

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – DECEMBER 21, 2021

STATES

- On December 20, the Karnataka cabinet – approved the anti-conversion bill without any changes
- ✓ The bill seeks to provide stringent punishment, including imprisonment and hefty fines, to those indulging in religious conversions through allurement or force.

UP TO 10 YEARS IN JAIL, ₹1L FINE

- 3 to 5 years of jail and ₹25,000 penalty; in cases involving minors, women and SC/ST, 3 to 7 years of jail and ₹50,000 fine
- ₹5 lakh compensation for those who are forced to convert in Karnataka
- For mass conversions, 3-10 years of jail and penalty of up to ₹1 lakh

“Religious conversions have a huge impact on society. Hence, they should not be allowed. Initially, it is coercion and allurement; it, then, becomes a disease and menace.

There's a need to bring the law because poverty and disabilities are often misused to lure people to change their faith

Basavaraj Bommai | CM

- ✓ The Karnataka Protection of Rights to Freedom of Religion Bill, 2021 will now be introduced in the assembly within a day or two and later in the council.
- ✓ The draft bill proposes a maximum punishment of 10 years of imprisonment for forcible conversion of persons from Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe communities, minors and women, to another religion
- ✓ A jail term of three years to five years, and a fine of Rs 25,000, has been proposed for people violating the law in case of people from general categories
- ✓ A jail term of three to 10 years, and a fine of Rs 50,000 has been proposed for people converting minors, women and persons from the SC and ST communities.
- ✓ The bill also envisages payment of a compensation of Rs five lakh (on court orders) to victims of conversion by the persons attempting the conversion and double punishments for repeat offenses.

- ✓ Marriages conducted with the intention of conversions can be declared null and void by a family court or a jurisdictional court.
- ✓ The bill also requires the person who gets converted to inform the district magistrate of the conversion within 30 days of conversion and must appear before the DM to confirm their identity
- ✓ According to the draft bill, conversion from one religion to another by misrepresentation, force, fraud, undue influence, coercion, allurement or marriage is prohibited
- ✓ At least seven states, including Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand have brought out similar proposals.

NATIONAL

- **On December 20, the Lok Sabha - passed the bill on electoral reforms through voice vote, including the one to link Voter ID with Aadhaar on a voluntary basis and providing multiple dates for voter registration**
 - ✓ Earlier last week, the Union Cabinet had cleared the bill, a long-pending demand of the Election Commission
 - ✓ The Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was introduced by Minister of Law and Justice Kiren Rijiju
 - ✓ According to the Minister, the bill will cleanse the election system and eliminate multiple entries in electoral rolls
 - ✓ The proposed bill will allow the youth to enroll as voters on four different dates every year - the first day of January, the first day of April, the first day of July, and the first day of October of a calendar year
 - ✓ The only qualifying date is currently January 1st of each year.
 - ✓ According to the bill, the electoral law will be made 'gender-neutral' for service voters.
 - ✓ The change will also help to replace the word "wife" with "spouse," making the laws "gender neutral."
 - ✓ Sections 20 and 60 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and 1951, respectively, will be amended to make elections gender-neutral for service voters.
 - ✓ The RP Act's Section 14 will be amended to provide for four "qualifying" dates for eligible people to register to vote
 - ✓ Section 23 of the RP Act would be altered to facilitate integration of electoral roll data with the Aadhaar ecosystem
- **On December 20, the Rajya Sabha - passed the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2021 to replace the ordinance on the same.**
 - ✓ The Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill-2021 was passed by Lok Sabha on December 13.

- ✓ Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman moved the Bill to amend the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 aiming to correct a drafting error created by a 2014 amendment to the original legislation.
 - ✓ The error crept in when the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act was amended in 2014 to allow better medical access to narcotic drugs, and removing state barriers in transporting and licensing of essential narcotic drugs.
 - ✓ The Bill replaces the ordinance which was promulgated on September 30, 2021 as Parliament was not in session then.
 - ✓ The House passed the Bill by a voice vote.
 - ✓ The NDPS Act regulates certain operations (such as manufacture, transport, and consumption) related to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
 - ✓ The Act treats financing certain illicit activities (such as cultivating cannabis or manufacturing narcotic drugs) or harbouring persons engaged in them as an offence.
 - ✓ Persons found guilty of this offence are punishable with rigorous imprisonment of at least 10 years (extendable up to 20 years) and a fine of at least Rs 1 lakh
 - ✓ In 2014, the Act was amended and the clause number of the definition for illicit activities was changed.
 - ✓ However, the section on penalty for financing these illicit activities was not amended and continued to refer to the earlier clause number.
 - ✓ This amendment will be deemed to have been in effect from 1st May 2014, the date when the 2014 amendments came into effect.
 - ✓ Later, the House referred the Biological Diversity Bill to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament.
 - ✓ The bill seeks to relax certain rules in the Biodiversity Act 2002 in order to fast-track research and patenting as well as empower local communities to be able to utilise resources, particularly of medicinal value, such as seeds.
 - ✓ It encourages Indian system of medicine, bring more foreign investments in the chain of biological resources and decriminalise use of biological resources by 'vaid', 'hakims' and Ayush practitioners who have been practising indigenous medicines.
 - ✓ The Bill was introduced by environment minister Bhupender Yadav in the Lok Sabha on December 16
- **The first draft of the Delimitation commission – proposes seven additional Assembly seats for Jammu and Kashmir, six in Jammu division and one in Kashmir valley**
- ✓ For the first time, the commission proposed reserving nine seats for Scheduled Tribes (STs) on the basis of population, while seven seats are proposed for the Scheduled Caste (SC) community.
 - ✓ With the proposed addition, the total Assembly constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir has risen to 90 from 83

- ✓ In Jammu, the number of seats has gone up to 43 from 37, and in Kashmir, by one seat to 47.
 - ✓ An additional 24 seats are proposed to be reserved for Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
 - ✓ Of the seven additional Assembly constituencies in the Union Territory, one each has been proposed in the districts of Kathua, Samba, Rajouri, Reasi, Doda and Kishtwar in Jammu division, and Kupwara in the Kashmir valley.
 - ✓ As per the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019, the number of assembly seats in the Union territory of J&K are to be raised from 107 to 114 through fresh delimitation
 - ✓ The Delimitation Commission was headed by Justice (Retd) Ranjana Prakash Desai.
 - ✓ Chief election commissioner Sushil Chandra and J&K state election body chief are ex-officio members of the commission.
 - ✓ Incidentally, the districts in J&K have increased from 12 to 20 since the last delimitation in the erstwhile state in 1995.
- **India's and South Asia's first hybrid school - will be virtually launched by Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog on 24th December 2021**
- ✓ Jain International Residential Hybrid School in Bangalore in southern Karnataka will offer both online and offline learning to children
 - ✓ The new school will bring together teachers and pupils from across geographical locations on a single platform.
 - ✓ It will start admitting students from January 2022
 - ✓ The hybrid school is a joint venture between JAIN International Residential School, a part of JAIN Group, and Crimson Education, a school development organisation led by educationists and researchers
 - ✓ It is affiliated to the Cambridge International Assessment International Education, UK.
 - ✓ The school will offer international academic programmes right from kindergarten to Grade 12 through a network of at least 40 home campuses in 20 Indian cities.
 - ✓ All subject classes will be streamed online for students through a learning operating system — TMRW — by teachers based out of different places.
 - ✓ For offline activities, such as sports, practicals, etc, students will be tied up with a school – called a home campus - close to their place of residence.
 - ✓ The school team has successfully filed for a patent in the US for the Hybrid Learning Education Model (HLEM) developed by them and has already secured a copyright in India.
 - ✓ The HLEM revolves around the unique concept of blending 'Parent campus' and 'Home campuses' of educational institutions.
 - ✓ The Parent Campus, a Cambridge-affiliated school, will be responsible to appoint, manage and regulate the functioning of the Home campuses (a local near-by school) in all major cities and towns in India as per a predefined specification

- ✓ Under this concept, students have to travel to the Parent campus only to appear for their Class X and Class XII board exams
- ✓ JAIN Group is an education provider and an entrepreneurship incubator in India with three decades of presence

INTERNATIONAL

- **On December 20, the European Union's drug regulator - approved use of the Covid-19 vaccine from US-based Novavax in people 18 years and older**
- ✓ The vaccine has an efficacy of around 90%, as per the studies
- ✓ Novavax is expected to start shipping vaccines to the EU's 27 member states in January.
- ✓ Vaccines from Pfizer-Bio-NTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca and J&J had already been approved for use in the EU.
- ✓ Novavax's protein-based vaccine uses alternative technology to the other four vaccine shots.
- ✓ The company has about eight manufacturing locations, including those of the Serum Institute of India, the world's biggest vaccine maker.
- ✓ Production of the shot in India at SII has also been approved by EMA
- ✓ Earlier, on December 17, the WHO issued an emergency use listing to SII's version of Novavax's vaccine.

SPORTS

- **On December 19, the Uttarakhand government - named India wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant as the state's brand ambassador for promoting sports and general health.**



- ✓ Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama made the announcement on the same
- ✓ Pant, 24, was born in Roorkee town in Haridwar district of Uttarakhand
- ✓ Pant has played 25 Tests, 18 ODIs, and 41 T20Is for the Indian side.
- ✓ He is also the skipper of the Delhi Capitals side in the Indian Premier League (IPL) and was retained by the franchise ahead of the 2022 edition of the tournament.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

➤ International Human Solidarity Day – December 20



- ✓ The Day is observed every year to raise public awareness of the importance of solidarity and to celebrate unity in diversity
- ✓ It also encourages new initiatives and plans aimed at eradicating poverty and other global problems.
- ✓ The basic purpose of observing the Day is to promote the culture of cooperation, equality and social justice
- ✓ On December 22, 2005, the UN General Assembly recognized solidarity as one of the fundamental and universal values of this century by resolution 60/209
- ✓ The UN General Assembly established World Solidarity Fund on December 20, 2002 to get rid of poverty and to promote human and social development in developing countries.
- ✓ Later, in 2003, the Assembly set up World Solidarity Fund as a trust fund of the UN Development Programme

