

GOVERNANCE**Issue on Goa Lokayukta**

Recently, Justice Prafulla Kumar Misra has retired from the post of Goa Lokayukta and has highlighted the issues related to the state office and the proceedings.

Lokpal and Lokayukta

- The Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013 provided for the establishment of Lokpal for the Union and Lokayukta for States.
- "India Against Corruption Movement" led by Anna Hazare put pressure on the then government at the Centre and resulted in the passing of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Bill, 2013, in both the Houses of Parliament.
- It received assent from the President on 1st January 2014 and came into force on 16th January 2014.
- These institutions are statutory bodies without any constitutional status.
- They perform the function of an "ombudsman" and inquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries and for related matters.
- The term Lokpal and Lokayukta were coined by Dr L. M. Singhvi.

Key Points**Goa Lokayukta Act:**

- Even much before the enactment of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 itself, many states had already set up the institution of Lokayuktas.
- It was sent to the Central government in 2003 and passed in the Assembly only in October 2011, after it was reintroduced.
- It is modelled upon Karnataka and Kerala's Lokayukta Acts but with less strict provisions.
- This Act is intended to remove grievances of individual(s) against maladministration of government officials.
- A complaint under this Act can be filed either on the basis of an allegation or on the basis of the grievance.
- **Data Analysis:** During his tenure, the office of the Lokayukta received 191 cases, 133 of which were disposed of. Among the 58 pending cases are 21 in which he sent reports to the government, but the state government has not acted and Action Taken Reports are still awaited.
- **Pending Cases:** His recommendations included initiation of disciplinary action, transfer, probe into mishandled funds, misuse of powers of ministers and bureaucrats, detailed investigation by the Anti-Corruption Bureau or a declaration that an elected functionary is unfit to hold office.

Highlighted Challenges:

- **Overburdened:** Officials stalled preliminary enquiry by avoiding registering an FIR and hence many cases went to Lokayukta because of that.
- To overcome it, he referred to the Supreme Court's Lalita Kumari versus Government of Uttar Pradesh judgment (2013) where the court has clearly said that whenever anyone comes to the police station and makes a complaint of a cognisable offence the police officer is bound to register an FIR, under the Section 154 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).
- **Lack of Governance:** His reports were indicative of the lack of governance, irrespective of any party of power of the day and highlighted bureaucratic apathy and apathy of politicians.
- **Less Powers:** The state act does not have the powers of the prosecution that the Karnataka and Kerala Acts have, nor does it have a provision for contempt of the Lokayukta's orders.
- **Inadequate Staff:** Lokayukta has an investigation wing in which police officers are supposed to be deputed however, it lacked an adequate number of qualified personnel.

Suggestions**Power of Prosecution:**

- Under Section 17 of the Goa Lokayukta Act, the power to prosecute should be given to the Lokayukta.
- It is there in Karnataka and Kerala acts but not present in Goa Act, where it is under 'initiation of Prosecution' and says that if the Lokayukta notices that an offence has been committed, then (s)he may pass an order and the appropriate authority "shall" initiate prosecution against the public functionary.

- The initiation of prosecution should not be left to the discretion and the “shall” here means that the opinion of the Lokayukta is mandatory to be followed.

Power to Punish on Contempt:

While making the rules, the Act should have been included with the power to punish on contempt of the orders of Lokayukta, which is still not available under the rules of the Act.

Increased Commitment:

- The Act requires a retired Chief Justice or a retired Supreme Court judge to be appointed as the Lokayukta. It means, whoever comes and joins would have taken the oath twice and joining the Lokayukta office will be the third oath, tripling the commitment.
- (S)he must be true to the oath and continue to be committed to discharging the duty without fear or favour, affection or ill will.

Mou Under PM SVANidhi

Recently, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Swiggy to onboard street food vendors on its e-commerce platform.

- This move is a part of the Prime Minister Street Vendor’s Atmanibhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme.
- An updated and modified version of PM SVANidhi Dashboard, which facilitates users not only with a better granular view of the scheme’s performance but also with additional tools for comparisons, has also been launched.

Key Points

The MoU will give the vendors online access to thousands of consumers and help them grow their businesses.

Aim:

- To radically transform the business of street vendors across cities, by facilitating them to receive orders and serve customers using online mode of business.
- It becomes important during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic where physical distancing is the key to check it’s spread.
- To empower street vendors with digital technology and facilitate greater income-earning opportunities through e-commerce platforms.

Phased Implementation:

- In a first of its kind initiative, MoHUA and Swiggy will run a pilot program by on-boarding 250 vendors across five cities namely Ahmedabad, Chennai, Delhi, Indore, and Varanasi.
- Upon the successful completion of the pilot, MoHUA and Swiggy plan to expand this initiative across the country in phases.

Key Stakeholders: MoHUA, Municipal Corporations, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Swiggy and Goods and Services Tax (GST) officials.

Assistance: The street vendors will be helped with Permanent Account Number (PAN) and FSSAI registration, training on technology/partner app usage, menu digitisation and pricing, hygiene and packaging best practices.

PM SVANidhi Scheme

- It was announced as a part of the Economic Stimulus-II under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- It has been implemented since 1st June 2020, for providing affordable working capital loan to street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to Covid-19 lockdowns, with a sanctioned budget of Rs. 700 crore.

Aims:

- To benefit over 50 lakh street vendors who had been vending on or before 24th March 2020, in urban areas including those from surrounding peri-urban/rural areas.
- To promote digital transactions through cash-back incentives up to an amount of Rs. 1,200 per annum.

Features:

- The vendors can avail a working capital loan of up to Rs. 10,000, which is repayable in monthly instalments in the tenure of one year.
- On timely/early repayment of the loan, an interest subsidy of 7% per annum will be credited to the bank accounts of beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer on a quarterly basis.
- There will be no penalty on early repayment of the loan. The vendors can avail the facility of the enhanced credit limit on timely/early repayment of the loan.

Recent Developments:

- As of October 2020, over 20 lakh loan applications have been received under the scheme and out of these over 7.5 lakh loans have been sanctioned.
- However, only 2 lakh applicants have received the money so far, with officials and applicants pointing to a number of hurdles that are slowing the process.

Challenges:

- Several banks are seeking applications on stamp papers worth between Rs. 100 and Rs. 500.
- There have also been instances of banks seeking PAN cards and even checking the CIBIL or Credit score of applicants or state authorities asking for voter ID cards, which many migrant vendors do not carry with them.
- CIBIL score is an evaluation of one's credit history and determines their eligibility for a loan.
- There have also been complaints of harassment by police and municipal officials.

Solutions:

- States should be asked to ensure that street vendors are not harassed by the authorities as all they are asking is a right to livelihood.
- The Centre has also decided to send the applications directly to bank branches listed by the applicant as a "preferred lender" or where the vendor holds a savings bank account.
- A software has also been developed that can "push" around 3 lakh applications to the banks.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**Nobel Prize for Physiology/Medicine 2020**

Americans Harvey J Alter and Charles M Rice, and British scientist Michael Houghton were awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine or Physiology, 2020 for the discovery of the Hepatitis C Virus.

- The Hepatitis C virus was discovered in 1982 by screening millions of DNA samples.
- The Nobel award comes with a gold medal and prize money of 10 million Swedish kronor (over USD 1,118,000) and was created by Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel.

Key Points**Hepatitis:**

- Hepatitis refers to an inflammatory condition of the liver.
- It's commonly caused by a viral infection, but there are other possible causes of hepatitis like autoimmune responses, medications, drugs, toxins, and alcohol.
- There are 5 main hepatitis viruses, referred to as types A, B, C, D, and E.
- World Hepatitis Day is observed each year on 28th July to enhance awareness of viral hepatitis.

Hepatitis C:

- Hepatitis C is caused by the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV).
- It is transmitted through direct contact with infected body fluids, typically through injection drug use and sexual contact.
- According to the World Health Organization, about 71 million people in the world have chronic infection with the Hepatitis C virus, which is also a major cause of liver cancer.
- A vaccine for the disease has still not been developed but it can be treated with the help of anti-viral drugs.

Significance of the Discovery:

- The discovery helped in finding a cure for the disease, and effective anti-viral drugs are now available.
- Tests have also been developed to identify blood containing this virus, so that infected blood is not given to any patient.

Hepatitis in India

- 40 million people are chronically infected with the Hepatitis B virus and 6 to 12 million with the Hepatitis C virus.
- In 2018 the National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme (NVHCP) was launched which has the target to eliminate Hepatitis C by 2030. The program is the largest program for Hepatitis B and C diagnosis and treatment in the world.
- Hepatitis B is included under India's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) which provides free of cost vaccination against a total of 12 vaccine-preventable diseases.
- The first recombinant DNA-based vaccine for Hepatitis B infection was made in India by Hyderabad-based Shantha Biotech.

ENVIRONMENT AND DIVERSITY**Development of Zoos in PPP Mode**

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is formulating a policy for the up-gradation and development of Zoos in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) across the country to encourage interaction between wildlife and humans, and help people observe and understand wildlife behaviour more closely.

- Wildlife Week, 2020 is also being celebrated. Wildlife Week is celebrated every year in India between October 2 and 8.
- It started in the year 1952 with the notion to preserve fauna of the country.

Key Points

- A report of the Central Zoo Authority (CZA)- The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) titled “Economic valuation of ecosystem services, National Zoological Park, New Delhi’ was also released.
- The study was first of its kind in India.
- It pegs the total annual economic value of the ecosystem services (biodiversity conservation, employment generation, carbon sequestration, education, and research, recreational and cultural) of the zoo.
- The Minister also gave away the CZA-Prani Mitra awards to encourage the zoo officers and staff towards working for captive animal management and welfare.

Zoological Parks

- Zoos or Zoological parks are facilities used for ex situ conservation of animals.
- Ex-situ conservation is the technique of conservation of organisms outside their natural habitats through different techniques like captive breeding, aquarium, botanical garden, and gene bank.
- The process of protecting an endangered plant or animal species in its natural habitat is commonly known as in situ conservation. It includes National Parks, Biosphere Reserves, Wildlife Sanctuaries, community reserves, sacred groves etc.
- The Zoos in India are managed as per the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and guided by the National Zoo Policy, 1998.
- The Government of India established the Central Zoo authority in the year 1992 to oversee the functioning of Zoos in the country and to control mushrooming of ill-planned and ill-conceived Zoos.

Central Zoo Authority

- The CZA is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. It was constituted in 1992 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- **Members:** It is chaired by the Environment Minister and has 10 members and a member-secretary.
- **Objective:** The main objective of the authority is to complement and strengthen the national effort in the conservation of rich biodiversity.
- **Functioning:** The authority provides recognition to zoos and is also tasked with regulating the zoos across the country.
- It lays down guidelines and prescribes rules under which animals may be transferred among zoos nationally and internationally.
- It coordinates and implements programmes on capacity building of zoo personnel, planned breeding programmes, and ex-situ research.

The Energy and Resources Institute

- TERI is a non-governmental research institute in New Delhi that specializes in the fields of energy, environment, and sustainable development.
- Established in 1974, it was formerly known as the Tata Energy Research Institute.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

India-Myanmar Relationship

A two-day visit by the Foreign Secretary of India and the Army Chief to Myanmar completed with greater engagement between India and Myanmar.

Key Points

- **Health and Pandemic:** As a part of India’s Medical or Drug Diplomacy a package of 3,000 vials of the antiviral Remdesivir given to assist Myanmar in its fight against the pandemic.
- India has shown willingness to prioritise Myanmar in sharing Covid -19 vaccines, when available.
- **Infrastructure and Connectivity:** Operationalisation of the crucial Sittwe port in Myanmar’s Rakhine state by March 2021 is committed.

- The two sides also discussed progress in the ongoing Indian-assisted infrastructure projects such as the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway and the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project. The project will link Kolkata to Sittwe in Myanmar and then from Myanmar's Kaladan river to India's north-east.
- **Security:** India has been concerned over some militant groups like the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) and National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) from the North-East region taking shelter in Myanmar.
- Myanmar handed over 22 cadres of Indian insurgent groups in May 2020.
- The maintenance of security and stability in their border areas and mutual commitment not to allow their respective territories to be used for activities inimical to each other were re-stressed.
- **Transition to Democracy:** Myanmar successfully conducted the 4th meeting of the 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference in Nay Pyi Taw.

The Union Peace Conference: 21st Century Panglong is a continuing peace conference started in 2016.

Aim: To have a stable political environment in Myanmar with peaceful transition into democracy.

Outcome of 4th meeting: The government of Myanmar and ten armed ethnic groups signed a framework agreement for the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

Indian Support: India assured continued support in sharing experiences in constitutionalism and federalism to assist Myanmar in its democratic transition.

Rohingya Issues: India came forward for support for ensuring safe, sustainable and speedy return of Rohingya refugees from refugees camps of Bangladesh.

Building on the progress made under the Rakhine State Development Programme (RSDP), India proposed to finalise projects under phase-III of the programme, including setting up of a skills training centre and upgrading of agricultural mechanisation.

Liaison Office: With the formal inauguration of liaison office in Nay Pyi Taw, India has taken one more significant step towards establishing its embassy in Nay Pyi Taw. India has its embassy in Yangon, the former capital.

Other Highlights:

A bust of Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Mandalay Jail is a symbolic gesture for a closer relationship and understanding mutual existence.

- **Mandalay Jail Connection:** Between 1908 and 1914, he spent 6 years in Mandalay Prison for defending the actions of revolutionaries Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki.
- Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki had tried to assassinate the District Judge, Mr. Kingsford by throwing bombs at the carriage in which he was supposed to travel.
- **Investment:** With investments of over USD 1.2 billion, Myanmar has the highest Indian investment in any country in South Asia.
- India's development cooperation in Myanmar is estimated at USD 1.4 billion.
- **Energy:** The two countries are also expanding partnership in the area of energy cooperation.
- Recently, India approved an investment of over USD 120 million in the Shwe Oil and Gas project.

India-Myanmar

- India and Myanmar have shared cultural roots and historical relations, apart from the strategic, economic, social and political ties.
- Myanmar is a member of both Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which is an organization of East Asian nations as well as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) which bridges South and South-East Asia.
- Connectivity projects through Myanmar help India overcome its Chicken-neck dilemma (Siliguri Corridor). Myanmar is also necessary for the development of North-Eastern India.
- Myanmar stands at the confluence of India's Neighbourhood First and Act East Policy and India-Myanmar partnership is at the heart of India's vision to create a connected and cooperative neighbourhood.
- Recently, India and Myanmar had signed 10 agreements with a focus on socio-economic development of Myanmar, during Myanmar President U Win Myint's visit to India.
- Myanmar's growing closeness with China and the recent proposal of China Myanmar Economic Corridor is a cause of concern for India amidst growing India-China tension.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**SMART System: DRDO**

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted a successful flight test of the Supersonic Missile Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART) from Wheeler Island off the coast of Odisha.

- This follows the successful test firing of indigenously developed nuclear capable hypersonic missile 'Shourya'.
- In 2017, the Odisha government formally named the Outer Wheeler island in Bhadrak district as APJ Abdul Kalam Island as a tribute to the former President on his second death anniversary.

Key Points

- **About:** SMART is a missile assisted release of lightweight Anti-Submarine Torpedo System for anti-submarine warfare (ASW) operations far beyond torpedo range.

Functioning:

- SMART, when launched from a warship or a truck-based coastal battery, takes off like a regular supersonic missile.
- It covers most of its flight in the air at lower altitudes with two-way data link from the warship or an airborne submarine target detection system and provides the exact location of the hostile submarine to correct its flight path midway.
- Just when it approaches close enough to the submerged submarine, the missile will eject the torpedo system into the water and the autonomous torpedo will start moving towards its target to take out the submarine.
- Torpedo is a cigar-shaped, self-propelled underwater weapon, launched from a submarine, surface vessel, or airplane and designed for exploding upon contact with the hulls of surface vessels and submarines.
- Varunastra is the first indigenous heavyweight ship launched anti-submarine electric torpedo.

Significance:

- Strengthens the country's maritime strategic capabilities.
- A major breakthrough for stand-off capability in anti-submarine warfare.
- Project 28, approved in 2003, is a class of anti-submarine warship corvettes currently in service with the Indian Navy. It includes INS Kamorta, INS Kadmat, INS Kiltan and INS Kavaratti.
- Project 75 is a programme by the Indian Navy that entails building six Scorpene-Class attack submarines (Kalvari, Khanderi, Karanj, Vela, Vagir and Vagsheer).

THSTI: Part of Vaccine Assessment Project

The Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness for Innovation (CEPI), a global initiative, has named Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad as one of the six laboratories for assessing Covid-19 vaccine candidates that are under development.

Key Points**Six Laboratories:**

- The CEPI network will initially involve six labs, one each in Canada, Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Bangladesh and India.
- All the labs would use the same reagents (cause a chemical reaction) and follow a common set of protocols to measure the immune response of multiple vaccine candidates under development and trial.
- This will greatly harmonise the vaccine trial process and allow different vaccine candidates to be compared and speed up the selection of the most effective candidate.
- The mandate of the THSTI is to provide validated assays (analysis) for vaccine development on a par with global standards.
- Bioassay is the determination of the relative strength of a substance (drug) by comparing its effect on a test organism with that of a standard preparation.

Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness for Innovation (CEPI):

- CEPI is a global partnership launched in 2017 to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics.
- CEPI was founded in Davos (Switzerland) by the governments of Norway and India, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Wellcome Trust, and the World Economic Forum.

- The Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, and Government of India has been implementing the IndCEPI mission 'India Centric Epidemic Preparedness through Rapid Vaccine Development: Supporting Indian Vaccine Development'.
- The objectives of this mission are aligned with that of CEPI and aims to strengthen the development of vaccines and associated competencies/technologies for the diseases of epidemic potential in India.

Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI):

- It is an autonomous institute of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT).
- It is located in Faridabad (Haryana).

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Mission Karmayogi is aimed at building a future-ready civil service with the right attitude, skills and knowledge, aligned to the vision of New India. (250 words)

Ans.

Mission Karmayogi- the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB) is meant to be a comprehensive post-recruitment reform of the Centre's human resource development. These are the Comprehensive reform of the capacity building apparatus at the individual, institutional and process levels for efficient public service delivery.

- It aims to prepare Indian civil servants for the future by making them more creative, constructive, imaginative, proactive, innovative, progressive, professional, energetic, transparent, and technology-enabled.

Benefits of the Mission Karmayogi:

- At present bureaucracy is facing challenges like- Rule orientation, political interference, inefficiency with promotions, and generalist and specialist conflict. The mission will be effective in dealing with these issues.
- **Rule Based to Role Based:** The programme will support a transition from rules-based to roles-based HR management, so that work allocations can be done by matching an official's competencies to the requirements of the post.
- **Domain Training:** Apart from domain knowledge training, the scheme will focus on functional and behavioural competencies also.
- It will provide an opportunity for civil servants to continuously build and strengthen their Behavioral, Functional and Domain Competencies in their self-driven and mandated learning paths.
- **Uniform Training Standard:** It will harmonise training standards across the country, so that there is a common understanding of India's aspirations and development goals.
- **On Site Learning:** It will emphasize on 'on-site learning' to complement the 'off-site' learning.
- **Adoption of Best Practices:** It will encourage and partner with the best-in-class learning content creators including public training institutions, universities, start-tips and individual experts.

Challenges of the mission

- John Maynard Keynes, the economist, once said that "The difficulty lies, not in the new ideas, but in escaping from the old ones."
- There is a tendency in the Bureaucracy to resist the change which challenges their status quo.
- The bureaucracy too must understand the need of domain knowledge and the importance of moving away from generalist to specialist approach.
- In today's world the governance is getting technical with each passing day and hence it's important that the person in authority too should have the requisite skill and experience in that particular area.
- Thus, there should be a behavioural change in the bureaucracy too and they must embrace the change as a need of the hour and not an attack on their status quo.
- Moreover, these online courses must not become another opportunity for the officers to go for the sabbatical leaves.
- It must be ensured that they are actually attending the courses and participating in it so that the purpose doesn't get defeated.

Conclusion

- While this is a welcome move, it is also a fact that lackadaisical attitude of public servants is only one side of the coin. Equally culpable is the political interference which manifests itself in transfers which must be addressed too.

- Ashok Khemka, the IAS officer from Haryana, is a living testimony of it who has been transferred 52 times so far in his career.
- Clearly, the reform process is not going to be easy but this is a good move in the right direction.

DAILY QUIZ

1. Scientific techniques like narcos analyses and polygraph tests are being increasingly used in criminal investigations. Which of the following statements is correct with reference to these methods?

- a) The results of these tests or subsequent discoveries with the help of the results are not admissible in the courts.
- b) These tests are scientifically proven methods based on the fact that physiological responses that are triggered when a person is lying are different from what they would be otherwise.
- c) **Consent is required to carry out these tests, both in case of victims and accused.**
- d) While the polygraph test detects falsehood, narcos analysis determines drug levels in the blood of a person.

2. Which of the following diseases affect the cultivation of rice crops?

- 1. Tungro
- 2. Bakanae
- 3. Sheath blight

Choose the correct option using code given below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) **1, 2 and 3**

3. 'Noumea Accord', recently seen in the news is related to?

- a) Peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- b) Middle East peace agreement signed with the United States.
- c) Global alliance under UNFCCC to reduce carbon emission.
- d) **Decolonisation plan for New Caledonia proposed by France.**

4. With reference to the Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF), consider the following statements:

- 1. The fund is collected under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980.
- 2. The CAF is shared between Centre and States.

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. With reference to the K Family of Missiles, consider the following statements:

- 1. It is primarily a Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs).
- 2. It is transferred from Russia under the missile technology control regime.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?

- a) **1 only**
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2