

**"If I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning." Mahatma Gandhi**

**INTERNATIONAL****KISS TO HOST 'COMMONWEALTH BIG LUNCH'**

Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), Bhubaneswar, in partnership with British Council, India, is hosting the 'Commonwealth Big Lunch'. KISS is the only organisation from Asia to be selected by British Council to host the Commonwealth Big Lunch.

British Council is celebrating 70 years of inception in Commonwealth countries. On this occasion, it has organized a mega lunch. The initiative launched by UK PM Theresa May. The motto of the programme is to encourage people to get together to celebrate their Commonwealth connections through food.

**The Commonwealth:**

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 independent and equal sovereign states. It was formally constituted by the London Declaration in 1949, which established the member states as "free and equal".

The Commonwealth operates by intergovernmental consensus of the member states, organised through the Commonwealth Secretariat and non-governmental organisations.

**NATIONAL****SUPREME COURT SHOULD REVISIT ITS JUDGMENT ON PREVENTION OF ATROCITIES ACT, 1989**

The Supreme Court has delivered a historic judgment altering the basic structure of the Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989.

The judgment states that public servants and private employees can only be arrested after a preliminary inquiry.

In the case of a public servant the appointing authority must give permission in writing and in the case of the public in general, the SSP's permission is needed.

A magistrate can extend arrest only after written permission is secured. Anticipatory bail must be given unless a prima facie case of crimes is made out.

No law should be misused, neither should it be diluted nor made blunt.

The appointing authority is hardly expected to give in writing permission to arrest his junior.

If the appointing authority happens to be of the same caste or if the employee concerned enjoys a good rapport with him, he may not give permission at all.

Political pressure may also be brought on the appointing authority or the SSP not to give permission to arrest the accused.

Various other laws like Anti Dowry law also face the same issue. 293 out of 361 dowry cases in 2015 were wrongly applied. Similarly, the law against sexual harassment is believed to have led to several cases where it has been wrongly and unfairly applied

According to National Crime Records Bureau data, atrocities on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, in the period 2007-2017, have increased by 66 percent.

During this decade, six Dalit women were raped every day, besides the fact that atrocities against SC/ST occurred every 15 minutes.

After this judgment, the Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989 will get further diluted.

The Constituent Assembly entrusted the Parliament to alone make laws and the judiciary to interpret them.

The change brought in the law by SC has raised concerns amongst vulnerable groups.

The government should act in a direction that ensures protection for vulnerable sections and a deterrent for those who commit crimes against the weak sections of society.

**IS EUTHANASIA VERDICT TOUCH TO IMPLEMENT?**

In a judgment on March 9, the Supreme Court said people suffering from a terminal illness had a right to a dignified death, as part of the right to life enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution. The judgment restricts itself to

the withdrawal or withholding of life-support which it refers to as “passive euthanasia.”

But this phrase is obsolete in medical circles. A 2018 document from the Indian Council of Medical Research says ‘passive euthanasia’ is an inappropriate term because it suggests that the doctor is actively shortening the patient’s life with lethal drugs.

#### **Why it will be hard to follow?**

Experts say the procedure laid down by the court for withdrawing life support is unduly complicated. ‘The procedure is frankly half-baked and confused,’ says a member of the team that framed the 2006 draft Bill on medical treatment of terminally ill patients. The court’s guidelines talk of an advance directive, a document in which a patient can specify conditions under which life-prolonging interventions should not be given.

Such interventions could mean feeding tubes, ventilators, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or even antibiotics.

The family of a terminally ill person can also refuse such treatment if an advance directive is not available.

But the judgment makes the execution of advance directives too complicated for patients. For example, the judgment requires the directive to be countersigned by a Judicial Magistrate of First Class, and copies to be given to the jurisdictional district court, the district judge and the local government.

These authorities may drag their feet leading to needless delays. “You are asking them to take on an additional responsibility, which they are not going to be willing to do”. Also, if a patient wants to execute the advance directive, two medical boards — one in the treating hospital and the other headed by the district medical officer — has to give the go-ahead.

#### **Balance between safety of Patient and usability of law:**

While safeguards are necessary to protect patients against vested interests, like illegal organ traders, a balance must be struck between the safety and usability of the law.

Instead of two medical boards it is enough if one team of medical consultants confirms the treating physician’s decision to withdraw life support. The decision must be well-documented, however, so that an ethics committee can study it later to confirm that due process was followed.

In principle, the medico-legal experts accept the judgment. But the procedure they have suggested has to be fine-tuned by experts.

Few estimates exist today for the number of Indians who seek withdrawal of life-support. A 2009 study in a Delhi hospital found that over half of the ICU patients who died during a period of 19 months sought withdrawal or withholding of life support.

As on today, India has poor palliative care systems. A 2015 Quality of Death Index by the Economist Intelligence Unit, which looked at palliative-care systems across 80 countries, rated India among the 15 worst.

#### **A FOURTH OF INDIAN TB PATIENTS ARE DRUG RESISTANT**

India is home to 2.8 million TB patients, the largest in the world. The Union health Ministry released the National Anti-TB Drug Resistance Survey report where it shows that India is home to 2,666 cases of extensively drug resistant (XDR) TB, which is being infected by the deadliest strain of the airborne disease and resistant to all known medicines.

- Drug susceptibility testing (DST): Among the 4,958 patients on whom drug susceptibility testing (DST) was conducted (necessary to find out if a person has drug resistant TB), 28% had resistance to one or other anti-TB drug while 6.19% had multi-drug resistant (MDR) TB.
- According to the new data, last year alone, 1.8 million TB cases were reported in India, out of which 38,605 cases were MDR-TB and a further 2,666 were XDR.
- The country reported 423,000 TB deaths in 2017. The new data also confirm what experts have long suspected: India’s crowded mega-cities provide a perfect breeding ground for the airborne infection to spread.

- With 879 XDR patients, Maharashtra has the highest number of such patients.

- U.P. has the highest number of cases of drug resistant TB (9,138); 619 of these are XDR.

In addition, the new data show that nearly 3% of new patients and nearly 12% of previously treated patients have MDR-TB.

#### **No private sector data**

While this is the largest study of its kind, the survey does not reveal the national burden of DR-TB as it does not include data from patients being treated in the private sector. The survey was done at designated microscopy centers (DMCs) within the laboratory network of the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP), and provides a conservative estimate of India's actual disease burden.

For better cooperation from the private sector, the government announced that doctors and pharmacists could be jailed for up to two years for failing to report new cases. Currently, TB incidence is declining by 1.2% per year and to achieve the TB elimination goal by 2025, we need to have a decline in TB incidence by 15-20% annually."

India has set itself the target of eliminating TB by 2025, five years ahead of the global target set under the Sustainable Development Goals of UNO. To reach the 'elimination' target the country will have to restrict new infections to less than one case per 100,000 people as against the current rate of 211 new infections per 1,000 people.

#### **EVE ON TOURISM, CENTRE TO EASE ACCESS TO BORDER AREAS**

- The Centre is set to relax the Protected Area Permit (PAP) regime to enable foreign tourists to access border areas. The move follows several requests from the Border States of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Nagaland and Manipur as also the Tourism Ministry.

- Earlier, the Tourism Ministry had written to the Home Ministry, seeking to ease the registration of these permits.

- It also sought an extension of these permits from the existing one year to two years.

- Under the Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958, all areas falling between the 'Inner line' and the International Border of the State have been declared as a 'Protected Area,' applicable to all of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, parts of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.

- Every foreigner, except a citizen of Bhutan who wants to enter and stay in a Protected Area, is required to get a special permit.

- Citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals of Pakistani origin are not issued the permit without the home Ministry's approval.

#### **ASSAM'S RARE CAPTIVE-BRED VULTURES FACE DRUG PROBLEM**

The last of the nature's scavengers in Assam, a suitable habitat for vultures, are battling toxic chemicals in livestock carcasses.

And the 'meal of death' that is killing them is also delaying freedom for vultures being reared in captivity in the State.

The Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC) at Rani, about 30 km west of Guwahati, is one of four in India that the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) set up more than a decade ago in association with State Forest Departments.

The VCBC has 104 vultures, most of them brought in as chicks from the wild. The centre has 30 adults and sub-adults all oriental white-backed and slender-billed. These are two of six species found in Assam that are old enough to be set free.

But their release is getting delayed because big vials of Dichlo-fenac, a painkiller, banned three years ago but allowed to be sold if manufactured before December 2015, are yet to expire. Rampant use of pesticides by farmers and more than 70,000 tea gardens is another cause. The digestive system of vultures is so evolved that they can tolerate bacteria and natural toxins in putrefying meat. But they are vulnerable to chemicals such as

Dichlo-fenac, present in the carcasses of cattle that were injected with the pain killer.

**ELECTIONS FOR 25 RAJYA SABHA SEATS WERE HELD RECENTLY**

The Rajya Sabha has the strength of 245 members of which 233 are representatives of the states and Union Territories of Delhi and Puducherry. The remaining 12 members are nominated by the President.

He must be a citizen of India and must not be less than 30 years of age. He must possess qualifications as may be prescribed under any law made by Parliament.

Elected representatives of state legislatures vote in elections to the Upper House.

Members of state assemblies elect Rajya Sabha members by a process of indirect voting in what is called proportional representation with a single transferable vote. Each voter ranks his preference, and if the first candidate on the list has enough votes to win or no chance of winning, the vote is transferred to the next choice and so on.

Rajya Sabha members are elected for a six-year term. One-third of the members of the Upper House of parliament retire after every two years.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION REFER M.LAXMIKANT**

**SCIENCE AND TECH****CHANDRAYAAN-2 LAUNCH POSTPONED TO OCTOBER: ISRO CHIEF**

The launch of India's second lunar mission 'Chandrayaan-2', slated for next month, has been postponed to October

**Chandrayaan-2**

India's second mission to the Moon is a totally indigenous mission comprising of an Orbiter, Lander and Rover.

After reaching the 100 km lunar orbit, the Lander housing the Rover will separate from the Orbiter. After a controlled descent, the Lander will soft land on the lunar surface at a specified site and deploy a Rover.

The mission will carry a six-wheeled Rover which will move around the landing site in

semi-autonomous mode as decided by the ground commands.

The instruments on the rover will observe the lunar surface and send back data, which will be useful for analysis of the lunar soil.

The Chandrayaan-2 weighing around 3290 kg and would orbit around the moon and perform the objectives of remote sensing the moon. The payloads will collect scientific information on lunar topography, mineralogy, elemental abundance, lunar exosphere and signatures of hydroxyl and water-ice.

**BHEL TO MAKE LI ION CELLS WITH ISRO TECHNOLOGY**

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has signed a technology transfer agreement with Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd for the manufacture of space grade lithium ion cells

These will be used for the space programme and other national requirements

The Li-ion batteries power various applications on satellites and launch vehicles. Currently, BHEL assembles and tests Li-ion batteries using imported cells.

Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre at Thiruvananthapuram has developed the technology to produce space grade Li-ion cells

**Li-ion batteries**

A lithium-ion battery or Li-ion battery (abbreviated as LIB) is a type of rechargeable battery in which lithium ions move from the negative electrode to the positive electrode during discharge and back when charging.

Li-ion batteries use an intercalated lithium compound as one electrode material, compared to the metallic lithium used in a non-rechargeable lithium battery.

The electrolyte, which allows for ionic movement, and the two electrodes are the constituent components of a lithium-ion battery cell.

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