



UPSC Current Affairs

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FACEBOOK PURGES PAGES FOR 'COORDINATED' FAKE BEHAVIOUR

With less than two weeks before India goes to the polls, Facebook said it had removed more than 700 pages and accounts in India for “*coordinated inauthentic behaviour*” including 687 linked to an IT cell of the Congress party. The other 15 pages, groups and accounts that were taken down were associated with an Indian IT firm Silver Touch, which does a bulk of its work for the NDA government.

With over 460 million internet users, India is the second largest online market, ranked only behind China. By 2021, there will be about 635.8 million internet users in India. Despite the large base of internet users in India, only 26 percent of the Indian population accessed the internet in 2015. This is a significant increase in comparison to the previous years, considering the internet penetration rate in India stood at about 10 percent in 2011. Furthermore, men dominated internet usage in India with 71 percent to women’s 29 percent.

MOZAMBIQUE CONFIRMS FIRST CHOLERA DEATH

Mozambique’s cyclone-hit city of Beira has confirmed its first death from cholera, as the number of cases of the disease has jumped to 517. To control the outbreak emergency clinics have been set up across Beira, a city of 500,000, said Mozambican national health director Ussenelsse, according to broadcaster TVM. Cases of the acute diarrhoeal disease have risen dramatically since the first five cases were confirmed last week. Cyclone Idai severely damaged the water system for Beira, a city of 500,000, when it hit on March 14. Some 900,000 cholera vaccine doses are set to arrive

on Monday, according to the World Health Organisation.

CHOLERA

Cholera is an infection of the small intestine by some strains of the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*. Symptoms may range from none, to mild, to severe. The classic symptom is large amounts of watery diarrhea that lasts a few days. Vomiting and muscle cramps may also occur. Diarrhea can be so severe that it leads within hours to severe dehydration and electrolyte imbalance. This may result in sunken eyes, cold skin, decreased skin elasticity, and wrinkling of the hands and feet. Dehydration can cause the skin to turn bluish. Symptoms start two hours to five days after exposure.

Cholera is caused by a number of types of *Vibrio cholerae*, with some types producing more severe disease than others. It is spread mostly by unsafe water and unsafe food that has been contaminated with human feces containing the bacteria. Undercooked seafood is a common source. Humans are the only animal affected. Risk factors for the disease include poor sanitation, not enough clean drinking water, and poverty. There are concerns that rising sea levels will increase rates of disease. Cholera can be diagnosed by a stool test. A rapid dipstick test is available but is not as accurate.

ELECTION MANIFESTO

Election manifesto refers to a statement issued by a political party fighting an election that informs people about the party’s programmes and policies on a wide range of issues. The manifesto cannot contain anything that is repugnant to the ideals and principles enshrined in the Constitution and must be consistent with the letter and spirit of the Model Code of Conduct. While political parties can promise welfare schemes in their manifestos,

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they cannot make promises “which are likely to vitiate the purity of the election process or exert undue influence on the voters in exercising their franchise”. The manifesto should reflect the rationale for the promises made and the ways in which such promises can be met financially. Manifesto is not legally enforceable has ruled the Supreme Court.

STARTING MAY, ISRO TO LAUNCH A STRING OF ‘DEFENCE’ SATELLITES

Sky monitors
A list of satellites which the ISRO is expected to launch in 2019-20

| Satellite | Planned launch |
|----------------------|----------------|
| RISAT-2B | May 2019 |
| Cartosat-3 | June 2019 |
| RISAT-2BR1 | July 2019 |
| GISAT-1 (new series) | September 2019 |
| RISAT-2BR2 | October 2019 |
| GISAT-2 | November 2019 |
| RISAT-1A | November 2019 |
| GSAT-32 | February 2020 |



Communication satellite GSAT-32 is also in the offing next year to replace GSAT-6A, which was lost in a failed launch and was meant to mainly serve the ground forces. Until now, such defence-use satellites were spaced out over a few years; or were put up only once a year as in the case of the Cartosat-2 series high-resolution imaging satellites. Looking at the last three launches, we could even say the train has already started. HysIS, launched in November; Microsat-R in January; and the EMISAT sent into orbit on April 1 are all for what is called “strategic use”.

Soon after EMISAT’s launch, ISRO Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space, K.Sivan, announced that the next mission would be the radar imaging satellite RISAT-2B, followed by a high resolution mapping satellite Cartosat-3. Both are understood to be useful militarily and seen as overdue assets. Cartosat-3 will have 30 cm resolution, which is at a par with the world’s best, according to public information already put out by ISRO. It means the satellite can clearly ‘see’ and capture images of guns, devices, objects or human movement at that scale from space. There are already half-a-dozen Cartosat-2 series satellites in orbit, though these possess a lower resolution capability than the upcoming Cartosat-3.

Radar imaging satellites like India’s RISAT series can provide almost an uninterrupted view of earth, day or night, rain or shine, a handy feature for the forces to detect border infiltration. And so, we should see many more RISATs or next-gen Cartosats coming up as the military’s objects of desire from the U.R. Rao Satellite Centre in Bengaluru. A few of them would serve civil agencies as well. RISAT-2B, which was earlier planned after RISAT-2A and was not due before next year, is now slated to fly in May. While the RISAT-1 of 2012 is dead, RISAT-2 of 2009 (said to have been imported from Israel) still works. A number of foreign satellites that have been flown to space on the PSLV are also for earth observation, space situational awareness and ship monitoring, which again may be useful as military information.

SUPREME COURT QUASHES RBI CIRCULAR ON INSOLVENCY

The Supreme Court on Tuesday quashed the RBI circular of last year that pertains to the provisions for declaring a company bankrupt even on a one-day overdue. The bench headed by Justice R.F. Nariman said, “We have declared the RBI circular ultra vires.” Reserve

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Bank of India (RBI) on February 12, 2018 had issued a circular saying that lenders have to provide for resolution plan within 180 days in case of large account of ₹2,000 crore and above.

It said that if a resolution was not found by August 27, Non Performing Asset (NPA) accounts should be sent to bankruptcy courts. However, during the pendency of the matter, the apex court on September 11 last year asked banks to maintain status quo and not to initiate insolvency proceedings against loan defaulting companies.

BLEACHING HITS WORLD'S SOUTHERNMOST CORAL REEF



The world's southernmost coral reef has been hit by bleaching this summer, Australian scientists said on Wednesday, as they warned rising sea temperatures from climate change were affecting even the most isolated ecosystems. The corals off Lord Howe Island — some 600 km offshore from Sydney — were affected by elevated temperatures this summer, despite escaping severe bleaching that damaged the Great Barrier Reef in 2016 and 2017.

“It's just another indicator that climate change is affecting everywhere around the world. Here is a reef that is 600 km from the mainland and we are seeing bleaching there in a lovely, beautiful ecosystem,” he said.

CAPITAL HIGH: FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN INDIA

Foreign investors appear to have rediscovered India. The inflow of foreign capital into India's stock market in the month of March hit a high of \$4.89 billion, the biggest foreign inflow into Indian stocks since February 2012. As a result, the stock market rose a solid 8% in March. Foreign investment in Indian equities stood at \$2.42 billion in February, as against a net outflow of \$4.4 billion during the same month a year earlier, and is expected to be strong in April as well. Both cyclical and structural factors are behind this sudden uptick in foreign investment that has helped the rupee make an impressive comeback. The rupee has appreciated by about 7% since early October, when it was reeling at around 74 against the dollar. Last year, India received more foreign direct investment than China for the first time in two decades.

NGT SETS UP CENTRAL MONITORING PANEL IN A BID TO REDUCE POLLUTION STRETCHES

A Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, “Having given due consideration to the serious issue and inadequacy of success achieved so far, we find it necessary to constitute a Central Monitoring Committee to undertake a national initiative by way of preparation and enforcement of a national plan to make river stretches pollution-free.”

Senior representatives of NITI Aayog, Secretaries of the Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change will

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be a part of the committee, apart from the Chairman, Central Pollution Control Board and Director General, National Mission for Clean Ganga, the NGT said. The Committee has been asked to coordinate with the respective States to oversee the action plans and ensure execution of the same in a time-bound manner.

NUGEN MOBILITY SUMMIT 2019

The International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT) is organizing a NuGen Mobility Summit, 2019, at Manesar, NCR, from 27th to 29th November 2019. The objective of the Summit is to share new ideas, learnings, global experiences, innovations and future technology trends for faster adoption, assimilation and development of advanced automotive technologies for a smarter and greener future. This event will help in building a platform for bringing together all stakeholders in the automotive industry to understand global advancements in technologies.

The Summit is being organized in association with SAENIS, SAE INDIA, SAE International, NATRiP, DIMTS, Department of Heavy Industry, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, SIAM and ACMA. More than 2500 participants and over 250 exhibitors are expected to take part in the Summit.

BATTLE OF KANGLA TONGBI

The Battle of KanglaTongbi, considered one of the fiercest battles of World War II, was fought by Ordnance personnel of 221 Advance Ordnance Depot (AOD) on the night of 6/7 April 1944. Japanese forces had planned a three pronged offensive to capture Imphal and the surrounding areas. In their attempt to extend their line of communication to Imphal, the 33rd Japanese Division cut in behind the 17th Indian Division at Tiddim (Mynmar) and establishing themselves firmly on the main Kohima – Manipur highway, started advancing towards

KanglaTongbi. Here at KanglaTongbi, a small but determined detachment of 221 AOD put up stiff resistance against the advancing Japanese forces.

THE JAMMU AND KASHMIR RESERVATION (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE

The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019 was promulgated.²⁹ The Ordinance amends the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004. The Act provides for reservation in appointment and admission in professional institutions for persons belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and socially and educationally backward classes (SEBC). The Act classifies persons living in areas adjoining the Line of Control as SEBCs for the appointment to state government posts; requires them to serve in such areas for at least seven years; and exempts them from the creamy layer test. The Ordinance extends these provisions to those living near the international border.

MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT RELEASES BULK DATA SHARING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways released the Bulk Data Sharing Policy and Procedure.³¹ The Ministry collects and holds data on issuance of Vehicle Registration Certificates (RC) and Driver Licenses (DL).

Currently, this data is shared with specified agencies such as enforcement agencies, automobile industries, banks, and financial companies. The policy seeks to share this data for various purposes to help support the transport and automobile industry, and help improve service delivery to citizens. Key features of the policy include: □ Data sharing: Any organisation requesting data should be registered in India, with at least 50% ownership by an Indian resident or an Indian company. All

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bulk data accessed by the organisations must be processed and stored in servers within India. The data at any point should not be transferred, processed or stored in a server outside India. □

Purchasing data: Organisations will purchase the data for one calendar year at any time, and the data will be shared with them quarterly. Commercial organisations and individuals seeking bulk data will be required to pay an amount of three crore rupees for FY 2019-20. Educational institutions seeking bulk data for research purposes and for their internal use can buy it at a cost of five lakh rupees. □

Procedures: Data in bulk will be released in encrypted format. Organisations seeking access to data are required to provide security audit report as specified. All data provided will be non-transferable and cannot be re-sold. The organisations will be responsible to ensure that any activity which results in identification of individuals using the data set will not be undertaken. □ **Misuse of data:** Violators of these guidelines will be liable for any action permissible under the IT Act, 2000, or any other applicable law. Further, such organisations will be barred from accessing this data for a period of three years

THE CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES, 1951

The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, also known as the 1951 Refugee Convention, is a United Nations multilateral treaty that defines who is a refugee, and sets out the rights of individuals who are granted asylum and the responsibilities of nations that grant asylum. The Convention also sets out which people do not qualify as refugees, such as war criminals. The Convention also provides for some visa-free travel for holders of travel documents issued under the convention. Although the Refugee Convention was agreed in Geneva, it is considered incorrect to refer to it as "the Geneva Convention" because that term

is more widely understood as referring to any of four treaties regulating armed conflict.

Article 1 of the Convention defines a refugee as As a result of events owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

The contracting states shall

exempt refugees from reciprocity (Article 7): That means that the granting of a right to a refugee should not be subject to the granting of similar treatment by the refugee's country of nationality, because refugees do not enjoy the protection of their home state.

be able to take provisional measures against a refugee if needed in the interest of essential national security (Article 9)

respect a refugee's personal status and the rights that come with it, particularly rights related to marriage (Article 12)

provide free access to courts for refugees (Article 16)

provide administrative assistance for refugees (Article 25)

provide identity papers for refugees (Article 27)

provide travel documents for refugees (Article 28)

allow refugees to transfer their assets (Article 30)

provide the possibility of assimilation and naturalization to refugees (Article 34)

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cooperate with the UNHCR (Article 35) in the exercise of its functions and to help UNHCR supervise the implementation of the provisions in the Convention.

provide information on any national legislation they may adopt to ensure the application of the Convention (Article 36).

settle disputes they may have with other contracting states at the International Court of Justice if not otherwise possible (Article 38)

The contracting states shall not

discriminate against refugees (Article 3)

take exceptional measures against a refugee solely on account of his or her nationality (Article 8)

expect refugees to pay taxes and fiscal charges that are different to those of nationals (Article 29)

impose penalties on refugees who entered illegally in search of asylum if they present themselves without delay (Article 31), which is commonly interpreted to mean that their unlawful entry and presence ought not to be prosecuted at all

expel refugees (Article 32)

forcibly return or "**refoul**" refugees to the country they've fled from (Article 33). It is widely accepted that the prohibition of forcible return is part of customary international law. This means that even States that are not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention must respect the principle of non-refoulement. Therefore, States are obligated under the Convention and under customary international law to respect the principle of non-refoulement. If and when this principle is threatened, UNHCR can respond by intervening with relevant authorities, and if it deems necessary, will inform the public.

Although the Convention is "legally binding" there is no body that monitors compliance. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has supervisory responsibilities, but cannot enforce the Convention, and there is no formal mechanism for individuals to file complaints. The Convention specifies that complaints should be referred to the International Court of Justice. It appears that no nation has ever done this.

An individual may lodge a complaint with the UN Human Rights Committee under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, or with the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, but no one has ever done so in regard to violations of the Convention. Nations may levy international sanctions against violators, but no nation has ever done this.

At present, the only real consequences of violation are 1) public shaming in the press, and 2) verbal condemnation of the violator by the UN and by other nations. To date these have not proven to be significant deterrents.

E-COMMERCE TO GROW CLOSE TO US\$ 1.2 TRILLION BY 2021

Despite all the regulatory challenges surrounding the e-commerce sector in India, the segment is well equipped to drive the next level of Indian consumer growth this year, according to a report.

Consultancy firm Deloitte India, along with the Retailers Association of India (RAI), in a report has said that the India's e-commerce marketplace is poised to grow to \$1.2 trillion by 2021 from the current market of \$200 billion.

The report, titled 'Unravelling the Indian Consumer', said that e-commerce is currently growing at CAGR 32 per cent and would further

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rise on back of factors such as increasing internet penetration. It further added that mobile wallets are also a reason for the growth of the e-commerce sector. The mobile wallet transactions in the country has increased from ₹200 billion in FY16 to ₹3,000 billion in FY18.

Besides, e-commerce has changed the shopping patterns in India as the number of smartphone users have increased both in urban and rural markets.

Millennials are one of the major reasons for the growth of e-commerce. According to the report, 28 per cent millennials purchase products due to social media recommendations, and 63 per cent millennials stay updated on brands through social media.

Indian government has recently published a Review of FDI Policy 2018 that has changed the way market place based e-retailing would conduct their businesses in India. It has brought some very significant and far reaching techno legal consequences that are not easy to understand and comprehend at this stage.

Simply said, Amazon, Walmart, etc cannot sell products or services supplied by affiliated companies on their websites and they cannot offer their customers special discounts or exclusive products. FDI in inventory based model is not allowed now and business to customer (B2C) dealings have also been prohibited in India. Anti competition norms have also been introduced for e-retailing companies operating in India.

EARTH DAY

Earth Day is an annual event celebrated around the world on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First celebrated in 1970, it now includes events coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network in more than 193 countries.

On Earth Day 2016, the landmark Paris Agreement was signed by the United States, China, and some 120 other countries. This signing satisfied a key requirement for the entry into force of the historic draft climate protection treaty adopted by consensus of the 195 nations present at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN INDIA

Languages spoken in India belong to several language families, the major ones being the Indo-Aryan languages spoken by 78.05% of Indians and the Dravidian languages spoken by 19.64% of Indians. Languages spoken by the remaining 2.31% of the population belong to the Austroasiatic, Sino-Tibetan, Tai-Kadai and a few other minor language families and isolates. India (780) has the world's second highest number of languages, after Papua New Guinea (839).

Article 343 of the Indian constitution stated that the official language of the Union should become Hindi in Devanagari script instead of the extant English. But this was thought to be a violation of the constitution's guarantee of federalism. Later, a constitutional amendment, The Official Languages Act, 1963, allowed for the continuation of English in the Indian government indefinitely until legislation decides to change it. The form of numerals to be used for the official purposes of the Union were supposed to be the international form of Indian numerals, distinct from the numerals used in most English-speaking countries. Despite the misconceptions, Hindi is not the national language of India. The Constitution of India does not give any language the status of national language.

The Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution lists 22 languages, which have been referred to as scheduled languages and given recognition, status and official encouragement. In addition, the Government of India has awarded the

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distinction of classical language to Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu. Classical language status is given to languages which have a rich heritage and independent nature.

According to the Census of India of 2001, India has 122 major languages and 1599 other languages. However, figures from other sources vary, primarily due to differences in definition of the terms "language" and "dialect". The 2001 Census recorded 30 languages which were spoken by more than a million native speakers and 122 which were spoken by more than 10,000 people.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE (PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND REDRESSAL) ACT, 2013

Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Rules, 2013 ("**Sexual Harassment Act**" or "**Act**"), as the title indicates, prevents, prohibits and redresses sexual harassment of women at workplace.

As a first step towards prevention and prohibition of sexual harassment at workplace, Supreme Court of India in *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan*, in the year 1997, laid down guidelines for prevention of sexual harassment at work places until the government came up with a legislation.

The Government of India, in the year 2013, legislated Sexual Harassment Act. The Act incorporates guidelines issued in Vishaka case by Supreme Court of India.

The Act states its objectives as prevention of violation of fundamental rights of a woman employee under article 14 (equal protection under the laws), article 15 (prohibition of discrimination on race, caste, religion, sex, etc.)

and article 21 (protection of life and personal liberty) of the Constitution of India.

Sexual harassment

Section 2(n) of the Act provides an inclusive definition of sexual harassment of a woman employee at work place. Sexual harassment includes:

1. Physical contact and advances;
2. A demand or request for sexual favours;
3. Making sexually coloured remarks;
4. Showing pornography; and
5. Any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

While clauses (1) to (4) above are self-explanatory, clause (5) is very wide and would also cover the following instances:

1. Any verbal comment or sound which may be construed as sexual in nature;
2. Sharing adult jokes may also be construed as sexual in nature;
3. Staring, or touching, or patting;
4. Stalking a woman employee;
5. Checking out a woman employee; and
6. Other gestures, sounds or comments which may be construed as sexual in nature.

Any implicit or explicit promise of preferential treatment or detrimental treatment or creation of hostile environment in her employment for gaining sexual favours would be construed as sexual harassment.

Redressal mechanism

Constitution of Internal Complaints Committee

Every employer employing 10 (ten) or more employees, would need to constitute an internal complaints committee ("**Internal Committee**"). The Internal Committee would comprise of

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employees and a member of non-government organisation. The presiding officer of the Internal Committee would need to be a woman employee.

Constitution of Local Complaints Committee

The government may notify a District Magistrate or Additional District Magistrate or Collector ("**District Authority**") to exercise powers or discharge functions for every district under the Act. The District Authority to constitute Local Complaints Committee ("**Local Committee**") with a woman as its chairperson.

(Any reference to either Internal Committee or Local Committee will be referred to as a "**Committee**")

Complaint by the aggrieved woman employee and redressal thereof

An aggrieved woman employee, or her legal heir on her behalf, or with her written permission, any other person, may make a written complaint to the Internal Committee within a period of 3 (three) months from the date of the sexual harassment incident. If the employer doesn't constitute Internal Committee, the aggrieved woman employee may make a written complaint to the Local Committee. The above period of 3 (three) months may be extended by another 3 (three) months if reasonable reasons exist for delay in filing a complaint.

At the request of aggrieved employee, the Committee may initiate conciliation process. It may be noted that the Act doesn't allow monetary settlement during conciliation process.

If aggrieved woman employee doesn't choose conciliation process, then the Committee would need to conduct inquiry proceedings into the complaint in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

For the purposes of inquiry, the Committee will have all the powers of civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 in respect of:

1. Summoning and enforcing attendance of any person and examining him/her on oath;
2. Requiring discovery and production of a document.

The process for inquiry of complaint filed by an aggrieved woman employee would need to be completed within a period of 90 (ninety) days from the date of filing of complaint with the Committee. Within 10 (ten) days after the conclusion of inquiry proceedings, the Committee will need to send its report and recommendations to the employer or District Authority, as the case may be.

Where the Committee finds that the complaint is malicious, then it may recommend action against the woman employee. It may be noted that identity and address of the victim needs to be kept confidential by the Committee and government officers.

Punishment and appeals

If the alleged offender is proved guilty, the Committee has the authority to order the offender to make a payment of such compensation to aggrieved woman as it may deem fit. If the offender fails to pay the compensation to the aggrieved woman employee, then on the recommendation of the Committee, District Authority may recover the amount as a land revenue.

On the recommendation of Committee, employer or District Authority may also take the following actions against the offender:

1. Written apology;
2. Warning, reprimand or censure;
3. Withholding of promotion or pay rise;
4. Termination of employment;

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5. Undertaking counselling sessions or community service.

The punishment under the Act would be in accordance with services rules of the employer. In the event employer doesn't have service rules, then punishment would be in accordance with the rules under the Act.

Any person aggrieved with the recommendations of the Committee may appeal within 90 (ninety) days to the appellate authority.

Duties of employer

The Act specifically enlists the following as the duties of employer:

1. Provide a safe working environment;
2. Display at a conspicuous place, penal consequences for sexual harassment;
3. Organise workshops for employees and orientation programs for the Committee;
4. Assist in securing the attendance of offender and witness;
5. Provide assistance to aggrieved woman employee;
6. Initiate action under Indian Penal Code if the offence requires such action or offender is not an employee.

NOTRE-DAME DE PARIS

Notre-Dame de Paris (meaning "Our Lady of Paris"), often referred to simply as Notre-Dame is a medieval Catholic cathedral in Paris. The cathedral is consecrated to the Virgin Mary and considered to be one of the finest examples of French Gothic architecture. Its pioneering use of the rib vault and flying buttress, its enormous and colourful rose windows, and the naturalism and abundance of its sculptural decoration set it apart from the earlier Romanesque style. Major components that make Notre Dame stand out include one of the world's largest organs and its immense church bells.

The cathedral's construction was begun in 1160 under Bishop Maurice de Sully and was largely complete by 1260, though it was modified frequently in the following centuries. In the 1790s, Notre-Dame suffered desecration during the French Revolution; much of its religious imagery was damaged or destroyed. In the 19th century, the cathedral was the site of the coronation of Napoleon I, and the funerals of many French presidents.

ROBERT MUELLER REPORT

Robert Mueller is an American lawyer and government official who served as the sixth Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation from 2001 to 2013. On May 17, 2017, Mueller was appointed by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein as special counsel overseeing an investigation into allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and related matters. Mueller submitted his report to Attorney General William Barr on March 22, 2019. On April 18, 2019, the Department of Justice released the special counsel's final report.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE-POLICY PLATFORM ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (IPBES) REPORT

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) report warns of "an imminent rapid acceleration in the global rate of species extinction". The pace of loss "is already tens to hundreds of times higher than it has been, on average, over the last 10 million years," it notes. "Half-a-million to a million species are projected to be threatened with extinction, many within decades."

Many experts think a so-called "mass extinction event" — only the sixth in the last half-billion years — is already under way. The most recent saw the end of the Cretaceous period some 66 million years ago, when a 10-km-wide asteroid

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strike wiped out most lifeforms. Up to one million species face extinction due to human influence, according to a draft U.N. report obtained by AFP that painstakingly catalogues how humanity has undermined the natural resources upon which its very survival depends.

The accelerating loss of clean air, drinkable water, CO₂-absorbing forests, pollinating insects, protein-rich fish and storm-blocking mangroves — to name but a few of the dwindling services rendered by nature — poses no less of a threat than climate change, says the report, set to be unveiled May 6.

JUSTICE S A BOBDE PANEL

Justice S A Bobde, the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court, was appointed to conduct an in-house inquiry into the allegations of sexual harassment levelled against Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi. Being the number two judge, the Chief Justice of India has appointed him to look into the allegations of sexual harassment charges levelled by a former woman staff.

Justice Bobde told PTI that he has decided to form a panel by inducting two apex court judges — N V Ramana and Indira Banerjee.

DEFAMATION: SECTION 499 OF THE INDIAN PENAL CODE

Defamation is the publication of statement which reflects on a person's reputation and tends to lower him in the estimation of right thinking members of society generally or tends to make them shun or avoid him. In simple term it means tarnishing somebody's image by speaking or writing something damaging. There are two types of defamation:

1. Libel: written/published form of defamation
2. Slander: spoken/oral form of defamation

There are laws which deal with defamation. The basic idea of having a defamation law is to balance the private right to protect one's reputation with the public right to freedom of speech. It allows people to sue those who say or publish false and malicious comments.

Section 499 of the Indian Penal Code defines defamation as, 'whoever, by words either spoken or intended to be read, or by signs or by visible, representations makes or publishes any imputation concerning any person intending to harm, or having reason to believe that such imputation will harm the reputation of such person, is said except in cases here in after expected, to defame that person.'

THE RESERVE BANK OF INDIA (RBI) DIVESTED STAKE IN NATIONAL HOUSING BANK (NHB) AND NATIONAL BANK FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (NABARD)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has divested its entire stake held in National Housing Bank (NHB), the regulator for housing finance companies, and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) to the government, which now holds 100% in these entities. The transactions were completed on February 26 (NABARD) and March 19 (NHB).

RBI had 100% shareholding in NHB, which was divested for ₹1,450 crore. The Nabard stake was divested in two phases — RBI had 72.5% stake in NABARD amounting to ₹1,450 crore, out of which 71.5%, worth ₹1,430 crore was divested in October 2010 and the residual shareholding was divested on February 26 this year for ₹20 crore.

LIBOR

LIBOR is a benchmark interest rate at which major global lend to one another in the international interbank market for short-term loans. LIBOR, which stands for London

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Interbank Offered Rate, serves as a globally accepted key benchmark interest rate that indicates borrowing costs between banks. The rate is calculated and published each day by the Intercontinental Exchange (ICE).

LIBOR is the average interest rate at which major global banks borrow from one another. It is based on five currencies including the US dollar, the euro, the British pound, the Japanese yen, and the Swiss franc, and serves seven different maturities—overnight/spot next, one week, and one, two, three, six, and 12 months. The combination of five currencies and seven maturities leads to a total of 35 different LIBOR rates calculated and reported each business day. The most commonly quoted rate is the three-month U.S. dollar rate, usually referred to as the current LIBOR rate.

JUSTICE A.K. PATNAIK PANEL

The Supreme Court on appointed its former judge, Justice A.K. Patnaik to probe whether a conspiracy is afoot against the Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi. Justice Patnaik has been tasked to unearth whether the CJI is the target of a larger intrigue hatched by a powerful lobby of fixers, disgruntled apex court employees and corporate figures to compromise the highest judiciary itself.

The enquiry would primarily focus on material and affidavits provided by lawyer Utsav Singh Bains that claimed some former staffers of the court, influential peddlers and corporate entities have ganged up against Chief Justice Gogoi to frame him in a false case.

GAGANDEEP KANG

She is 2019 Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS), London. Gagandeep Kang FNA, FASc, FRS is a clinician scientist, Professor in the Department of Gastrointestinal Sciences at the Christian Medical College, Vellore, India and the executive director of the Translational

Health Science and Technology Institute, Faridabad, an autonomous institute of the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India. She is a leading researcher with a major research focus on viral infections in children, and the testing of rotaviral vaccines. She also works on other enteric infections and their consequences when children are infected in early life, sanitation and water safety. She was awarded the prestigious Infosys Prize in Life Sciences in 2016 for her contributions to understanding the natural history of rotavirus and other infectious diseases.

PROTECTION OF PLANT VARIETIES AND FARMERS' RIGHTS (PPV&FR) ACT, 2001

PepsiCo has invoked Section 64 of the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPV&FR) Act, 2001 to claim infringement of its rights against some potato farmers in Ahmedabad.

However, farmers groups cite Section 39 of the same Act, which specifically says that a farmer is allowed "to save, use, sow, resow, exchange, share or sell his farm produce including seed of a variety protected under this Act" so long as he does not sell "branded seed".

The farmers want the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPV&FRA) to make a submission in court on their behalf and fund legal costs through the National Gene Fund.

NATIONAL GENE FUND

As per the Protection of Plant Variety and Farmers Rights Act, 2001 Section 45 "National Gene Fund" has been constituted to receive contributions from:

- a. benefit sharing received from the breeder of a variety or an essentially derived variety registered under the Act, or the propagating material of such

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- variety or essentially derived variety, as the case may be;
- annual fee payable to the Authority by way of royalty;
 - compensation deposited by breeders and
 - contributions from any National and International organizations and other sources

The Gene Fund to be applied for meeting:

- any amount to be paid by way of benefit sharing
- the compensation payable under sub-section (3) of section 41;
- the expenditure for supporting the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources and for strengthening the capability of the Panchayat in carrying out such conservation and sustainable use;
- the expenditure of the schemes relating to benefit sharing framed under section 46.

SOCIAL MEDIA FRAUD

In a sign that platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp are emerging as new public square for criminal deception, a study has found that social media fraud increased 43% in 2018. The results suggest that cybercriminals are increasingly relying on Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and other legitimate social media and messaging platforms to communicate with each other and sell stolen identities, credit card numbers and other ill-gotten gains.

Given the ease of use, absence of fees and other benefits of these platforms, continuation of this trend in 2019 should come as no surprise, said the whitepaper 'Current State of Cybercrime — 2019', released by RSA Security.

According to the researchers, fraud in the mobile channel has grown significantly over the past several years, with 70% of artifice originating in the mobile channel in 2018. In particular, fraud from mobile apps increased 680% between 2015 and 2018, said the study, adding that the use of rogue mobile applications to defraud consumers was on the rise.

HYPERLOOP TECHNOLOGY

A Hyperloop is a proposed mode of passenger and/or freight transportation, first used to describe an open-source vactrain design released by a joint team from Tesla and SpaceX. Drawing heavily from Robert Goddard's vactrain, a hyperloop is a sealed tube or system of tubes through which a pod may travel free of air resistance or friction conveying people or objects at high speed while being very efficient. Elon Musk's version of the concept, first publicly mentioned in 2012, incorporates reduced-pressure tubes in which pressurized capsules ride on air bearings driven by linear induction motors and axial compressors. The Hyperloop concept has been explicitly "open-sourced" by Musk and SpaceX, and others have been encouraged to take the ideas and further develop them.

In India, agreement has been concluded with a US company to build hyperloop to connect Pune-Mumbai and Vijayawada-Amrawati.

PAMBAN BRIDGE

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- i. The main land of Indian peninsula is connected with Rameswaram Island through a Road and a Railway bridge , These two bridges commonly referred as Pamban Bridge.
- ii. Second Longest sea bridge in India (first longest till the opening of Bandra worli – sea link Mumbai on 2009).
- iii. The location of this bridge is world's second highly corrosive environment next to Miami, US.
- iv. It is also Cyclone prone and high velocity wind zone.
- v. The two hundred tonne bascule leaves are still operated manually by the workers .
- vi. This Rail bridge was shattered during the cyclone on December 26, 1964.
- vii. After the cyclone the Indian railway set a plan to repair the Pambanbridge , targeted in 6 months.
- viii. The bridge was renovated and restored again in just 46 days under the leadership of I.E.S officer E.sreedharan renowned as Metro man (Recognition for this quick heal achievement he was given a Railway minister's award, in that year.)
- ix. In 2014 Hundredth year celebration of the Pamban bridge was done

AIR INDIA ONE

Air India One (also referred to as AI-1or AIC001) is the call sign of any aircraft with the Prime Minister or President of India on board. Air India is the national airline of India. The aircraft is operated as VIP flight by the Indian Air Force (IAF). The IAF's Air Headquarters Communication Squadron, based at Indira Gandhi International Airport (formerly Palam Air Force Base) in New Delhi, is in charge of operating these aircraft.

CO2 EMISSION GROWTH RATE

In 2017-18, India became the leading country in world with 4.8% growth rate in CO2 emission. It was followed by USA and China with 3.1% and 2.5% growth rate respectively. However, in gross emission China leads the world with 9481 million tons of CO2 emission, followed by US 4888 million tons and India at 2299 million tons.

THE LOW-FREQUENCY ARRAY OR LOFAR TELESCOPE

The Low-Frequency Array or LOFAR, is a large radio telescope network located mainly in the Netherlands, completed in 2012 by ASTRON, the Netherlands Institute for Radio Astronomy and its international partners, and operated by ASTRON's radio observatory, of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research.

LOFAR consists of a vast array of omnidirectional antennas using a new concept in which the signals from the separate antennas are not combined in real time as they are in most array antennas. The electronic signals from the antennas are digitized, transported to a central digital processor, and combined in software to emulate a conventional antenna. The project is based on an interferometric array of radio telescopes using about 20,000 small antennas concentrated in at least 48 stations. Forty of these stations are distributed across

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the Netherlands and were funded by ASTRON. The five stations in Germany, and one each in Great Britain, France, Sweden and Ireland, were funded by these countries. In February, 2019 it discovered 3 lakhs new galaxies in universe.

BIFURCATION OF HYDERABAD HIGH COURT

The President of India, on 26th December, 2018, has issued orders bifurcating The High Court of Judicature at Hyderabad for the State of Telangana and the State of Andhra Pradesh into High Court of Andhra Pradesh with the principal seat at Amaravati and High Court for the State of Telangana with the principal seat at Hyderabad. The bifurcation and the constitution of separate High Courts for Telangana and Andhra Pradesh will come into effect from 1st January, 2019. There are 25 High Courts at the State level (including new Andhra Pradesh HC).

The High Courts are the principal civil courts of original jurisdiction in the state along with District Courts which are subordinate to the High courts. However, High courts exercise their original civil and criminal jurisdiction only if the courts subordinate to the high court in the state are not competent (not authorised by law) to try such matters for lack of pecuniary, territorial jurisdiction. High courts may also enjoy original jurisdiction in certain matters if so designated specifically in a state or Federal law. e.g.: Company law cases are instituted only in a high court.

Judges in a high court are appointed by the President after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, Chief Justice of High Court and the governor of the state. The Calcutta High Court is the oldest High Court in the country, established on 2 July 1862, whereas the Allahabad High Court is the largest in world having a sanctioned strength of judges at 160.

KUMBHA MELA OF 2019: THREE GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

The world's largest congregation of pilgrims in the world, the Kumbha Mela of 2019 has got three Guinness World Records in its hold. Isn't it something making every Indian proud? Kumbha Mela is among the largest fairs in the world and is no less than a festival in India. 2019 is marked with the exceptional records making the country proud. The team of Guinness World Records was here in India from February 28 to March 3, 2019, the period when all the three records were performed.

1. Guinness World Record confirmed by the Prayagraj Mela Authority (PMA) is "the maximum contribution to an event of handprint painting in just 8 hours". The activity being a part of 'Paint my City' involved participation of over 7,664 people which broke the previous world record held by South Korea. From children to adults, saints to security staff, people from different part of the world came together to participate in the activity. It was a 60 feet canvas that displayed hand impressions of every size.
2. The second record set at Kumbha Mela 2019 is for the "largest bus parade". There were around 500 buses painted with the theme of Kumbha Mela on them driven through the period of the world fair. All the mela festivities were carried out smoothly, including the performances and royal baths. Another astonishing fact is that over 22 crore pilgrims bathed in the Holy Ganges. An unbelievable record in itself!
3. The third world record set in the Guinness Book of World Records is for "largest sanitation drive". Initiated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi under Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan campaign in the year 2014, this was the

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largest sanitation work and crowd management drive ever observed in the country. Over 10,000 workers were involved in taking the cleaning and sanitation responsibility during the event.

VANITHA MATHIL

Vanitha Mathil ("Women's Wall") was a human chain formed on 1 January 2019 across the Indian state of Kerala to uphold gender equality and protest against gender discrimination. The wall was formed solely by women and extended for a distance of around 620 kilometres (390 miles) from Kasargod to Thiruvananthapuram. Around three to five million women participated in the event.

ASSUMPTION ISLAND

Assumption Island is a small island in the Outer Islands of Seychelles north of Madagascar, with a distance of 1,135 km (705 mi) south-west of the capital, Victoria, on Mahé Island. In 2018, Seychelles and India signed an agreement to build and operate a joint military facility on a portion of the island. The plan stirred up public protests by activists who believed that the islands should stay out of the brewing India-China regional conflict.

ASIA REASSURANCE INITIATIVE ACT (ARIA)

On the final day of 2018, U.S. President Donald J. Trump signed into law the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA), which passed the U.S. Senate earlier that month. The act "establishes a multifaceted U.S. strategy to increase U.S. security, economic interests, and values in the Indo-Pacific region," according to the White House.

Specifically, the ARIA will authorize \$1.5 billion in spending for a range of U.S. programs in East and Southeast Asia and "develop a long-term strategic vision and a comprehensive,

multifaceted, and principled United States policy for the Indo-Pacific region, and for other purposes."

ARIA draws attention to U.S. relations with China, India, the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Northeast Asian allies Japan and South Korea. The ARIA devotes considerable energy to reasserting U.S. support for Taiwan and calls on the president of the United States to "encourage the travel of high level United States officials to Taiwan, in accordance with the Taiwan Travel Act," which was made law in 2018. Elsewhere, ARIA devotes attention to the maritime commons in the Asia and the South China Sea, where it calls on the United States to support the ASEAN nations as they adopt a code of conduct in the South China Sea with China.

HELSINKI SUMMIT

The 2018 Russia–United States summit was a summit meeting between United States President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin (hence also known as the Trump–Putin summit) on July 16, 2018, in Helsinki, Finland.

During a post-summit joint press conference with Putin, Trump did not accept Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. elections. Trump's omissions provoked an uproar across the political spectrum, including from some of his usual allies.

ASHGABAT AGREEMENT

The Ashgabat agreement is a multimodal transport agreement between the governments of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Pakistan, India and Oman for creating an international transport and transit corridor facilitating transportation of goods between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf. The agreement came into force in April 2016.

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Ashgabat in Turkmenistan is the depository state for the agreement.

The agreement was originally signed by Iran, Oman, Qatar, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on April 25, 2011. Qatar subsequently withdrew from the agreement in 2013, the same year Kazakhstan applied for membership, which was eventually approved in 2015. Pakistan has also joined the Agreement from November 2016. India formally joined in February 2018.

For enhanced connectivity, the Ashgabat Agreement will also synchronize with the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC) encompassing ship, rail including Trans-Caspian railway, and road route for moving freight between India, Russia, Iran, Europe and Central Asia. The route primarily involves moving freight from India, Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia via ship, rail and road.

NINE-DASH LINE

The Nine-Dash Line refers to the undefined, vaguely located, demarcation line used by People's Republic of China (PRC), for their claims of the major part of the South China Sea. The contested area in the South China Sea includes the Paracel Islands, the Spratly Islands, and various other areas including the Pratas Islands, the Macclesfield Bank and the Scarborough Shoal. The claim encompasses the area of Chinese land reclamation known as the "Great Wall of Sand".

On 12 July 2016, an arbitral tribunal constituted under Annex VII to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ruled that China has no legal basis to claim "historic rights" within its nine-dash line in a case brought by the Philippines. The tribunal judged that there was no evidence that China had historically exercised exclusive control over the waters or resources within the Nine-Dash Line.

FIRST ISA SUMMIT 2018

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an alliance of more than 122 countries initiated by India, most of them being sunshine countries, which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. now extended to all members of UN. The primary objective of the alliance is to work for efficient exploitation of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

The initiative was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the India Africa Summit, and a meeting of member countries ahead of the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris in November 2015. The framework agreement of the International Solar Alliance opened for signatures in Marrakech, Morocco in November 2016, and 122 countries have joined. It is headquartered in India.

The first ISA summit was held in March, 2018 in New Delhi, India, was a highlight in the 2018 solar calendar. French President, Emmanuel Macron announced €700 million in support through loans and donations by 2022, while several other financial deals and MoUs were also signed. Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi further outlined 10 action points to help the spread of solar energy.

RAISINA DIALOGUE

The Raisina Dialogue is a multilateral conference held annually in New Delhi. Since its inception in 2016, the conference has emerged as India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-economics. The conference is hosted by the Observer Research Foundation, an independent think tank, in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs of India.

The conference is structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion, involving a variety of global policymakers including heads of state, cabinet ministers and local government officials. In addition, The Dialogue also welcomes major private sector executives, as well as members of the media

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and academia. It is designed on the lines of Singapore's Shangri-La Dialogue. The name "Raisina Dialogue" comes from Raisina Hill, an elevation in New Delhi, seat of the Government of India, as well as the Presidential Palace of India, Rashtrapati Bhavan.

GST

The One Hundred and Twenty Second Amendment Bill of the Constitution of India, officially known as The Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016, introduced a national Goods and Services Tax in India from 1 July 2017. This amendment included 279 A that established GST council with the Union Finance Minister as Chairperson; the Union Minister of State in charge of Revenue or Finance as member; and the Minister in charge of Finance or Taxation or any other Minister nominated by each State Government as members. One half of the total number of Members of the Goods and Services Tax Council shall constitute the quorum at its meetings.

Every decision of the Goods and Services Tax Council shall be taken at a meeting, by a majority of not less than three-fourths of the weighted votes of the members present and voting, in accordance with the following principles, namely:—

- a) the vote of the Central Government shall have a weightage of one-third of the total votes cast, and
- b) the votes of all the State Governments taken together shall have a weightage of two-thirds of the total votes cast

The council also acts as federal dispute resolution body in GST matters. The GST is a Value added Tax (VAT) proposed to be a comprehensive indirect tax levy on manufacture, sale and consumption of goods as well as services at the national level. It replaces all indirect taxes levied on goods and

services by the Indian Central and state governments. It is aimed at being comprehensive for most goods and services.

ROLE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

The Chief justice of India (CJI) has various powers and functions. Some include:

1. Swearing in of the President and Governors.
2. Consultation by the President to the Chief Justice of India for the appointment of judges in the Supreme Court and the High Courts.
3. Appointing ad-hoc Supreme Court judges under the Article 127 of the Constitution.
4. Appoint retired judges to sit in the Supreme Court. [Article 128, Constitution of India]
5. With the approval of the president, the Chief Justice of India can change the seat of the Supreme Court from Delhi to any other place. [Article 130, Constitution of India]
6. The Appointment of officers and servants of the Supreme Court will be made by the Chief Justice of India. [Article 146, Constitution of India]
7. Chief Justice of India has the power to move High Court Judges to other High Courts. [Article 222, Constitution of India]
8. The Chief Justice of India can appoint an arbitrator to resolve a financial dispute between the Centre and the states.

Master of the Roster

Along with the above-mentioned powers and functions, the Chief Justice of India also has the power to constitute benches to hear cases in the Supreme Court. The Chief Justice of India decides which judge will hear which case and when. The term "Master of the Roster" was

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coined by the present Chief Justice of India, Justice Dipak Misra. He declared that: “ The Chief Justice is the master of the roster and he alone has the prerogative to constitute the Benches of the Court and allocate cases to the Benches so constituted.”

SAMMAKKA SARALAMMA JATARA

SammakkaSaralammaJatara or MedaramJatara is a festival of honouring the Hindu goddesses, celebrated in the state of Telangana, India. This Jatara is known for witnessing one of the largest people gatherings in the world. People offer Bangarm (jaggery) :TheJatara begins at Medaram in Tadvaimandal in JayashankarBhupalpally district. The rituals related to the Goddesses are entirely conducted by Koya tribe priests, in accordance with Koya customs and traditions.

Once declare a national festival a, jatara can be considered for 'intangible cultural heritage of humanity' tag of UNESCO. Jatara celebrated during the time the goddesses of the tribals are believed to visit them. It is believed that after Kumbha Mela, the Medaramjatara attracts the largest number of devotees in the country.it is very Asia's largest tribal festival which is celebrated in Telangana.

WALMIKI AND MALHAR: TWO NEW LANGUAGES

Walmiki is spoken in the district of Koraput of Odishaand on the bordering districts of Andhra Pradesh. The analysis showed that the language is an “isolate”, and does not belonged to a particular family of languages. The name of the language, Walmiki, “is also interesting and indicative because the speech community claims descent from the great Indian saint-poet Valmiki”.

The second language “Malhar” is spoken in a remote and isolated hamlet about 165 km away

from Bhubaneswar. The community consists of about 75 speakers including children.

The preliminary data shows that Malhar belonged to the “North Dravidian subgroup of the Dravidian family of languages” and that it has close affinities with the other North Dravidian languages like Malto and Kurux spoken in West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar.

BAGH CAVES

The Bagh Caves are a group of nine rock-cut monuments, situated among the southern slopes of the Vindhyas in Bagh town of Dhar district in Madhya Pradesh state in central India. These monuments are located at a distance of 97 km from Dhar town. These are renowned for mural paintings by master painters of ancient India. The use of the word "cave" is a bit of a misnomer, since these are not natural, but instead examples of Indian rock-cut architecture. The Bagh caves, like those at Ajanta, were excavated by master craftsmen on perpendicular sandstone rock face of a hill on the far bank of a seasonal stream, the Baghani. Buddhist in inspiration, of the nine caves, only five have survived. All of them are 'viharas' or resting places of monks monasteries having quadrangular plan. A small chamber, usually at the back, forms the 'chaitya', the prayer hall. Most significant of these five extant caves is the Cave 4, commonly known as the Rang Mahal (Palace of Colors). The Bagh Caves were quarried in the 5th -6th century AD.

The paintings on the wall and ceilings of the viharas of Bagh, the fragments of which are still visible in Cave 3 and Cave 4 (remnants seen also in Caves 2, 5 and 7), were executed in tempera. These paintings are materialistic rather than spiritualistic. The ground prepared was a reddish-brown gritty and thick mud plaster, laid out on the walls and ceilings. Over the plaster, lime-priming was done, on which these paintings were executed. Some of the

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most beautiful paintings were on the walls of the portico of Cave 4. To prevent further loss of the values of Indian classical art, most paintings were carefully removed in 1982 and today can be seen in Archaeological Museum of Gwalior.

BADAMI CAVE

The Badami cave temples are a complex of four Hindu cave temples located in Badami, a town in the Bagalkot district in northern part of Karnataka, India. The caves are considered an example of Indian rock-cut architecture, especially Badami Chalukya architecture, which dates from the 6th century. Badami was previously known as Vataapi Badami, the capital of the early Chalukya dynasty, which ruled much of Karnataka from the 6th to the 8th century. Badami is situated on the west bank of a man made lake ringed by an earthen wall with stone steps; it is surrounded on the north and south by forts built in later times.

The Badami cave temples represent some of the earliest known examples of Hindu temples in the Deccan region. They along with the temples in Aihole transformed the Malaprabha River valley into a cradle of temple architecture that influenced the components of later Hindu temples elsewhere in India.

Caves 1 to 4 are in the escarpment of the hill in soft Badami sandstone formation, to the south-east of the town. In Cave 1, among various sculptures of Hindu divinities and themes, a prominent carving is of the Tandava-dancing Shiva as Nataraja. Cave 2 is mostly similar to Cave 1 in terms of its layout and dimensions, featuring Hindu subjects of which the relief of Vishnu as Trivikrama is the largest. The largest cave is Cave 3, featuring Vishnu-related mythology, and it is also the most intricately carved cave in the complex. Cave 4 is dedicated to revered figures of Jainism. Around the lake, Badami has additional caves of which one may be a Buddhist cave. Another cave was

discovered in 2015, about 500 metres (1,600 ft) from the four main caves, with 27 Hindu carvings.

SITTANAVASAL CAVE

Sittanavasal Cave is a 2nd-century Jain complex of caves in Sittanavasal village in Pudukottai district of Tamil Nadu, India. Its name is a distorted form of Sit-tan-na-va-yil, a Tamil word which means "the abode of great saints".

The monument is a rock-cut monastery or temple. Created by Jains, it is called the ArivarKoil, and is a rock cut cave temple of the Arihants. It contains remnants of notable frescoes from the 7th century. The murals have been painted with vegetable and mineral dyes in black, green, yellow, orange, blue, and white. Paintings have been created by applying colours over a thin wet surface of lime plaster.

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RAMSAR SITES IN INDIA

| Sr No. | Name | Location | Designated | Area (km ²) | Description |
|--------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---|
| 1 | Ashtamudi Wetland | Kerala | 19 August 2002 | 614 | <p>A natural backwater in Kollam district. River Kallada and Pallichal drains into it. I</p> <p>In 1975, an area of 672 km² was declared the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary. The core area of the sanctuary, with an area of 145 km², was declared Bhitarkanika National Park in September 1998. Gahirmatha Marine Wildlife Sanctuary, which bounds the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary to the east, was created in September 1997, and encompasses Gahirmatha Beach and an adjacent portion of the Bay of Bengal. Bhitarkanika Mangroves were designated a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance in 2002. It is also famous for its salt water crocodiles and Olive ridley sea turtle.</p> |
| 2 | Bhitarkanika Mangroves | Odisha | 19 August 2002 | 650 | <p>The Bhoj Wetland consists of two lakes located in the city of Bhopal, the capital of the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. The two lakes are the Bhojtal and the Lower Lake, which lie to the west of the city center. It is a manmade reservoir. A total of more than 20,000 birds are observed annually. Bhoj Wetland was recognized as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention of 1971 in 2002.</p> |
| 3 | Bhoj Wetland | Madhya Pradesh | 19 August 2002 | 32 | |
| 4 | Chandra Taal | Himachal Pradesh | 8 November 2005 | .49 | <p>A high altitude lake on the upper Chandra valley flowing to the Chandra river of the Western Himalayas (4,337m asl.) near the Kunzam pass joining the Himalayan and PirPanjal ranges. It supports CITES and IUCN Redlisted Snow Leopard and is a refuge for many species like Snow Cock, Chukor, Black Ring Stilt, Kestrel, Golden Eagle, Chough, Red Fox, Himalayan Ibex,</p> |

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5 Chilika Lake Odisha 1 October 1165
1981

and Blue Sheep.

Chilika Lake (Chilika Lake) is a brackish water lagoon, spread over the Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts of Odisha state on the east coast of India, at the mouth of the Daya River, flowing into the Bay of Bengal, covering an area of over 1,100 km². It is the largest coastal lagoon in India and the second largest lagoon in the world. In 1981, Chilika Lake was designated the first Indian wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. White bellied sea eagles, greylag geese, purple moorhen, jacana, flamingos, egrets, gray and purple herons, Indian roller, storks, white ibis, spoonbills, brahminy ducks, shovellers, pintails, and more. Nalbana Island is the core area of the Ramsar designated wetlands of Chilika Lake.

The Irrawaddy dolphin (*Orcaellabrevirostris*) is the flagship species of Chilika lake.

6 DeeporBeel Assam 19 August 40
2002

A permanent freshwater lake in a former channel of the Brahmaputra river, of great biological importance and also essential as the only major storm water storage basin for the city of Guwahati.

Some globally threatened birds are supported, including Spotbilled Pelican (*Pelicanus philippensis*), Lesser and Greater Adjutant Stork (*Leptoptilos javanicus* and *dubius*), and Baer's Pochard (*Aythya baeri*).

7 East Kolkata West 19 August 125
Wetlands Bengal 2002

World-renowned as a model of a multiple use wetland, the site's resource recovery systems, developed by local people through the ages, have saved the city of Kolkata from the costs of constructing and maintaining waste water treatment plants.

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| | | | | |
|----|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------|
| 8 | Harike Wetland | Punjab | 23 March 1990 | 41 |
| 9 | Hokera Wetland | Jammu and Kashmir | 8 November 2005 | 13.75 |
| 10 | Kanjli Wetland | Punjab | 22 January 2002 | 1.83 |
| 11 | Keoladeo National Park | Rajasthan | 1 October 1981 | 28.73 |
| 12 | Kolleru Lake | Andhra | 19 August | 901 |

A shallow water reservoir with thirteen islands, at the confluence of two rivers. Dense floating vegetation covers 70% of the lake. An important site for breeding, wintering and staging birds, supporting over 200,000 Anatidae (ducks, geese, swans, etc.) during migration. The entire lake is leased on an annual basis to commercial fishery organizations.

Located in the northwest Himalayan biogeographic province of Kashmir, back of the snow-draped Pir Panchal (1,584m asl.), Hokera wetland is only 10 km from scenic paradise of Srinagar. A natural perennial wetland contiguous to the Jhelum basin, it is the only site with remaining reedbeds of Kashmir and pathway of 68 waterfowl species like Large Egret, Great Crested Grebe, Little Cormorant, Common Shelduck, Tufted Duck and endangered White-eyed Pochard, coming from Siberia, China, Central Asia, and Northern Europe.

Typical marshy vegetation complexes inhabit like Typha, Phragmites, Eleocharis, Trapa, and Nymphoides species ranging from shallow water to open water aquatic flora.

A permanent stream, the Kali Bein, converted by construction of a small barrage in 1870 into a water storage area for irrigation purposes.

The stream is considered to be the most significant in the state from the religious point of view, as it is associated with the first guru of the Sikhs, Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

Wildlife Sanctuary. A natural eutrophic

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Pradesh 2002

lake, situated between the two major river basins of the Godavari and the Krishna, fed by two seasonal rivers and a number of drains and channels, which functions as a natural flood balancing reservoir between the deltas of the two rivers.

Loktak Lake is the largest freshwater lake in the north-eastern region of the country, which is famous for the phumdis (heterogeneous mass of vegetation, soil, and organic matters at various stages of decomposition) floating over it. KeibulLamjao the only floating national park in the world floats over it. It is located near Moirang, Bishnupur district in Manipur state, India.

'Sendra tourist hub' (a small hillock) is located at moirang ~58 km from the heart of the city.

A natural freshwater lake (a relict sea) that is the largest natural wetland in the Thar Desert Biogeographic Province and represents a dynamic environment with salinity and depth varying depending on rainfall.

It is an important stopover site within the Central Asia Flyway, with globally threatened species such as the critically endangered Sociable Lapwing (*Vanellusgregarius*) and the vulnerable Marbled Teal (*Marmaronettaangustirostris*) stopping over at the site during migration, while the vulnerable Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone*) takes refuge there during summer when other water bodies are dry. The wetland is also a lifeline for a satellite population of the endangered Indian Wild Ass (*Equus hemionuskhur*) which uses this area in the dry season.

13 Loktak Lake Manipur 23 March 1990 266

14 Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary Gujarat 24 September 2012 123

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- | | | | | | |
|----|--|------------------|-----------------|--------|---|
| 15 | Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary | Tamil Nadu | 19 August 2002 | 385 | <p>One of the last remnants of Dry Evergreen Forests.</p> <p>Habitat: Dry Evergreen Forests, Mangrove & Wetlands.</p> <p>Winter Migrants : Spoon Billed Sandpiper, Greater Flamingos.</p> <p>A water storage reservoir created in 1975 on the Beas River in the low foothills of the Himalaya on the northern edge of the Indo-Gangetic plain.</p> <p>A natural wetland with freshwater springs and inland subterranean karst formations, fed by a small stream flowing from the lower Himalayan out to the Giri river.</p> <p>The lake is home to at least 443 species of fauna and 19 species of ichthyofauna representative of lacustrine ecosystems like Puntius, Labeo, Rasbora, Channa. Prominent vegetation ranges from dry deciduous like Shorea Robusta, Terminalia tomentosa, Dalbergia sissoo to hydrophytes. There are 103 species of birds of which 66 are residents, e.g. Crimson-breasted barbet, Mayna, Bulbul, Pheasants, Egrets, Herons, Mallards and Lapwing. Among ungulates Sambhar, Barking deer and Ghorals are also abundant in the area.</p> <p>The lake has high religious significance and is named after the mother of Hindu sage Parshuram, and is thus visited by thousands of pilgrims and tourists.</p> <p>A humanmade wetland of lake and river formed by the 1952 construction of a barrage for diversion of water from the Sutlej River for drinking and irrigation supplies. The site is an important breeding place for the nationally protected Smooth Indian Otter, Hog Deer, Sambar, and several reptiles, and the endangered Indian Pangolin (<i>Manis crassicaudata</i>) is</p> |
| 16 | Pong Lake | Himachal Pradesh | 19 August 2002 | 156.62 | |
| 17 | Renuka Lake | Himachal Pradesh | 8 November 2005 | .2 | |
| 18 | Ropar Wetland | Punjab | 22 January 2002 | 13.65 | |

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19 Rudrasagar Lake Tripura 8 November 2005 2.4

thought to be present.

A lowland sedimentation reservoir in the northeast hills, fed by three perennial streams discharging to the River Gomti. The lake is abundant in commercially important freshwater fishes like *Botiaspp*, *NotopterusChitala*, *Mystus spp.*, *Ompokpabda*, *Labeobata*, and freshwater scampi, with annual production of 26 metric-tons, and an ideal habitat for IUCN Redlisted Three-striped Roof Turtle *Kachugadhongka*.

20 Sambhar Lake Rajasthan 23 March 1990 240

The Sambhar Salt Lake, India's largest inland salt lake. Sambhar has been designated as a Ramsar site (recognized wetland of international importance) because the wetland is a key wintering area for tens of thousands of flamingos and other birds that migrate from northern Asia.

21 Sasthamkotta Lake Kerala 19 August 2002 3.73

It is the largest freshwater lake in Kerala, situated in Kollam district. River Kallada had a unique replenishing system through a bar of paddy field which has now disappeared due to indiscriminate sand and clay mining.

22 Surinsar- Mansar Lakes Jammu and Kashmir 8 November 2005 3.5

Freshwater composite lake in semi-arid Panjab Plains, adjoining the Jhelum Basin with catchment of sandy conglomeratic soil, boulders and pebbles. Surinsar is rain-fed without permanent discharge, and Mansar is primarily fed by surface run-off and partially by mineralised water through paddy fields, with inflow increasing in rainy season. The lake supports CITES and IUCN Redlisted *Lissemyspunctata*, *Aspideretesgangeticus*, and *Mansariellalacustris*. This composite lake is high in micro nutrients for which it is an attractive habitat, breeding and nursery ground for migratory waterfowls like *Fulicaatra*, *Gallinulachloropus*,

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Podicepsnigricollis, Aythyafuligula, and various Anas species.

A freshwater to brackish lake lying at 4,595m above sea level, with wet meadows and borax-laden wetlands along the shores. The site is said to represent the only breeding ground outside of China for one of the most endangered cranes, the Black-necked crane (*Grus nigricollis*), and the only breeding ground for Bar-headed geese in India. The Great Tibetan Sheep or Argali (*Ovisammonhodgsoni*) and Tibetan Wild Ass (*Equus kiang*) are endemic to the Tibetan plateau, of which the Changthang is the westernmost part. The barley fields at Korzok have been described as the highest cultivated land in the world. With no outflow, evaporation in the arid steppe conditions causes varying levels of salinity. Ancient trade routes and now major trekking routes pass the site. The 400-year-old Korzok monastery attracts many tourists, and the wetland is considered sacred by local Buddhist communities and the water is not used by them.

23 Tsomoriri Jammu and Kashmir 19 August 2002 120

24 Upper Ganga River (Brijghat Narora Stretch) to Uttar Pradesh 8 November 2005 265.9

A shallow river stretch of the great Ganges with intermittent small stretches of deep-water pools and reservoirs upstream from barrages. The river provides habitat for IUCN Red listed Ganges River Dolphin, Gharial, Crocodile, 6 species of turtles, otters, 82 species of fish and more than hundred species of birds. Major plant species, some of which have high medicinal values, include *Dalbergia sissoo*, *Saracaindica*, *Eucalyptus globulus*, *Ficus bengalensis*, *Dendrocalamus strictus*, *Tectonagrandis*, *Azadirachta indica* and aquatic *Eichhorina*. This river stretch has high Hindu religious importance for thousands of pilgrims and is used for cremation and holy baths for spiritual

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25 Vembanad-Kol Wetland Kerala 19 August 2002 1512.5

purification. Major threats are sewage discharge, agricultural runoff, and intensive fishing. Conservation activities carried out are plantation to prevent bank erosion, training on organic farming, and lobbying to ban commercial fishing.

Largest lake of Kerala, spanning across Alappuzha, Kottayam, and Ernakulam districts. Famous tourist locations like Alappuzha and Kumarakom, known for house boats falls here. River mouths of Pamba-Achenkovil rivers in Vembanad forms one of the unique wetland topography of Kerala, the Kuttanad. It is below sea level and is famous for exotic fish varieties and Paddy fields that are below sea level.

26 Wular Lake Jammu and Kashmir 23 March 1990 189

The largest freshwater lake in India with extensive marshes of emergent and floating vegetation, particularly water chestnut, that provide an important source of revenue for the State Government and fodder for domestic livestock.

27 Sundarban Wetland West Bengal 1 February 2019 4230

Sundarban Wetland is located within the largest mangrove forest in the world, the Sundarbans, that encompasses hundreds of islands and a maze of rivers, rivulets and creeks, in the delta of the Rivers Ganges and Brahmaputra on the Bay of Bengal in India and Bangladesh. The Indian Sundarban, covering the south-westernmost part of the delta, constitutes over 60% of the country's total mangrove forest area and includes 90% of Indian mangrove species. The mangrove forests protect the hinterland from storms, cyclones, tidal surges, and the seepage and intrusion of saltwater inland and into waterways.

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