UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 08-02-2025

Governor's Role in Lawmaking

Why in News?

The Supreme Court recently continued to hear petitions filed by the Tamil Nadu government raising questions on the scope of the Governor's powers in the legislative process.

- The Constitution envisages the office of the Governor as an ***apolitical*** entity.
- Governor is under Article 168 a part of the legislature and is bound by the constitutional regime.
- Over the years, the SC in several rulings has limited the Governor's exercise of the powers in a permissive manner.
- Broadly, the Governor is bound to act on the ***aid and advice of a state's Council of Ministers.***
- However, there are a few exceptions to this.
- **Exceptions**
    - **Article 356-** Recommending the imposition of the President's rule
    - **Article 200-** Granting assent to Bills.
- **Article 200 -** After a Bill has been passed by a state Assembly, it is presented to the Governor for her assent. Article 200 envisages 3 scenarios where the Governor can
    1. Give assent to the Bill, in which case it becomes state law.
    2. Withhold assent to the Bill and send it back for reconsideration by the state Assembly.
    3. Reserve the Bill for consideration by the President of India.
- If the Governor withholds assent and sends the Bill back for reconsideration, the Assembly can amend the Bill or pass it again as is.
- When the particular Bill is presented to the Governor again, she shall not withhold assent therefrom, mandating the Bill's passage.
    - **Exception -** In cases where the Bill, in the opinion of the Governor, could derogate from the powers of the High Court.
- In that case, the Bill shall be reserved for the President's consideration.

Tamil Nadu dispute

- RN Ravi was appointed as Governor in September 2021.
- Since then, the TN government has repeatedly raised concerns about the Governor withholding assent and delaying the passage of Bills passed by the state assembly.
- In November 2023, the state government moved the SC, claiming that Governor Ravi had been withholding assent on several Bills, the earliest of which had been pending since January 2023.
- The SC replied that Governors ***cannot be oblivious*** to the fact that they are not

elected representatives of the people.
- Around two weeks later, the Tamil Nadu Assembly re-enacted the pending Bills.
- However, Governor Ravi referred two of these Bills to the President for her consideration, and withheld assent for the rest.

Reference

The Indian Express | TN govt-Governor dispute case

Dibru Saikhowa National Park

Why in News?

Recently the Environment Ministry's forest advisory committee recommended the R&D proposal on Extended Reach Drilling technology subject to the condition that it will be used purely for research purposes

- Dibru Saikhowa National Park is a national park and biosphere reserve located in *Assam.*
- It is the ***largest salix swamp forest*** in northeast India.
- It is an identified Important Bird Area (IBA).
- The area was declared as Dibru Reserved Forest in 1890. In 1929, Saikhowa Reserve Forest was declared.
- It was declared as wildlife sanctuary in 1995. In 1997, Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve was declared.
- Originally created to help conserve the habitat of the ***rare white-winged wood duck.***
- **Rivers -** The park is bounded by the Brahmaputra and Lohit Rivers in the north and Dibru River in the south.
- **Forest type -** Dibru-Saikhowa comprises of semi-evergreen forests, deciduous forests, littoral and swamp forests and patches of wet evergreen forests.
- The Park is renowned for natural regeneration of ***Salix trees.*** It is famed for ***Ferral horses.***
- **Fauna -** 36 species of mammals have so far been recorded.

Tiger	Squirrels	Hoolock Gibbon
Elephant	Gangetic Dolphin	Wild Pigs
Leopard	Slow Loris	Sambar
Jungle Cat	Assamese Macague	Barking Deer
Bears	Rhesus Macaque	Water Buffalo
Small Indian Civet	Capped Langur	

- **Birds –** It have more than 382 species of Birds.

Greater Adjutant Stork	Large Whistling Teal	Spot Billed Pelican
Lesser Adjutant Stork	Grey leg Goose	**White Winged Wood Duck**
Greater Crested Grebe	Grey-headed Fishing Eagle	Baer's Pochard
Large Cormorant	Griffon Vulture	Greater Spotted Eagle
Open bill Stork	Osprey	Pale Capped Pigeon

Black necked Stork	Crested Serpent Eagle	Great Pied Hornbill
Marsh Babbler	Jerdon's Babbler	Black Breasted Parrot bill

References

1. The Indian Express | Dibru Saikhowa National Park
2. Assam Govt | Dibru-Saikhowa National Park

National Commission for Safai Karamcharis

Why in News?

Union Cabinet has recently approved the extension the tenure of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) for 3 years beyond 2025.

> *Safai Karamchari means a person engaged in, or employed for, manually carrying human excreta or any sanitation work.*

- The National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) was constituted on 12th August, 1994 as a ***statutory body,*** for a period of 3 years.
- It was subsequently extended up to 2002 and 2004 and extended so many times until recently in 2025.
- The Commission is acting as a ***Non-Statutory body*** of the *Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment* from 2004.
- National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Act, 1993, was enacted in September, 1993 and a statutory National Commission for Safai Karmcharis was first constituted in August, 1994.
- **Functions -** Recommend to the Central Government specific programs of action towards elimination of inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities of Safai Karmacharis.
- Study and evaluate implementation of the programmes and schemes relating to the social and economic rehabilitation of Safai Karmacharis and scavengers in particular.
- Investigate specific grievances and take ***suo-motu notice*** of matter relating to non-implementation of
    - Programmes or schemes in respect of any group of Safai Karmacharis,
    - Decisions, guidelines etc. Aimed at mitigating the hardships of Safai Karmacharis;
    - Measures for the social and economic upliftment of Safai Karmacharis etc,
- Study and monitor the working conditions, including those relating to ***health safety and wages*** of Safai Karmacharis,
- Make reports to the Central or State Government on any matter concerning Safai Karmacharis, taking into account any difficulties or disabilities being encountered by Safai Karmacharis; and
- Any other matter which may be referred to it by the Central Government.
- Under the provisions of the ***Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013*** (MS Act 2013), NCSK shall perform the

functions namely:
    - To monitor the implementation of the Act
    - To enquire into complaints regarding contravention of the provisions of this Act and to convey its findings to concerned authorities with recommendations requiring further action;
    - To advice the Central and State Govt for effective implementation of the provisions of this Act; and
    - To take suo-motu notice of matter relating to non-implementation of this Act.
- It is the ***only body keeping track*** of sewer deaths in India.

Reference

PIB | National Commission for Safai Karamcharis

Rhododendron Wattii

Why in News?

Researchers have identified the last tree which is standing in a popular trekking destination in Nagaland.

- **Rhododendron Wattii** – It is a ***small tree*** attaining a maximum height of 25 feet.

  Rhododendron *has more than 1,000 species of worldwide and the northeastern region has 129 of the 132 taxa recorded in India.*

- It is an *evergreen plant*, and leaf renewal occurs throughout the year.
- **1st identified by** – Sir George Watt from Nagaland's Japfu Hill range during his 1882-85 survey.
- **Located in** – Dzukou Valley, Nagpur which extends into the adjoining Manipur.
- **Habitat** – It grows on ***rocky hill slopes*** with other Rhododendron species, dwarf bamboo, mosses, and ferns.
- **Distribution** – Endemic to Manipur and Nagaland.



- **Seed** – They are fusiform and winged, which retain viability for about one year when

stored at normal temperature and humidity.
- No seedlings were observed in its natural habitat.
- **Seeding capacity** – It produces numerous seeds after the flowers are pollinated mainly by the fire-tailed sunbird and bumble bees.
- **Leaves** – They are obovate to oblong, apex rounded, apiculate, base rounded, glabrous above, with a sparse whitish felted indumentum beneath.
- **Flowers** – It present in trusses of 18-25 flowers are tubular-campanulate, corolla 6-lobed, pink with darker flecks and purplish basal patches.
- **Flowering period** – End of February to April.
- **Fruit** – It is a capsule that is oblong, grooved, and dehisce from the top by longitudinal slits.
- **Fruiting period** – April to December.
- **Factors responsible for disappearance**
    - Poor seedling survivability
    - Anthropogenic activities
    - Wildfires in a Dzukou valley burnt for 2 weeks in 2020-21.
- **Conservation status – IUCN status** – *Vulnerable*.

References

1. The Hindu| Rhododendron Wattii Tree in Nagaland
2. Threatened Taxa| Rhododendron Wattii

One Liners 08-02-2025

Polity & Governance

Post Office Savings Account (POSA)

• **POSA** – It fostering savings as it reaches out to the remotest part of India which has a limited reach of banking services.
• **Nodal Ministry** – Ministry of Communications.
• **Minimum deposit** – Only with a cash of *Rs. 500*.
• **Interest rate** – 4% per annum.
• **Feature –** It facilitates *easy account transfer* from one post office to another with no lock-in or maturity requirements.
• **Linkage Process** – India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) savings account allows the customer to link the account with POSA.

PM-DevINE Scheme

• **PM-DevINE** – Prime Minister's Development Initiative For North East Region.
• **Launched in** – *2022*.
• **Nodal Ministry** – Ministry of Development of North-East Region.
• **Aim** – At rapid and holistic development of the North- east region by funding infrastructure and social development projects, based on felt needs of the States.
• **Timeline** – *4 years* (2022-2026).

Search And Rescue Aid Tool (SARAT) Version 2

• **Launched in** – *2016*.
• **Developed by** – Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS).
• **Nodal Ministry** – Ministry of Earth Sciences.
• **Objective** – To facilitating the search and rescue operations in the seas to locate individuals/vessels in distress in the shortest possible time.
• **Features** – It directly anchored to the Last Known Position (LKP) of the object as opposed to the point with the minimum longitude in the search area.
• Visualization of individual and mean particle trajectories, finer and distinct color-coded search regions, and a marker identifying the LKP.

Deocha Pachami Coal Mining Project

• **Led by** – Birbhum district, West Bengal.
• **Deocha Pachami** – It is the *2nd largest coal block in the world* with a reserve of 1,240 million tonnes of coal and 675 MT of basalt.
• It begins with basalt mining or primary cleaning of land, promising jobs and fair compensation for locals.
• **1st phase** – It will be carried out, the thickness of basalt is between 100 metres and 350 metres.

Swadesh Darshan 2.0 Scheme

• **Launched in** – *2015*.
• **Nodal Ministry** – Ministry of Tourism.
• **Mantra** – Vocal for local.
• **Objective** – To develop sustainable and responsible tourism destinations in the country.
• **Coverage** – Tourism and allied infrastructure, tourism services, human capital development and destination management.

Mission for Cotton Productivity

• **Launched in** – *2025.*
• **Nodal Ministry** – Ministry of Textiles.
• It is also known as *Cotton Mission*.
• **Objective** – To facilitate significant improvements in productivity and sustainability of cotton farming, and promote extra-long staple cotton varieties.
• It will benefit lakhs of cotton growing farmers as the best of science & technology support will be provided to farmers.
• **Timeline** – *5 years*.

Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses

• **Launched in** – *2025.*
• **Nodal Ministry** – Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare.
• **Objective** – It is with a special focus on *Tur, Urad and Masoor*.
• **Responsible agencies** – National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED)
- National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India (NCCF).
• They will procure these 3 pulses, as much as offered during the next 4 years from farmers who register with these agencies and enter into agreements.
• **Timeline** – *6 years*.

Swavalambini
• **Launched in** – *2025*.
• **Launched by** – Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and NITI Aayog.
• **Concept** – It is a *women entrepreneurship programme* for the northeast states of Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram.
• **Aim** – At empowering female students in select *Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)* in the northeast.
• **Feature** – It equipping them with the essential entrepreneurial mind-set, resources, and mentorship they need to succeed in their entrepreneurial journey.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 (PMKVY 4.0)
• **Launched in** – *2015*.
• **Umbrella scheme** – Skill India Programme (SIP).
• **Nodal Ministry** – Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
• **Objectives** – To encourage and promote skill development by providing free short duration skill training and incentivizing this by providing monetary rewards to youth for skill certification.
• **Targeted beneficiaries** – 15-59 years of age.
• **Timeline** – *4 years* (2022-2026).

Grameen Credit Score
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recently announced Grameen Credit Score.
• **Developed by –** Public sector banks.
• **Aim –** To formalize transactions within ***self-help groups (SHGs)*** by incorporating them into India's central credit system.
• To foster financial inclusion for *women entrepreneurs* within self-help groups, providing them with the essential support they need to grow their businesses and improve their lives.
• This will enable leading financial institutions to assess the creditworthiness of SHG members more effectively.

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