



13 February, 2024

Floor Test

Context: Yesterday, amidst the ongoing political changes in Bihar, the Bihar Legislative Assembly conducted a floor test.

➤ Bihar Political Landscape:

- Nitish Kumar, Bihar Chief Minister, won the floor test, demonstrating the confidence of Bihar MLAs in his new government.
- The ruling Mahagathbandhan dissolved two weeks ago, comprising Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United), Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), and the Congress party.
- Kumar formed an alliance with the BJP, resigned, and then took oath again with his new cabinet members.

➤ Understanding Floor Test:

- A floor test, also known as a 'trust vote,' determines if a suspected minority government still holds the confidence of the legislative body through a vote among members.
- The Speaker or Governor can call for a floor test depending on the session status or circumstances.
- In 2020, the Supreme Court upheld the Speaker's powers to call for a floor test if there's a prima facie view of the government losing its majority.

➤ Process of Floor Test:

- The leader claiming majority moves a vote of confidence, requiring a majority among present and voting members for the government to survive.
- Voting methods include voice votes, electronic voting, or physical division of votes.
- In cases of coalition differences, the Governor may demand a majority proof from the Chief Minister.

➤ Composite Floor Test:

- Conducted when multiple parties claim to form the government and majority is unclear.
- Majority is determined based on those present and voting, through voice or division voting.
- In case of a tie, the speaker can cast the deciding vote.

➤ Bihar's Floor Test:

- Nitish Kumar resigned citing alliance issues and formed a new alliance.
- The RJD is the largest party with 79 seats, followed by the BJP with 78 seats, JD(U) with 45, and Congress with 19.
- A majority in the 243-member Bihar Assembly requires at least 122 seats. The NDA government claims a majority with 128 members, while the Mahagathbandhan has 114.

➤ Constitutional Provisions for a Floor Test:

- Article 174 of the Constitution grants the Governor the authority to summon, dissolve, and prorogue the state legislative assembly.
- Article 174(2)(b) empowers the Governor to dissolve the Assembly based on the advice of the cabinet. However, if there are doubts about the Chief Minister's majority, the Governor can use discretion.
- According to Article 175(2), the Governor can convene the House and initiate a floor test to ascertain the government's numerical strength.
- Article 163 of the Constitution stipulates that the Governor acts on the advice of the Council of Ministers led by the Chief Minister.
- During a legislative session, the Speaker has the prerogative to call for a floor test. However, if the

Assembly is not in session, the Governor can utilize residual powers under Article 163 to conduct a floor test.

Law Commission's Report on Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897

Context: The 22nd Law Commission of India has submitted its Report No. 286 titled "A Comprehensive Review of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897" to the Government of India.

➤ Epidemic Plan and Standard Operating Procedure:

- The 286th Law Commission Report underscores the necessity of establishing an Epidemic Plan and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to effectively address future epidemics.
- It emphasizes the current lack of clear delineation between the powers of the Centre, states, and local authorities during epidemics, resulting in disjointed responses that hamper effective management.
- The Epidemic Plan is envisioned to ensure a coordinated response to public health emergencies by clearly defining the powers and responsibilities of various levels of government and stakeholders.

➤ Limitations of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 (EDA):

- The report critically examines the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 (EDA), highlighting its inadequacy in addressing modern challenges posed by infectious diseases.
- It points out that the EDA, being a relic of the colonial era, fails to adequately address contemporary issues related to the spread of infectious diseases, especially in the context of globalization and increased connectivity.
- The report notes the potential for the misuse of the EDA and its lack of comprehensive guidelines on crucial aspects of epidemic management, advocating for substantial amendments or the enactment of new legislation.

➤ Recommendations for Improvement:

- The Law Commission proposes significant amendments to the EDA to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in addressing current and future challenges posed by infectious diseases.
- It suggests incorporating provisions in the EDA to mandate the preparation, enforcement, and periodic revision of the Epidemic Plan, along with clear guidelines on quarantine, isolation, lockdowns, and other measures.
- Additionally, the report recommends provisions for privacy-friendly disease surveillance, regulation of medical supplies, dissemination of public information, and safe disposal of infectious waste, among other essential aspects of epidemic management.
- To mitigate conflicts between states and the Central government, the report advocates for the creation of an SOP outlining the roles and powers of various stakeholders at each stage of an epidemic, ensuring a coherent and unified response.

➤ Law Commission:

- The Law Commission of India is an executive body established by the Government of India to work for legal reforms.
- It operates as an advisory body to the Ministry of Law and Justice, comprising primarily legal experts.

Face to Face Centres



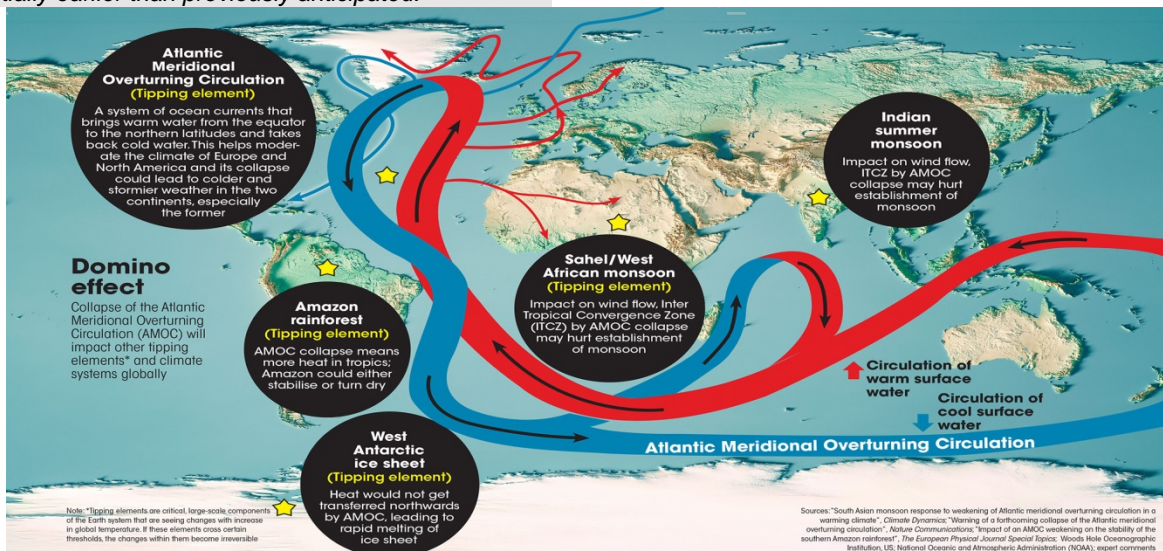


➤ **Functions of the Law Commission:**

- Conducts research and reviews existing laws in India for reforms and new legislation, either on government reference or suo-motu.
- Undertakes studies to improve justice delivery systems, aiming to reduce procedural delays and litigation costs.
- Identifies and recommends the repeal of obsolete laws and examines laws impacting poverty alleviation.
- Proposes new legislation to implement Directive Principles and achieve constitutional objectives.
- Advises on legal and judicial administration matters referred by the government.
- Provides research assistance to foreign countries as requested by the government.
- Reviews laws to promote gender equality and suggests amendments.
- Examines the impact of globalization on food security and unemployment, recommending measures for marginalized communities.
- Submits periodic reports to the Central Government on various legal issues and research findings, proposing effective measures.
- Performs additional functions assigned by the Central Government as needed.

Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC)

Context: A significant ocean current system crucial for regulating global climate and weather patterns may cease functioning this century, potentially earlier than previously anticipated.



➤ **Background:**

- A major ocean current system, the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), plays a crucial role in regulating global climate and weather patterns.
- Recent studies suggest that AMOC may collapse sooner than previously thought due to increased anthropogenic emissions and environmental changes.

➤ **AMOC Collapse Predictions:**

- Scientists from the University of Copenhagen project that AMOC could collapse between 2025 and 2095, with a high likelihood of occurrence by the 2050s.
- This collapse could have significant implications for climate systems worldwide and may be the first of 16 climate tipping elements to be breached.

➤ **Factors Leading to AMOC Collapse:**

- Increased precipitation and rapid melting of the Greenland ice sheet are contributing to the disruption of AMOC by adding more fresh cold water to the North Atlantic Ocean.
- This influx of fresh water is reducing the salinity and density of the ocean, slowing down the AMOC's heat conveyor belt mechanism.

➤ **Historical Context and Current Trends:**

- Historical data suggests that AMOC has already slowed by about 15% over the past few decades and is at its slowest pace in 1,600 years.
- Recent studies indicate that AMOC may be much closer to collapse than previously thought, with the system exhibiting signs of instability over the last century.

➤ **Uncertainties and Potential Impacts:**

- While some studies project AMOC's collapse within this century, others, such as the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), suggest it is unlikely to occur.
- The collapse of AMOC could lead to widespread cooling across the northern hemisphere, impacting precipitation patterns and potentially disrupting ecosystems and food production.
- Additionally, the collapse of AMOC may have cascading effects on other climate systems and tipping elements, such as the Amazon rainforest, West Antarctic ice sheet, and monsoon patterns. However, the exact nature and extent of these impacts remain uncertain.





NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Kokborok Language



Recently, a rail-road blockade in Tripura concluded following the State government's assurance that students would be permitted to write Kokborok language papers in both Bengali and Roman scripts for the upcoming Class X and Class XII exams.

About Kokborok language:

- Kokborok, also known as Tripuri or Tipra kok is a **Tibeto-Burman language spoken by the Borok people** of Tripura and neighbouring areas of Bangladesh.
- The word "**kok**" means "**verbal**" and "**borok**" means "**people**" or "**human**".
- It is an indigenous language **spoken by nearly 24 per cent** people of Tripura but **lacks a script**.
- Kokborok is one of the official languages of Tripura, along with Bengali.
- It has been recognized as an official language of Tripura since **1979**.
- It can be traced back to at least the 1st century AD when the historical record of **Tripuri kings** started to be written down in a book called the **Rajratnakar**.
- In **1897**, Kokborok acquired a written form when **Muslim scholar Doulot Ahammad** authored the first Kokborok Grammar titled "**KOKBOROMA ANG TRIPURA – VYAKARAN GRAMMAR**."

Convention of Migratory Species

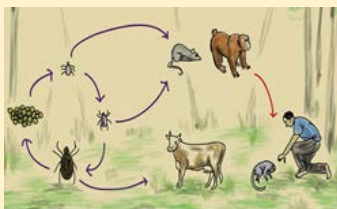


Recently, a report released at the 14th Conference of Parties (COP14) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, revealed that the millions of iconic migratory animal species are in peril because of anthropogenic pressures.

About the Convention of Migratory Species:

- The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), **also known as the Bonn Convention**, is an **environmental treaty** that aims to protect migratory species and their habitats.
- It is an intergovernmental agreement **signed in Bonn, Germany, on 23 June 1979 under the United Nations Environment Programme**.
- It is the only global convention that focuses on conserving **migratory species, their habitats and migration routes**.
- It has two Appendices: **Appendix I lists endangered migratory species** with prohibitions on their take, while **Appendix II lists species with an 'unfavourable conservation status** and encourages range states to draft agreements for their conservation and management.
- **India joined CMS in 1983** and has signed non-legally binding MOUs for the conservation and management of **Siberian Cranes (1998), Marine Turtles (2007), Dugongs (2008) and Raptors (2016)**.

Kyasanur Forest Disease



Recently, Karnataka state health officials reported a surge in the Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD) outbreak.

About Kyasanur Forest Disease:

- Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD) is a viral **hemorrhagic fever** that is endemic to **India's southwestern region**.
- It is a rare **zoonotic disease** that causes acute febrile hemorrhagic illness in humans and monkeys.
- It is caused by the bite of infected ticks or contact with infected animals.
- The disease causes **fever, headache, muscle pain, bleeding problems and neurological complications**.
- Some patients experience neurological symptoms in the third week, including severe headaches and vision problems.
- It was identified in 1957 when it was isolated from a sick monkey from the Kyasanur Forest in Karnataka (formerly Mysore) State, India.
- The virus has spread along the entire stretch of Western Ghats, including **Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Goa**.

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Personality in News

Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati

Recently, the President of India addressed 200th birth anniversary celebrations of Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati at Tankara in Morbi, Gujarat.

Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati (12th February 1824- 30 October 1883)

Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati, a philosopher and social leader was born at Tankara in Morbi, Gujarat.

Contributions:

- Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati **founded the Arya Samaj**, a reform movement of Vedic dharma, on April 7, 1875 in **Bombay**.
- He established Arya Samaj with **10 principles focusing on God, soul and nature**.
- He **advocated for Swaraj** with the powerful call of "**India for Indians**" in 1876.
- He drew inspiration from the Vedas, considering them '**India's Rock of Ages**,' and advocated a return to Vedic principles with the **slogan "Back to the Vedas."**
- He **revolutionized Indian education** with comprehensive reforms, culminating in the establishment of **DAV (Dayanand Anglo Vedic) schools in 1886**.



Ethical Values: Truthfulness, Integrity, Social Justice, Equality and Respect.

Place in News

The United Arab Emirates

Recently, the Prime Minister of Indian announced a two-day visit from today to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for bilateral talks with President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The United Arab Emirates (Capital: Abu Dhabi)

Location: The United Arab Emirates is located in the Middle East, in the southeast of the Arabian Peninsula.

Boundaries: It shares its border with **Oman (East), Saudi Arabia (South and West), Persian Gulf (North) and Qatar (Northwest)**.

Physical Features:

- **Burj Khalifa**, the tallest human-made structure in the world, located in Dubai.
- The United Arab Emirates has thick layers of **Paleozoic, Mesozoic and Cenozoic sedimentary rocks** over Precambrian formations and this area holds abundant oil and gas resources.
- The UAE has transformed from Bedouin tribes to one of the **world's wealthiest states, with a high GDP (PPP) per capita**.
- **Subtropical-arid climate** is found in UAE with hot summers and warm winters.



POINTS TO PONDER

- What is the main aim of the 'Support to Students for Participating in Competitions Abroad' (SSPCA) scheme introduced by AICTE? - **Enhancing global competitiveness of Indian Students in technical education**
- Which institute organizes the World Sustainable Development (WSDS) Summit annually, recently highlighted in the news? - **The Energy and Resources Institute**
- Which city recently declared free bus travel for the transgender community? - **Delhi**
- What profession was Farooq Nazki associated with before his recent passing? - **Poet**
- In which states was the Kilhari programme, a Mobile Health (m-health) initiative, recently launched? - **Gujarat and Maharashtra**

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