

INTERNAL SECURITY**❖ Strengthening Parliamentary Security: December 13 Incidents and the Imperative for Reform**

➤ **CONTEXT:** The recent breach of security at the heart of India's democracy on December 13, 2023, where two individuals infiltrated the Lok Sabha, demands a meticulous analysis of the incident, its historical context, and the subsequent repercussions. Experts shed light on the gravity of the breach and its implications for the security infrastructure surrounding Parliament House..

- It draws attention to the unsettling parallels between the recent security breach and the tragic events of December 13, 2001, when terrorists attacked Parliament, claiming the lives of nine personnel.
- The current breach, occurring on the same date, raises concerns about the efficacy of the security measures implemented post-2001, turning the spotlight on the layers of security and the technology employed to safeguard this citadel of democracy.

➤ **Rules pertaining to Parliament Visitors:**

- Rule 386 within the Regulations of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha governs the "entry, exit, and removal" of visitors, colloquially termed "strangers" within parliamentary parlance, during the House's proceedings.
- Under Rule 387, the Speaker possesses the authority to expel "strangers" from any section of the House as deemed appropriate.
- Rule 387A, sanctioned by the Speaker, confers the ability upon a Secretariat officer to expel or detain any stranger within House precincts designated for members. This encompasses strangers admitted who exhibit misconduct, violate regulations outlined by the Speaker (as per Rule 386), or neglect to withdraw as directed under Rule 387 during House sittings.
- Members are exclusively permitted to request visitors' cards for individuals personally well-known to them. Certification is mandatory, declaring, "The aforementioned visitor is known to me personally as a relative/personal friend, and I assume complete responsibility for him/her." Cards granting admission to visitors' galleries are typically issued for a single sitting, generally lasting an hour. Non-transferability is a condition for issuance, contingent upon the holder's adherence to the specified conditions.
- For security considerations, visitors are obligated to carry photo identification along with the provided certification.
- Parallel regulations govern visitor entry into the Rajya Sabha.
- Members are strongly advised to exercise utmost caution, particularly when facilitating the entry of individuals introduced by someone personally acquainted with them.
- Members shoulder responsibility for any untoward incidents or undesirable activities in the galleries attributable to cardholders.

➤ **Anatomy of the Breach:**

- Looking into the layers of security in place at Parliament House, including spike barriers, bollards, drop gates, scanners, RFID devices, and personnel from central police forces. A phalanx of men and women from the central police forces are deployed in the outer precincts, while plainclothes men from the Parliament Duty Group, and the Delhi police manning the various stations and checkpoints in the inner environs.
- Despite these measures, the breach occurred along the various layers of personal screening for visitors.
- Experts identify the lapse in screening procedures, particularly the failure to detect plastic or rubber concealed in shoes, an aspect not covered by traditional metal detectors. The lack of watchfulness by security personnel and the failure of marshals to apprehend the intruders further compounded the breach.

➤ **Role of Technology in Security:**

- The crucial role of technology in fortifying security measures is emphasized, particularly the need for advanced screening technologies like backscatter scanners capable of detecting substances such as plastic.
- Those who are watchful move ahead with the technology of the times. There was an announcement recently by the Director General, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, that Delhi airport is to get full body scanners and computer tomography x-ray (CTX) machines to ensure more thorough but also faster screening.
- Comparisons with international practices, such as the use of millimeter-wave scanners in the United States and Europe, highlight the need for adopting cutting-edge technology to enhance security at Parliament House.

➤ **Blame Game and Responsibility:**

- The distribution of responsibility for Parliament's security is questioned, focusing on key positions such as the Joint Secretary, Security, and the chiefs of the Central Reserve Police Force and the Central Industrial Security Force. With these positions vacant, attention is drawn to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) as the primary entity Parliament turns to for security needs.
- Concerns are raised about whether the MHA actively recommended the integration of new technology, underscoring the need for collaboration between the MHA and Parliament to address security vulnerabilities.

- The issue lies in the lack of coordination between the MHA and the administrative bodies responsible for Parliament's security. The MHA should have played a proactive role in advising and implementing advanced technology upgrades. The ongoing political debate about jurisdiction and leadership roles distracts from the fundamental problem of access control failure, which jeopardizes national security.
- **Political Fallout and National Security:**
 - The political responses to the breach are critiqued, emphasizing the significance of the security failure rather than engaging in jurisdictional debates.
 - Stress is laid on potential national security implications, particularly if the Prime Minister had been present during the breach, necessitating the intervention of the Special Protection Group (SPG).
 - The absence of a preliminary statement from the Home Minister acknowledging the severity of the breach and announcing a high-level inquiry is a concern, especially given the potential threat to the Prime Minister. The Opposition should wait for the results of the inquiry before engaging in a meaningful discussion.
 - Blaming the MP who recommended passes for the intruders is unfair, as MPs have historically recommended visitors without extensive background checks. The focus should remain on addressing the security lapse rather than individual blame.
- **Legal Implications and Further Investigations:**
 - The individuals involved in the breach may not have caused harm, but the gravity of their revelation, exposing vulnerabilities in Parliament's security, is underscored.
 - While acknowledging the charges under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, a call for a fair inquiry is made, emphasizing the need for legal proceedings against unauthorized entry into a well-guarded space.
- **A Call for Sweeping Changes:**
 - To address the security issues comprehensively, a committee comprising MPs from various parties should be formed, supervised by the Secretary of Security, in the Cabinet Secretariat.
 - This committee should involve specialists from both inside and outside the security sector to implement out-of-the-box security measures. Coordination among the various security forces guarding Parliament should be improved, possibly under the leadership of a Director General, ensuring accountability and responsibility. MPs should actively cooperate with enhanced security arrangements.

Conclusion

The evolving nature of security threats necessitates constant monitoring and upgrading of security infrastructure. The December 13 incidents serve as a stark reminder that even the most robust security arrangements can be breached. The analysis underscores the need for a collaborative and proactive approach between the Ministry of Home Affairs and Parliament to fortify security measures and protect the sanctity of the nation's democracy.

GOVERNANCE, POLICIES, INTERVENTIONS

❖ **Post Office Bill, 2023**

➤ **CONTEXT:** Parliament of India passed the Post Office Bill, 2023 to replace the Indian Post Office Act, 1898.

➤ **Brief History of Post Office regulations in India:**

- India saw the opening of the first post office by East India Company in 1727 at Kolkata.
- Governor General Lord Dalhousie appointed a Post Office Commission in 1850 for a proper regulation.
- Lord Dalhousie recognised the Indian Post Offices as a separate organisation of national importance.
- The Post Office Act XVII, 1854 was framed after recommendations of the Post Office Commission.
- Post Office Act XVII, 1854 was replaced by the Post Office Act 1866, which was amended a number of times because of the defects and omissions.
- A new Bill was introduced in 1898 to amend the Act of 1866 that became the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 after enactment.
- It included within its scope postal insurance, the value payable in post, and the Post Office money order system, and declared and limited the government liability in respect of these matters.
- **Need to Amend the Post Office Regulations**
 - Post Office Bill, 2023 was introduced to repeal the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 and to consolidate and amend the law relating to the Post Offices in India.
 - A colonial era law is not relevant in today's world where services have massively expanded.
 - Post offices are now not just an office to distribute letters, but they are hubs of various financial and other services.
 - Postal network has more than 1.5 lakh post offices, with over 1.29 lakh in rural areas.
 - There is a need to provide a simple legislative framework to facilitate the evolution of the post office into a network for delivery of citizen-centric services.
- **Key Features of the Bill:**
 - Exclusive privileges of the Union government: It provides that wherever the central government establishes posts, it will have the exclusive privilege of conveying letters by post, as well as incidental services such as receiving, collecting, sending, and delivering letters.

- It provides for the issuance of postage stamps as per the prescribed Rules.
- Director General to make regulations regarding services: It provides for the appointment of the Director General of Postal Services.
- It has powers to decide the time and manner of delivery of postal services, and may make regulations regarding any activity necessary to provide postal services.
- Powers to intercept postal articles: It allows interception of an article being transmitted through post on certain grounds like occurrence of any public emergency, or in the interest of public safety or tranquillity, and or the security of the state.
- An intercepted shipment can be detained or disposed of or destroy shipments carrying items prohibited under the Act or any other law by the officer in charge.
- The Union government may empower an officer of India Post to deliver the postal article to the customs authority or any other specified authority.
- Exemptions from liability: It exempts the government from any liability related to the loss, mis-delivery, delay, or damage to a postal article.
- Officers are also exempt from such liability unless they have acted fraudulently or wilfully.
- Removal of offences and penalties: It specified various offences and penalties, all of which were removed by the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023.
- The Bill does not provide for any offences or consequences, except one. Amounts not paid by a user will be recoverable as arrears of land revenue.

Concerns:

- The amendment relating to interception of articles being transmitted through post offices could be a concern.
- It does not specify procedural safeguards. This 'may violate freedom of speech and expression, and the right to privacy of individuals'.
- The grounds for interception include 'emergency' may be beyond reasonable restrictions under the Constitution of India.
- The Bill does not specify any offences and penalties.
- For instance, there are no consequences for unauthorised opening of postal articles by a postal officer. This may have adverse implications for the right to privacy of consumers.

Conclusion:

- The Post Office Bill (2023) emphasises digital addressing by opening up avenues for efficient mail and parcel delivery, and streamlining the sorting processes.
- Despite few concerns raised in the Bill, it still marks a significant step in clarifying and modernising the Indian Post and related infrastructure.

PRELIMS

❖ **Indian Coast Guard**

➤ **CONTEXT:** Recently, the Indian Coast Guard has deployed its ships, aircraft and disaster relief teams in flood-affected areas of South Tamil Nadu.

About

➤ **Established:** August 1978.

- HQ: New Delhi.
- Ministry: Ministry of Defense.
- ICG was established by the Coast Guard Act, of 1978 as an independent Armed force of India.
- It is the fourth largest Coast Guard in the world.
- It has jurisdiction over the territorial waters of India, including its contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone.
- It is an Armed Force, Search and Rescue and Maritime Law Enforcement agency .
- For effective command and control, the Maritime Zones of India are divided into five Coast Guard Regions, namely:
 - North-West (Regional Headquarters in Gandhinagar)
 - West (Regional Headquarters at Mumbai)
 - East (Regional Headquarters at Chennai)
 - North-East (Regional Headquarters at Kolkata)
 - Andaman & Nicobar (Regional Headquarters at Port Blair)

➤ **Functions**

- Preventing Smuggling. (Defence Acquisition Council)
- It is responsible for marine environment protection in maritime zones of India and is the coordinating authority for response to oil spills in Indian waters.
- It has also rescued approximately 13,000 personnel till date during various 'Aid to Civil Authority' operations viz. assistance provided to civil authorities during floods, cyclones and other natural calamities; most recently during the recent floods in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Goa.

- It is also working in close coordination with Central and State agencies to put in place a robust coastal security mechanism.
- It is responsible for marine environment protection in maritime zones of India.
- ❖ **Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana**
- **Context: Recently, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that Indian Railways' 'Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana' graduates are not preferred for railway jobs.**
- **About the scheme**
 - Launched: September, 2021.
 - Ministry: Ministry of Railway.
 - Objective: imparting training skills to the youth across several trades to bring qualitative improvement.
 - Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana is a skill development scheme with a special focus on providing training for jobs that are relevant to the Railways.
 - It is a sub-scheme under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).
- **Salient Features:-**
 - The training is imparted in fourteen (14) industry-relevant technical trades such as Electrician, Welder, Machinist, Fitter etc.
 - The training is provided free of cost to the candidates.
 - There is no provision for providing employment under this scheme.
 - Participants will be selected from applications received online, following a transparent mechanism based on marks in matriculation.
 - Candidates, who have passed class X and are aged between 18 and 35 are eligible to apply.
 - After the end of the program, trainees have to pass a standardized assessment followed by a certificate in the allotted trade by the National Rail and Transportation Institute.

Significance

- It will improve the employability of the youth as well as upgrade the skills of self-employed.
- It will also cater to those who are working with contractors through re-skilling and up-skilling.

❖ **Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary**

- **Context: Recently, the South Wayanad Forest Division officials shifted a 13-year-old male tiger from Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary to a quarantine facility at Puthur Zoological Park in Thrissur for safety.**

About

- The Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary was established in 1973 and is located in Kerala's Wayanad district.
- The sanctuary is a component of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO-designated area) and of the Elephant Reserve No. 7 of South India.
- It covers the Wayanad Plateau, situated at the confluence of three biologically distinct and diverse regions- the main Western Ghat Mountains, the Nilgiri Hills and the Deccan Plateau.
- Kabini river, a tributary of the Kaveri River flows through the sanctuary.

- The flora consists of moist deciduous forests, West coast semi-evergreen forests, and teak, eucalyptus, and Grewelia plantations.

- The fauna includes Elephant, Gaur, Tiger, Panther, Sambar, Spotted deer, Barking deer, Wild boar, Sloth bear, Nilgiri langur and more

❖ **ANDRIAMAMELO CAVE ART**

- **Context: The recent discovery of prehistoric rock art in the Andriamamelolo Cave in western Madagascar has unveiled a treasure trove of unique and previously unseen pictorial depictions, marking a notable departure from the basic symbols found in earlier Madagascar rock art sites.**

➤ **Notable discoveries**

- Egyptian Influences: Some depicted scenes appeared to be related to Egyptian religious motifs from the Ptolemaic period (300-30 BCE).
- Connections to Ethiopian and Afro-Arab Worlds: Symbolism and writings on the cave walls indicated ties to the Ethiopian and Afro-Arab spheres.
- Borneo Art Style: The prevalent symbology and motifs resonated with a cave art style from Borneo dating back two millennia.
- Depicted Extinct Animals: Astonishingly, the cave art potentially portrays three extinct animals of Madagascar - a giant sloth lemur, elephant birds, and a giant tortoise.
- Artistic Elements:
 - Noteworthy Figures: The art comprises various drawings, including animals, human-like and animal-like forms, geometric designs, and unique M-shaped symbols.
 - Egyptian References: Notable images include depictions of Egyptian motifs such as a falcon (Horus), Thoth, and figures resembling Anubis.

- **Mysterious M-Figures:** The ubiquitous M-shaped symbol found in the cave art resembled the ancient Ethiopian Amharic alphabet, "hawt" (ሐ), which translates to the "breath of life" in some Austronesian languages.
- **Significance**
- Madagascar's people, language, and culture are believed to have ancient connections to Borneo and influences from continental eastern Africa.
- The discovery's implications hold significance in the reconstruction of Malagasy early history.
- **About Andriamamelo Cave**
- The Andriamamelo Cave is situated in the western part of Madagascar.
- The cave is nestled within the karstified limestone terrain of the Paysage Harmonieux Protege de Beanka, contributing to its unique geological structure.
- This cave is a notable part of a broader karst region that includes the Parc National de Bemaraha, acknowledged as a UNESCO World Heritage site due to its exceptional karst landscape and biodiversity.
- Additionally, it is proximate to the Antsingimavo karst area, an area that has been relatively less studied compared to other karst regions in the vicinity.
- Being part of the karstified limestone terrain, the Cave represents an essential component of the broader karst landscape, characterized by intricate underground formations resulting from the dissolution of soluble rocks like limestone.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. Tribal rights should not be disregarded in the pursuit of progress. In this context, explain what do you understand by tribal rights. What are the legislative measures taken by the state to protect the rights of tribal?

A tribe is an independent political division of a population with a common culture. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), recognises Indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination, autonomy or self-governance, and their right against forcible displacement and relocation from their lands or territories without free, prior and informed consent. In India, tribal rights flow from the constitution of India and other legal measures taken by the state. Therefore, tribal rights are a cluster of entitlements provided to protect and promote the quality of life, culture, and livelihood of tribals.

Provisions in the Constitution with respect to the protection of tribes:

- Part X of the Constitution contains special provisions relating to the administration of Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas.
- Article 342 provides for the specification of tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which are deemed to be for the purposes of the Constitution, the Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union Territory.
- Articles 15, 16, 19, and 46 of the Constitution provide for various educational, economic and public employment-related safeguards to scheduled tribes.
- Political safeguards are provided to scheduled tribes in the form of reservation of seats in the Lok Sabha, legislative assemblies and panchayats.

Other legislative measures for the protection of the rights of tribes in India:

- **Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006:** The act recognizes the rights of the forest-dwelling tribal communities and other traditional forest dwellers to forest resources, on which these communities were dependent for a variety of needs, including livelihood, habitation and other socio-cultural needs. The main objectives of the act are:
 - ✓ To undo the historical injustice that occurred to the forest-dwelling communities.
 - ✓ To ensure land tenure, livelihood and food security of the forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers.
 - ✓ To strengthen the conservation regime of the forests by including the responsibilities and authority of Forest Rights holders for sustainable use, conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological balance.
- **Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (or PESA), 1996:** The fundamental spirit of the Panchayat Extension Act for tribal areas under the 5th Schedule is that it devolves power and authority to Gram Sabha and Panchayats and paves the way for participatory democracy. The Act gives Gram Sabhas the authority to play an important part in approving development plans and managing all social sectors.
- **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act, 1989:** The Act was passed to prevent the commission of offences of atrocities against the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, to provide for Special Courts for the trial of such offences and for the relief and rehabilitation of the victims of such offences.
- **Protection of the Civil Rights Act, 1955:** The act prescribes punishment for preaching and practising untouchability. Under the act, "civil rights" meant "any right accruing to a person by reason of the abolition of 'untouchability' by Article 17 of the Constitution."

- Formation of Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED): It is a national-level cooperative body established under the multi-state co-operative societies act 1984. It was formed with the main objective of institutionalising the trade of Minor Forest products (MFP) and providing the tribals of India with a fair price for the surplus agricultural products produced by them.

While the legislations for the protection of the rights of tribal people are in place, they are regularly flouted as has been highlighted by the Xaxa Committee report of 2014. The committee recommended measures such as establishing agro-based training institutions and labour-intensive processing industries in tribal regions. Tribal farmers should be motivated to undertake organic farming and eco-forestry. Further State must also try to minimise displacement and follow a rights-based approach to rehabilitate them.

MCQs

- With reference to Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, consider the following statements: (PYQ)
 - It is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
 - It, among other things, will also impart training in soft skills, entrepreneurship, and financial and digital literacy.
 - It aims to align the competencies of the unregulated workforce of the country to the National Skill Qualification Framework.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only**
 - 1, 2 and 3
- Andriamamelô Cave recently seen in news is situated in which of the following?
 - Egypt
 - Madagascar**
 - Java Island
 - Andaman And Nicobar Island
- With regards to Postal service in India consider the following?
 - These come under the Union List of the Constitution of India.
 - The Indian Post Office Act, 1898 regulates the postal services offered by the Union government through India Post, a departmental undertaking.
 - The above act grants the Union government exclusive privilege over conveying letters.
 Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?
 - 1 only
 - 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3**
- Consider the following statements
 - Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary was formed in 1973 and was brought under the Project Elephant in 1991–92
 - This Sanctuary is contiguous to the tiger reserves of Nagarhole and Bandipur of Karnataka and Madhumalai of Tamil Nadu.
 - Kabini river which is a tributary of the Kaveri River flows through the sanctuary.
 How many above statement/s is/are true?
 - Only one
 - Only two
 - All the three**
 - None
- Consider the following statements with reference to the Indian Coast Guard:
 - It operates under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
 - The Indian Coast Guard's motto is "वयम रक्षामः" (Vayam Rakshamah), which translates from Sanskrit as "We Protect".
- The recommendation by the Nagchaudhuri Committee led to the setting up of the Indian Coast Guard.
 How many of the above statement/s is/are correct?
 - Only one**
 - Only two
 - All the three
 - None
- Consider the following statements
 - On December 15, 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially included noma, a severe gangrenous disease of the mouth and face, in its list of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).
 - It is also known as cancrum oris, noma has a high mortality rate of approximately 90%, and it is associated with extreme poverty, malnutrition, and poor sanitation.
 Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?
 - 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2**
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- Gelephu Smartcity Project, a mega "international city" near the Indian border recently seen in news, is situated in which country?
 - Pakistan
 - China
 - Nepal
 - Bhutan**
- Recently scientists have uncovered a remarkable lithium reservoir estimated to be worth \$540 billion in Salton Sea, the said sea is located in which country?
 - USA**
 - UK
 - Brazil
 - Russia
- Which of the following statements regarding the SAMAR air defense missile system recently developed by the Indian Air Force is correct?
 - SAMAR primarily uses domestically developed missile technology without any external collaboration.
 - It operates as a long-range air defense missile system capable of targeting intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).
 - SAMAR has been designed to employ old Russian-origin air-to-air missile systems for surface-to-air defense.**
 - The SAMAR system does not possess the capability of launching multiple missiles simultaneously.
- Consider the following statements
 - In India, Kerala had also introduced a 'fat tax' in 2016, which later got subsumed into India's Goods and Services Tax in 2017.
 - Sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) are taxed with a 28% GST rate and 12% compensation cess.
 Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?
 - 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2**
 - Neither 1 nor 2