



# PIB, THE HINDU Newspaper and Editorial Current Affairs

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## Al Nagah 2019

Why in news?

Indo Oman Joint Exercise Al Nagah III 2019, a joint military exercise between Indian and Royal Army of Oman (RAO), commenced in Oman.

### **Highlights of Exercise:**

- The Indian Army and RAO contingents have been specifically selected for the exercise based on expertise and professional competence and will take part in the two-week-long event that will see them hone their tactical and technical skills in joint counter insurgency and counter terrorist operations in semi-urban scenario in mountainous terrain under UN mandate.
- Due emphasis will be laid on increasing interoperability between forces from both countries which is crucial for success of any joint operation.
- Both sides will jointly train, plan and execute a series of well-developed tactical drills for neutralization of likely threats that may be encountered in such a scenario.
- Experts from both sides will also hold detailed discussions to share their experience on varied topics for mutual benefit.
- Ex Al Nagah 2019 will contribute immensely in developing mutual understanding and respect for each other's military as also facilitate in tackling the worldwide phenomenon of terrorism.

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## **National guidelines on responsible business conduct**

### **Why in news?**

Ministry of Corporate Affairs has revised the National Voluntary Guidelines on Social, Environmental and Economic Responsibilities of Business, 2011 (NVGs) and formulated the National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBC).

### **These principles are:**

1. Businesses should conduct and govern themselves with integrity in a manner that is Ethical, Transparent and Accountable.
2. Businesses should provide goods and services in a manner that is sustainable and safe
3. Businesses should respect and promote the well-being of all employees, including those in their value chains.
4. Businesses should respect the interests of and be responsive to all their stakeholders.
5. Businesses should respect and promote human rights.
6. Businesses should respect and make efforts to protect and restore the environment.
7. Businesses, when engaging in influencing public and regulatory policy, should do so in a manner that is responsible and transparent.
8. Businesses should promote inclusive growth and equitable development.
9. Businesses should engage with and provide value to their consumers in a responsible manner.

### **Background:**

- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has been taking various initiatives for ensuring responsible business conduct by companies.

- As a first step towards mainstreaming the concept of business responsibility, the 'Voluntary Guidelines on Corporate Social Responsibility' were issued in 2009.
- These guidelines were subsequently revised as 'National Voluntary Guidelines on Social, Environmental and Economic Responsibilities of Business, 2011 (NVGS)' after extensive consultations with business, academia, civil society organisations and the government.
- The NVGs were developed based on India's socio-cultural context and priorities as well as global best practices.
- There have been various national and international developments in the past decade that have nudged businesses to be sustainable and more responsible, prior most being the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights (UNGPs).
- These became the key drivers for further revision of the guidelines. Some of these include the thrust of Companies Act, 2013 (Act) on businesses to be more mindful of their stakeholders.
- The Act casts fiduciary duties on the Directors of a Company (Section 166) requiring them to promote the objects of the company for the benefit of its members as a whole, and in the best interests of the company, its employees, the shareholders, the community and for the protection of environment.
- There was also a need to demonstrate more visibly India's implementation of the UNGPs based on UNHRC's 'Protect, Respect & Remedy' Framework and also make evident India's commitment to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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### **NRIs vote**

- India does not support e-voting. The only way a voter can exercise his/her franchise is by personally visiting the polling booth. There are two more options: postal ballots and proxy voting reserved for government and armed forces personnel.
- Postal ballots, in which a voter exercises his/her franchise through post is available only for people on election duty, armed forces personnel, and electors subject to preventive detention.
- The option of proxy voting is available only for armed forces, police,

and government officials posted outside India. The person can authorise another residing in the same polling booth area to cast a vote on his/her behalf. This option is currently available for wives of the above mentioned personnel, but not for the husbands.

- A non-resident Indian, who holds an Indian passport, can vote in his/her hometown after registering as an Overseas Voter. The NRI must fill the Form 6A, which can be downloaded online or taken from the nearest Indian Mission.
- The duly filled forms with supporting documents must be submitted to the Electoral Registration Officer in the constituency in person or via post.
- After verification, the ECI will add the NRI to the electoral rolls as an 'Overseas Voter'. Once the person returns to India, he or she will have to re-register himself or herself as a general voter and obtain an EPIC card.

### **Background:**

- According to the Ministry of External Affairs, there are **about 3.1 crore NRIs** living in different countries. An expert committee of the ECI approved proxy voting.
- The Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill 2017 that extends the proxy voting to NRIs was passed in the Lok Sabha during the monsoon session last year, but didn't see the light of day in the Rajya Sabha and hence got lapsed.

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### **Stolen artefacts**

- Karnataka tops the list in the country that has seen 30 idols or artefacts being stolen from Archaeological Survey of India(ASI) sites, reveals the Ministry of Culture in a written answer to a Lok Sabha question last week.
- At least 12 idols have been stolen from protected monuments in the State in the past six years, and none of them have been recovered by the police.

- In a span of three years, a stone Nandi and a stone Ganesha were stolen from the Ramalingaswara temple complex at Avani in Kolar district. A stone Shivalinga was stolen from a Shiva temple in Thimalapura in Ballari district; while, the eight-armed goddess Mahishamardini was stolen from the Panchalingeswara Temple in Mandya is yet to be recovered.

### **Tracing problem:**

- In Hassan district, three sculptures of Hoysala period were stolen. A seated Chaturbhuja Ganesha sculpture from Bucheshwara Temple at Koravangala near Hassan was stolen on the night of October 11, 2013.
- Lack of sufficient staff to guard the monuments is said to be one of the reasons for the thefts.
- sculptures were stolen from a place that had no night watchmen. "If the department does not take measures to strengthen security, it is difficult to protect monuments."

### **Idol wing needed:**

- An official at the local ASI office says the local police are often clueless on how to go about the investigation into this. "We do contact Customs officials so that it can't be smuggled out through major ports. But it continues to happen. And the local police can't do much if the perpetrator is not from the surroundings," said an official.
- The demand was for an idol wing, much like what exists in Tamil Nadu where idol thefts is a continuing concern. "An idol wing is an immediate priority to follow up and track these investigations. At a local level, heritage committees headed by the Deputy Commissioner should keep track of unprotected sites and see if any temples are vulnerable to theft."

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## **World Kidney Day**

## **Why in news?**

World Kidney Day is celebrated on March 14 every year, aiming to create awareness about kidney diseases all over the world.

## **World Kidney Day: Importance**

- The annual World Kidney Day campaign allows us to assess where we are today with kidney health across the globe. This year's theme of women's health has focused our attention on the specific difficulties faced by this segment of the population.
- There are medical aspects to consider - certain kidney conditions disproportionately impact women, pregnancy and the health of the unborn child; and there are complex socio-economic, psychological and cultural aspects to consider in our country.
- Advancements in medicine, more awareness and a greater impetus on the part of the medical fraternity and government to increase access to health care for women will pave way for better outcomes in the future.

## **Kidney diseases in India**

- Due to the lack of accurate national data collection, the incidence of CKD in India is not clear but studies estimate that the number of new patients diagnosed with End Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD) who are started on dialysis or transplantation is over 100,000 per year.
- This number grossly underestimates the true burden of kidney disease in our country given the inequality in access to health care between urban and rural populations, due to disparities in wealth and literacy.
- Aside from these general population-based issues, there are unique medical and socio-economic challenges faced by women which are essential to understanding in order to improve their access to kidney care and therefore their overall health.



## **Causes in India**

- The most common causes of kidney disease in India in both men and women are Diabetes and Hypertension. However, there are certain conditions affecting the kidneys that occur with a greater incidence in women - for example, urinary tract infections that lead to infection and scarring of the kidneys and autoimmune diseases, Rheumatoid Arthritis and Systemic Lupus Erythematosus.
- Early detection and treatment of these conditions are essential for good kidney outcomes.
- Chronic kidney disease can negatively impact a woman's fertility and in some cases, the medication used to treat certain kidney diseases can have the same effect.
- Therefore, medications have to be carefully selected for women of child-bearing age. Pregnancy in itself carries risks for both the woman with CKD and her unborn child.
- These risks, which increase in more advanced stages of kidney disease, include severe high blood pressure, protein losses in the urine, and worsening of CKD in the mother as well as prematurity and low birth weight in the baby. These conditions may actually increase the risk of future kidney problems in the new-born.
- Advancements in our understanding of pregnancy and kidney diseases, however, have allowed substantial improvements in outcomes of pregnancies amongst patients even with ESKD who require dialysis or are transplanted.
- Once again, access to preconception primary care to detect baseline kidney problems, and access to good prenatal and antenatal care is essential.

## **Treatment**

- Once a patient reaches advanced stages of CKD, kidney replacement therapy will be needed. Kidney replacement therapy can be either dialysis or kidney transplantation; with transplantation offering the best health outcomes. Studies indicate that women tend to have more complications with dialysis than men; as an example, the incidence of low blood counts and poor nutritional levels seem to be higher.
- They may fare just as well as their male counterparts post kidney

transplantation.

- However, interestingly the number of male patients who receive either dialysis or kidney transplantation is significantly greater than women. Studies from countries all over the world, including India, indicate an inequality in the registration of women on the deceased organ donation waiting lists and longer waiting times for women on dialysis.
  - Globally and in India, women tend to serve more often as kidney donors - mothers and wives are much more likely to be donors than fathers or husbands.
  - The recurring theme here seems to be timely access to kidney care. And clearly, there is substantial inequality in access to care between the genders.
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## **Global Environmental Outlook**

### **Why in news?**

Recently sixth edition of the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO), prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme.

### **About Global Environmental outlook:**

- The Global Environment Outlook (GEO) is often referred to as UN Environment's flagship environmental assessment. The first publication was in 1997 and was originally requested by Member States.
- It is a flagship report because it fulfills the core functions of the organization, which date back to the UN General Assembly resolution that established the UN Environment Programme in 1972.
- The Global Environment Outlook (GEO) is a consultative and participatory process to prepare an independent assessment of the state of the environment, the effectiveness of the policy response to address these environmental challenges and the possible pathways to



be achieve various internationally agreed environmental goals.

- The process also builds capacity for conducting integrated environmental assessments and reporting on the state, trends and outlooks of the environment.
- The Global Environment Outlook (GEO) is also a series of products that informs environmental decision-making for not only governments but also various stakeholders such as the youth, businesses and local governments and aims to facilitate the interaction between science and policy.

### **Highlights of sixth edition:**

- GEO-6 is the world's most comprehensive environmental report, covering a range of topics, issues and potential solutions.
- India could save at least \$3 trillion (Rs. 210 trillion approx.) in healthcare costs if it implemented policy initiatives consistent with ensuring that the globe didn't heat up beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius by the turn of the century.
- Damage to the planet is so dire that people's health will be increasingly threatened unless urgent action is taken....Unless environmental protections were drastically scaled up, cities and regions in Asia, the Middle East and Africa could see millions of premature deaths by mid-century.
- India's stated commitment is to lower emissions intensity of its GDP by 33-35% compared to 2005 levels by 2030; increase total cumulative electricity generation from fossil free energy sources to 40% by 2030, and create additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tons through additional forest and tree cover.
- India is on track to achieve two of these goals — of emissions intensity and electricity generation — according to independent climate-watch site Climate Tracker.
- For India to leapfrog onto a 1.5-degree pathway it would have to "abandon plans to build new coal-fired power plants.

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### **Contempt of Court**

## Why in news?

The Meghalaya High Court's order finding the Editor and Publisher of Shillong Times guilty of contempt for derogatory article against judges and Judiciary.

- The Meghalaya High Court's order finding the Editor and Publisher of Shillong Times guilty of contempt, and asking them to "sit in a corner" till the rising of the court and imposing a fine of Rs. 2 lakh each, is a heavy-handed response to comments in the newspaper on the court's earlier orders.
- What makes the order even more unfortunate is the explicit threat to ban the newspaper and jail them if they fail to pay the fine. While courts are indeed empowered to decide whether a publication scandalised or tended to scandalise the judiciary or interfered with the administration of justice, there is no legal provision for an outright ban on it.
- The origin of these contempt proceedings appears to be the State government's unilateral decision to withdraw certain facilities to retired judges without consulting the court administration.
- After the matter was not resolved on the administrative side for two months, the court initiated suo motu proceedings and issued some directions.
- It was because of a news item, accompanied by a commentary on the court's directions, that the contemnors had incurred the court's displeasure.
- The offending comments appeared to imply that the directions regarding extending facilities, including protocol services and domestic help, and reimbursing communication bills up to 10,000 a month and a mobile phone worth Rs. 80,000, to retired judges amounted to "judges judging for themselves".
- It is a moot question whether the court ought to have taken umbrage at this remark or ignored it. It would serve the cause of preserving the dignity of the higher judiciary if overzealous comments made by activists or journalists were ignored.
- In 1999, the Supreme Court had brushed aside some adverse remarks

by activists by saying, “the court’s shoulders are broad enough to shrug off their comments.” However, in the case of Patricia Mukhim, the Editor of Shillong Times, the court has made sweeping remarks that the newspaper had always attacked individuals and institutions, had published propaganda calling for bandhs and “was always working against judges and the judicial system”.

- The defence argued the court should frame specific charges before convicting them for contempt. However, the matter was tried summarily.
- While it is open to the court to try a case of contempt in a summary manner, the use of personalised views of the publication’s past record to hand down the verdict puts a question mark over the decision-making process.
- While there may be a need to curb tendentious criticism of the judiciary and self-serving comments on ongoing proceedings in mainstream and social media, there is a compelling case to use the contempt law sparingly, and avoid the impression that it is being used to stifle free speech or dissent. Lenience, not anger, ought to be the primary response of a detached judiciary.

### **About Contempt of Court:**

Contempt of court, often referred to simply as "contempt", is the offense of being disobedient to or disrespectful toward a court of law and its officers in the form of behavior that opposes or defies the authority, justice and dignity of the court.

### **In India contempt of court is of two types:**

**Civil contempt:** Under Section 2(b) of the Contempt of Courts Act of 1971, civil contempt has been defined as wilful disobedience to any judgment, decree, direction, order, writ or other process of a court or wilful breach of an undertaking given to a court.

**Criminal contempt:** Under Section 2(c) of the Contempt of Courts Act of 1971, criminal contempt has been defined as the publication (whether by words, spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise) of any matter or the doing of any other act whatsoever which:

- Scandalises or tends to scandalise, or lowers or tends to lower the authority of, any court, or
  - Prejudices, or interferes or tends to interfere with the due course of any judicial proceeding, or
  - Interferes or tends to interfere with, or obstructs or tends to obstruct, the administration of justice in any other manner.
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