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## WASP-62b

- This is an exo-planet, which was first found in **2012**.
- It is 575 light years away and orbits its star in just four-and-half days.
- For the first time, astronomers have come across a huge planet with about half the mass of Jupiter which is cloudless and unblocked by haze.

## One Nation One Ration Card Scheme

- Finance Minister announced the nation-wide rollout of 'One Nation, One Ration Card' (ONORC) system by **March 2021**.
- In the present system, a ration cardholder can buy food grains only from a Fair Price Shop (FPS) that has been assigned to her in her locality.
- However, this will change once the ONORC system becomes operational.
- This system, based on a technological solution, will identify a beneficiary through **biometric authentication** on electronic Point of Sale (**ePoS**) devices installed at the FPSs.
- This will enable the person to purchase the quantity of food grains to which she is entitled under the National Food Security Act, (NFSA) 2013.
- Under the **NFSA**, people are entitled to buy subsidized food grain from their designated FPS of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- The **subsidized food grains** are at the rate of, rice at Rs 3/kg, wheat at Rs 2/kg, and coarse grains at Re 1/kg.

## Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act

- Uttar Pradesh Police booked a farmer's relatives who had died during the farmers' agitation in Delhi, under The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, after his body was draped in the national flag.
- As per the Act, disrespect to the National Flag includes, among other things, using it as a drapery in any form whatsoever except in State funerals or armed forces or other para-military forces funerals.
- Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act penalises,
    1. The desecration of or insult to national symbols, such as the National Flag, the Constitution, National Anthem, and Indian map,
    2. Contempt of the Constitution of India.
- Section 2 of the Act says that whoever insults the National Flag or the Indian

Constitution shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to **three years**, or with **fine**, or with both.

### Flag Code of India

- The Flag Code of India, 2002 reads that the Flag shall not be used as a drapery in any form whatsoever except in State / Military / Central Paramilitary Forces funerals hereinafter provided.
- It also says that on the above occasions too, the flag shall be draped over the bier or coffin with the saffron towards the head of the bier or coffin.
- The Flag shall not be lowered into the grave or burnt in the pyre.
- The flag can only be used during a funeral if it is accorded the status of a state funeral. The state funerals are held when people below pass away,
    1. People from police and armed forces,
    2. People who are holding or have held office of President, Vice-President, Prime Minister, Cabinet Minister, Chief Minister.
- The status of a state funeral can be accorded in case of death of people not belonging to the above-mentioned categories by state government.

## Democracy Index 2020

- This index report titled "Democracy in sickness and in health?" was released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
- [The EIU is the world's leading resource for economic and business research, forecasting and analysis.]
- Democracy Index had classified 167 countries, as full democracies, flawed democracies, hybrid regimes and authoritarian regimes.
- It looks at the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on freedom and democracy around the world.
- India had slipped two places to **53$^{rd}$ position** in the Democracy Index.
- This is due to the democratic backsliding by authorities and crackdowns on civil liberties have led to a further decline in the country's ranking.
- India has been classified as a **'flawed democracy**' along with countries such as the U.S., France, Belgium and Brazil.

## ADR Report

- The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), a poll rights group, has released a report.
- The report says that the number of registered unrecognised political parties has increased two-fold from 2010 to 2019 (10 years).
- Between 2018 and 2019, it increased by over 9.8% while between 2013 and 2014, it increased by 18%.

- **Basis** - Election Commission of India issued guidelines on "Transparency and Accountability in party funds and election expenditure - submission of reports by unrecognised political parties".
- This is applicable to all political parties w.e.f October 1, 2014.
- As per these guidelines, all unrecognised parties are required to submit their requisite reports in the office of the respective state CEOs.
- In view of the above, this report by ADR analyses the status of submission of contribution reports of registered unrecognised parties between FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19.

## Chamoli Disaster

- A major disaster struck the Joshimath area of the Chamoli district of Uttrakhand, when a **glacier broke** after an avalanche.
- The Rishiganga Power Project had been damaged due a breach caused by the glacier in Tapovan area.
- **Reduced snowfall** in the higher elevations this winter seems to have played a major part in the disaster.
- Some 8,800 glacial lakes in the Himalayas are spread across countries and more than 200 of these have been classified as dangerous.
- Scientific evidence suggests that floods originating in the Himalayas are caused largely by **landslides** that temporarily block Mountain Rivers.
- The Himalayas are **warming faster** than other mountain ranges and the increased use of reinforced concrete in building construction is likely to create a heat-island effect and thus add to regional warming.

**Source: PIB, The Indian Express, The Hindu, Economic Times, Down To Earth**

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