

DRAFT NORMS ANNOUNCED BY UGC FOR FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES

Why in News?

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has announced draft norms for facilitating foreign universities and educational institutions to set up campuses in India which allow them autonomy in decision making.
- The final norms will be notified by the end of the month after feedback from all stakeholders.

About University Grants Commission:

- The University Grants Commission of India is a **statutory body** under the provisions of UGC Act, 1956.
- It is responsible for coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of higher education.
- It provides recognition to universities in India, and disburses funds to such recognized universities and college.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education

What are the Objectives of UGC?

- Promoting and coordinating university education.
- Determining and maintaining standards of teaching, examination and research in universities.
- Framing regulations on minimum standards of education.
- Monitoring developments in the field of collegiate and university education; disbursing grants to the universities and colleges.
- Serving as a vital link between the Union and State governments and institutions of higher learning.
- Advising the Central and State governments on the measures necessary for the improvement of university education.

What are the Draft Norms announced by the UGC?

- University Grants commission chief M Jagadesh Kumar has stated draft regulations for foreign universities setting up campuses in India.

• **The draft includes the following guidelines –**

○ **Criteria –**

- A foreign university with a rank among the top 500 global rankings or a foreign educational institution of repute in home jurisdiction can apply to the UGC to set up a campus in India.

○ **Application Process –**

- The application will be considered by a standing committee appointed by the UGC which will submit its recommendations within 45 days after examining the institution's credibility.
- Subsequently, within 45 days, the UGC may grant in-principle approval to the foreign institution to set up campuses in India within two years.
- The initial approval will be for 10 years, which can be extended.

○ **Reasonable Fees –**

- Such a campus can evolve its own admission process and criteria to admit domestic and foreign students.
- It will also have autonomy to decide its fee structure, and will face no caps that are imposed on Indian institutions.
- The fee should be “reasonable and transparent”.

○ **Mode of Teaching –**

- It will also have autonomy to recruit faculty and staff from India and abroad.
- The courses to be offered cannot be in online and open and distance learning mode.
- The qualifications awarded to the students in the Indian campus should have equivalence with those awarded by the institutions in their country of origin.

○ **Fund Management –**

- Foreign universities will be allowed to repatriate funds to parent campuses.
- Cross-border movement of funds and maintenance of Foreign Currency Accounts, mode of payments, remittance, repatriation, and sale of proceeds, if any, will be as per the **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) 1999** and its Rules.

What is the need for allowing Foreign Universities to set-up Campuses in India?

- The UGC chief pointed out that in 2022 over 4.5 lakh Indian students went abroad to study, leading to outflow of estimated \$28-30 billion.
- Allowing foreign universities to set-up campuses in India will also ensure that all our students — there are around 40 million pursuing higher education — have access to global quality education.
- The ideal of setting up foreign universities' campuses in India is also mentioned in the **National Education Policy 2020**.

WHAT IS NATIONAL SINGLE WINDOW SYSTEM?

National Single Window System, NSWS Portal for various Central, State, and UT clearances has hit a new milestone by crossing 75 thousand approvals.



About National Single Window System (NSWS):

The National Single Window System (NSWS) is a **digital platform** to guide you in identifying and applying for approvals according to your business requirements.

- The portal hosts applications for approvals from **26 Central Departments and 19 State Governments**. These approvals can be applied through NSWS.
- NSWS is providing a single interface to apply for all **G2B clearances from various Ministries and Departments** as well as eliminating duplication of work by auto-populating form fields across different approvals based on single investor profile.
- The platform is built to serve as an advisory tool to identify approvals based on user input and is to be used for guidance purpose only.
- The NSWS initiative is an epitome of the **'Whole of Government'** approach with different Central ministries/departments, states and UTs coming together to facilitate investor related clearances on a single portal, with transparency and accountability, enhancing ease of doing business exponentially.

WHAT IS Y20 SUMMIT?

Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Anurag Singh Thakur will launch the themes of the Y20 summit, logo, and website in New Delhi on January 6 in the curtain raiser event of Y20 Summit India.



About Y20 Summit:

- The Y20 is the **official youth engagement group for the G20 (Group of 20)**, the forum for the world's largest and most advanced economies.
- The Y20 is a process which brings together young leaders from across the globe, to discuss and debate global challenges and agree policy recommendations they would like to see G20 leaders take forward.
- The list of policy recommendations is known as a **communiqué**, which is announced publicly at the Y20 Summit and presented to world leaders as part of the official G20 summit.
- **India is hosting the Y20 summit for the first time.**
- In Youth 20 Engagement Group, India's key focus is to bring young leaders from all across the globe together and discuss ideas for a better tomorrow and draft an agenda for action.
- The activities to be undertaken by Y20 during India's presidency will focus on global youth leadership and partnership.
- In a run-up to the final Youth-20 Summit, for the next eight months, there will be Pre summits on the **five Y20 themes** along with various discussions and seminars at different Universities across the country.

WHAT IS PURPLE FEST?

The first-of-its-kind inclusive festival in India, 'Purple Fest: Celebrating Diversity' is set to begin on January 6, 2023 in Goa.



About Purple Fest:

- It aims to showcase how we can come together to create a welcoming and inclusive world for everyone.

- It is aimed at furthering the spirit of inclusion, the Purple Fest will feature a variety of exciting live performances, sporting events, grand exhibitions, immersive experience zones, accessible movie screenings, & discussions on vital subjects like inclusive education, tourism, employment, & independent living.
- **Who is organising Purple Fest?**
 - The Purple Fest will be hosted by the Goa State Commission for Persons with Disabilities in association with the Directorate of Social Welfare and Entertainment Society of Goa.
- **When is Purple Fest Goa?**
 - Purple Fest Goa will be held from January 6-8, 2023, in Panjim, Goa.

[NILGIRI BIOSPHERE RESERVE\(NBR\)](#)

A recent paper published by a conservationist said that the Asian elephant has lost most of its optimal habitat in the Nilgiri biosphere Reserve.



Why in news?

- The study said that human settlements and crop cultivation have hindered the movement of the elephants, keeping them confined to the hilly areas, considered sub-optimal habitats.
- IUCN status of Elephant: **Endangered**
- Wildlife(protection) act 1972: **Schedule 1**

Key facts about NBR

- It harbours a wide spectrum of ecosystem types such as **tropical evergreen forests**, Montane **sholas** and grasslands, **semi-evergreen forests**, moist deciduous forests, dry deciduous forests and **thorn forests**.
- The major part of the core areas spread over Kerala and Tamil Nadu States.
- This range of ecosystem occurs from hilly terrain to the meadows extending from 300 to 2670 m constituting an excellent habitat for the flora, fauna and other microbial forms.



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- The varied habitats of the NBR house a sizeable number of species of animals and plants including a large number of endemics having special relevance to conservation.
 - **Fauna:** Animals like Nilgiri tahr, Nilgiri langur, slender loris, blackbuck, tiger, gaur, Indian elephant and marten are found here.
 - **Tribal Population:** Tribal groups like the Todas, Kotas, Irullas, Kurumbas, Paniyas, Adiyans, Edanadan Chettis, Cholanaickens, Allar, Malayan, etc., are native to the reserve.
 - **Protected Areas** within the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve are
 - The Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, Bandipur National Park, Nagarhole National Park, Mukurthi National Park and Silent Valley.
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