

Prelim Bits 03-08-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Anti-discrimination norms in universities

Centre forms expert panel to revise anti-discrimination norms in higher universities.

- **Education Ministry** - It has constituted an expert committee to revisit its regulations and guidelines on anti-discrimination.
- It will revisit anti-discrimination guidelines against Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Other Backward Classes, Persons with Disabilities, and other minorities in higher educational institutions.
- The Supreme Court had earlier asked the government to clarify the affirmative steps it had taken to make campuses free of caste discrimination.
- **UGC Regulations, 2012** - Notably, the UGC had in 2012 issued the *UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutes) Regulations, 2012*.
- This covered all forms of discrimination, provided for liaison officers to check reservation fulfilment, and gave mandates for strict grievance redressal cells to address concerns of discrimination.
- **Not implemented** - However, these guidelines have not been fully implemented in several higher educational institutions, including lot of the Indian Institutes of Technology.
- The IIT-Delhi in fact got the mandate for its SC/ST Cell passed only in 2023, providing for a liaison officer and anti-discrimination officers.

Reference

1. [The Hindu - Expert panel to revise anti-discrimination norms in higher universities](#)

Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme

Government kicks off contractual dispute settlement scheme, which allows contractors and suppliers to government and its undertakings can file claims by October 31.

Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme II

- **Vendors** - The Centre on August 2 launched a settlement scheme for contractual disputes with vendors or suppliers to government and its undertakings.
- The scheme set an October 31 deadline for firms to submit their claims for consideration.
- **Budget** - The scheme is termed Vivad se Vishwas II — (Contractual Disputes)' in this year's Union Budget and the Department of Expenditure had indicated the guidelines for its operation.
- **Cutoff date** - For disputes to be considered for settlement, the aggrieved party should have secured an arbitral award by January 31, 2023, with the cut-off date set at April

30 in case of Court orders.

- **Available to** - The scheme will apply to all domestic contractual disputes where one of the parties is either the Government of India or an organisation working under its control.
- **GeM** - The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) has developed a dedicated web page for implementation of this scheme and eligible claims shall be processed only through GeM.

Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme I

- In the 2020-21 Budget, this scheme was introduced to put an end to pending direct tax disputes at various appellate forums paving way for efficient revenue collection.
- It waives of the interest, penalty & prosecution for those persons who settle their dues by March 31, 2021.
- It is modelled on the lines of Sabka Vishwas scheme, which met with reasonable success in closing numerous litigations in indirect tax demands.
- As per the Standing Committee on Finance, there are 4,83,000 disputes cases pending before the Commissioner (Appeals), the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, High Courts & Supreme Court.
- The *Direct Tax Vivad se Vishwas Act, 2020* was enacted on 17th March, 2020 with the objective:
 1. To reduce pending income tax litigation
 2. To generate timely revenue for the Government
 3. To benefit taxpayers by providing them peace of mind, certainty and savings because of time and resources that would otherwise be spent on the long-drawn and vexatious litigation process.

Reference

1. [The Hindu - Government kicks off contractual dispute settlement scheme](#)

Einstein Cross

Astronomers have discovered a stunning, rare example of an Einstein cross splitting and magnifying light from the far depths of the universe.

The image

- In the image, one foreground elliptical galaxy, around 6 billion light-years from Earth, has warped and quadrisect a bright beam of light from a background galaxy about 11 billion light-years from our planet.
- The resulting pattern shows four smudges of blue light haloed around the orange of the foreground galaxy, a rare arrangement.
- The background light likely comes from a quasar, a young galaxy whose supermassive black hole at its core gobbles up enormous amounts of matter.



Einstein Cross

- Einstein predicted the existence of these crosses back in 1915.
- **General Relativity** - Einstein's theory of general relativity describes the way massive objects warp the fabric of the universe, called space-time.
- **Gravity** - Einstein discovered, gravity, is not produced by an unseen force; rather, it is simply our experience of space-time curving and distorting in the presence of matter and energy.
- **Space curve** - This curved space, in turn, sets the rules for how energy and matter move.
- Even though light travels in a straight line, light moving through a highly curved region of space-time, like the space around enormous galaxies, also travels in a curve.
- This bends around the galaxy and splaying out into a halo.
- What this halo looks like depends on the strength of the galaxy's gravity and the perspective of the observer.
- **Einstein ring** - In this case, Earth, the lensing galaxy and the quasar have aligned to perfectly duplicate the quasar's light, arranging them along a so-called Einstein ring.
- The general effect is known as *gravitational lensing, and this specific case is known as the Einstein Cross.*

References

1. [Live Science - Rare 'Einstein cross' warps light from one of the universe's brightest objects](#)
2. [NASA - The Einstein Cross-Gravitational Lens](#)

Blue Supermoon

There will be two supermoons in August and one of them will be only happen again nine years later.

- The month of August will bear witness to two supermoons, one on August 1, and another one on August 30.

Supermoon

- Supermoon refers to when the *Moon's orbit is closest to the Earth at the same time the Moon is full.*
- When that happens, it appears slightly brighter and larger than a regular full moon.

Sturgeon Supermoon

- **Farmer's Almanac** - The full moon on August 1 will be a sturgeon supermoon, according to Farmer's Almanac.

Farmers' Almanac is an annual American periodical that has been in continuous publication since 1818.

- **Origin** - It gets its name from the Native American tribes who found that the giant sturgeons from the Great Lakes were most easily caught during this time of the

summer.

- **Other names** - The sturgeon moon is also referred to as a green corn moon, grain moon, flying-up moon, harvest moon, ricing moon, black cherries moon, and mountain shadow moon.

Blue Supermoon

- There are two kinds of blue moons; one definition is for when a full moon appears for the second time in a single month.
- Despite the expression that comes from it, a blue moon is not rare.
- Full moons are separated by 29 days and since most months are 30 or 31 days long, it is quite possible for two full moons to fit within a month.
- In fact, it happens every two and a half years on average, however, a Supermoon coinciding with a blue moon is a much rarer occurrence.
- The next time such an occurrence will take place only in August 2032.

References

1. [The Indian Express - Blue supermoon in August will only happen again 9 years later](#)
2. [CNN - Double-supermoon display in August](#)

UNESCO heritage danger list

Climate crisis and tourism may place Venice on UNESCO heritage danger list.

Venice, Italy

- The Italian city of Venice should be added to a list of world heritage sites in danger, UNESCO have stated in a new report.
- Kyiv and Lviv in Ukraine are also on the recommendation for sites to be put on the danger list this year.
- Venice has been grappling for years with too many tourists and the effects of climate change.
- The UNESCO World Heritage property comprises the city of Venice and its lagoon situated in the Veneto region of northeast Italy.

Heritage danger list

- The List contains world heritage sites that are threatened by various conditions such as:
 - Natural disasters, armed conflicts, wars, pollution, unchecked urbanization, poaching, and uninhibited tourist development.
- UNESCO maintains the list of World Heritage Sites recognizing sites of distinctive cultural or physical importance, which is considered of outstanding value to humanity.
- According to the World Heritage Convention, the World Heritage Committee (that administers the Convention) adds World Heritage Sites to the danger list

Danger sites in India

- **Group of Monuments at Hampi** - Listed from 1999 to 2006.
- The site was listed because of the partial construction of two cable-suspended bridges within the protected archaeological areas.
- **Manas Wildlife Sanctuary** - Listed from 1992 to 2011.
- The reason was poaching and damage to the park's infrastructure and a reduction in the population of the Greater One Horned Rhino following an invasion by militants of the Bodo tribe in 1992.

References

1. [Down To Earth - Venice on UNESCO heritage danger list](#)
2. [UNESCO - List of World Heritage in Danger](#)

