

PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION (PIL)

SC refuses to entertain PIL seeking direction to Lok Sabha Secretariat for inauguration of new Parliament building by President



About:

- PIL has not been defined in any Indian statute. However, Courts have interpreted and defined PIL.
- The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has, in the case of Janata Dal v. H.S. Chaudhary, [(AIR 1993 SC 892)] held that lexically, the expression 'PIL' means a legal action started in a court of law for the enforcement of public/general interest where the public or a particular class of the public some interest (including pecuniary interest) that affects their legal rights or liabilities.
- Any individual or organisation can file a PIL either in his/her/their own standing i.e. to protect or enforce a right owed to him/her/them by the government or on behalf of a section of society who is disadvantaged or oppressed and is not able to enforce their own rights.
- The concept of "Locus Standi" has been relaxed in the case of PILs so as to enable the Hon'ble Court to look into grievances that are filed on behalf of those who are poor, illiterate, deprived or disabled and are unable to approach the courts themselves.
- Suo moto cognizance may also be taken by the Court.
- PILs are extensions of Writ Jurisdiction. Therefore, PILs may be filed either before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India under Article 32 of the Indian Constitution or any High Court under Article 226 of the Indian Constitution.

G20 ANTI-CORRUPTION WORKING GROUP MEETING

The three day Anti-Corruption Working Group meeting under the G20 India Presidency concluded recently at the Tehri, Uttarakhand.



About:

- Its primary goal is to prepare "comprehensive recommendations for

consideration by leaders on how the G20 could continue to make practical and valuable contributions to international efforts to combat corruption".

- The ACWG has led the G20 anti-corruption efforts coordinating the collective and national actions taken by its members.
- The ACWG actively works with the World Bank Group, the OECD, the UNODC, the IMF, the FATF, as well as with the Business 20 (B20) and the Civil Society 20 (C20).

SENGOL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the esteemed Adheenam priests at his official residence in New Delhi recently, seeking their blessings on the eve of the grand inauguration of the new Parliament building.



About:

- The Sengol sceptre, measuring an impressive five feet in length, is a remarkable creation made from silver and gold.
- It carries a rich history as it was originally handed over to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru by Lord Mountbatten on August 14, 1947, symbolizing the momentous transfer of power during India's Independence.
- Subsequently, the sceptre was put on display at The Allahabad Museum, allowing visitors to appreciate its historical significance.
- The golden scepter has its origins in the Chola empire, where it was used as a symbol of power transfer from one king to another.
- It had a carving of the Nandi atop it, which is said to be a symbol of justice.

VINAYAK DAMODAR SAVARKAR



PM Modi, Lok Sabha Speaker & various ministers pay floral tribute to Savarkar on his 140th birth anniversary.

About:

- Born on this day in 1883 near Nasik in Maharashtra, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was popularly called Veer Savarkar.

- Veer Savarkar was a freedom fighter . He called 1857 revolt as the first war of independence.
- He founded the following Organizations: Abhinav Bharat Society and Free India Society.
- He was also a member of India House. He was not the founder of Hindu Mahasabha, but he did served as its president.
- He opposed the Quit India struggle in 1942, calling it a "Quit India but keep your army" movement.
- Savarkar endorsed the ideal of India as a Hindu Rashtra and is credited with developing the Hindu nationalist political ideology Hindutva.
- Publications:
 - He wrote the book "Joseph Mazzini- Biography and Politics".
 - He published "The Indian War of Independence" about the Indian rebellion of 1857.
- The airport at Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar's capital has been named Veer Savarkar International Airport.

SOLAR DECATHLON INDIA (SDI) DESIGN CHALLENGE FOR NET-ZERO FUTURE PROOF BUILDING 2022-2023

A total of 12 teams won the Solar Decathlon India (SDI) Design Challenge for Net-Zero Future Proof Building in the different categories at the 3rd edition of the challenge conducted at Infosys' campus in Mysuru



Solar™
Decathl
India

About:

- The Solar Decathlon India is conducted every year by the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS) and the Alliance for an Energy-Efficient Economy (AEEE).
- It is under the aegis of the Indo-US Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF), an autonomous bilateral organisation jointly funded by both the Governments (The Department of Science & Technology, Government of India and the U.S. Department of State are the respective nodal departments on the two sides).
- The Council of Architecture (CoA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding as a knowledge partner with AEEE, who co-organises SDI, to expand outreach and the impact of Solar

Decathlon India aimed at building the next generation of leaders to combat climate change in India.

WHAT IS A NARCO TEST, HOW DOES IT WORK?

Why in News?

- Protesting wrestlers at Jantar Mantar recently said they were willing to undergo a narco analysis test, provided it was monitored by the Supreme Court.
- The remark was made in response to Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president comment that he was ready to undergo the narco test on the condition that wrestlers take one too

What is a Narco Test?

- In a ‘narco’ or narco analysis test, a drug called **sodium pentothal** is injected into the body of the accused, which transports them to a **hypnotic or sedated state** in which their **imagination is neutralised**.
 - **Sodium pentothal/sodium thiopental** is a fast-acting, short-duration anaesthetic used in larger doses to sedate patients during surgery.
 - It belongs to the **barbiturate class of drugs** that act on the central nervous system as depressants.
 - Because the drug is believed to weaken the subject’s resolve to lie, it is sometimes referred to as a “**truth serum**”, used by intelligence operatives first during World War II.
- In this hypnotic state, the accused is understood as being **incapable of lying** and is expected to give information that is true.

Narco Tests vs Polygraph Tests:

- **Polygraph tests**, although having the same truth-decoding motive, **work differently**.
- A polygraph test is carried out on the **assumption that physiological responses triggered when one is lying are different** from what they otherwise would be.
- Rather than injecting drugs into the body, polygraph tests **attach instruments like cardio-cuffs or sensitive electrodes** to the suspect (while being questioned) and measure variables such as blood pressure, pulse rate, respiration, etc.

What is the Evidentiary Value of Such Tests?

- The results of narco-analysis tests are **not considered “confessions”** since those in a drugged-induced state cannot exercise their choice in answering questions put to them.
- However, the SC clarified that any information or material that is subsequently discovered with the help of voluntary administered test results **can be admitted, in accordance with the Evidence Act, 1872.**
- Thus, if an accused reveals a physical piece of evidence (like a murder weapon) and the police later find that evidence, **the statement of the accused will not be treated as evidence, but the physical evidence will be valid.**

Legal Position before the SC Ruling:

- **In 2006, the Madras HC** observed that since the accused did not come forward with the truth, the scientific tests resorted to by the investigating agency **did not “amount to testimonial compulsion”**.
- **In 2008, the Delhi HC** said that narco-analysis tests **“do not suffer from any constitutional infirmity”** and are a “step in aid of investigation”.

IMPLICATIONS OF US' NEW VISA POLICY FOR DHAKA AND NEW DELHI

Why in News?

- A month after the PM of Bangladesh accused Washington DC of seeking to oust her government, the US Secretary of State announced a new visa policy supporting Bangladesh's goal of holding free, fair and peaceful national elections.
- It could also have an impact on India's diplomacy with Bangladesh.

What is the US' New Visa Policy?

- The new policy, which covers current and former Bangladeshi officials, members of ruling and opposition parties, etc., **would restrict issuance of visas to those who undermine the holding of a free and fair elections.**
- In clarifications issued soon after the announcement, the US State Department said the actions were not targeted against the Awami League led government.

Ongoing Scenario in Bangladesh:

- Opposition is protesting and demanding that the **elections be held** under a caretaker government and by a “**neutral**” Election Commission.
- In her three terms in office, PM’s style of functioning has come to be seen as increasingly **authoritarian**.
- **Her crackdown** on former PM Khaleda Zia’s Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), citing its links to Islamist parties and alleging corruption at the top, dealt a crippling blow to the Opposition.
- **The space for dissent and criticism has shrunk** visibly in Bangladesh. Hence, the Bangladesh opposition has welcomed the new policy.

Implication of these Developments on India:

- The US position on the Bangladesh elections **could complicate India’s diplomacy in Bangladesh**.
- New Delhi, **wants Sheikh Hasina** - a leader who has acted on its security concerns swiftly, **back in power in Dhaka**
- **She is seen as having given away too much** - land transit rights to the Northeastern states, a favourable coal power deal to an Adani company, etc., while Bangladesh itself has been awaiting Teesta waters for many years.
- Over the last few years, **the US and India were seen as acting in tandem in Bangladesh**, especially as their security objectives converged.
- The visa policy is a sign that this may be changing. A **post-Afghanistan US** seems more open than India to political change in Dhaka.
- For now, **India may prefer to keep silent** on the linking of the US visa policy in Bangladesh to free and fair elections in the country.

[NATIONAL REVIEW CONFERENCE OF DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE,
EMPOWERMENT](#)

National review conference of Department of Social Justice, Empowerment recently conducted in New Delhi.



About:

- Two-day national review conference organised by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment will be conducted in New Delhi recently.
- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment said, the focus of this conference is to discuss the issue pertaining to the welfare schemes being implemented by the department for the marginalized section of the society including Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, Senior Citizens and others.
- The National Review Conference will have deliberation on an overview of the schemes, highlighting best practice and innovations from States and Union Territories to establish better synergy between the States and Centre.

NITI AAYOG'S EIGHTH GOVERNING COUNCIL MEET

Why in news?

- PM Modi chaired the eighth Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog. The meeting was conducted at the new Convention Centre in Pragati Maidan, Delhi.
- The theme for this meeting was '**Viksit Bharat @ 2047: Role of Team India**'.

National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog:

About:

- NITI Aayog, was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on 1 January 2015. It was constituted to replace the Planning Commission - instituted in 1950.
- It is the premier policy think tank of the Government of India, providing directional and policy inputs.
- NITI Aayog acts as a platform to bring the States to act together in national interest and thereby fosters cooperative federalism.
- **Composition**
- **Chairperson:** The Prime Minister of India

○ **Full time organisational framework:**

- Vice Chairperson: Appointed by the PM, s/he enjoys the rank of a Cabinet Minister.
 - Full-Time Members: Enjoys the rank of a Minister of State.
 - Part-Time Members: Maximum 2.
 - Ex-Officio Members: Maximum of 4 members of the Union Council of Minister to be nominated by the PM.
- **Chief Executive Officer (CEO):** Appointed by the PM for a fixed tenure, s/he enjoys the rank of Secretary to the Government of India.
- **Special Invitees:** These will be experts with relevant domain knowledge to be nominated by the PM.

Governing Council of NITI Aayog:

- The council is the premier body tasked with evolving a shared vision of national priorities and strategies, with the active involvement of States.
- It presents a platform to discuss inter-sectoral, inter-departmental and federal issues to accelerate the implementation of the national development agenda.
- **Composition of Governing Council:**
 - It is **chaired by the PM** and comprises Chief Ministers of all the States and UTs with legislatures and Lt Governors of other Union Territories.
 - The council also comprises of Vice Chairman
- Before 2023, seven meetings of the Governing Council had been held (7th meeting was held in August, 2022).

NITI Aayog: Promoting Federalism

● **Cooperative Federalism**

- NITI Aayog has provided a platform for direct issue-based interaction between States and Central Ministries thereby helping quick resolution of outstanding issues.
- The NITI Forum for North East has been constituted and tangible sectoral proposals are being implemented by the States in partnership with the North East council.

- NITI Aayog has designed some major initiatives for island development which are being implemented under the overall guidance of the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.
 - It is also envisaged that like the NITI Forum for the North East, other regional councils of contiguous States could be formed.
 - The first step has been taken by forming the **Himalayan States Regional Council** and forming a **coalition of all thirteen central universities in these states**.
 - **Competitive Federalism**
 - It promotes competitive federalism principally through pushing its sectoral indices which are put out in the public domain.
 - The indices on water, education, health, innovation, export preparedness, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have attracted significant positive attention.
 - It has also introduced a competition element in ‘Aspirational Districts Program’ by focusing on governance improvement on the ground.
 - These districts have shown significant improvement in indicators pertaining to health and nutrition, education etc.
 - Besides, several best practices in governance have emerged from these districts which are now being scaled up and replicated at the block level in some states.
-