

WHAT IS THE SC INITIATIVE ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT?

- Recently, a three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court referred to a five-member Constitution Bench the issue of **death penalty**.
- The issue revolves around giving meaningful opportunity to those found guilty of a capital offence to present mitigating factors and circumstances so that they can better plead for a life term instead of a death sentence.
- The reference was made to resolve differences between judgments, mainly on whether it is necessary to hold the **hearing on sentencing** on a subsequent day and not on the **day of the conviction**.

Legal Provisions in Question:

- The issue arises from the legal requirement that whenever a court records a conviction, it has to hold a separate hearing on the quantum of sentence.
- Section 235 of the **Code of Criminal Procedure** (CrPC) says that after hearing arguments, the judge shall give a judgment; and, “if the accused is convicted, the judge shall hear the accused on the question of sentence and then pass sentence”.
- This process gains significance if the conviction is for an offence that entails either death or life imprisonment.
- Section 354(3) says that when an offence is punishable with death or imprisonment for life, the judgment shall state the reasons for the sentence awarded, and if the sentence is death, “special reasons” for the sentence.

Same-day sentencing:

- Even though a separate hearing on sentencing is practised in all trials, most judges do not adjourn the case to a future date to go through this.
- As soon as the verdict of ‘guilty’ is pronounced, they ask counsel on both sides to argue on sentencing.

- There is a view that such ‘same-day’ sentencing is inadequate and violates natural justice as convicts do not get enough time to gather mitigating factors.
- In a series of judgments, the Supreme Court has advocated that the sentencing hearing be done separately, that is, at a future date after conviction.
- However, in a contradiction of sorts, several judgments have upheld the practice of ‘same-day’ sentencing.

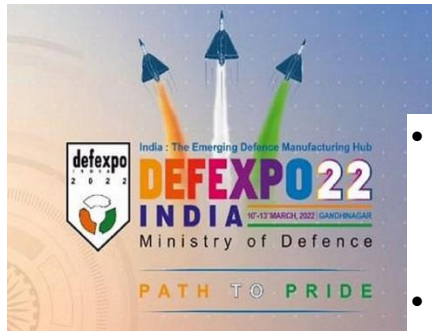
Should same-day sentencing continue?

- The current referral of the three-judge bench of the Supreme Court to a five-judge bench is based on an argument that the process of same-day sentencing is hopelessly tilted against the accused.
- The Bench said –
 - “The State is given an opportunity to present aggravating circumstances against the accused throughout the duration of a trial”.
 - The accused, on the other hand, is able to produce evidence showing mitigating circumstances in their favour, only after their conviction”.

Likely Outcome:

- The Constitution Bench may lay down comprehensive guidelines on the manner in which sentencing decisions can be arrived at.
- It may make it necessary for the trial court to get to know the accused better before passing the sentence.
- Going beyond the reports of jail authorities or parole officers, the courts may take the help of psychologists and behavioural experts.
- A study into the childhood experiences and upbringing of the accused, mental health history in the family and the likelihood of traumatic past experiences and other social and cultural factors may be mandated to be part of the sentencing process.
- This may mean that trial courts will be better informed than now, when only basic data such as educational and economic status are ascertained before a sentence is imposed.

The forthcoming DefExpo 2022, scheduled to be held in Gandhinagar from October 18 to 22, will host the second edition of the India-Africa Defence Dialogue with invites extended to 53 African countries.



About:

- A separate Indian Ocean Region plus (IOR+) conclave with participation of approximately 40 countries is also on the anvil, the Defence Ministry said.
- The Expo, earlier scheduled to be held in March, was postponed due to “logistical challenges” the Ministry had said.
- For DefExpo 2022, Indian companies, Indian subsidiaries of foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers, Division of company registered in India, exhibitor having joint venture with an Indian company will be considered as Indian participants.
- The theme of DefExpo 2022 is ‘Path to Pride’ and the aim is to showcase the might of the domestic defence industry, which is now powering ‘Make in India, Make for the World’ resolve of the Government and the nation at large.

OPERATION MEGH CHAKRA: 50 UNDER CBI SCANNER OVER CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

In News:

- The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) recently conducted searches at 59 locations across 20 States and one Union Territory, as part of a pan-India drive against the circulation and sharing of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM).
- The operation code-named “**Megh Chakra**” is being carried out following the inputs received from **Interpol’s Singapore special unit** based on the information received from the authorities in New Zealand.

About Interpol:

- Interpol is an acronym for **I**nternational **C**riminal **P**olice **O**rganization. It was established in **1923**.
- It is an inter-governmental organisation comprising 195 member nations, including India.
- The Interpol manages 19 police databases with information on crimes and criminals (from names and fingerprints to stolen passports), accessible in real-time to countries.

Composition:

- Interpol headquarters (called the General Secretariat) is located in **Lyon, France**.
- The **General Assembly**, made up of delegates from all the member countries, meets once each year.
- The assembly votes on all major Interpol decisions - resolutions are passed by a simple majority, with each member nation receiving a single vote.
- **Funding –**
 - Most of Interpol's funding comes from the member countries themselves, with each nation contributing a portion based on its size, gross domestic product and other factors.

What does Interpol do?

- The Interpol basically connects police across the world even if these individual member nations do not have diplomatic relations.
- The Interpol facilitates information exchange, knowledge sharing and research between nations.
- This is done by issuing colour-coded 'notices' in four languages - English, Spanish, French, and Arabic.
- The agency is focused on several key areas of crime –
 - Terrorism
 - Sexual abuse of children and child pornography
 - Organized crime
 - International fugitives
 - Computer crime, including identity theft and theft of financial information
- The **Interpol doesn't have law enforcement powers such as arrest**.

- When a member nation approaches it with a specific request backed with court orders, the Interpol sends it out to other countries. The information received is sent back to the country.

Different Interpol Notices:



TYPES OF INTERPOL NOTICES

- RED NOTICE:** To seek the location and arrest of wanted persons with a view to extradition or similar lawful action.
- YELLOW NOTICE:** To help locate missing persons, often minors, or to help identify persons who are unable to identify themselves.
- BLUE NOTICE:** To collect additional information about a person's identity, location or activities in relation to a crime.
- BLACK NOTICE:** To seek information on unidentified bodies.
- GREEN NOTICE:** To provide warnings and intelligence about persons who have committed criminal offences and are likely to repeat these crimes in other countries.
- ORANGE NOTICE:** To warn an event, a person, an object or a process representing serious and imminent threat to public safety.
- INTERPOL-UN SECURITY COUNCIL SPECIAL NOTICE:** Issued for groups and individuals who are the targets of UN Security Council sanctions committees.
- PURPLE NOTICE:** To seek information on modus operandi, objects, devices and concealment methods used by criminals.

Source: www.interpol.int

News Summary:

- The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) recently conducted searches at 59 locations across 20 States and one Union Territory, as part of a pan-India drive against the circulation and sharing of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM).
- The CBI has registered two cases alleging that a large number of Indian nationals were involved in the online circulation, downloading and transmission of the CSAM using cloud-based storage.
- Last November, the agency launched a similar exercise code named “**Operation Carbon**”, in which the suspects in 13 States and one Union Territory were raided.

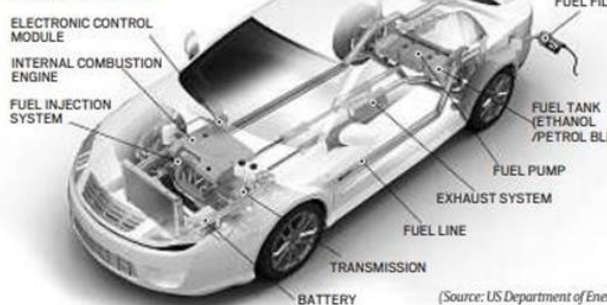
FLEX FUEL: PART OF PLAN TO CUT CRUDE IMPORTS, BUT POLICY SUPPORT KEY

In News:

- Next month, India will get its first flex-fuel car, which can run on ethanol-blended petrol and a battery.
- The **Flex Fuel Strong Hybrid Electric Vehicle (FFV-SHEV)** imported from Brazil will be used in a pilot project led by the Government of India to evaluate its performance in terms of reduced carbon emissions and reducing the country's reliance on imported fossil fuels.

Flex fuel technology:

KEY COMPONENTS OF A FLEX FUEL CAR



BATTERY: The battery provides electricity to start the engine and power vehicle electronics/accessories

ELECTRONIC CONTROL MODULE (ECM): The ECM controls the fuel mixture, ignition timing, and emissions system; monitors the operation of the vehicle

EXHAUST SYSTEM: The exhaust system directs the exhaust gases from the engine out through the tailpipe. A three-way catalyst is designed to reduce engine-out emissions within the exhaust system

FUEL FILLER: A nozzle from a fuel dispenser attaches to the receptacle on the vehicle to fill the tank

FUEL INJECTION SYSTEM: This system introduces fuel into the engine's combustion chambers for ignition

FUEL LINE: A metal tube or flexible hose that transfers fuel from the tank to the engine's fuel injection system

FUEL PUMP: A pump that transfers fuel from the tank to the engine's fuel injection system via the fuel line

FUEL TANK (ETHANOL/PETROL BLEND): Stores fuel on board the vehicle to power the engine

INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE: Fuel is injected in either the intake manifold or the combustion chamber, where it is combined with air, and the air/fuel mixture is ignited by the spark from the spark plug

TRANSMISSION: The transmission transfers mechanical power from the engine and/or electric traction motor to drive the wheels

(Source: US Department of Energy)

• About the new technology:

- A flex or flexible fuel vehicle has an internal combustion engine (ICE), but unlike a traditional petrol or diesel vehicle, **it can run on more than one type of fuel, or even a combination of fuels.**

- The most common versions use a blend of petrol and ethanol or methanol, but these engines can also run on 100% petrol or ethanol.

- This is accomplished by equipping the engine with a **fuel mix sensor and engine control module (ECM)** programming that detects and adjusts for any ratio of

designated fuels.

- According to the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, the push to encourage car manufacturers to use flexible engines is part of a larger strategy **to reduce the country's reliance on imported crude in the medium to long term.**
- According to IHS Markit, there were over 21 million flex fuel vehicles (as of 2018) in the United States, but **Brazil** is the biggest market and a leader in this segment.
- Since ethanol blending is expected to reach 20% by 2025-26, **the groundwork will be laid for the introduction of FFV-SHEV vehicles in India.**
- **How do flex fuel cars work?**
 - Most components in a flex fuel vehicle are the same as those in a conventional petrol-only vehicle.
 - Some ethanol-compatible components, such as modifications to the fuel pump and fuel injection system, are required to adjust to the different chemical properties and energy content in ethanol or methanol.

- The ECM is also calibrated to account for ethanol's higher oxygen content.
- Thus, the flex fuel vehicles are similar to their conventional petrol-only counterparts **except for an ethanol-compatible fuel system and a different powertrain calibration.**
- **Advantages of flex fuel technology:**
 - Ethanol blending **significantly reduces harmful pollutants** such as carbon monoxide, sulphur, carbon and nitrogen oxides.
 - The blending will help **reduce oil imports** for vehicle fuel.
 - One significant advantage is the ability of countries such as Brazil **to be flexible on the degree of the mix depending on crude prices**, varying it when energy prices spike, such as just after the Ukraine war.
- **Associated problems:**
 - When using ethanol, a flex fuel vehicle **typically loses 4-8% of its fuel efficiency.** While increased levels of ethanol reduce fuel economy, many flex fuel vehicles **improve acceleration performance** when operating on higher ethanol blends.
 - According to an NITI Aayog report, sugarcane accounted for more than 90% of total ethanol produced in the country in 2019-20.
 - A major issue with ethanol blending is that crops like **sugarcane require a lot of water** in a country with scarce fresh water resources.

NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME (NSS) AWARDS

President Droupadi Murmu conferred the National Service Scheme (NSS) Awards for the year 2020-21 at Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports said in a statement.



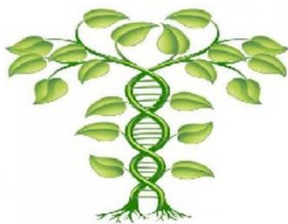
About:

- A total of forty-two awards were given today. Two universities, ten NSS units, their programme officers, and 30 NSS volunteers received the awards.

- The Department of Youth Affairs of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports confers every year the National Service Scheme Award. Awards are conferred to recognise and reward outstanding contributions towards voluntary community service with a view to further promoting NSS in the country.
 - At present, NSS has about 40 lakh volunteers on its rolls spread over the country.
-

[NINTH SESSION OF GOVERNING BODY OF THE ITPGRFA](#)

The Ninth Session of the Governing Body (GB9) of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) concluded in New Delhi.



About:

- The six-day GB9 session of ITPGRFA was inaugurated by the Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar in New Delhi on September 19, 2022.
 - In a historical first, Federation of Seed Industry of India (FSII) contributed Rs 20 lakhs (~USD 25,000) to the Benefit-Sharing Fund (BSF) as the first collective contribution from Indian seed sector, during the GB-9 meetings. The BSF is the funding mechanism of the Treaty used for support of capacity building, Conservation and sustainable use projects among the Contracting Parties of the Treaty.
 - Dr Sunil Archak, ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, India, was appointed as Co-Chair, along with Dr Michael Ryan, Department of Agriculture, Canberra, Australia, on the Working Group on 'Enhancement of the Multilateral System (MLS)'.
-