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1. Barbados becomes a Republic (Dec. 1, 2021)

The Caribbean island nation of **Barbados declared itself a republic on 30 November**, a move that coincides with the 55th anniversary of its independence from Britain.

The country of some 3,00,000 citizens is no longer a constitutional monarchy and will not pledge allegiance to the Queen of Britain.

On November 29, Barbados, once known as Little England, swore in its **first President, Sandra Mason.**

However, it will remain a part of the Commonwealth.

Barbados capital Bridgetown

Currency: Barbados Dollar

Prime Minister: Mia Mottley

Commonwealth of Nations or Commonwealth

- Commonwealth of Nations is an association of countries that were once ruled by Britain. The current Commonwealth of Nations was formally constituted by the London Declaration in 1949.
- The head of the Commonwealth is Britain's, Queen Elizabeth II.
- At present, there are 54 members including India

Headquarters: **London , England**

2. UAPA Trials cannot be held indefinitely - Supreme Court (Dec. 3, 2021)

Hearing a petition of an undertrial arrested under UAPA(Unlawful Activities Prevention Act), the Supreme Court gave a landmark judgment on the right of the undertrials.

- The Supreme Court said that putting a person accused under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act behind bars for an unduly long time with no progress in the trial or appeal process is a violation of his or her fundamental right and a threat to public confidence in the administration of justice,
- **The Court held that timely delivery of justice is part of human rights.**
- The court held that if a timely trial is not possible and the accused has already suffered a significant period of incarceration, the courts have an obligation to release the accused on bail.
- It also held that cases investigated by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) should be tried on a day-to-day basis and have priority over other cases.

The supreme court observed this while hearing an appeal by 74-year-old Ashim who was in jail for over 10 years under UAPA and was awaiting his trial.

Article 21 of the Indian constitution

Protection of life and personal liberty.—No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.

Uttarakhand High court in Lalit Kumar v. Union of India, 2018, observed that access to speedy justice is a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) 1967

It is a preventive detention act aimed at preventing activities that are directed against the integrity and sovereignty of India. It was enacted by the Parliament in 1967.

The act has been amended four times in 1969,2004,2012,2019

Important Points of UAPA Act 1967

- With the recent 2019 amendment, the act meets commitments made at the **Financial Action Task Force** (an intergovernmental organization to combat money laundering and terrorism financing).
- As per the **2019 amendment, the government is now allowed to designate an individual as a terrorist without trial. The previous versions of the Bill allowed for only groups to be designated as terrorists.**
- The **burden of proof of innocence is on the accused.**
- Under the UAPA, this pre-chargesheet time is extended to 180 days.
- Police normally have 60 to 90 days to investigate a case and submit a chargesheet failing which the accused may obtain default bail.
- **In a ruling passed on 1 February 2021, the Supreme Court of India ruled that bail could be granted to accused if the right to a speedy trial was violated.**

National Investigation Agency (NIA)

After the deadly 26/11 attacks in Mumbai, the government decided to setup a specific body to deal with terror-related activities in India, thereby establishing the NIA in 2008.

Key Points regarding NIA-

- At present NIA is functioning as the **Central Counter-Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency** in India.
- Though **as per the constitution of India, law and order is a state subject** but NIA has the power to investigate specific cases under concurrent jurisdiction framework across any state of India.
- NIA is prepared to deal with cases involving complex inter-state and international linkages related to terrorist attacks in insurgency or militancy affected areas, areas of left-wing extremism, hinterland terrorist attacks, smuggling of arms and drugs, circulation of fake Indian currency, infiltration from across the borders, hijacking of aircraft and ships and attacks on nuclear installations.
- The 2019 amendment empowers the NIA to probe terror **attacks targeting Indians and Indian interests abroad** and also offences like **human trafficking; manufacture and sale of prohibited arms; and cyber-terrorism.**
- Trial of NIA Cases are held at special courts as notified by the central government as per NIA Act.
- Judges are appointed by the Central Government on the recommendation of the Chief Justice of the High Court with jurisdiction in that region.
- The Supreme Court of India has also been empowered to transfer the cases from one special court to any other special court within or outside the state, in the interest of justice. Based on the prevailing circumstances in any particular state.
- **The NIA Special Courts are empowered with all powers of the court of sessions under code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 for trial of any offense.**
- Special Court in New Delhi has jurisdiction of all NIA investigation cases abroad in accordance with international treaties and domestic laws of other countries.

3. INDIA Joins G20 Troika (Dec. 2, 2021)

Highlights-

- Indonesia is currently holding the G20 presidency
- The 2022 Bali Summit will be held on October 30-31, 2022. Theme - "Recover Together, Recover Stronger"
- India will assume the G20 Presidency on December 1, 2022 from Indonesia.
- India will convene the G20 leaders' summit for the first time in India in 2023
- Italy held the last presidency and hosted the summit on Oct 30-31, 2021 at Rome.
- PM Modi participated in the G20 Summit 2021 and raised the issue of Afghanistan's future after Taliban takeover.

G20 Troika

It refers to the top grouping within the G20 consisting of the current, immediate past and the incoming presidencies. Currently the troika is made of Italy, Indonesia and India.

About G20

- G20 or Group of 20 is an intergovernmental forum.
- Member Countries - Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union.
- Permanent invitees are African Union, ASEAN, FAO, ILO, IMF, Spain, OECD, UN, World Bank, WHO and WTO.
- Members comprises both industrialized and developing countries and accounts to two-third of world population, 75-80% world trade and 90% of Gross World Product (GWP - Gross National Income of all countries)
- The G20 Summit is often formally known as the “Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy”
- G20 was founded in 1999 as a response to the severe Asian Economic Crisis of 1997-98, when it was acknowledged that the participation of major emerging market countries was necessary for a discussion on the international financial system. Thus from 1999, G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting started on major economic and monetary policy issues amongst major countries in the global financial system targeting stable and sustainable global economic growth
- Since 2008 it is upgraded to head of the state level and from 2011 are held annually.
- They work on addressing major issues related to the global economy, such as international financial stability, climate change mitigation, trade, energy, counter-terrorism, migration, refugees and sustainable development.

4. Elephants Death (Dec. 2, 2021)

A whopping 1,160 elephants were killed in the country due to reasons other than natural causes in the past 10 years up to December 31, 2020, according to the **Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.

- This came to light after Tenkasi based **RTI activist R Pandiraja** had filed an RTI query over the deaths of wild elephants before the **Ministry of Environment and Forests' 'Project elephant' division** this year.

Key Highlights

Figures provided by the Union Environ Ministry over the death of Elephants across the country:

- Electrocution claimed the lives of 741 elephants.
- Train hits led to the death of 186 pachyderms, followed by poaching - 169, and poisoning - 64.
- Karnataka and Odisha lost 133 elephants each due to electrocution and Assam reported 129 deaths.
- Among elephant casualties due to train hits, Assam stood first with 62 deaths, followed by West Bengal at 57.
- A total of 169 elephants were killed by poachers in the last 10 years and Odisha reported the highest - 49 deaths, followed by Kerala 23.

5. No International flights from India (Dec. 2, 2021)

The Government cited concerns over the **Omicron variant** of the coronavirus and **indefinitely postponed the full resumption** of scheduled **international flights from December 15**.

- The international flights will continue to operate on a smaller scale and only with the countries with which India has air bubble agreements.

Move by Maharashtra Government:

The Maharashtra government has issued strict guidelines for international **passengers**, requiring all those **arriving from “at-risk”** countries from **December 3 to undergo mandatory institutional quarantine for one week**.

Air Transport Bubble

“Transport Bubbles” or **“Air Travel Arrangements”** are temporary arrangements between two countries aimed at restarting commercial passenger services when regular international flights are suspended as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. **They are reciprocal in nature, meaning airlines from both countries enjoy similar benefits.**

Countries with which India Has Air Bubble agreements

Afghanistan	Bahrain	Bangladesh	Bhutan	Canada
Ethiopia	Finland	France	Germany	Iraq
Japan	Kenya	Kuwait	Maldives	Mauritius
Nepal	Netherlands	Nigeria	Oman	Qatar
Russia	Rwanda	Seychelles	Singapore	Sri Lanka

Tanzania	Ukraine	UAE	UK	USA
Uzbekistan	-	-	-	-

6. Center appoints committee to review EWS criteria (Dec. 1, 2021)

The Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has appointed a three member committee to review the criteria for 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in educational institutions and government jobs in terms of the provisions of the **Explanation to Article 15 of the Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act 2019**.

The Central government gave an undertaking to the Supreme Court on a petition regarding EWS reservation in NEET(National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) to explain the reason behind fixing the criteria for EWS.

• The panel members are

- Ajay Bhushan Pandey, former Finance Secretary
- V.K. Malhotra ; Member Secretary, Indian Council of Social Science Research, and
- Sanjeev Sanyal Principal Economic Adviser to the Government of India.

Constitutional Provision for Economically Weaker Section (EWS)

- The 103 Constitutional amendment act 2019 provides for reservation to Economically Weaker Section(EWS)

The main points of this amendment act are as follows:

- It amended article 15 and 16 and introduced a new clause 15(6), and 16(6)
- Article 15(6) provides for 10% reservation in government educational institutions for EWS.
- Article 16(6) provides for 10% reservation in Public employment for EWS.
- The act gives the central government power to lay down the criteria for determining EWS.

Current Central government criteria for determining EWS

- Currently, the EWS quota can be availed by persons with an annual gross household income of up to ₹8 lakh.

Who cannot avail the benefit of EWS

- However the families that own over 5 acres of agricultural land,
- a house over 1,000 square feet,
- a plot of over 100-yards in a notified municipal area or over a 200-yards plot in a non-notified municipal area.
- Persons belonging to communities that already have reservations such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the "creamy layer" of Other Backward Classes are also not eligible for reservation under this quota.

Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment : Mr. Virender Kumar

NEET

The National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET), formerly the All India Pre-Medical Test (AIPMT), is the qualifying test for MBBS and BDS programmes in Indian medical and dental colleges. It is conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA)

7. Supreme Court to allow setting up of medical board for Jayalalitha Death inquiry (Dec. 1, 2021)

The Supreme Court said it will pass orders to allow the setting up of a medical board of AIIMS doctors to help **Justice A. Arumugasamy Commission** of Inquiry to gather the facts on the death of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister **Jayalalitha at Apollo Hospital in Chennai in 2016.**

- Justice A. Arumugaswamy **Commission of Inquiry** was set up by the **Tamilnadu Government in 2017** to inquire into the cause of death of the former Chief Minister of Tamilnadu J.Jayalalitha.
- She died on 5 December 2016 at Apollo Hospital, Chennai.

8. Accidental Death and Suicided Report 2020 (Dec. 1, 2021)

The **National Crimes Records Bureau (NCRB)** released its report on **'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India' (ASDI)** for 2020.

Highlights of the report:

- The road accidents and related deaths fell in the pandemic year, the number of deaths by suicides rose by 10% from 2019, taking the total figure to an all-time high of 1,53,052.
- The coronavirus lockdown led to a fall in deaths caused by accidents. Accidental deaths fell by 11% from 2019 to 2020 to 374, 397, the lowest figure since 2009.
- The number of deaths by suicide per lakh population in 2020 stands at 11.3%, up from 10.4% in 2019.
- Daily wage earners made up the largest proportion of people who died by suicide in the country in 2020 at 24.6%, according to the ASDI report.
- Tamil Nadu was the state with the highest number of deaths by suicides among daily wage earners with 6,495, followed by Madhya Pradesh (4,945), Maharashtra (4,176), Telangana (3,831) and Gujarat (2,745).

National Crime Records Bureau(NCRB)

- It is a government of India agency under the Ministry of Home Affairs. It is responsible for collecting and analysing the crime data as per the Indian Penal Code(IPC) and other laws.
- It is a repository of crimes and criminals in India
- It was set up in 1986.
- Headquarters: **New Delhi**

9. Admiral R. Hari Kumar takes charge as the new Chief of Naval Staff (Dec. 1, 2021)

Admiral R Hari Kumar became the **25th Chief of Naval Staff** succeeding Admiral Karambir Singh. Admiral Kumar was the commander of the Western Naval Command before he was made the Navy chief.

Indian Navy

It is the Naval branch of the Indian Armed forces and the President of India is the supreme commander of the Navy.

The Chief of Naval Staff, a four-star admiral commands the Navy.

Headquarters: Integrated Defence Headquarters, Ministry of Defence, New Delhi.

Motto(s): “ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय” (sham noVarunah). Translation: **May the Lord of Water be Auspicious to us.** Taken from Taittiriya Upanishad.

Established: 26th January 1950,

Indian Navy Day: 4 December

Indian Navy Day is celebrated every year on **December 4** to commemorate the attack on the **Karachi harbour** during the India-Pakistan war 1971 under operation Trident.

Commands of Indian Navy:

Commands	Headquarters
Western Naval Command	Mumbai
Eastern Naval Command	Visakhapatnam
Southern Naval Command	Kochi

Andaman and Nicobar (tri-service)	Port Blair
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