed under the Prime Minister’s special

**truthfulness and honesty of representations and claims made through advertising and safeguarding against misleading advertising.**

4.Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021: It prescribes a framework for the regulation of content by online publishers. Although betting and gambling are part of State List items, but online betting and gambling falls under grey area of governance. Sikkim was the first state to legalise and Telangana was the first one to ban it.

## ARMED FORCES (SPECIAL) POWERS ACT (AFSPA) EXTENDED IN FOUR STATES FOR SIX MONTHS

1.Uncertainty around culmination of Naga peace process has led to AFSPA being retained in some parts of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh. Earlier, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and State governments had reduced “disturbed areas” in Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland. Apart from these states, it is also applicable in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

2.AFSPA grants special powers to the armed forces to bring back order in “disturbed areas”. Disturbed areas are declared under Section 3 of AFSPA Act, 1958 when a part or whole state/UT is in such a condition that the use of armed forces in aid of civil power is necessary.

3.Disturbed areas are declared by Governor of state and administrator of Union Territory or by Central government. The AFSPA grants extraordinary powers under Section 4 of AFSPA Act and immunity (Section 6) to the armed forces to bring back order in the “disturbed areas.”

4.Tripura revoked the Act in 2015 and Meghalaya was under AFSPA for 27 years, until it was revoked by MHA in 2018.

## MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI LAUNCHES ASSESSMENT OF THE FUNCTIONALITY OF HOUSEHOLD TAP CONNECTIONS (FHTC) 2022 UNDER JJM

1.The FHTC report is prepared annually by an empanelled third party agency for ensuring adequate monitoring as mandated under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). FHTC refers to household tap connection providing water in adequate quantity, i.e. at least 55 litre per capita per day. Of prescribed quality, i.e. BIS:10500 standard. On regular basis, i.e. continuous supply in long-term.

2.Key findings 62% of the households received fully functional tap water connections within the premises. Overall FHTC in the country increased by 14% in 2021-22 over the previous year. Puducherry (88%) Tamil Nadu (86%) and Himachal Pradesh (82%) were ranked highest on functionality score.

3.About JJM It is a centrally sponsored scheme. Fund sharing pattern between Centre and States/ UTs: 100% for Union Territories without legislature, 90:10 for North Eastern & Himalayan States and UTs with legislature and 50:50 for rest of States.

4.It envisages providing safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India. It empowers Panchayati Raj Institutions and communities by engaging them in water supply schemes.

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF PRADHAN MANTRI KAUSHAL VIKAS YOJANA (PMKVY)

1.Major observations and recommendations Under PMKVY 3.0, out of four lakh candidates, only 8% have been placed. Delay in release of funds from State Treasury is also observed. Solution-Making the certification process more transparent to facilitate more self-employment. Approx 20% of the total enrolled candidates dropped out of the training programme. Solution-Identify the area of intervention to prevent dropouts.

2.Training courses, curriculum, and practical skills imparted are not aligned with industry requirements. Solution- On-job training and courses in partnership with the industry and organisation of Rozgar Melas. PMKVY (2015) was launched as flagship scheme of Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

3.Encourages and promotes skill development by providing free short-duration skill training programmes. It incentivizes by

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housing scheme are either wholly or jointly owned by women in rural areas. According to the data shared by the government, as on September 29, 2022, a total of two crore houses had been constructed out of the 2.46 crore houses that were sanctioned. Of this, 69% are owned partly or completely by women. Launched by PM The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin) was launched by the Prime Minister in 2016 with the aim of constructing 2.95 crore houses.

providing monetary rewards to youth for obtaining skill certification. Two major components are Centrally Sponsored Centrally Managed (CSCM) includes Short Term Training, Recognition of Prior Learning and Special Projects for short/fresh term training.

4. Implemented by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), Centrally Sponsored State Managed (CSSM), implemented by State Skill Development Missions, support training and capacity building initiatives for state specific traditional skills etc.