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Judgment on Right to Protest

- Recently, the Supreme Court (SC) has upheld the right to peaceful protest against the law but also cleared that public ways and public spaces cannot be occupied and that too indefinitely.
- The Supreme Court has said that occupying public places for protests is not acceptable and such a space cannot be occupied indefinitely.
- High points of the judgment are as follows

1. The judgment upheld the right to peaceful protest against a law but made it unequivocally clear that public ways and public spaces cannot be occupied, and that too indefinitely.
2. In a democracy, the rights of free speech and peaceful protest were indeed "treasured", they were to be encouraged and respected.
3. But these rights were also subject to reasonable restrictions imposed in the interest of sovereignty, integrity and public order, Police regulations also weighed in.
4. Fundamental rights do not live in isolation, the right of the protester has to be balanced with the right of the commuter and they have to co-exist in mutual respect.
5. It highlighted that the State or UT administrations have the entire responsibility to prevent encroachments in public spaces and should not wait for courts to pass suitable orders.
6. The verdict also dwelt on the merits and demerits of technology impacting social movements.

Provisions in the constitution

- The Constitution guarantees the right to protest and express dissent, but with an obligation towards certain duties.
- Article 19 confers upon citizens the right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) and right to assemble peacefully without arms under Article 19(1)(b).
- These rights, in cohesion, enable every citizen to assemble peacefully and protest against action or inaction of the State..
- However, these rights are also subject to reasonable restrictions

mentioned under Article 19(2), imposed in the interest of sovereignty, integrity and public order with the help of police regulations.

Noble Prize in Chemistry

- Nobel Chemistry Prize has been awarded for the gene-editing technique known as the CRISPR-Cas9 DNA snipping “scissors”.
- Emmanuelle Charpentier of France and Jennifer Doudna of the U.S. will be receiving the prize, this is the first time a Nobel science prize has gone to a women-only team.
- Using CRISPR-Cas9 DNA snipping “scissors”, researchers can change the DNA of animals, plants and microorganisms with extremely high precision.
- Its simplicity has often been compared to the ‘Cut-Copy-Paste’ mechanism in any word processor or ‘Find-Replace’ mechanism, while its uses can potentially transform human beings, and all other life forms.
- In essence, the technology works in a simple way — it locates the specific area in the genetic sequence which has been diagnosed to be the cause of the problem, cuts it out, and replaces it with a new and correct sequence that no longer causes the problem.
- The technology replicates a natural defence mechanism in some bacteria that uses a similar method to protect itself from virus attacks.
- It can be used in the following

1. Potentially eliminate genetic, and other, diseases,
2. Multiply agricultural production,
3. Correct deformities,
4. Producing ‘designer babies’,
5. Bringing cosmetic perfection.
6. In effect, anything that is linked with functioning of the genes can be corrected, or ‘edited’.

Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2020

- Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report is biennial report of the World Bank.
- It provides the latest and most accurate estimates on trends in global poverty and shared prosperity.
- According to the report “new poor” will be the following

a. Be more urban poor.
b. Be more engaged in informal services and manufacturing and less in

agriculture.

c. Live in congested urban settings and work in the sectors most affected by lockdowns and mobility restrictions.

- Highlight estimates of the report are as follows

1. The COVID-19 pandemic is estimated to push an additional 88 million to 115 million people into extreme poverty this year, with the total rising to as many as 150 million by 2021, depending on the severity of the economic contraction.
2. It mentions that Covid-19 can add around 27-40 million new poor in Sub-Saharan Africa and around 49-57 million in South Asia region.
3. The pandemic and global recession may cause over 1.4% of the world's population to fall into extreme poverty.
4. Extreme poverty is defined as living on less than $1.90 a day.
5. The World Bank measures poverty lines of $3.20 and $5.50, and also a multidimensional spectrum that includes access to education and basic infrastructure.
6. Global extreme poverty rate is projected to rise by around 1.3% to 9.2% in 2020.
7. If the pandemic would not have been there, the poverty rate was expected to drop to 7.9% in 2020.

Appointment of RBI deputy Governor

- The Reserve Bank's affairs are governed by a Central Board of Directors (CBD).
- Members of the board are appointed by the Government of India in accordance with Section 8 of the Reserve Bank of India Act.
- The CBD as the administrative apex body of the RBI contains two sets of directors; the official directors and non-official directors.
- The official directors comprised of the Governor and not more than four Deputy Governors who are appointed/nominated by the Central Government under the RBI Act. RBI Governors is thus appointed by the Government
- **Structure:** The central bank has four Deputy Governors of which two are appointed from outside – one a commercial banker and the other, an economist.
- The remaining two are promoted from within the RBI.
- **Selection:** The Financial Sector Regulatory Appointment Search Committee (FSRASC) is responsible for selecting the candidate.
- The RBI Act doesn't mention any specific qualification for the governor.

- **Term/ Tenure:** The Governor and Deputy Governors hold office for periods not exceeding five years.
- The term of the governor may be fixed by the government at the time of his appointment.
- Governor/Deputy Governors is eligible for reappointment or extension.
- **Appointments:** Previously Deputy Governors were appointed by a panel headed by RBI Governor.
- But now they are appointed based on recommendations of the Financial Sector Regulatory Appointment Search Committee (FSRASC) headed by Cabinet Secretary that also includes RBI Governor.
- Recently Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of RBI's senior-most Executive Director M. Rajeshwar Rao as RBI Deputy Governor.

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

- The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from POPs.
- The convention calls to ban nine of the dirty dozen chemicals (key POPs), limit the use of DDT to malaria control, and curtail inadvertent production of dioxins and furans.
- The convention listed twelve distinct chemicals in three categories:

1. **Eight pesticides -** Aldrin, Chlordane, DDT, Dieldrin, Endrin, Heptachlor, Mirex and Toxaphene.
2. **Two industrial chemicals -** Poly chlorinated biphenyls and Hexachlorobenzene.
3. **Two unintended by-products of many industrial processes -** Poly chlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins and dibenzofurans. (Commonly referred to as dioxins and furans).

- Union Cabinet has recently approved the ratification of seven chemicals listed under Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).
- The regulation inter alia prohibits the manufacture, trade, use, import and export of seven chemicals, namely:

1. Chlordecone,
2. Hexabromobiphenyl,
3. Hexabromodiphenyl ether and Hepta Bromodiphenyl Ether (Commercial octa-BDE),
4. Tetrabromodiphenyl ether and Pentabromodiphenyl ether (Commercial

penta-BDE),
5. Pentachlorobenzene,
6. Hexabromocyclododecane, and
7. Hexachlorobutadiene.

- The Cabinet further delegated its powers to ratify chemicals under the Stockholm Convention to Union Ministries of External Affairs (MEA) and Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MEFCC) in respect of POPs for streamlining the procedure.
- The ratification process would enable India to access the Global Environment Facility (GEF) financial resources.

Persistent Organic Pollutants

- Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are identified chemical substances that are characterised by:

1. Persistence in the environment.
2. Bio-accumulation in the fatty acids in living organisms.
3. Less soluble in water.
4. Adverse effect on human health/ environment.

- Exposure to POPs can lead to cancer, damage to central & peripheral nervous systems, diseases of the immune system, reproductive disorders and interference with normal infant and child development.
- The property of long-range environmental transport (LRET) makes them spread widely in the atmosphere.

World Cotton Day

- 1st World Cotton Day was launched at the initiative of Cotton-4 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali) by the World Trade hosted on 7th October 2019.
- It was launched in collaboration with the secretariats of the UN, FAO, UNCTAD, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC).
- The annual celebration of World Cotton Day provides the opportunity to recognize the importance of cotton as a global commodity grown in over 75 countries across five continents.
- The Objective of the day is

1. To recognize the importance of cotton as a global commodity grown in over 75 countries across 5 continents.

2. To highlight its central role in job creation and maintaining economic stability in several least-developed countries.

- As a part of 2nd cotton day celebrations India has launched its premium Cotton.
- It would be known as ‘Kasturi Cotton’ in the world cotton Trade.
- The Kasturi Cotton brand will represent Whiteness, Brightness, Softness, Purity, Luster, Uniqueness.

Source: News on Air, the Hindu, Indian Express

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