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Appointment of District Judge

- The district judge is also called "Metropolitan session judge" when he is presiding over a district court in a city which is designated "Metropolitan area" by the State Government.
- The district court has appellate jurisdiction over all subordinate courts situated in the district on both civil and criminal matters.
- The district and sessions judge is often referred to as "district judge" when presiding over civil matters and "sessions judge" when presiding over criminal matters.
- Under Article 233 (1) Appointments of persons to be, and the posting and promotion of, district judges in any State shall be made by the Governor of the State in consultation with the High Court exercising jurisdiction in relation to such State.
- Under Article 233 (2) A person not already in the service of the Union or of the State shall only be eligible to be appointed a district judge if he has been for not less than seven years an advocate or a pleader and is recommended by the High Court for appointment
- The Constitution makers consciously wished that members of the Bar should be considered for appointment at all three levels, i.e. as District judges, High Courts and the Supreme Court.
- This was because counsel practising in the law courts have a direct link with the people who need their services; their views about the functioning of the courts, is a constant dynamic.
- SC recently ruled that the only opportunity to be District Judges is through promotion in accordance with the Rules framed under Article 234 and held that subordinate judicial officers cannot apply or compete for direct appointment as District Judge even if they have a previous experience of seven years as an advocate.
- SC judgement while interpreting direct appointment under Article 233, said it is only available to advocates or pleaders with seven years of legal practice.
- The Article expressly bars candidates in service of either the Union or the State.
- Thus by the new judgement “Members of judicial service having seven

years experience of practice before they have joined the service or having combined experience of seven years as both a lawyer and judicial officer are not eligible to apply for direct recruitment as a District Judge,"

- The court held that prohibition on judicial officers staking a claim to District Judgeship through direct recruitment under Article 233(2) is not ultra vires nor a violation of their fundamental rights to equality and equal opportunities in public employment.
- The judgment also noted that judicial officers directly appointed under Article 233 cannot continue as District Judges.
- They would be reverted to their original posts and the respective High Courts would consider their promotion in accordance with the prevailing Rules in case they were superseded by their juniors.
- The court held that an advocate, to be eligible under Article 233, has to be continuing in practice for seven years as on the cut-off date and at the time of appointment as District Judge.

Stockholm Declaration 2020

- Stockholm Declaration was adapted in 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety held recently.
- The global character of the road safety challenge calls for international cooperation and partnerships across many sectors of society.
- The Stockholm Declaration was prepared in close collaboration with the conference's steering group.
- Building on the Moscow Declaration of 2009 (first global conference on road safety) and the Brasilia Declaration of 2015 (2nd Global conference on road safety) , UN General Assembly and World Health Assembly resolutions, the Stockholm Declaration is ambitious and forward-looking and connects road safety to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Vision Zero

- The Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety 2020 embraced Vision Zero approach.
- The basic standpoint for Vision Zero is that no one should be killed or suffer lifelong injury in road traffic.
- The concept of Vision Zero was decided by the Swedish Parliament in 1997, it turned the traditional view of road safety work upside down.
- In short, creating a comprehensive and safe environment to ensure road safety is the essence of Vision Zero.

- The Vision Zero elaborates that the main problem is not that accidents occur – it is instead whether the accidents lead to death or lifelong injury.
- Vision Zero stresses that the road transport system is an entity, in which different components such as roads, vehicles and road users must be made to interact with each other so that safety can be guaranteed.

UN Road Safety Fund

- United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF) was established in 2018 as a UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund.
- The Fund was officially launched in UNHQ New York.
- The vision of the UN Road Safety Fund is to build a world where roads are safe for every road user, everywhere.
- Its mission is to finance - and leverage further funding for - high-impact projects based on established and internationally recognized best practices that increase road safety and minimize and eventually eliminate road crash trauma for all road users.
- The Fund was created to finance actions in low- and middle-income countries to

1. Substantially reduce death and injuries from road crashes, and
2. Reduce economic losses resulting from these crashes.

- As a unique and multi-stakeholder financing instrument, the Fund gathers concerned UN organizations, governments, private sector, academia and civil society under one umbrella and for common purpose.

Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive

- The Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive (AIFM) is an EU law on the financial regulation of hedge funds, private equity, real estate funds, and other "Alternative Investment Fund Managers" (AIFMs) in the European Union.
- The Directive requires all covered AIFMs to obtain authorisation, and make various disclosures as a condition of operation, It followed the global financial crisis.
- Before, the alternative investment industry had not been regulated at EU level.
- The Union Cabinet recently has approved the proposal of Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to sign an updated Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive (AIFMD).
- This is done following the UK's exit from the European Union on 31st

January 2020.

Bhaskaracharya Institute of Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG)

- At present, BISAG is a state agency of the Department of Science and Technology Government of Gujarat, located at Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- It is registered as a Society and Trust with the Charity Commissioner of Ahmedabad.
- Its Governing body is chaired by the Chief Secretary, Government of Gujarat.
- It works on the application of space technologies (especially the space-based remote sensing technology), satellite communication and geo-informatics has contributed significantly towards the socio-economic development.
- Recently union government approves Elevation of BISAG as National Institution under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India.
- With this announcement, BISAG (N) will be an Autonomous Scientific Society under Government of India instead of the State Government.

Species

- A species is often defined as the largest group of organisms in which any two individuals of the appropriate sexes or mating types can produce fertile offspring, typically by sexual reproduction.
- It is a group of living organisms consisting of similar individuals capable of exchanging genes or interbreeding.
- The total number of species estimated in earth are to be between 8 and 8.7 million.
- All species (except viruses) are given a two-part name, a "binomial".
- The first part of a binomial is the genus to which the species belongs.
- The second part is called the specific name or the specific epithet (in botanical nomenclature, also sometimes in zoological nomenclature).
- For example, Homo sapiens is one species of the genus Homo.

Asian Elephant

- The Government of India has declared Indian elephant as National Heritage Animal.

- The Indian elephant is also provided with the highest degree of legal protection by listing it in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Mainland Asian elephants/Indian elephants migrate over long distances in search of food and shelter, across States and Countries.
- Some elephants are resident while others migrate regularly in annual migration cycles; proportion of resident and migratory populations depends upon, size of regional populations, as well as on extent, degradation and fragmentation of their habitats.
- Recently Indian elephant is placed under in Schedule I of the CMS Convention, which will fulfil natural urge of migration of Indian elephant across India's borders and back safely and thereby promote conservation of this endangered species for our future generations.

Great Indian Bustard

- The Great Indian Bustard, an iconic, critically endangered (under IUCN Red List) and conservation dependent species.
- The Great Indian Bustard is a Critically Endangered species with a small population of about 100–150 individuals that are largely restricted to the Thar Desert in Rajasthan, India.
- The species has disappeared from 90% of this range; their population has reduced by 90% within 50 years (six generations); and their threats are expected to increase in future.
- It exhibits transboundary movements, and its migration exposes it to threats such as hunting in boundary area of Pakistan-India and power-line collisions in India.
- Recently it has been included in Appendix I of CMS, which will aide in transboundary conservation efforts facilitated by International conservation bodies and existing international laws and agreement.

Bengal Florican

- The Bengal Florican an iconic, critically endangered species of topmost conservation priority.
- It exhibits transboundary movements, and its migration exposes it to threats such as land-use changes, collision with power transmission line at boundary area of India-Nepal and probable power-line collisions.
- Populations have declined as a result of habitat loss, hunting and the species no longer breeds outside Protected Areas in the Indian subcontinent, except in a few areas of Assam.
- The bird has been included in Appendix I of CMS, which will aid in

transboundary conservation efforts facilitated by International conservation bodies and existing international laws and agreement.

INS Jamuna

- INS Jamuna is Indian Navy Hydrographic Survey Ship.
- It is on a deployment to carry out Joint Hydrographic Survey off the South – West coast of Sri Lanka.
- The ship has undertaken several survey activities as part of the Foreign Cooperation Survey along with the Sri Lanka Navy hydrographers.

Source: PIB, the Hindu, Economic Times

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