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20 September 2018

Daily News Pedia

The Death of A Tigress

Sarita Subramanian member of Earth Brigade Foundation (EBF) analyses the Supreme Court order of killing a 5 year old tigress from Pandharkawada region in Maharashtra

Supreme Court dismissed the plea filed by Earth Brigade Foundation (EBF) and ordered to shoot a five-year-old tigress. Tigress is accused of killing and eating a dozen people over the last two years from Pandharkawada region in Maharashtra

All the killing by tigress has taken place within designated forest area or on their periphery. The forest has scant food for wild herbivores. There is heavy pressure from illegal grazing, with livestock consuming a huge proportion of the food and water meant for wildlife. Human encroachment is rampant; it disrupts contiguity of the habitat and multiplies the chances of man-animal conflict. Locals take cattle and goats “on contract” from rich owners to graze them illegally in the forest.

The Forest Department, mandated to preserve forests and their denizens, appears to be apathetic towards the basic tenets of habitat management. The National Tiger Conservation Authority protocols says, “Human beings killed due to chance encounters may also be eaten, this is not sufficient for classifying a tiger as a ‘man-eater.’

Source: The Hindu.

Triple Talaq Is Criminal Offence

<p>Key provisions</p> <p>The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill makes instant triple talaq illegal and imposes a jail term of up to 3 years</p>		<p>BY THE AGGRIEVED ALONE: Police can register the FIR only when a complaint is made by the victim (wife) or her blood relative</p> <p>BURYING THE HATCHET: If the offence is compoundable, i.e. the husband and wife can have a settlement before a magistrate, the case can be withdrawn</p>
<p>BAIL PROCESS: While the proposed law will remain “non-bailable” – bail cannot be granted at the police station – the accused can approach a magistrate for bail even before the trial</p>		

The Union Cabinet has cleared an ordinance that makes Talaq-e-biddat, commonly known as instant triple talaq, a criminal offence. The President has given his assent to the ordinance.

Marriage is considered a civil contract under Islamic law. Islamic law prescribes Triple Talaq as the means to end marriage. Instant Triple Talaq is a distorted form of Triple Talaq which is not mentioned in the Quran. There were 430 incidents of instant triple talaq from January 2017 to 13 September 2018. Of these, 201 were after the Supreme Court judgment of 2017.

The Supreme Court in August, 2017 declared the practice of instant triple talaq unconstitutional and wanted Parliament to bring in legislation governing Muslim marriages and divorce.

The government introduced The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill to give statutory form to the Supreme Court verdict. The Bill sought to criminalize instant triple talaq and make it a punishable offence. The Bill was passed in Lok Sabha but is pending in the Upper House as opposition parties wanted it to be sent to a select committee for further discussion.

The ordinance has incorporated certain safeguards which were not present in the original Bill, to allay fears among Muslim. Instant Triple Talaq has been made a cognizable offence with a maximum of three years imprisonment and a fine. The offence has been made non-bailable. Under a non-bailable law, bail cannot be granted by police at the police station itself. The accused has to approach the magistrate for bail. However under this law the accused can approach a magistrate even before trial to seek bail. The move was taken to allay fears among Muslim men. Police can lodge First information Report (FIR) only if the complaint is filed by the wife (victim), her blood relations or her relatives by virtue of her marriage. Non-relatives or neighbours cannot lodge a complaint under the proposed law.

The ordinance makes the offence of instant triple talaq “compoundable” which means that the magistrate can use his powers to settle the dispute between a husband and his wife. When categorized as a compoundable case, both parties are allowed to withdraw the case. A compromise can be achieved only when the woman is willing and says so to a magistrate. A magistrate can grant bail only after the wife’s consent. The magistrate will have the power to decide the quantum of compensation and subsistence allowance for the victim and her minor children. The custody of children from the marriage will go to the woman. The law doesn’t affect Jammu and Kashmir.

MINT QUICK READS

BILL AGAINST TRIPLE TALAQ PENDING IN RAJYA SABHA

► The Union cabinet on Wednesday **approved the instant triple talaq ordinance**, making the practice a criminal act

430 incidents of triple talaq have come to the government’s notice so far between January 2017 to 13 September 2019
Out of these, **229** such cases came up before the Supreme Court judgement
201 cases were after the SC judgement

► The ordinance makes provision for a woman or her blood relative to **file a case before a police station** to make the offence cognizable. A compromise can also be reached before a magistrate after the affected woman consents to it.

I will again appeal to Sonia ji that this ordinance has been brought in the interest of the country to bring gender justice. I appeal to you to rise above vote bank politics and help pass it in the interest of justice for women

Ravi Shankar Prasad
Law minister

“Modi Government is using ‘Instant Triple Talaq’ as a ‘Political Football’ for ‘Fake Credit Seeking!’”
Randeep Singh Surjewala, Congress spokesperson

“I welcome the centre’s decision to bring an ordinance to make triple talaq a penal offence. It is a huge step towards empowering Muslim women in the country”
Ishrat Jahan, petitioner



Criticism of the Ordinance: The move would create problems for Muslim women as the ordinance does not provide clarity on issues like property rights. There is also no clarity on who will pay for the maintenance of the wife once the husband is in jail. Mere lack of consensus in the House is not a good enough reason to promulgate an ordinance. It could even amount to subversion of the parliamentary process. The Bill should have been passed through the normal route.

Note:

PAKISTAN BANNED TRIPLE TALAQ IN 1961

Turkey 1926	Egypt 1929	Tunisia 1955	Pakistan 1961	Bangladesh 1971	When Bangladesh ceded from Pakistan in 1971, it inherited its divorce laws	Sri Lanka 2006
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Why triple talaq ordinance works better for politics than a Bill

THE UPDATE: The Union Cabinet has approved an ordinance to make 'triple talaq' a punishable offence. The Supreme Court had last year ruled that the law that allowed Muslim men to divorce their wives simply by uttering the word 'talaq' three times was unconstitutional.

Why the law?
The government says the practice persists despite SC's decision and so it wants to make it a non-bailable offence carrying a jail term of up to three years. There was a 'compelling necessity to come up with an ordinance' the law minister said.

Why the ordinance?
The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights in Marriage) Bill (triple talaq bill) was cleared by Lok Sabha in December last year but is pending approval of Rajya Sabha. The bill wasn't introduced in the upper house, where the BJP-led government lacks majority, due to 'lack of consensus among political parties' on the issue.

PROBLEM WITH ORDINANCE: The Supreme Court had in January 2017 said that 're-promulgation of ordinances is a fraud on the constitution' and cannot become a 'parallel source of legislation'.

Ordinance vs Bill:
In his Independence Day speech PM Modi had said he would "not stop till they get justice," referring to Muslim women. The ordinance fits in well as 'a promise kept'. Plus, the law will have to be brought back to parliament for legislative approval within six months. The six-month period ends in mid-March which would also be close to 2019 polls and a debate or a party's stand may have an impact on polls

Sri Lanka's Marriage and Divorce (Muslim) Act, 1951, amended in 2006, doesn't recognise instant divorce



Source: The Hindu.

Dam Rehabilitation Improvement Project (DRIP)

In April 2012, the Central Water Commission (CWC) under Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation with assistance from the World Bank, embarked upon the six year Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) at an estimated cost of Rs. 2100 crore.

The project originally envisaged the rehabilitation and improvement of about 223 dams within four states namely, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Tamil Nadu and later Karnataka, Uttarakhand (UNVNL) and Jharkhand (DVC) joined DRIP and total number of dams covered under DRIP increased to 250; due to the addition / deletion of dams during implementation by partner agencies, presently 223 dams are being rehabilitated. The project will also promote new technologies and improve Institutional capacities for dam safety evaluation and implementation at the Central and State levels and in some identified premier academic and research institutes of the Country.

Significance of the project: The project will improve the safety and operational performance of selected existing dams and mitigate risks to ensure safety of downstream population and property. The primary beneficiaries are both urban and rural communities dependent on reservoir and downstream communities, who are prone to risk associated with dam failure or operational failure. Through institutional strengthening component, effectiveness of Dam Safety Organisations will be increased to take the lead to make dams safe from structural and operational point of view through capacity building of staff and officials.

Source: The Hindu.

S. Korea wants to elevate ties with India

South Korea recently announced a 'New Southern Policy' to develop its relations with South-East Asia and ASEAN.

To manage the challenge of North Korea. Lesser focus earlier on Southeast Asia compared to Northeast Asian States like China and Japan. Advancement of Seoul by its middle power diplomatic efforts. Building an inclusive regional architecture in Asia South Korea, as part of this strategy, wants to build stronger ties with ASEAN and India on multiple fronts like economic, bilateral and strategic.

India – South Korea: There is convergence of approach between India and South Korea towards regional issues. Both sides are concerned about maritime security in the region. The increasing influence of China in South China Sea and India Ocean region is also being watched. South Korea sees India as the main partner in expanding their economy. Both sides have agreed to boost bilateral trade to \$50 billion by 2030 from \$20 billion now. South Korea wants to elevate diplomatic ties with India to the level of four other major powers around the Korean Peninsula namely the U.S., China, Russia and Japan.

China – South Korea: South Korea favours BRI but accuses China's unilateral approach and pursues for more open and transparent policy. South Korea also warned to countries borrowing from China for big ticket infrastructure projects of possible debt trap later.

Source: The Hindu.

Kuposhan Mukh Bharat

India to take strong measures to combat Malnutrition.

POSHAN (Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment) Abhiyan was launched in March from Jhunjhunu to fight against Kuposhan (Malnutrition).

Objective and Targets: 3 percentages reduction yearly in underweight prevalence in children (0-3 years) by 2022 from NFHS-4 levels. 1/3rd reduction in anaemia in children, adolescent & Women of Reproductive Age (WRA).

UN expert says malnutrition figures in India were worse than those of sub-Saharan Africa mainly due to: More underweight babies born to more underweight mothers. Mothers are underweight because there is a high level of anaemia among women (55 per cent). Women gave birth at an early age. There is not enough spacing between children. There is a high dropout rate from school. Bare minimum nutritional food to eat.

Under Umbrella ICDS scheme of MWCD (Ministry of Women and Child Development), Supplementary Nutrition Programme is being implemented through platform of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) for addressing under-nutrition in pregnant and lactating women, under-6 children and out-of-school adolescent girls.

Recently National Nutrition Mission has been approved under MWCD for addressing malnutrition status of the country in a comprehensive manner. To prepare a detailed action plan for states to tackle malnutrition. Need to track progress closely, and consider a yearly survey instead of the six-yearly National Family Health Survey (NFHS). Attitudinal change towards dyslexic (Unable to read and spell) and special children.

Source: The Hindu.

Union Home Minister launches two portals to strengthen Women Safety

Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC) portal to check objectionable online content.

The Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC) portal is convenient and user friendly that will enable complainants in reporting cases without disclosing their identity. This will not only aid the victims/complainants but also help the civil society organizations and responsible citizens to anonymously report complaints pertaining to child pornography, child sexual abuse material or sexually explicit material such as rape and gang rape. Complainants can also upload the objectionable content and URL to assist in the investigation by the State Police. The complaints registered through this portal will be handled by police authorities of respective State/UTs. There are other features such as a victim or complainant can track his/her report by opting for “report and track” option using his/her mobile number.

National Database on Sexual Offenders (NDSO) to aid in monitoring & investigation of sexual crimes

The National Database on Sexual Offenders (NDSO), which is accessible only to law enforcement agencies, will assist in effectively tracking and investigating cases of sexual offences. It is a central database of “sexual offenders” in the country which will be maintained by the NCRB for regular monitoring and tracking by the State Police. The database is accessible only to the law enforcement agencies for investigation and monitoring purpose. The database will include offenders convicted under charges of rape, gang rape, POCSO and eve teasing. At present the database contains 4.4 lakh entries. The State Police have been requested to regularly update the database from 2005 onwards. The database includes name, address, and photograph and fingerprint details for each entry. However, the database will not compromise any individual’s privacy.

Source: PIB.

EDITORIAL

To Read

Towards a Kuposhan Mukh Bharat

With the PM backing the POSHAN (Prime Minister’s Overarching Scheme For Holistic Nourishment) Abhiyan, launched in March from Jhunjhunu, the usually elusive “convergence” of effort by relevant ministries becomes somewhat easier.

The best thing in the prime minister’s Independence Day speech this year was committing his government to a Kuposhan (malnutrition) Mukh Bharat. The way he articulated it — “main bechain hoon, main besabr hoon, main vyakul hoon” — it was like making a vow and the country will hold him to that commitment in the months and years to come. Even better was his “samvad” with grass roots functionaries last week — anganwadi workers, Ashas, ANMs — and it was the first time a PM had spoken directly to them, appreciating the work they did to save the lives of women and children, and announcing an increase in their emoluments. You could not miss the political implication of that outreach. Though he spoke to 3,000 frontline workers — addressing their leaders by their first name, his connect was something that is worth a study — it is bound to have a ripple effect. There are 34 lakh frontline workers, and each impacts, on an average, 250 families. That one event was geared to reach out to 340 million people.

Politics aside, for the first time, Narendra Modi has put his political weight behind combating malnutrition. With two out of five children in the country stunted, and given that irreversible damage can be done in the first two years of life, there is no future-India unless an all-out effort is made to address the problem. Given his experience in Gujarat as CM, Modi knows this is no easy task.

With the PM backing the POSHAN (Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme For Holistic Nourishment) Abhiyan, launched in March from Jhunjhunu, the usually elusive "convergence" of effort by relevant ministries becomes somewhat easier. The turf battles between the Health and Women and Child Development departments have been legendary. The chief ministers, at least of the BJP-ruled states, have been called to order — and these are the states in the Hindi heartland where a bulk of the problem lies.

The otherwise toothless Niti Aayog must be commended for the speed with which it readied the just rolled-out action plan for "September Maah", to focus on Poshan, mobilising different sectors, developing and standardising advocacy materials, targeting the service providers, roping in all those agencies which have been working on the issue for decades — be it UNICEF, Tata Trust, IFPRI or others. The idea is to create a "buzz" around Poshan.

While the government has set yearly targets for itself, like a 2 per cent reduction in stunting and underweight children, or a 3 per cent reduction in anaemia (7 out of 10 children in India are anaemic), it will need to track progress closely, and consider a yearly survey instead of the six-yearly National Family Health Survey (NFHS). Given the district level data now available (in the NFHS 4), it should also be possible to get a nutrition profile of every Lok Sabha and assembly constituency, and this might enable poshan to become a poll issue.

I had once asked a UN expert why the malnutrition figures in India were worse than those of sub-Saharan Africa when we are a democratic country and a fast-growing economy. His answer was simple: "More underweight babies born to more underweight mothers." Mothers are underweight because there is a high level of anaemia among women (55 per cent). They are married early, they produce children at an early age, there is not enough spacing between children, they get "bacha-khucha khana" at home, there is a high dropout rate from school. Viewing nutrition as an issue concerning only "food" is one reason why we — including Modi in Gujarat — had not made the headway we hoped for, even though the ICDS has been in existence since 1975. All this is now known, and the prime minister's words made this amply clear. There is another reason why the problem has persisted. Child malnutrition does not disturb us as it should. This is despite 115 million children in India — almost doubles the population of UK, or France, or Italy — being anaemic and malnourished and susceptible to cognitive problems, something that is bound to affect their productivity as adults.

The government appears to be stirring itself. But it cannot be left to it alone. Some years ago, Aamir Khan had made a film called Tare Zameen Par. It brought about an attitudinal change towards dyslexic and special children, and what they were capable of doing. A film on this dream, called a Kuposhan Mukta Bharat, is now waiting to be made. So is an anthem on poshan, waiting to be sung by all the anganwadi, in fact, hummed by the whole country.

Three assembly elections — Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh — are around the corner. Some headway has been made in these states, but will the BJP and the Congress include in their manifestos the promise to create a "kuposhan mukt" Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh? More important, to prepare a detailed action plan on how they will go about it if they come to power? This is for you, Sachin Pilot and Vasundhara Raje Scindia, and for Messrs Shivraj Chouhan, Kamal Nath, Raman Singh and Bhupesh Baghel. Could the President persuade the Governors to be more proactive in putting their weight to get a new deal, for, particularly, the Dalit and tribal children, who are at the bottom of the heap? Governors are anyway supposed to report regularly to the President under Schedule Five (covering tribal-dominated western and central states) and Schedule Six (for the north-eastern states) of the Constitution about the progress being made for tribals in their areas.

We now know “what” is to be done. The challenge is to do it on a scale not attempted before. There are moments in the life of a nation which, if seized, can result in a quantum leap. If missed, they do not come again, at least not for a long time.

MAINS QUESTION

Q: Biofuels offers a sustainable energy option and there is an urgent need to leverage its benefits to push the Indian economy forward. Discuss.

YesUPSC