

Current Affairs : 29 July 2022

ELECTION COMMISSION ALLOWS 17-YEAR-OLDS TO REGISTER IN ADVANCE FOR VOTERS' LIST ENROLMENT

In News:

- The Election Commission of India recently announced that those over the age of 17 can now apply in advance to be enrolled in the voters' list.
- They do not have to wait until they reach the age of 18 on January 1 of each year.
- With this announcement, ECI has begun the process of incorporating the changes announced by the govt recently regarding electoral reforms.

Who is entitled to vote in India?

- Part XV (Article 324-329) of the Indian Constitution consists of provisions to ensure free and fair elections in India and empowers the Parliament of India to regulate the electoral process.
- In this regard, the Parliament passed the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1950 (and the Representation of the People Act, 1951).
 - The 1950 Act provides for allocation of seats and delimitation of constituencies for elections, qualifications of voters, preparation of electoral rolls.
 - The 1951 Act regulates the actual conduct of elections and by-elections.
 - It provides for the conduct of elections and offences and disputes related to elections.
 - It also deals with the registration of political parties, the qualifications and disqualifications for membership of the Houses.
- Persons entitled to vote in an election are those who are registered as voters under the provisions of the Indian Constitution and the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1950.
- As per the Indian Constitution (under Article 326), all Indian citizens above the age of 18 years who have registered themselves as voters are eligible to vote.
- Eligible voters have to register themselves in the constituency where they live, upon which they will be issued photo election identity cards.

Background:

- The govt had issued four notifications to give effect to the electoral reforms enacted by Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021 (passed by the Parliament in late 2021).
- The changes made by the notification were:
 - **Voluntary Linking of voter ID with Aadhaar**
 - The notification specified April 1, 2023 as the date on or before which every person whose name exists in the electoral rolls may intimate his Aadhaar number.
 - **To ease the enrolment schedule for first-time voters**
 - It allowed four qualifying dates in a year — January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1 —for those above 18 years, to register themselves as voters.
 - **Make voting by special procedure gender neutral**
 - The notification replaced the word “wife” with “spouse” so as to allow woman Army officer’s husband to be enrolled as a service voter.
 - **More power to Election Commission**
 - It empowered EC to requisition premises for any purpose related to elections.

News Summary:

- First-time voters can soon apply for inclusion of their names in the voter’s list even before they attain the minimum voting age of 18 years.
- The new voters who complete 18 years on April 1, July 1 and October 1 of any given year, and not just January 1, will be eligible for enrolling as voters.
 - However, ECI has announced that all 17 years-plus youths who will be turning 18 on each of the four qualifying dates can submit their claims in advance.
 - They can start applying from the date of draft publication of electoral rolls.
 - E.g., the special summary revision with reference to January 1, 2023 as qualifying date has already been ordered.
 - Hence, under the new model, the 17-year-olds can start applying for inclusion in rolls starting November 9, 2022, the date of publication of draft rolls.

UNSC CONDEMNS MYANMAR EXECUTIONS

In News:

- The Security Council released a statement condemning the executions and calling for the immediate release of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi.
- This statement highlights a rare consensus on the post-coup crisis in Myanmar.

Myanmar Coup

- In February 2021, Myanmar's military had seized power after detaining Aung San Suu Kyi and other democratically elected leaders.
- Army seized control following a general election in which Ms Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party won by a landslide (80% votes)-even better than in 2015.
- Military alleged that the recent landslide election win by NLD was marred by fraud.
- In the past, Myanmar was ruled by the armed forces from 1962 until 2011. However, in 2011, a new government began ushering in a return to civilian rule.
- Myanmar, under military government, drafted a constitution in 2008 which formed the basis of power transition in 2011

Myanmar's military Constitution

- Myanmar's constitution, framed under the military government, ensures role and supremacy of military in national affairs.
- Under its provisions, the military reserves for itself 25% of seats in both Houses of Parliament, to which it appoints serving military officials.
- The constitution allows formation of a political party which is proxy to the military. In other words, indirectly, Military can contest election in Myanmar.
- Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) in Myanmar is backed by military.
- **Article 417** of Myanmar Constitution allows the military to take control over the nation in times of emergency. This clause is often termed as **coup mechanism in waiting**.

Background:

- Recently, Myanmar's military announced that it had executed four pro-democracy activists and political prisoners.

- Out of the four persons executed, two were leading political leaders who opposed the junta. These two were executed citing counterterrorism charges.
- Two other people were executed after they were convicted of killing a woman who they reportedly thought was a military informer.
- The political executions of these activists were the first in many decades for Myanmar.
- Experts believe that, through these executions, the military wants to send a message to other citizens – and to the world – that it is in charge.

News Summary

- In a rare consensus on the post-coup crisis, the UN Security Council has condemned the Myanmar junta's execution of four prisoners.
- The statement was endorsed by Russia and China — the junta's two major allies that have previously shielded it at the UN — as well as neighbouring India.

India's stand on the execution

- India expressed deep concern over the execution of four pro-democracy activists by Myanmar's military government.
- It asserted that the rule of law and democratic process must be upheld in the country.
- Many critics say that the execution has met with strong objection by the international community. However, India has so far said it is concerned about the situation in Myanmar.

Why India is careful in reacting to this situation?

- India is in the process of establishing ties with the Myanmar junta. Criticising the junta will only push Myanmar closer to China.
- Myanmar is strategically located with a strong China influence as it has invested heavily in infrastructure projects.
- Also, Myanmar is geographically significant for India as it shares border with north eastern states.
- Myanmar is the only ASEAN country adjoining India and is therefore an important gateway to South East Asia.
- Myanmar is a key component of India's ambitions at bridging South Asia and South-East Asia through BIMSTEC.

DELIVERY OF INDIGENOUS AIRCRAFT CARRIER (IAC) 'VIKRANT'

Indian Navy has created maritime history on July 28, 2022 by taking delivery of the prestigious Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) 'Vikrant from her builder Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi.



About:

- Designed by Indian Navy's inhouse Directorate of Naval Design (DND) and built by CSL, a Public Sector Shipyard under Ministry of Shipping (MoS), the carrier is christened after her illustrious predecessor, India's first Aircraft Carrier which played a vital role in the 1971 war.
- The 262 mtr long carrier has a full displacement of close to 45,000 tonnes which is much larger and advanced than her predecessor. The ship is powered by four Gas Turbines totaling 88 MW power and has a maximum speed of 28 Knots.
- Built at an overall cost of close to Rs. 20,000 Crs, the project has been progressed in three Phases of contract between MoD and CSL, concluded in May 2007, Dec 2014 and Oct 2019 respectively. The ship's keel was laid in Feb 2009, followed by launching in Aug 2013.
- With an overall indigenous content of 76%, IAC is a perfect example of the nation's quest for "Aatma Nirbhar Bharat" and provides thrust to Government's 'Make in India' initiative.
- With the delivery of Vikrant, India has joined a select group of nations having the niche capability to indigenously design and build an Aircraft Carrier.
- The Indigenous Aircraft Carrier would soon be commissioned into the Indian Navy as Indian Naval Ship (INS) Vikrant which would bolster India's position in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and its quest for a blue water Navy.

ELEVENTH AGRICULTURAL CENSUS (2021-22)

The Eleventh Agricultural Census (2021-22) was launched in the country by the Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar.



About:

- Agriculture Census is conducted every 5 years, which is being undertaken now after delay due to corona pandemic. The field work of agricultural census will start in August 2022.
- Agricultural Census is the main source of information on a variety of agricultural parameters at a relatively minute level, such as the number and area of operational holdings, their size, class-wise distribution, land use, tenancy and cropping pattern, etc.
- This is the first time that data collection for agricultural census will be conducted on smart phones and tablets, so that data is available in time. Most of the States have digitized their land records and surveys, which will further accelerate the collection of agricultural census data.

HUB AND SPOKE MODEL SILOS

Under 'Hub and Spoke Model' meant for development of wheat Silos across the country, the Department of Food & Public Distribution has proposed to develop a capacity of 111.125 LMT of Silos at 249 locations across the country.



About:

- With a view to modernize storage of food grains and to ramp-up the storage capacity for food grains in India, a new model 'Hub & Spoke' Model for implementation in Public Private Partnership (PPP) Mode has been proposed.
- The proposed Silos will operate under Design, Build, Fund, Own & Transfer (DBFOT) (FCI's land) and Design, Build, Fund, Own & Operate (DBFOO) (Land of concessionaire/other agency) mode, through implementing agency i.e. Food Corporation of India (FCI).

Meaning

- Hub and Spoke Model is a transportation system which consolidates the transportation assets from standalone locations referred to as “Spoke” to a central location named as “Hub” for long distance transportation.
 - Hubs have a dedicated railway siding and container depot facility while the transportation from Spoke to Hub is undertaken through road and from Hub to Hub via rail.
 - This model by harnessing the efficiency of railway siding, promotes cost efficiency through bulk storage & movement, reduces cost and time of handling and transportation and simplifies operational complexities in addition to economic development, infrastructure development & employment generation in the country.
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GOOGLE STREET VIEW

Google Street View is finally available for ten cities in India and is expected to roll out in about 50 more cities by the end of the year.



About:

- Google Street View is an immersive 360-degree view of a location captured using special cameras mounted on vehicles or on backpacks by data collectors moving around the city streets.
 - The images are then patched together to create a 360-degree view which users can swipe through to get a detailed view of the location.
 - It is available to view on Android and iOS using the app, or as a web view.
 - In India, unlike in other markets, Google Street View is powered by images from third parties as per the National Geospatial Policy, 2021.
 - Street View in India is not allowed for restricted areas like government properties, defence establishments and military areas. This means in a place like Delhi, the cantonment area will be out of bounds for Street View.
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