Prelim Bits 02-11-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Overseas Voters

The Supreme Court (SC) disposed of a petition seeking directions to enable non-resident Indians, migrant labourers to cast vote.

> *The SC asked the concerned authorities and functionaries to find a solution to enable expatriate to cast their vote, ensuring the integrity and confidentiality of the entire electoral process.*

- Voting in an Indian election can be done in three ways - in person, by post or through a proxy.
- Generally, a voter can cast their vote by personally visiting the polling booth in their respective constituency.
- The postal ballot facility available to soldiers serving in far-flung areas across the country.
- Under section 60 of Representation of People Act, 1951 postal ballot facility is given to the electors above the age of 80 years and electors with physical disability (benchmark) on request.
- Proxy voting is a form of voting whereby a member may delegate his or her voting power to a representative, to enable a vote in absence.
- The Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 2017 was proposed to allow overseas Indians to vote by proxy.
- However, the bill lapsed with the dissolution of the 16th Lok Sabha.

Present state of Non-Resident Indian voters

- Section 20A of the Representation of the People Act,1950 requires overseas electors to be **physically present** in their electoral constituencies to cast their votes.
- An overseas voter is 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.
- Once the person returns to India, they will have to re-register themselves as a general voter and obtain an EPIC card.
- An overseas voter is not issued with EPIC card.
- They vote in person at the polling station on production of his original passport.
- **Significance of NRI vote** – The NRIs are migrant labourers, mostly from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and northern parts of the country emerge as a decisive force in the country’s electoral politics.

References

1. The Hindu - Considering ways to facilitate NRIs to cast vote remotely, Centre tells SC
2. The Indian Express - Enabling NRIs, migrants to vote: SC disposes of plea as AG says efforts on to find solution
3. Election Commission of India - Overseas Electors

Amur falcons

The hunting, killing and sale of Amur falcons has been banned by the district magistrates of Tamenglong and Senapati districts in Manipur.

- Amur falcon (*Falco amurensis*) is the longest-distance **migrating raptors** in the world.
- South-Eastern Siberia and north China are the breeding grounds of the birds.
- The birds summer in this region between May and September.
- They arrive in **Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh** in October, with over two lakh coming to Manipur alone.
- At the end of November, they leave for South Africa where they stay till April.
- They play a vital role in **pest control** and in increasing the production of paddy and other crops.

Under Wildlife (protection) Act 1972, migratory birds cannot be hunted, sold or killed and it is a punishable offence.

- **Food** - Feeds on dragonflies that follow a similar migration path over Arabian Sea.
- **Threats** - Over harvesting from hunting and trapping, illegal trade and habitat loss from grassland degradation
- **Conservation**
    1. Wildlife (protection) Act 1972 - Schedule IV
    2. IUCN – Least Concern
    3. CMS – Appendix II

References

1. The Hindu - Amur falcon hunting banned in Manipur
2. CMS - Falco amurensis
3. World Migratory Bird Day - Amur falcon

Coronal Holes

NASA released an image taken by its Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO) where the Sun seems to be smiling.

- The Sun in the image seems to have two dark eyes, a bright round nose and a wide-open smile.
- These dark patches on the Sun are known as **coronal holes**.
- Coronal holes are **cooler denser regions** in the Sun's corona.
- They appear as irregular black patches when the sun is imaged in **ultraviolet light** or certain types of X-ray images.
- These regions also appear when fast solar wind gushes out into space.
- They are not periodical and can pop up on the solar surface at any time.
- **Similar Topics** - Sun Spots and Solar Flares

Solar Dynamics Observatory

- NASA launched Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO) in 2010.
- SDO is the first satellite in the NASA's **Living with a Star program**, which studies space weather.
- SDO studies how solar activity happens and how that impacts the Earth's magnetosphere.
- SDO takes observations of the Sun's interior, surface and atmosphere.
- SDO carries three instruments:

Helioseismic and Magnetic Imager (HMI)	HMI studies changes in the Sun's magnetic field by capturing images of the Sun in polarized light every 50 seconds.
Atmospheric Imaging Assembly (AIA)	AIA observes the solar corona in eight wavelengths of ultraviolet light every 10 seconds.
Extreme Ultraviolet Variability Experiment (EVE)	EVE determines every 10 seconds how much energy the Sun emits at extreme ultraviolet wavelengths.

References

1. The Indian Express - NASA image shows Sun 'smiling' down at us
2. CNN - Eerie image of the sun 'smiling' captured by NASA
3. NASA - SDO: Our Eye on the Sun

C-295 Aircraft

The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the C-295 transport aircraft manufacturing facility in Vadodara.

- The manufacturing facility to be set up by Tata (TASL) - Airbus joint venture.
- This is the **first time in India** a private sector company would be manufacturing a full aircraft.
- 56 number of C-295 will be procured by India for the Indian Air Force (IAF).
    a. 16 out of them will be procured from Spain in a 'fly-away' condition.

    b. The remaining 40 aircrafts will be manufactured in the Vadodara facility.
- The C-295 will replace the legacy Avro aircraft in IAF procured in the 1960s.
- The aircraft is also a potential replacement for the AN-32 aircraft, the workhorse of the IAF.

C-295 manufacturing is the first Make in India aerospace programme in the private sector involving the full development of a complete industrial ecosystem.

- **C-295 Specifics** - The C-295 is a **medium-lift** transport aircraft.
- The aircraft has a capacity of 5-10 tonne.
- The aircraft has a maximum speed of 480 kmph.
- It has very good fuel efficiency and can take off and land from short as well as unprepared runways.
- The aircraft is capable of performing special missions as well as disaster response and maritime patrol duties.
- The aircraft can airdrop Para troops and loads, and also be used for casualty or medical evacuation.

References

1. The Hindu - Explained | The C-295 and India's aircraft industry
2. Live Mint - PM Modi launches Rs 22,000 Cr project to build C-295 transport aircraft in Gujarat
3. The Times of India - C-295 military transport planes to boost India's defence sector

First Amendment to the Constitution

The Supreme Court has agreed to examine a PIL challenging changes made to the right to freedom of speech and expression by the first amendment to the Constitution in 1951.

- The first Amendment Act was enacted during the tenure of Pt. **Jawaharlal Nehru**.
- The first Amendment is called as **the Constitutional (First Amendment) Act, 1951.**
- The Amendment made the following changes to the Constitution.
- **Restriction on freedom of Speech** - *Article 19* of Fundamental Rights was amended to expand the grounds on which the State could restrict free speech in interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India.
- The grounds in which the reasonable restrictions can be made in the interest of

    a. The security of the State,
    b. Friendly relations with foreign States,
    c. Public order, decency or morality,
    d. In relation to contempt of court, defamation,
    e. Incitement to an offence.

- **Reservation in Educational Institutions -** *Article 15* of Fundamental Rights was amended to allow the State to reserve seats in educational institutions for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.

- **Ninth Schedule** - *Article 31A* was inserted, creating the Ninth Schedule to the Constitution.
- Laws contained in this Ninth Schedule would be shielded from judicial review to prevent the courts from striking down laws intended to abolish the Zamindari system as unconstitutional.
- **Citizenship as criteria** - *Article 376* was amended to make 'Citizen of India' as an eligibility criteria for appointment as Chief Justice of such High Court, or as Chief Justice or other Judge of any other High Court.

References

1. The Indian Express - SC agrees to hear plea challenging first amendment to Constitution
2. National Portal of India - The Constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1951

