

DENY SAFE HAVENS TO CORRUPT & TERRORISTS', PM MODI URGES INTERPOL

In News:

- PM Modi addressed the inaugural session of Interpol's 90th General Assembly in New Delhi, which is being held in India after 25 years.

In Focus: Interpol

- Full Name - International Criminal Police Organisation.
- Interpol is the radio-telegraph code for the organisation.
- Interpol is an international police organisation made up of 195 member countries.
- It does not work under UN.
- It has enjoyed a special role – that of Permanent Observer at the United Nations - since 1996.
- It was founded in 1923 and is headquartered at Lyon, France.

Functions



- It is not a police force in the traditional sense—its agents are not able to arrest criminals.
- It is more of an information-sharing network, providing a way for national police forces to cooperate effectively and
 - tackle international crime ranging from human trafficking and terrorism to money laundering and illegal art dealing.

- Sharing of information is done by issuing colour-coded notices in four languages - English, Spanish, French, and Arabic.
- The organization operates centralised criminal databases that contain fingerprint records, DNA samples and stolen documents.

Types of Interpol Notices

- Interpol issues different types of notices which have different objectives.
- Types of notices issued – Red, Blue, Yellow, Black, Orange, Purple, Green etc.
- Red Notice - A notification that a member state would like someone
- States are not obliged to follow these notices, often treat them as a warrant for someone's arrest and extradition.

Interpol General Assembly

- The General Assembly is Interpol's supreme governing body, and comprises representatives from all its member countries.
- It meets annually for a session lasting approximately four days, to vote on activities and policy. It takes decisions in the form of resolutions.

India and Interpol

- India has been a member since 1956.
- Like any member nation, India maintains a National Central Bureau (NCB). The NCB is the designated contact point for the Interpol.
- In India's case, CBI is the designated nodal body for the Interpol.
- NCB serves as the national platform for cooperation between domestic law enforcement units and the international police community.
- India has collaborated with the Interpol in tackling a myriad of organised crimes such as poaching, wildlife trafficking, spurious drugs and fake medicine rackets, etc.
- India is hosting the Interpol General Assembly in 2022 as part of celebrations of the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence.
- Also, in November 2021, CBI Special Director Praveen Sinha was elected as a delegate for Asia on the executive committee of the Interpol.

TUSSLE IN KERALA: CAN GOVERNOR KHAN DISMISS A STATE MINISTER?

In News:

- Kerala's Governor **Arif Mohammed Khan** recently threatened to sack ministers who "lowered the dignity" of his office.
- The Governor tweeted from his tweeter handle "the CM and Council of Ministers have every right to advise Governor but statements of individual ministers that lower the dignity of the office of the Governor, can invite action including withdrawal of pleasure".
- There has been no occasion so far of a Governor unilaterally removing a minister from the government.

Governor's role in Parliamentary System:

- The position, role, powers, and conditions of office of the Governor are described in **Articles 153-161** of the Constitution.
- The Governor is the chief executive head of the state. But, like the President, he is a nominal executive head (titular or constitutional head).
- Being the head of the state's executive power, he acts on the advice of the council of ministers, barring some matters.
 - The council of ministers, in turn, are responsible to the state legislature.
- Being appointed by the President, the Governor acts as a vital link between the Union and the state governments.
- The Governor appoints the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers.

Does a Governor have the power to remove a Minister?

- **Article 164(1)** says state "Ministers shall hold office during the pleasure of the Governor".
- However, Constitutional experts say the Governor cannot remove a minister in their own capacity without obtaining the sanction of the Chief Minister or consulting with the latter.
- If a Governor removes a minister in their own capacity, that will result in '**parallel governance**'.
- Only when the Chief Minister allows it, then the Governor is empowered to remove the minister.

- **Sarkaria Commission (1983) –**
 - The Commission was set-up to look into Centre-state relations. It has proposed various additional criteria for appointing someone to the Governorship.
 - It proposed that the Governors be appointed after effective consultations with the State Chief Minister and Vice President and Speaker of the Lok Sabha should be consulted by the PM before his/her selection.
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WHEAT MSP HIKED BY 5.4%; INCENTIVE FOR OILSEEDS, PULSES

In News:

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs recently announced to raise the minimum support price (MSP) for 6 rabi (winter sowing) crops for the marketing season 2023-24, including a decision to raise the MSP for wheat by Rs 110 per quintal (5.46%) to Rs 2,125.
- The government's decision is an attempt to make it more appealing for farmers to grow oilseeds and pulses and reduce import dependence, while increasing wheat procurement.

The Minimum Support Price (MSP) Regime in India:

About MSP:

- MSP is a form of **market intervention** (a policy decision not enforceable by law) by the Government of India to insure agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices during bumper production years.
- In 1964, **Lal Bahadur Shastri** formed the Food Grain Price Committee (under L K Jha), to push for a MSP regime. The first MSP announcement was made in 1967.
- Thus, the MSP regime came into existence as a policy decision and the government set up the Agricultural Prices Commission (renamed as the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACAP) in 1985) for fixing MSP for crops.
- **Announced by:** These are announced by the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** (Chaired by the Prime Minister of India) on the basis of the recommendations of the CACAP at the beginning of the sowing season for certain crops

Objectives:

- MSPs are a guarantee price for farmer's produce from the Government to prevent the farmers from distress sales and to procure food grains for public distribution.
- g., if the market price for a commodity falls below the specified minimum price due to bumper production and a market glut, government agencies will buy the entire quantity supplied by farmers at the announced minimum price.

Crops covered:

- Government announces MSPs for 22 mandated crops and fair and remunerative price (FRP) for sugarcane (total 23).
- The mandated crops are 14 crops of the kharif (summer sowing) season, 6 rabi crops (Wheat, Barley, Gram, Masur (Lentil), Rapeseed & Mustard, Safflower) and two other commercial crops.
- **The increase in wheat MSP is significant** in light of lower production and procurement in the recently concluded rabi season.
- According to the Agriculture Ministry's most recent data, wheat production in 2021-22 is expected to be 106.84 million tonnes, which is lower than the year's target (110 million tonne) and the 109.59 million tonne actual production in 2020-21.

SPIDER SPECIES

Arachnologists from the Centre for Animal Taxonomy and Ecology (CATE), Christ College, Irinjalakuda in Kerala have recently discovered six new species of spiders from across the country.



About:

- The new species of spiders were found from the Garo hills in Meghalaya, the Thar desert of Rajasthan, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, Kottappara hills near Kothamangalam, Thumboormuzhi butterfly garden near Athirappilly, and the University of Calicut campus.

Siamspinops garoensis:

- Studies conducted on the Garo hills of Meghalaya resulted in the first spotting of the genus Siamspinops from India with a new species Siamspinops garoensis.
- This belongs to the family of flat spiders, Selenopidae.
- This spider lives in the crevices of rocks on hills.
- The yellowish brown spider measures about 10 mm in length.
- There is a black circle around its eyes and black patches on the abdomen.

Jumping spiders:

- Two new species of spiders coming under the family of jumping spiders (Salticidae) were discovered from the Thar desert of Rajasthan and the Kurichiyad forest ranges of the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary.
 - **Afraflacilla miajlarensis**, the Thar species, is characterised by white fine hairs on a black head and black horizontal lines on the abdomen. This spider stays among dry leaf blades.
 - **Afraflacilla kurichiadensis**, the Wayanad species, is characterised by red patches around the eyes and white hairs on the abdomen. The bulged first pair of legs are also a special feature of this species. This spider lives in the moist deciduous forest of Kurichiyad.

Feather- legged spiders:

- The next spider species lacks a venom gland and belongs to the family of feather- legged spiders (Uloboridae). This new species has been named as Philoponella rostralis, due to the presence of a beak like structure on the male reproductive organ.

Spiny-legged spiders:

- Two new species of spiders belonging to the family of spiny-legged spiders (Oxyopidae) have been discovered from the Thumboormuzhi butterfly garden, near the Athirappilly waterfalls, and on the Calicut University campus.

NIHONSHU/JAPANESE SAKE

The Embassy of Japan, New Delhi, has filed an application seeking Geographical Indication (GI) tag for nihonshu/Japanese sake.



About:

- This is the first time a product from Japan has filed for a tag at the Geographical Indication Registry in Chennai.
- In Japan, nihonshu is regarded as a special and valuable beverage made from fermenting rice.
- People traditionally drink nihonshu on special occasions, such as festivals, weddings or funerals, but it is also consumed on a daily basis. Thus, it is an integral part of the lifestyle and culture in Japan.
- The sake market (almost all are nihonshu) is the second largest brewed liquor (such as beer) market in Japan.
- For making nihonshu three main raw materials – rice, koji-kin (a type of fungal spore) and water – are required.
- The production of nihonshu follows an alcoholic fermentation method called parallel multiple fermentation and involves raw material treatment, koji making, starter culture making, mash making, pressing, heat sterilisation and bottling.
- The rice and koji used should originate in Japan.

History:

- The economy of Japan was based around rice, which was used as a sort of quasi-money before the establishment of a monetary economy in the Meiji period (1869-1912).
- As a result, nihonshu production was thoroughly under the government's control.
- As nihonshu's production became more industrialised in the Edo period (1603-1868), those who had special licences began hiring many farmers in the agricultural off-season.
- They gradually won a reputation as craftsmen, which resulted in the establishment of the hierarchical Toii system (Toii is the person responsible for sake brewing), likened to an apprenticeship or guild system.

ANTIQUITIES

The U.S. authorities formally handed over 307 antiquities, estimated to be worth nearly \$4 million to Indian officials.



About:

Antiquities returned:

- Vishnu and Lakshmi with Garuda, dating to the 11th century C.E., which was allegedly stolen from a temple in Central India.
- A Chola-era Sambandar bronze idol, a Chola-era Devi idol in stone, bronze idols of Vinayaga, Narasimha with Lakshmi, a wooden idol of Muruga and wooden chauri bearers are other items that had been taken from Tamil Nadu.

Antiquities:

- “Antiquity” is an article or object that is at least 100 years old.
- It could be a coin, sculpture, painting or epigraph, or any object or article taken from a building or a cave, or anything that illustrates the science, art, crafts or customs or religion or literature of a bygone age, or anything of historical interest.
- If it is a manuscript or record of any scientific, historical, literary or aesthetic value, it should be at least 75 years’ old.
- An art treasure is a human work of art, other than an antiquity, declared to be a treasure by the Centre for its artistic value after the artist’s death.
- Antiquities in India are governed by **The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 which falls within the purview of the Archaeological Survey of India ("ASI"), Union Ministry of Culture.**

Possession of an antiquity:

- Possession of an unregistered antiquity is a punishable offence under law.
- **Section 14(3)** of the Act makes it mandatory for “every person who owns, controls or is in possession of any antiquity” to register it before a registering officer within 15 days of its coming into his control or possession and obtain a certificate of registration.

- Antiquities can be sold, but only by a licensed person. However, Section 3 of the Act prohibits export of an antiquity by anyone other than the Centre or its agencies.

Punishment:

- A jail term of **six months**, or with fine, or both. Besides, the antiquity is also liable to be confiscated.
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WOMEN INVOLVEMENT IN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING RESEARCH (WISER)

The first 11 awardees of the Women Involvement in Science and Engineering Research (WISER) programme were recently felicitated.



About:

- It was launched by Indo-German Science & Technology Centre (IGSTC) for encouraging women researchers in joint R&D projects.
 - WISER will enable gender equality and women's participation in Science and Technology through IGSTC's program.
 - This programme will be in addition to the ongoing flagship 2+2 program of the Centre.
 - This program by IGSTC, a joint initiative of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Government of Germany, will support women scientists holding regular/long term research positions in academia or research institutes/industry.
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