

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**Rule 12 of The Government Of India (Transaction Of Business) Rules, 1961**

To revoke President's Rule in Maharashtra, the Government has used a special Section in the Union government's Transaction of Business Rules, which allows for revocation of President's Rule without Cabinet approval if the Prime Minister "deems it necessary".

About:

- Rule 12 of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961, allows the Prime Minister to depart from laid down norms at his discretion.
- Titled "Departure from Rules", Rule 12 says, "The Prime Minister may, in case or classes of cases permit or condone a departure from these rules, to the extent he deems necessary."
- The Cabinet can subsequently give post-facto approval for any decision taken under Rule 12.
- Rule 12 is usually not used to arrive at major decisions by the government. However, it has been used in matters such as withdrawal of an office memorandum or signing of MoUs in the past.

Review Petition

Supreme Court will review Sabarimala judgment and a review plea is set to be moved over Ayodhya verdict too.

About:

- Article 137 of the Constitution gives Supreme Court the power to review any of its judgments or orders. The court has the power to review its rulings to correct a "patent error" and not "minor mistakes of inconsequential import".
- Grounds for review petition: In a 2013 ruling, the Supreme Court itself laid down three grounds for seeking a review of a verdict it has delivered —
 - the discovery of new and important matter or evidence which was not within the knowledge of the petitioner or could not be produced by him;
 - mistake or error apparent on the face of the record; or
 - any other sufficient reason which means a reason that is analogous to the other two grounds.
- It is not necessary that only parties to a case can seek a review of the judgment on it. Any person aggrieved by a ruling can seek a review.
- Time frame: As per 1996 rules framed by the Supreme Court, a review petition must be filed within 30 days of the date of judgment or order. While a judgment is the final decision in a case, an order is an interim ruling that is subject to its final verdict.

What if a review petition fails

- In *Roopa Hurra v Ashok Hurra* (2002), the court itself evolved the concept of a curative petition, which can be heard after a review is dismissed to prevent abuse of its process.
- A curative petition is also entertained on very narrow grounds like a review petition, and is generally not granted an oral hearing.

Conference of Governors

The 50th Conference of Governors concluded at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

About:

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, presided over a two-day Conference of Governors and Lt. Governors of all States and Union Territories on November 23 and 24, 2019 at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- This was the 50th such Conference to be held in Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- The first Conference was organised in 1949.

- The two-day Conference discussed important thematic issues like tribal issues, reforms in agriculture, Jal Jeevan Mission, new education policy for higher education and governance for ease of living.

Quota for Disabled in Panchayats

The Chhattisgarh Cabinet has approved an amendment to the State Panchayati Raj Act, 1993, which makes mandatory the presence of a person with disabilities in all panchayats across the state. This implies that if differently abled members are not elected through the electoral process, then one member, either male or female, would be nominated by the government. The Cabinet has also decided to remove educational qualification as a requirement for the members of Panchayat.

Key Points

- Chhattisgarh will be the only State to have Persons with Disabilities (PwD) as members in all panchayats. It needs to be noted that there is no such quota for the disabled community in the elections to the central, state legislative assemblies and Panchayats (in general).
- The State government would also nominate two such members, one male and one female, to Janpads and Zilla Panchayats.
- Only being literate would be enough to contest election. The cabinet has decided to remove the educational stipulations of Class V and Class VII for members of the Panch and those above Panch, respectively.
- This in contrast to the Supreme Court's judgement in 2015 (Rajbala v. the State of Haryana) where it upheld the decision of the Haryana government which mandated "minimum" educational qualifications as an eligibility to contest panchayat elections in the State.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

Golden Rice

Bangladesh could become the first country to approve golden rice as it will soon take decision on the release of Golden Rice.

Golden Rice

- Golden rice was developed almost two decades ago by biologists from Switzerland and Germany as a way to prevent vitamin A deficiency in the developing world.
- Lack of vitamin A is a leading cause of childhood blindness and can also make children more susceptible to death from other illness like measles.
- Vitamin A is made from beta-carotene, which is found in carrots, spinach, sweet potatoes, and other vegetables.
- To create golden rice, scientists modified rice plants with beta-carotene genes from maize. By doing this, rice plants started to produce the rich orange-coloured pigment.
- Then, the transgenic plants were donated to publicly funded research centres to develop their own versions of golden rice using local rice varieties.

Opposition:

- Since the inception of golden rice in the late 1990s, debates have raged over the transgenic crop, considered a genetically modified organism (GM), and it has struggled to gain approval.
- Moreover, stringent international regulations such as the Cartagena Protocol have stymied approval of many GM crops.

Scenario in Bangladesh:

- In Bangladesh, the golden rice in question was developed at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Los Baños, Philippines.

- This particular version is based on the dhan 29 rice variety widely grown in Bangladesh.
- If everything goes to plan, farmers might be planting golden rice seed by 2021.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Per Capita Consumption of Electricity

During the Winter Session of Parliament, the Ministry of Power released data on India's per capita consumption of electricity.

Key highlights of the data:

- India's per capita consumption of electricity is 1,181 kWh as of 2018-19.
- The highest per capita consumption in 2018-19 is in Dadra and Nagar Haveli, at 15,179 kWh. The Union Territory is followed by the states of Gujarat (2,378), Goa (2,274), Haryana (2,082) and Punjab (2,046).
- The state with the lowest per capita consumption of electricity is Bihar, at 311 kWh, followed by the North-eastern states of Assam (341), Nagaland (356), Manipur (371) and Tripura (514).
- The 5,251 previously un-electrified households in villages were electrified between 2017-18 and 2028-19 under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana scheme. Arunachal Pradesh accounts for the highest number of such households at 1,134, followed by Odisha (925), Jharkhand (729), Bihar (596) and Assam (572).
- As of April 28, 2018 all inhabited Census villages stand electrified, with the exception of seven states where over 19 lakh households were unwilling to be electrified earlier. These households are now willing to get electricity connections.

Special Non-Resident Rupee Account (SNRR Account)

In a bid to boost internationalisation of the rupee, the RBI has relaxed norms for the opening of special non-resident rupee (SNRR) accounts and permitted direct remittance from India into these accounts.

About:

- Now, RBI has expanded the scope of SNRR Account by permitting person resident outside India to open such account for:
 - External Commercial Borrowings in INR;
 - Trade Credits in INR;
 - Trade (Export/ Import) Invoicing in INR; and
- Business related transactions outside International Financial Service Centre (IFSC) by IFSC units at GIFT city like administrative expenses in INR outside IFSC, INR amount from sale of scrap, government incentives in INR, etc.
- It has also been decided to rationalise certain other provisions for operation of the SNRR Account, as under:
- Remove the restriction on the tenure of the SNRR account opened for the purposes given at paragraph 3 above as the proposed transactions are more enduring in nature.
- Apart from Non-Resident Ordinary (NRO) Account, permit credit of amount due/ payable to non-resident nominee from account of a deceased account holder to Non-Resident External (NRE) Account or direct remittance outside India through normal banking channels.

Related Info:

- SNRR accounts are designed for non-residents to enable them to undertake rupee transactions that are legally permitted. Earlier, these accounts were subject to several restrictions which have now been eased.
- A task force on offshore rupee markets headed by former deputy governor Usha Thorat had recommended measures to incentivise non-residents to access the onshore foreign exchange market.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES**Plastic Parks**

Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister DV Sadananda Gowda informed Rajya Sabha that the government has approved setting up of six plastic parks in different parts of the country.

About:

- These parks will have an ecosystem with infrastructure building and enabling the common facility to consolidate and synergize the capacities of the domestic downstream plastic processing industry.
- Under the scheme, the government provides grant funding up to 50 per cent of the project cost. The remaining project cost is to be funded by State Government beneficiary industries and by a loan from financial institutions.
- These parks are located in Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu. Out of them, the plastic park at Tamot in Madhya Pradesh is functional.
- Four new plastic parks have also been given in-principle approval for establishment in West Bengal, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Chhattisgarh

Sumatran Rhino

The Sumatran rhinoceros has become extinct in Malaysia, after the death of the last rhino in the country.

Sumatran Rhino

- Its scientific name is *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis* and is the smallest of all rhino species.
- It is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- The World Wild Life (WWF) estimates that there are only about 80 of them and are left mainly in Sumatra and Borneo in Indonesia.
- Black Rhino, White Rhino, Greater One-Horned Rhino, Javan Rhino and Sumatran Rhino are the five different species of Rhino.
- The three species of Rhino in Asia — Greater one-horned, Javan and Sumatran. Javan and Sumatran Rhino are critically endangered and the Greater one-horned (or Indian) rhino is vulnerable in the IUCN Red List.
- They are spread across India, Nepal, Bhutan, Indonesia and Malaysia. These countries are also known as Asian Rhino Range Countries.
- Only the Great one-horned rhino is found in India.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Do you agree that the process of urbanisation if carried out in a planned, sustainable and inclusive manner, can potentially help India mitigate the impact of all-pervasive casteism?

Ans:

Casteism is one of the biggest challenges that Indian society continues to face. However, urbanization is playing a role in social transformation by modifying human institutions and diluting caste-based identities. The 'relative anonymity' of an individual's identity in a city makes it difficult for 'rules of purity and pollution' to be observed and enforced in the public sphere.

Factors that reflect that urbanization helps mitigate casteism in India:

- **Compulsion of urban living:** In a city, buses and trains do not segregate people on the basis of caste. Carpooling, dining in restaurants, sharing public parks, educational institutions, etc also eliminates the factor of caste and religion in the urban way of life.
- **Role of education:** Modern-day education also promotes liberal values which undermine identity-based segregation of students and professionals.
- **Individualistic society:** The hold of belongingness to a community is relatively weak in the urban landscape. People in the middle-class shift from family and caste networks to friends and professional networks.
- **Occupation:** Jobs are distributed on the basis of expertise and ability and not decided by caste. They freely allow the abandonment of traditional caste-based occupations and urban workplaces mix up castes.
- **Role of technology:** Machines replace a lot of human labour hence diminishing the sense of purity and pollution. For example, waste collection through machines eliminates the loss of dignity faced by manual scavengers.
- **Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, etc help intermingling of thoughts and cultures which allows people to understand the lacunae of the hierarchical division of Indian society.**
- However, there are certain factors that highlight the limitations of the assertion that urbanization could mitigate casteism.

- **Deep-rooted prejudices:** Rural to urban migration does not abruptly erase social prejudices of caste. Even educated urban dwellers discriminate people based on caste and ethnic identities. For eg: separate utensils are used to provide water to lower caste domestic helpers.
- **Failure of policy implementation:** The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 bans the practice of manual scavenging. Though outlawed, the appalling practice continues to be exclusively reserved for Dalits. National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) data reveals that at least 50 people have died cleaning sewers in the first six months of 2019 alone.
- **Role of identity-based politics:** Vote bank politics diverge societies based on caste and ethnic lines, though to a limited extent in urban areas.

Conclusion

Thus, urbanization can act as a revolutionary phenomenon in transforming social realities of Indian society. However, The change in age-old prejudices cannot be brought only by one phenomenon, it takes into account other factors like education, awareness, empathy for all the sections of the society, implementation of constitutional spirit, which largely depend on the people who form a society.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs

1. With reference to the setting up of six plastic parks in different parts of the country, consider the following statements:
 1. Under the scheme, the government provides grant funding up to 50 per cent of the project cost.
 2. The plastic park at Tamot in Madhya Pradesh is functional.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) **Both 1 and 2**
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
2. Recently Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has expanded the scope of special non-resident rupee (SNRR) accounts by permitting person resident outside India to open such account for:
 1. External Commercial Borrowings in INR
 2. Trade Credits in INR
 3. Trade (Export/ Import) Invoicing in INRSelect the correct answer using the code given below:
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 1 and 2 only
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) **1, 2 and 3**
3. The first Conference of Governors was organised in
 - (a) 1947
 - (b) 2000
 - (c) 1990
 - (d) **1949**
4. With reference to the Rule 12 of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961, consider the following statements:
 1. It allows the Prime Minister to depart from laid down norms at his discretion.
 2. The Cabinet approval is mandatory for any decision taken under Rule 12 before implementing it.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) **1 only**
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. Golden rice is a variety of rice produced through genetic engineering to biosynthesize:
 - (a) **Beta-carotene**
 - (b) Vitamin B
 - (c) Vitamin C
 - (d) None of the above
6. With reference to the 'review petition', consider the following statements:
 1. Article 137 of the Constitution gives Supreme Court the power to review any of its judgments or orders.
 2. It is necessary that only parties to a case can seek a review of the judgment on it.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) **1 only**
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2