



CURRENT AFFAIRS : JANUARY 2024

TRIBUNAL SYSTEM IN INDIA

Recently, the Supreme Court (SC) ruled that tribunals cannot direct the government to frame policy.

- SC was deciding on whether the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) could have directed the government to make a policy to fill up the post of Judge Advocate General (Air).
 - o The AFT was set up under the AFT Act, of 2007.
 - o AFT provide for adjudication or trial of disputes and complaints to the commission, appointments, enrolment and conditions of service in respect of persons subject to the Army Act, 1950, Navy Act, 1957, Air Force Act, 1950.

About Tribunals System

- **Nature:** Tribunals are quasi-judicial bodies. The objective may be to reduce the caseload of the judiciary or to bring in subject expertise for technical matters.
- **Constitutional Recognition:** In 1976, Articles 323A and 323B were inserted in the Constitution of India through the 42nd Amendment.
 - o Article 323A: Empowered Parliament to constitute administrative Tribunals (both at central and state level) for adjudication of matters related to recruitment and conditions of service of public servants.
 - o Article 323B: Specified certain subjects (such as taxation and land reforms) for which Parliament or state legislatures may constitute tribunals by enacting a law.
 - ✓ In 2010, the Supreme Court clarified that subject matters under Article 323B are not exclusive, and legislatures are empowered to create tribunals on any subject matter under their purview as specified in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.
- **Composition of Tribunals:** The presence of expert members (technical members) along with judicial members is a key feature of tribunals which distinguishes them from traditional courts.

- **Jurisdiction:** Each tribunal is given specific jurisdiction to hear and decide cases within its designated area of expertise.

- o Some tribunals have appellate jurisdiction, meaning they hear appeals from decisions made by lower authorities or government bodies.

- **Appeals:** Appeals from tribunals usually lie with the concerned High Court. However, some laws specify that appeals will be heard by the Supreme Court.

- o In Chandra Kumar Case (1997), appeals against decisions of tribunals were allowed in the division bench of High Courts.

- Currently, tribunals have been created both as substitutes to High Courts and as subordinate to High Courts.

DUAL CITIZENSHIP

- Recently the Union External Affairs Minister remarked that dual citizenship is a challenge in India.

- **Dual or Multiple Citizenship:** It grants an individual legal status as a citizen of two or more countries simultaneously.

- **Countries offering dual citizenship:** United States, Finland, Albania, Israel, and Pakistan, etc.

- The Indian Constitution prohibits dual citizenship for nationals.

- **Alternative to dual citizens in India**

- o India offers the Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) program to Persons of Indian Origin (PIO), excluding those who migrated to Pakistan and Bangladesh.

SUPREME COURT LEGAL SERVICES COMMITTEE (SCLSC)

- Recently, a Supreme Court judge has been nominated as the Chairman of the SCLSC.

- **About SCLSC**

- o It is a statutory body.

✓ Constituted under section 3A of Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 by National Legal Service Authority.

o Objective: Providing free legal services to poor, under-privileged and those marginalized in society.

o Chief Justice of India in Patron-in-Chief of Committee.

• Members: Chairman (sitting Judge of SC) and 9 members (nominated by the Chief Justice of India).

NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM)

Recently, 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was held in Kampala, Uganda.

About Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

- **Genesis:** Asia-Africa Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955.
- **About:** NAM was created during the independence struggles of Africa, Asia, Latin America and other regions of the world at the height of the Cold War.
 - o A key role was played in this process by the then Heads of State of Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia and Yugoslavia, who later became the founding fathers of the movement.
 - o The idea was to declare themselves as "nonaligned" from either of the two nascent military blocks (NATO and the Warsaw Pact).
- **Principles:** "Ten Principles of Bandung" proclaimed during Bandung Conference were later adopted as the main goals/principles of NAM. (Refer Image)
- **NAM's first conference** - The Belgrade Conference in 1961.
- **Membership:** It has 121 members (including India) comprising 53 countries from Africa, 39 from Asia, 26 from Latin America and the Caribbean and 2 from Europe.

GENOCIDE CONVENTION

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) gave its interim ruling on South Africa's genocide case against Israel.

- South Africa vs. Israel case in ICJ: South Africa argued that the manner in which Israel was conducting its military operations in Gaza violated the Genocide Convention.
- Provisional Measures by ICJ: ICJ ruled that Israel must take all measures to prevent genocidal acts in Gaza (Palestine). However, it did not order ceasefire and did not find Israel guilty yet.

About International Court of Justice (ICJ)	About International Criminal Court (ICC)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis: It is a principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN) established in 1945. • HQ: The Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is the only principal organ of the UN which is not located in New York. • Role: To settle legal disputes as per International law and to provide advisory opinions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Judgment is binding on the parties to a case and without appeal (subject to interpretation or revision). • Composition: 15 judges (Currently India serves one Judge), who are elected for nine years by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council. • Official languages: English and French. • Comparison with ICC: ICJ hears disputes between nations over matters of law, unlike the International Criminal Court (ICC) which holds individuals criminally responsible for offences and crimes against humanity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis: Established by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in 1998. • HQ: The Hague (Netherlands) • About: It is an international court to investigate and prosecute individuals accused of serious international crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and aggression. • Members: 123 countries are party to Rome Statute. India is not a member. • Jurisdiction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It has jurisdiction only over crimes committed after July 1, 2002, when the Rome Statute entered into force. ○ Only States are eligible to appear before the Court in contentious cases. It has no jurisdiction over applications from individuals, non-governmental organizations, corporations or private entity. • Other Key information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Its judgments are final without appeal and binding upon the parties concerned. ○ The Court does not have its own police force and relies on State cooperation, to the arrest and surrender of suspects.

INDIA BECOMES FOURTH-LARGEST STOCK MARKET

- India overtakes Hong Kong to become the world's fourth-largest stock market.
- According to data compiled by Bloomberg, the combined value of shares listed on Indian exchanges reached USD 4.33 trillion, versus USD 4.29 trillion for Hong Kong, on Jan 22, 2024.
 - Top three stock markets are the US, China, and Japan.

16TH FINANCE COMMISSION

- It was constituted with the approval of the President of India in pursuance of **Article 280(1) of the Constitution**.
- The government appointed Arvind Panagariya (former vice-chairman of NITI Aayog) as the chairman and members would be notified separately.
- The Commission's work involves redressing the vertical imbalances between the taxation powers and expenditure responsibilities of the Center and the States respectively and equalization of all public services across the States.
- The commission shall make recommendations on the following:
 - Distribution between the Union and States of the net proceeds of taxes and allocation between the States of such proceeds.
 - Principles for governing the grants-in-aid and revenues of the state under Article 275 of the Constitution.
 - Measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement the resources of the Panchayats and Municipalities based on state finance commission recommendation.
- The 16th FC recommendations, upon acceptance by the government, would cover the period of five years commencing April 1, 2026

REVERSE FLIP

- Many Startups are reverse flipping i.e. moving their overseas holding entities to India.
- 'Reverse flipping': It is a term used to describe the trend of overseas start-ups shifting their domicile to India and listing on Indian stock exchanges.

Reasons for Reverse Flipping

- Capitalise on India's large and growing economy
- Access to deeper pools of venture capital

SC ANNULS REMISSION IN BILKIS BANO CASE

- Supreme Court sets aside remission of 11 convicts in Bilkis Bano's case given by Gujarat government
- SC held that Gujarat is not appropriate government to decide on remission petition as the trial was conducted in Maharashtra. Thus, remission orders were held to be invalid.
- Remission refers to reduction in period of sentence that has been imposed on a person, without affecting the nature of sentence.

- o State may release convicts early under its remission policy.

• **Constitutional provisions related to Remission**

- o Article 72 empowers President of India to grant pardons, reprieves, respites, suspend, remit, or commute the sentence of a person convicted of any offense where sentence is

- ✓ by a court Martial;

- ✓ for an offence against any law relating to a matter to which executive power of Union extends;

- ✓ a sentence of death.

- o Under Article 161, Governor's power is similar to that of President, but limited to a matter to which executive power of state extends.

• **Legal basis of Remission**

- o Section 432 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) 1973 grants government power to suspend or remit sentences.

- o Section 433A mandates remission only after 14 years of imprisonment

ATAL SETU NHAVA SHEVA SEA LINK

- Inaugurated by PM, it is the country's longest Sea bridge, also referred to as Mumbai Trans Harbour Link.

- It is a 21.8 Kms long bridge of which 16.5 km is built completely over the Sea.
- It connects Sewri in Mumbai with Nhava Sheva in Raigad district, thereby easing travel between Mumbai-Navi Mumbai.

ILLEGAL MIGRATION

Gujarat Crime Investigation Department (CID) is probing the case of possible illegal immigration related to the Nicaraguabound plane carrying Indians, which was grounded in France.

About Illegal Migration

- Illegal migration refers to trans-boundary migration of people from one country to another without valid documents, using illegal means.
- In Indian context, as per Citizenship Act, 1955, an illegal migrant is defined as, a foreigner who enters India,
 - o without a valid passport or other prescribed travel documents, or
 - o with a valid passport or other prescribed travel documents but remains in India beyond the permitted time period.

EXERCISES IN NEWS

- **Exercise Khanjar:** India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise Khanjar has held in Himachal Pradesh.
- **Exercise Cyclone:** 2nd edition of the India-Egypt exercise 'Cyclone' held in Egypt.
- **Exercise Desert Knight:** Indian Air Force conducted Exercise Desert Knight along with French Air and Space Force and UAE Air Force.
- **Ex-Desert Cyclone:** It is a joint military exercise between India and UAE.
- **Exercise Sea Dragon:** It is a multinational maritime exercise to enhance interoperability between Indian Navy and participating navies from US, Australia, South Korea and Japan.
- **MILAN 24 Exercise:** It is a biennial multi-national naval exercise.

o It was first conceived by Indian Navy in 1995 at Andaman and Nicobar Command with participation of four countries (Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand).

- **Ex-Ayutthaya:** The maiden Bilateral Maritime Exercise between the Indian Navy (IN) and Royal Thai Navy (RTN) was conducted in December 2023.

o Along with this bilateral exercise, the 36th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) was also conducted.

HENLEY PASSPORT INDEX 2024 (HPI)

- HPI was released by Henley & Partners, a global leader in residence and citizenship planning.
- HPI ranks different passports according to number of destinations their holders can visit without a prior visa.
 - o It covers 227 destinations and 199 passports.
 - o Rankings are based on data provided by International Air Transport Association.

Key findings

- o India stands at 80th rank in list of most powerful passports. Its passport has visa-free access to 62 nations.
- o France, Germany, Italy and Spain, Japan and Singapore are sharing number one spot.

SWACHH SURVEKSHAN AWARDS 2023

Recently, the President of India conferred the Swachh Survekshan Awards for 2023.

Key Highlights of the 2023 Awards:

- Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and Surat (Gujarat) were declared as the Cleanest Cities in India (Rank 1) followed by Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra) (Rank 3).
 - o Indore has been declared as the cleanest city for the 7th consecutive time.

- In cities with less than 1 Lakh population, Sasvad (Maharashtra), Patan (Gujarat) and Lonavala (Maharashtra) secured the top three spots.
- Maharashtra was named the cleanest state in the country, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.
- Mhow (Madhya Pradesh) was selected as the cleanest cantonment board followed by Deolali (Maharashtra) and Ahmedabad (Gujarat).
- Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) was declared the cleanest Ganga town followed by Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh)
- Chandigarh was declared as the Best Safaimitra Surakshit Sheher.

SOCIALISM IN INDIA

Eminent Socialist leader and former Chief Minister of Bihar Karpoori Thakur has been conferred with Bharat Ratna, posthumously.

Contribution of Karpoori Thakur towards Socialism in India

- Social Justice
 - o Implemented Mungerilal Lal Commission's recommendations to provide for reservations for backward castes in public employment and government educational institutions.
 - ✓ Split backward castes in two blocs (sub-categorization) to ensure social justice within backward communities (popularly known as 'Karpoori Formula').
 - ✓ It set the stage for implementation of Mandal Commission report.
 - o Implemented 3% reservations for women and another 3% for poor segments of upper castes which was later struck down by the judiciary.
 - o Conducted Panchayati Raj elections in 1978, to reconfigure upper caste hegemony in rural power structure. (Next Panchayati Raj elections in Bihar were held only in 2001.)

- Education

- o Abolished English language being compulsory for school students, to enable deprived people to move up.
- o Made teaching of Hindi mandatory for Christian missionary schools.
- o Did away with fee for children from a weaker economic background.
- Credited with enforcing total prohibition of alcohol in Bihar in 1970.

X-RAY POLARIMETER SATELLITE (XPOSAT)

ISRO successfully launched the X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat) by Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) -C58.

- PSLV-C58 was the 60th flight of ISRO's Polar Satellite launch Vehicle.
 - o PSLV is a 4-stage launch vehicle propelled by Solid fuel at first and third stages and Liquid fuel at second and fourth stages.
 - o It has multiple satellite launch capability and multiple orbit capability.
- After Placing XPoSAT at orbit of 650 km altitude, Fourth stage of PSLV was brought to a lower altitude (about 350 km) for conducting the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module-3 (POEM-3) experiment.

MITAKSHARA LAW

Supreme Court ruled that children born from void or voidable marriages are legitimate for property inheritance under the **Hindu Succession Act (HSA), 1956** which recognizes Mitakshara Law.

- The court held that such children be treated as an extended family of a common ancestor to decide a valid share in the property of the common ancestor.

Mitakshara Law

- It is one of the two major Hindu law schools (the other being Dayabhaga) that governs the succession of property in Hindu families.

- It is based on the commentary on the Yajnavalkya Smriti, written by Vijñaneswara in the 12th century.
- It recognizes the concept of coparcenary, which means that ancestral property is jointly held by all male members of the family, and they have equal rights in the property.
- Coparcener has no absolute right to transfer his share because his share is not definite or ascertainable as their shares fluctuate with the births and deaths of the coparceners.
- According to this school, a woman could never become a coparcener.
 - However, the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, of 2005 empowered women to become a coparcener like males in ancestral property.
- It is prevalent throughout India, except in some eastern parts where Dayabhaga School is followed.
- There are 4 sub-schools of Mitakshara Law:
 - Dravidian/Madras school of thought,
 - Maharashtra school of thought,
 - Banaras school of thought,
 - Mithila school of thought.
 - Punjab School

STATUE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Statue of Social justice was unveiled in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh.
 - It is a 206 foot Bronze Statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and is currently the world's tallest Ambedkar statue.
- Other important Statues
 - Statue of Unity (Kevadia, Gujarat): Sardar Patel.
 - Statue of Equality (Hyderabad's Shamshabad, Telangana): Ramanuja.

o Statue of belief (Nathdwara, Rajasthan): Lord Shiva.

NATIONAL SPORTS AWARDS (NSA) 2023

- President of India conferred NSA 2023.
- Administered by: Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.
- It includes following six core awards:
 - o Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna (Highest sporting honour).
 - o Arjuna Award (For consistent performance over 4 years).
 - o Dronacharya Award (Highest sports honour for coaches).
 - o Major Dhyan Chand Award (For lifetime achievement).
 - o Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy (Top performance in inter-university tournaments).
 - o Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar (sports promotion by organisations or corporates).

PRADHAN MANTRI RASHTRIYA BAL PURASKAR (PMRBP)

- The President conferred PMRBP to 19 children.
- The PMRBP awarded annually by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
 - o It honors children aged 5–18 for excellence in Bravery, Art & Culture, Environment, Innovation, Science & Technology, Social Service, and Sports that deserve national recognition.
 - o Awards include a medal, certificate, and citation booklet, presented the week before Republic Day.
 - o Awardees must receive the accolades personally, with posthumous exceptions for bravery in Bal Shakti Puraskar.

GOOD SAMARITANS

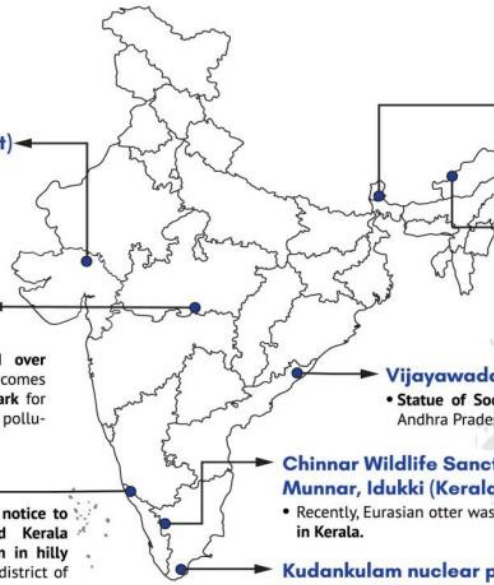
In a case related to Good Samaritan, the Delhi High Court observed that a person who chooses to help a person in distress should not be harassed for showing kindness. Further, HC said that helping an injured on a public road/highway is the prime duty of everyone.

Good Samaritan and Legal Provision in India

- A person who comes forward to administer immediate assistance or emergency care to a person injured in an accident, or crash, or emergency medical condition, or emergency situation. Such act is performed voluntarily without expectation of payment or reward and without any duty of care or special relationship.

- Based on a PIL filed by Save LIFE Foundation, Supreme Court directed the centre to issue guidelines. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways accordingly issued guidelines:-
 - Good Samaritan may take an injured person to the nearest hospital and should be allowed to leave immediately.
 - He/she shall not be liable for any civil and criminal liability.
 - Hospitals should publish a charter stating that they shall not detain Samaritan or ask for depositing money for the treatment.
 - Action against public officials who coerce Good Samaritan for revealing personal details.
- In 2016, Supreme Court made these guidelines legally binding for all states and Union Territories.
- Section 134A was inserted in Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019 providing protection to Good Samaritans

Places in News: India



Vadnagar, Mehsana (Gujarat)

- A joint study by Indian Institute of Technology (Kharagpur) discovered evidence of human settlement in Vadnagar dating back to 800 BCE.

Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR) Nagpur (Maharashtra)

- Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR) spread over Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra becomes India's first international Dark Sky Park for protecting night sky, preventing light pollution and promote astronomy.

Minchinpadavu (Kerala)

- National Green Tribunal's has issued notice to Union Government, Karnataka and Kerala governments on dumping endosulfan in hilly area of Minchinpadavu in Kasaragod district of Kerala.

Sikkim (Sikkim)

- India has recorded its first-ever confirmed sighting of a rare Tibetan brown bear (*Ursus arctos pruinosus*) in Sikkim.

Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival (PPHF) East Kameng (Arunachal Pradesh)

- A three-day conservation festival PPHF began in Arunachal Pradesh

Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh)

- Statue of Social justice was unveiled in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh.

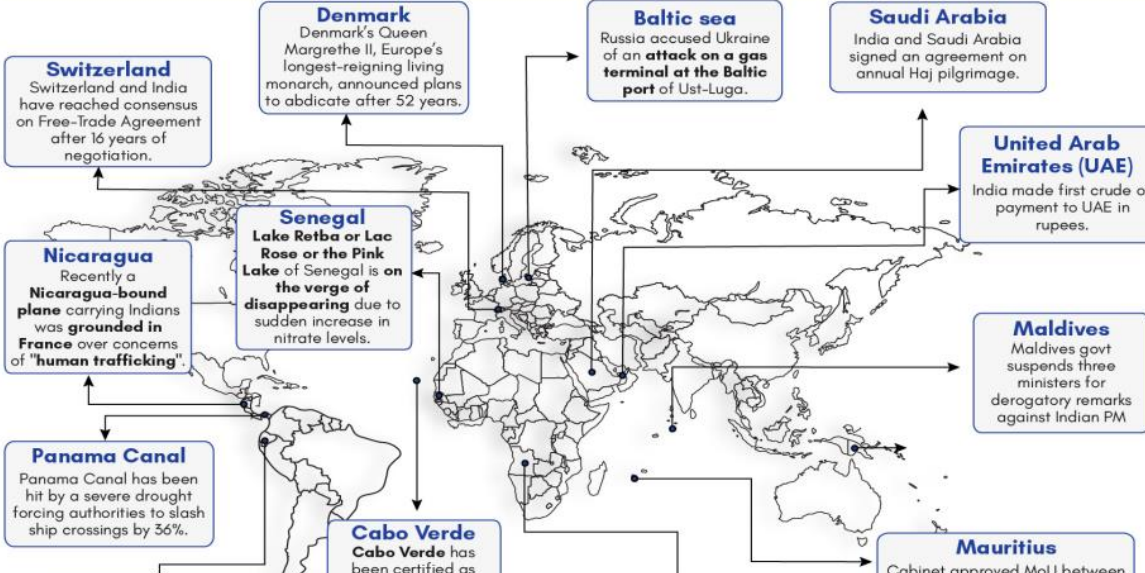
Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary Munnar, Idukki (Kerala)

- Recently, Eurasian otter was found in the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala.

Kudankulam nuclear power plant (KNPP) Tirunelveli (Tamil Nadu)

- India, Russia ink pacts on construction of future power units of KNPP

Places in News: World



Switzerland
Switzerland and India have reached consensus on Free-Trade Agreement after 16 years of negotiation.

Denmark
Denmark's Queen Margrethe II, Europe's longest-reigning living monarch, announced plans to abdicate after 52 years.

Baltic sea
Russia accused Ukraine of an attack on a gas terminal at the Baltic port of Ust-Luga.

Saudi Arabia
India and Saudi Arabia signed an agreement on annual Haj pilgrimage.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)
India made first crude oil payment to UAE in rupees.

Maldives
Maldives govt suspends three ministers for derogatory remarks against Indian PM.

Mauritius
Cabinet approved MoU between ISRO and Mauritius Research and Innovation Council on development of Joint Small Satellite.

Senegal
Lake Retba or Lac Rose or the Pink Lake of Senegal is on the verge of disappearing due to sudden increase in nitrate levels.

Nicaragua
Recently a Nicaragua-bound plane carrying Indians was grounded in France over concerns of "human trafficking".

Panama Canal
Panama Canal has been hit by a severe drought forcing authorities to slash ship crossings by 36%.

Ecuador
Ecuador has declared nationwide emergency following escape of high-profile prisoner.

Cabo Verde
Cabo Verde has been certified as malaria-free by WHO, becoming third African country to achieve this status after Mauritius and Algeria.

Angola
Angola withdraws from Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).