# Prelim Bits 22-08-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

## Justice Gita Mittal Committee

*Supreme Court panel flags reconstruction of lost essential documents of victims as the first healing step in Manipur.*

### The Committee

- The committee was constituted to supervise, intervene and monitor relief and rehabilitation, restoration of homesteads, religious places of worships, better relief work, etc. in Manipur.
- The committee is led by former Jammu & Kashmir High Court Chief Justice Gita Mittal, the committee includes Justices (retd) Shalini P Joshi and Asha Menon.
- This move aims to oversee various aspects beyond the investigation, such as relief, rehabilitation, and compensation for those affected by the violence.
- The committee's role extends beyond investigation, encompassing vital aspects of recovery and rebuilding.
- The primary goal behind the committee is to restore public confidence, reinforce faith in the rule of law, and rebuild trust within the affected community.
- The committee has filed three separate reports in the Supreme Court after meeting stakeholders on August 19.

### The Reports

- **First report –** The first of the three reports submitted by the committee highlights the loss of essential documentation of the residents of Manipur who have been dis-housed.
- The committee suggests the appointment of a nodal officer to take charge of the reconstruction of these documents.
- **Second report –** The committee’s second report raised concerns on the Manipur Victim Compensation Scheme (MVCS).
- The committee says the MVCS needs to be substantially improved.
- The MVCS should be in the same league as the schemes framed by the National Legal Services Authority (NLSA).
- **Third Report –** The committee submitted a proposal for appointment of domain experts to facilitate its work.

### Manipur Victim Compensation Scheme (MVCS)

- **Victim Compensation Scheme (VCS) –** Compensation to persons groundlessly arrested is under Section-358.

***Section 358 –*** *Whoever assaults or uses criminal force to any person on grave*

*and sudden provocation given by that person, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month, or with fine which may extend to two hundred rupees, or with both.*

- The Government introduced the Central Victim Compensation Fund (CVCF) Scheme to enable support to victims of rape, acid attacks, human trafficking, women killed or injured in cross border firing.
- **The Manipur scheme –** It provides that if a victim of violence has received benefits under any other scheme, then they would not receive any compensation under the state victim compensation scheme.
- **NALSA scheme –** The benefit received under other schemes would be taken into consideration while determining the extent of benefits that would be additionally provided to the victims of violence.

**References**


1. The Hindu – SC panel flags reconstruction of MVCS
2. Times of India – SC panel flags inadequacies in MVCS


## Malabar Exercise

*The 27th edition of Exercise MALABAR concluded on the East Coast of Australia off Sydney.*

### The Exercise

- Malabar Exercise is a multilateral naval exercise that includes simulated war games and combat maneuvers.
- **Aim** - To demonstrate the synergy, coordination and inter-operability among the participating navies.
- **Formation** - Started in 1992 as a bilateral exercise between the navies of India and the US.
- **Current Members** - Exercise Malabar is a naval exercise involving the United States, Japan, Australia and India as permanent partners.
- These countries are also members of the QUAD grouping

### QUAD

- The Quad, officially the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, is a group of four countries: Australia, India, Japan and the US.
- Maritime cooperation began after the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004.
- However now, Quad works on a far broader agenda, which includes tackling security, economic, and health issues.

### 2023 Exercise

- The Indian Navy was represented by indigenously built Destroyer INS Kolkata, Frigate INS Sahyadri and P8I Maritime Patrol Aircraft.
- The exercise saw participation of Ships, Submarines and aircraft from the Indian Navy

(IN), Royal Australian Navy (RAN), Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF) and the US Navy (USN).
- Exercise MALABAR 23 was conducted in two phases, which included a harbor phase and a sea phase.

**References**

1. PIB – Exercise Malabar -23 Concludes
2. India Today – Naval exercise 'Malabar' of QUAD nations concludes

## ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA)

*India, ASEAN agree to review FTA by 2025.*

- India and the ASEAN countries reached an agreement to review their free trade pact for goods.
- Under the agreement they set 2025 as target for concluding the review aimed at addressing the asymmetry in bilateral trade.
- The review of the AITIGA was a long-standing demand of Indian businesses and the early commencement of the review would help in making trade facilitative and mutually beneficial.
- The AITIGA review will now be taken up at the India-ASEAN Leaders' Summit scheduled in early September.

### AITIGA

- The ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (the Agreement) is a trade deal between the ten member states of ASEAN and India.
- ASEAN and India signed the Agreement at the 7th ASEAN Economic Ministers-India Consultations in Bangkok, Thailand in 2009.
- The Agreement, which came into effect in 2010, is sometimes referred to as the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement.
- The Agreement has led to steadily increasing trade between ASEAN and India since its signing.
- In 2019-20, trade between India and ASEAN was worth US$86 billion.
- Though this represented a decline from US$97 billion in 2018-19 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was an increase from US$81.3 billion in the 2017-18 financial year.

**References**

1. The Hindu – India, ASEAN agree to review FTA by 2025
2. ASEAN Briefing – The ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement

## Blue Bonds & Debt-for-nature swap deal

*Gabon announces $500 million debt-for-nature swap deal for marine conservation.*

### Debt-for-nature swaps

- It refers to the process of reducing a developing country's debt burden in exchange for guaranteed finance for nature.
- This concept has its roots in the 1980 debt crisis.
- The bond allows developing countries to get financial aid from financial institutions in developed countries.
- The developed countries will pay the debt of the developing country, when the later agree to spend money on conservation of natural resources.
- Usually banks in developed countries buy the debts of such counties and replace them with new loans which mature later.
- These have lower interest rates.

## Gabon's Deal

- Gabon announces $500 million debt-for-nature swap deal for marine conservation.
- This is the world's 2nd largest deal signed under blue bond to refinance the country's debt and conserve marine resources.
- In Africa, it is the largest such deal signed by any country to refinance its debt and conserve marine resources.

*In May 2023, the world's first and largest debt swap to conserve oceans was signed by **Ecuador**, which had exchanged $1.6 billion denominated bonds for a new $656 million loan.*

- With this move Gabon aims to refinance $500 million in national debt toward marine conservation efforts in the country.

## Blue Bonds

- Blue bonds are pioneering financial instruments that are designed to support sustainable marine and fisheries projects.
- They are a subset of the green bonds.

*The World Bank defines blue bonds as a debt instrument issued by governments, development banks or others to raise capital from impact investors to finance marine and ocean-based projects that have positive environmental, economic and climate benefits.*

- Back in October 2018, the Republic of Seychelles launched the world's first sovereign blue bond.

**References**


1. Down To Earth – Gabon announces debt-for-nature swap deal
2. Guardian – Are debt-for-nature swaps the way forward?
3. UNDP – The World's 1st Publicly Offered Sovereign Blue Bond

## HD 45166

*A Star, HD 45166, that could become the strongest magnet in the universe has been discovered by astronomers.*

- HD 45166, is a giant helium-rich star that is several times larger than the sun and is located 3,000 light years away from Earth.
- It was spotted from several telescopes from all over the planet.
- HD 45166 has a remarkable feature: it has the most powerful magnetic field ever detected in a massive star, 43,000 gauss, to be precise.
- The star is also part of a binary system, meaning that it has another star orbiting around it.

## Magnetars

- Magnetars are neutron stars.
- In a typical neutron star, the magnetic field is trillions of times that of the Earth's magnetic field.
- However, in a magnetar, the magnetic field is another 1000 times stronger.
- Magnetars are the most magnetic objects in the universe and are so powerful that they can wipe every credit card in existence on Earth if they were at the same distance as the moon.
- They are also very rare: only 31 magnetars have been confirmed so far.

**References**


1. The Indian Express – HD 45166, strongest magnet in the universe
2. News Room Post – Star bound to become strongest magnet of Universe



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