

22 December, 2023

Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill

Context: The Lok Sabha approved the Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023, abolishing the outdated Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, which dated back to the colonial era.

Introduction of Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023:

- The bill simplifies title allotment and registration of periodicals through an online system, eliminating physical interface requirements.
- Publishers, especially small and medium ones, benefit from a faster process without the need for declarations with District Magistrates or local authorities.

Key Provisions of the Bill:

➤ Title Allotment and Registration Process:

- The online mechanism streamlines title verification and registration by the Press Registrar General.
- Eliminates the need for declarations before local authorities, reducing the overall process to 60 days.
- Individuals convicted for offences related to terrorism or unlawful activities are barred from publishing a periodical.
- Facsimile editions of foreign periodicals can be printed in India with Central Government approval and registration with the Press Registrar General.

➤ Printing Presses:

- Printers only need to provide online intimation to the Press Registrar General and local authorities, removing the declaration requirement.

➤ Role of District Magistrate/Local Authority:

- District Magistrates have a minimal role in the registration process.
- Their comments/NOC to the Press Registrar General are expected within 60 days; registration decisions can proceed even without their response.
- Publishers no longer need to file declarations before District Magistrates.

Differences from the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867:

- Books are excluded from the Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, administered by the Ministry of HRD.
- Printing presses only need online intimation, not declarations before District Magistrates.
- Publishers simultaneously apply for title allotment and registration, decided by the Press Registrar General.
- The new statute significantly decriminalises violations, replacing severe penalties with financial fines.
- Jail sentences (up to six months) are now reserved for extreme cases where a periodical lacks registration, and the publisher disregards directives from the Press Registrar General.
- Empowerment of the Press Registrar General to suspend/cancel Registration Certificates, contrasting the 1867 Act where only District Magistrates had such authority.

Faster Adoption & Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME) II Scheme

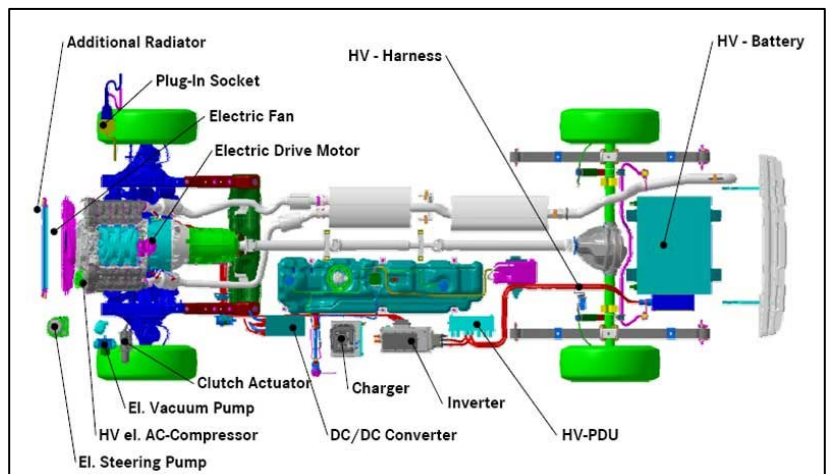
Context: The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Industry recommended a three-year extension for the Faster Adoption & Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME) II Scheme deadline.

➤ FAME II Scheme Overview:

- Deadline: March 31, 2024, with a budget of Rs 10,000 crore.
- Aims to provide upfront incentives for electric and hybrid vehicle purchases and expand charging infrastructure.

➤ Subsidy Reduction and Impact:

- In May, FAME-II subsidy on electric two-wheelers reduced from 40% to 15% on ex-factory price.
- Demand incentive for electric two-wheelers decreased from Rs 15,000/kWh to Rs 10,000/kWh.
- Subsequent negative impact on electric two-wheeler sales noted by the committee.



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➤ **Recommendations for Scheme Extension:**

- Parliamentary committee recommends a three-year extension of FAME-II Scheme.
- Urges the Ministry to consult with industry stakeholders for inclusivity and to support the transition to electric mobility.
- Highlights the need to restore subsidies on electric two-wheelers to maintain momentum and meet 2030 targets.

➤ **FAME I and II Progress:**

- FAME I approved in March 2015 with an extension until March 31, 2019, and an outlay of Rs 895 crore.
- FAME II focuses on technology development, demand creation, pilot projects, and charging infrastructure.

➤ **Four-Wheelers Inclusion and EV Support:**

- Recommends increasing support for four-wheelers and incorporating private electric four-wheelers in FAME II.
- Suggests setting caps based on vehicle cost and battery capacity.

➤ **Infrastructure Development:**

- Emphasises the importance of consistent government frameworks at all levels for EV development.
- Recommends establishing dedicated manufacturing hubs for batteries, cells, and EV components.

➤ **Charging Stations and BHEL's Role:**

- Advocates allocating more funds to BHEL for EV charging stations.
- Encourages public sector participation in installing charging stations and proposes support for women self-help groups and cooperative societies.

➤ **Policy Stability and Market Certainty:**

- Highlights the negative impact of frequent policy changes on the EV market.
- Urges the government to formulate a consistent and stable national policy for electric mobility to foster sustainable transportation.

Winter Solstice

Context: The winter solstice of 2023 is falling on 22nd of December.

➤ **Definition:**

- The winter solstice, also known as the hibernal solstice, occurs when either of Earth's poles reaches its maximum tilt away from the Sun.
- It happens twice yearly, once in each hemisphere.

➤ **Occurrence:**

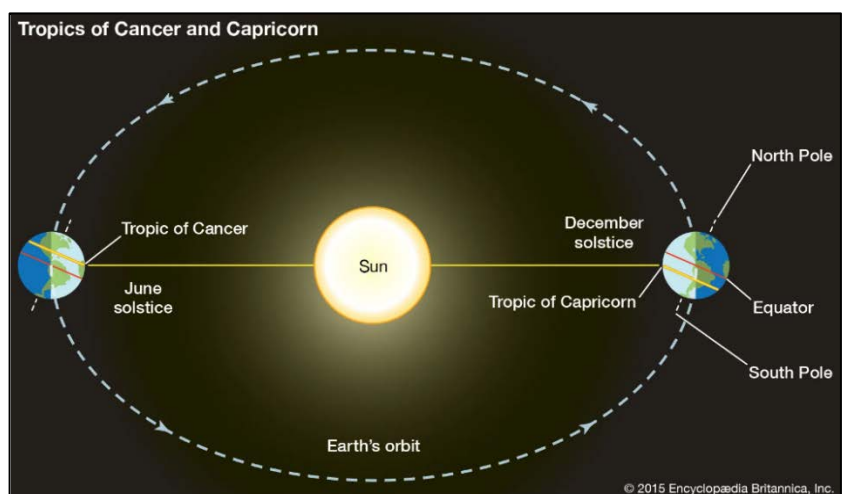
- Solstices occur due to Earth's axis of rotation being tilted about 23.4 degrees relative to Earth's orbit around the Sun.
- This tilt drives the planet's seasons, causing unequal sunlight distribution in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

➤ **Impact on Daytime:**

- The hemisphere tilted toward the Sun experiences its longest day, while the one tilted away sees its longest night.
- During the Northern Hemisphere's winter solstice (around December 22), the Southern Hemisphere experiences its summer solstice, and vice versa during the summer solstice.

➤ **Tilted Axis Effect:**

- The Northern Hemisphere spends half the year tilted toward the Sun, resulting in long summer days, and the other half tilted away, leading to shorter days.
- Winter Solstice, on December 21, marks the day when the North Pole is most tilted away from the Sun.



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- **Seasonal Changes:**
 - The Earth's tilted axis is responsible for the different seasons observed on Earth.
 - Regions near the Equator experience equal day and night lengths, while polar regions witness extreme variations.
- **Cultural Celebrations:**
 - Ancient Egyptians celebrated the birth of Horus during mid-winter.
 - In China, families come together for a special meal.
 - In the Persian region, Yalda or Shab-e-Yalda is celebrated, symbolizing the victory of light over darkness.
- **Vedic Tradition:**
 - In Vedic tradition, the northern movement of Earth on the celestial sphere is acknowledged in the Surya Siddhanta.
 - It outlines the Uttarayana, the period between Makar Sankranti and Karka Sankranti.
- Winter Solstice is a celestial event driven by Earth's axial tilt, impacting day length and seasons globally.
- Cultural celebrations and traditions around the world highlight the significance of this astronomical occurrence.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Wildlife Trust of India



Recently, the experts from the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) and the Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary (BMAD) are planning to establish feeding stations for birds at at Ennore Creek, in the aftermath of the recent oil spill from industries in Manalirastically.

About Wildlife Trust of India:

- The Wildlife Trust of India is a **non-profit nature conservation organization** that was established in **1998**.
- It is a registered charity in India (**under Section 12A of the Income Tax Act, 1961**).
- Its mission is to **protect wildlife** and its habitat, and to work for the welfare of individual wild animals.
- It collaborates with **communities** and **governments** to conserve nature, particularly endangered species and threatened habitats.
- It handles wildlife emergencies, aids law enforcement against wildlife crime, **preserves habitats**, raises conservation awareness, **promotes green livelihoods** and assists grassroots conservation.

National Human Rights Commission



Recently, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed Union Ministry of Home Affairs and six State governments to furnish information on victims of Salwa Judum and their plights.

About National Human Rights Commission:

- The National Human Rights Commission is a **statutory body**.
- It was established on **October 12, 1993**, in accordance with the **Paris Principles**.
- It is responsible for reviewing and addressing human rights **violations** and making recommendations for their protection and promotion.
- It is mandated to protect human rights as "**rights related to life, liberty and dignity** of an individual guaranteed by the **constitution** and **courts** of our country".
- It is a multi-member body including a **chairman, four members** and **four ex-officio members**.
- The **chairman and members serve for a five-year** term or until they reach the **age of 70**, whichever comes first.

R21/Matrix-M Vaccine



Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) added the R21/Matrix-M malaria vaccine, developed by Oxford University and manufactured by Serum Institute of India, to its list of prequalified vaccines.

About R21/Matrix-M Vaccine:

- The R21/Matrix-M vaccine is a **malaria vaccine** recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) to protect children from malaria in at-risk countries.
- The vaccine targets the **first form of the malaria parasite** to enter the body after a person is bitten by an infected mosquito.
- The vaccine primarily acts **against Plasmodium falciparum** and prevents malaria infection in children.
- It is the **second malaria vaccine** recommended by the WHO, following the **RTS,S/AS01** vaccine, which received a WHO recommendation in 2021.

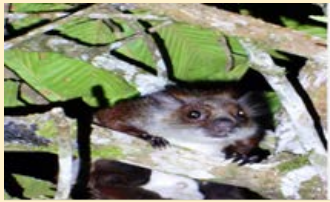
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Namdapha Flying Squirrel



Recently, the Namdapha Flying Squirrel has been found resurfaces in Arunachal Pradesh after going missing for 42 Years

About Namdapha Flying Squirrel:

- The Namdapha flying squirrel (**Biswamoyopterus Biswasi**) is a **nocturnal and arboreal flying squirrel** that is endemic to **Arunachal Pradesh**.
- The species is known from a single specimen collected in **Nam dapha National Park** in **1981**.
- It was **named after the Mesua ferra jungles** bordering the **Noa Dihing river** (a tributary of the Brahmaputra River) in Arunachal Pradesh, where it was discovered.
- It has **reddish, grizzled fur** with white above, a **pale grey crown**, an orangish patagium and white underparts.
- It is listed as **critically endangered by the IUCN**.

Place in News

Czech Republic

Recently, a day of mourning was declared in the Czech Republic following a tragic incident where a gunman claimed the lives of 14 individuals at a university in Prague.

Czech Republic (Capital: Prague)

Location: The Czech Republic is a **landlocked country** located in Central Europe.

Boundaries: The Czech Republic is bordered by **Poland** (North), and **Slovakia** (East), **Austria** (South) and **Germany** (West).

Physical Features:

- The **Krkonoše**, also known as the Giant Mountains, is a mountain range in the Czech Republic and Poland.
- The **highest peak, Snezka**, is part of the Krkonoše Mountains.
- The Czech Republic has several artificial lakes, including, **Lake Macha, Medard** and **Lake Milada**.
- The country has mostly **temperate continental and oceanic climates**.



POINTS TO PONDER

- ❖ Who is newly appointed speaker of Rajasthan assembly? - **Vasudev Devnani**
- ❖ Which airport in Bengaluru won an award at UNESCO's 2023 Prix Versailles? - **Kempegowda International Airport**
- ❖ Which bill has been passed recently by the Parliament to simplify the allotment of titles and registration of periodicals through an online system, eliminating the need for physical interaction? - **Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill**
- ❖ Which two languages were recognized by Sahitya Akademi for the annual awards outside the 22 languages mentioned in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution? - **English and Rajasthani**
- ❖ Who have been recently received the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports? - **Chirag Shetty and Satwik Sai Raj Rankireddy**

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