

NEWS TODAY

LOK SABHA PASSES BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021

● Bill was drafted by **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** in response to **concerns raised by traditional Indian medicine practitioners that Biological Diversity Act imposed a heavy compliance burden.**

- Thus, it **amends Biological Diversity Act, 2002** to simplify compliance requirements for domestic companies.
- **Act was enacted to conserve biological diversity and ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits** arising out of use of biological resources.

● **Key highlights of Bill**

- **Users of codified traditional knowledge and AYUSH practitioners will be exempted** from sharing benefits with local communities.
- **Removes research and bio-survey activities from purview of benefit-sharing** requirements.
- **Decriminalising offences and replaced imprisonment with fines** and a joint secretary-level officer to determine penalties.
- **Bring more foreign investments in chain of biological resources**, including research, patent and commercial utilisation.

● **Significance of Bill**

- **Reduce pressure on wild medicinal plants by encouraging cultivation of medicinal plants.**
- Encourage **Indian system of medicine.**
- **Facilitate fast-tracking of research, patent application process** etc. without compromising objectives of UN Convention on Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol.

Issues with the Bill

Removes the direct role of local communities in determining benefit sharing provisions

Amendments were made to "solely benefit" Ministry of AYUSH and would pave the way for "bio piracy"

Discretion to government officials to hold inquiries and determine penalties

SUPREME COURT DIRECTS STATES & UT'S TO SUBMIT RESPONSES ON THEIR MENSTRUAL HYGIENE POLICIES

● Earlier, SC had directed the **Centre to frame a National Policy on Menstrual Hygiene** for girls studying in schools.

● **Need for National Policy on Menstrual Hygiene**

- **Increase awareness** among adolescent girls on Menstrual Hygiene.
- **Increase access to and use** of high quality sanitary napkins to adolescent girls in rural areas.
- Ensure **safe disposal of Sanitary Napkins** in an environmentally friendly manner.
- **Reduce female dropout rate** in schools.

● **Challenges associated with Menstrual Hygiene**

- **Considered a Social Taboo** and limit activities of girls, undermining their development.
- **Insufficient toilet and sanitary facilities** in schools and in public places.
- **High cost of menstrual products**, making it unaffordable for marginalised people.
- **Deprived economic status and illiteracy** leads to prevalence of unhygienic practices.

● **Initiatives taken for promoting Menstrual Hygiene**

- **Menstrual hygiene scheme** under National Health Mission for adolescent girls in age group of 10-19 years in rural areas.
- State initiatives like **Kerala's 'She Pad', Odisha's 'Kushi'** etc. to deliver sanitary pads.
- **Menstrual hygiene management** is an integral part of **Swachh Bharat Mission.**
- **Kerala and Bihar have implemented menstrual leave policies.**

DOCUMENTATION OF ANTIQUITIES MOVING TOO SLOWLY: PARLIAMENTARY PANEL

• Parliamentary standing committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture has submitted its report on "**Heritage theft - the illegal trade in Indian antiquities and challenges of retrieving and safeguarding our tangible cultural heritage**".

• Key highlights

- **National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA)** has been able to document only 16.8 lakh antiquities around/ about 30% out of total estimated 58 lakh antiquities since its inception.
- **Documentation** of antiquities and digitization in National Museums are **still in progress**.

• Challenges in Documentation of Antiquities

- Documentation is a **detailed, tedious, time consuming process** as it involves new **innovative techniques like 3D documentation and petrology** etc.
- **Lack of coordination** between State enforcing agency and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- **Sub-optimal utilization of budgetary allocations**.
- Absence of dedicated professional team of professionals.

• Recommendations

- Establishing a **dedicated cultural heritage squad** for recovery of stolen antiquities.
- **Multi-departmental task force** to smoothen retrieval process.
- **Creating a master database of antiquities in country** through a dedicated central sector scheme.
- **Incentivization** of relevant agencies for record keeping of Tangible Cultural Heritage.

UGC PASSES GUIDELINES FOR INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP) FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS(HEIs)

• National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recognises the **importance of IDP and recommend that each institution will make a strategic IDP**.

- Subsequently, UGC has developed guidelines for individual HEIs to **develop their own IDP**.
- The necessity for IDPs arises from the acknowledgment that a **uniform set of norms may not be applicable to all** as each HEI require a different path to progress.
 - **UGC believes that the IDP needs to reflect an integrated approach** that is mindful of the institution's vision and mission, context, life cycle stage, location, character, and aspirations.

• Guidelines in the framework

- **Physical infrastructure** should support both academic and research activities of various schools and departments of universities.
- The HEIs must also create a road map along with requisite modes of learning and teaching using ICT and virtual technologies **to move towards the idea of 'Digital Universities'**.
- **Proposes a "fast track promotion system"** for faculty members for recognizing "very high-impact" research and contribution.
- **It says 50% of the total faculty requirement** can be contractual (tenured) or visiting from the profession/industry.
- Each HEI needs to maintain the **faculty-student ratio as set by the UGC**.

National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA)

- It was launched in 2007 by **Ministry of Culture** to prepare database of diverse Indian antiquities as defined in Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972.
- **ASI is the nodal agency**.

LOK SABHA PASSES MULTI-STATE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES (AMENDMENT) BILL

• Bill seeks to **amend the Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act (MSCS), 2002**.

• Bill aims to **strengthen governance, enhance transparency, increase accountability and reform electoral processes** in the Multi-State Cooperative Societies.

• Key Highlights:

- **Co-operative Election Authority (CEA):** The Centre is to **establish the CEA** to conduct, supervise, direct, and control the election process of MSCS.
- **Amalgamation of co-operative societies:** The Bill **allows state co-operative societies to merge into an existing MSCS**, subject to the respective state laws and approval of 2/3rd of its members.
- **Fund for sick co-operative societies:** The **Co-operative Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development Fund (CRRDF)** is introduced for revival of sick MSCS.
 - **MSCS that are in profit for the preceding three financial years** shall finance the Fund.
- **Restriction on redemption of government shareholding:** Any shares held by the central and state governments in the MSCS cannot be redeemed without their prior approval.
- **Redressal of complaints:** The centre will **appoint one or more Co-operative Ombudsman with territorial jurisdiction** to inquire into the complaints made by members of MSCS and complete the process within 3 months.

• MSCS are cooperative societies whose **activities are not confined to one state** and serve interests of individuals in more than one state.

• The National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation, Indian Farmers Fertilisers Cooperative, AMUL, British Council are some prominent examples.

ALSO IN NEWS

 <p>DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill 2019 withdrawn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bill provided for the regulation of the use of DNA technology for establishing the identity of certain persons. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ DNA refers to deoxyribonucleic acid, It is the carrier of genetic information. • Key concern regarding the bill <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ DNA testing is currently being done on an extremely limited scale in India. ➤ The standards of the laboratories collecting DNAs are not monitored or regulated. ➤ DNA information can be very intrusive that can be liable for misuse. ➤ The possibility of this law being used for racial profiling.
 <p>Women reservation in ULBs in Nagaland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supreme Court asked both the centre and Nagaland government reasons for non-implementation of women's quota in urban local body (ULB) polls. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Earlier, in 2006, the Nagaland Municipal Act of 2001 was amended to provide for reservation of women in line with the 74th constitutional amendment in 1992. • Challenges in implementation of women's quota <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Opposition from Naga tribal bodies against women's quota in ULBs on grounds of infringement of special rights guaranteed by Article 371(A). ➤ Patriarchal socio-cultural traditions and customary laws of Naga tribes that restricts decision-making by women.
 <p>Communities added to Schedule Tribe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rajya Sabha passed a Bill to amend the Constitution (Schedule Tribes) Order, 1950 for the inclusion of certain communities in the list of Schedule Tribes of Chhattisgarh. • Communities added: Dhanuhar, Dhanuwar, Kisan, Saundra, Saonra, and Binjhia and three Devanagari versions of the Pando community. • According to Article 342 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The President may with respect to any State/UT and where it is a State after consultation with the Governor, may notify the STs in relation to that State/UT. ➤ The Parliament may by law include or exclude from the list of STs specified in a notification issued.
 <p>Trade settlement Cycle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEBI has said that it is working on real-time settlement of transactions in India's stock exchanges i.e. 'T+0' settlement cycle. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ After implementation, 'T+0' cycle will provide instant transfer of money to investors who sell share. • 'Settlement' is a two-way process that involves transfer of funds and securities on settlement date. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Currently, Indian Stock market follows 'T+1' cycle (since January 2023) which means that trade settlements happen within a day, or within 24 hours of actual transaction. ➤ Benefits: Brings operational efficiency, ease for stock market participants etc.
 <p>White label ATMs (WLAs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATMs set up, owned and operated by non-banks are called WLAs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Non-bank ATM operators are authorised under the Payment & Settlement Systems Act, 2007 by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). ➤ It will broaden access to banking services, particularly in smaller towns and rural areas, as well as promote financial inclusion. • Other type of ATMs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Brown Label: These are managed service providers which deploy and operate ATMs for banks. ➤ Green Label: ATM is provided for Agricultural Transaction.
 <p>Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) 5.2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister of Civil Aviation and Steel launched Regional Connectivity Scheme(RCS)-UDAN 5.2. • It has been launched to further enhance the connectivity to remote and regional areas of the country. • It will achieves last-mile connectivity through small aircraft such as 1A (<9 seats) and Category 1 (<20 seats). • About UDAN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is a market-driven scheme, that aims to enhance regional air connectivity from unserved and underserved airports and make air travel affordable. ➤ It was formulated based on the review of the National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP)-2016.

 <p>Full-reserve banking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It refers to a system of banking where banks are not allowed to lend out money that they receive from customers in the form of demand deposits. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is also known as 100% reserve banking. In this case, banks simply act as custodians to depositors' money and may charge a fee from depositors for the service of safekeeping that they offer to the depositors. This is to ensure that banks can successfully meet redemption demands from depositors, and thus avoid a run on the bank even if all depositors seek withdrawals simultaneously.
 <p>Silvopasture system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silvopasture systems are advocated as a buffer against temperature and wind extremes in pasture lands, providing a favourable living environment for livestock. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is an agroforestry practice that integrates the benefits of trees, forage, and animals in a mutually supportive manner. It is created by introducing trees into open pasture lands. Silvopasture system helps to improve soil properties, reducing heat stress in livestock, and increase wildlife diversity. Trees on silvopasture lands act as natural carbon sinks and regulate local climatic conditions.
 <p>Nipah Virus (NiV)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICMR's National Institute of Virology (ICMR-NIV) has found an evidence of NiV circulation in bat population across states and UTs. Nipah Virus (NiV), a zoonotic virus, is a type of RNA virus transmitted in humans through its natural hosts or through direct contact with infected people or contaminated food. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It causes fatal respiratory and encephalitic infection in humans. Fruit bats of Pteropodidae family are natural host of NiV. There is no treatment or vaccine available for either people or animals.
 <p>Kargil Vijay Diwas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 26th July 1999, Indian Army recaptured all the Indian posts in Kargil that had been occupied by Pakistan's army. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian army fought battle at altitudes above 12000 feet in Dras, Kaksar, Batalik and Turtuk Sectors of Kargil Districts.
 <p>Places in news</p>	<p>Chad (Capital: N'Djamena)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chad hosts the largest number of refugees in west and central Africa. Political Boundaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landlocked country in north-central Africa. Bounded by Libya (north), Sudan (east), Central African Republic (south), and Cameroon, Nigeria, and Niger (west). Geographical features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest Peak: Mount Koussi (Emi Koussi). It is an extinct volcano. Major Rivers: Chari and Logone. Major Lakes: Lake Chad (located at junction of Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon). Semi-desert country, rich in gold and uranium.  <p>Greece (Capital: Athens)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greece islands (Rhodes and Corfu) are bracing for at least another 48 hours of wildfire. Political Boundaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southernmost of countries of Balkan Peninsula. Major water bodies: Aegean Sea (east), Mediterranean Sea (south), and Ionian Sea (west). Land borders: Albania, Bulgaria, Turkey (east), Republic of Macedonia. Maritime borders: Cyprus, Egypt, Italy and Libya. Geographical features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest Peak: Mount Olympus. Major Rivers: Haliacmon, Aliakmonas etc. Climate Type: Mediterranean climate. 