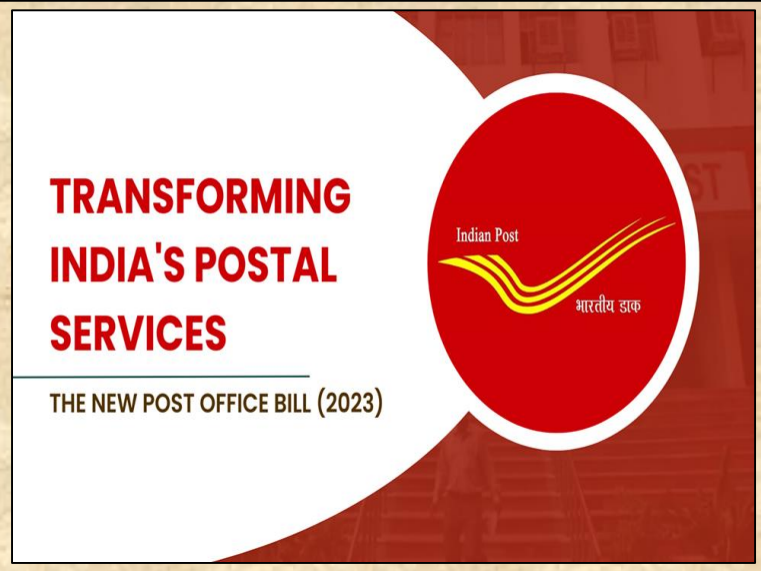
Daily Current Affairs : 18 December 2023

Post Office Bill, 2023



- After being passed in the Rajya Sabha on December 4, the Post Office Bill, 2023, was brought to the Lok Sabha for consideration on December 13.
- The new bill seeks to replace the colonial-era Indian Post Office Act of 1898 that has governed India's postal services for 125 years.

❖ Key Provisions of the Bill

- The bill aims to provide a simple legislative framework for post offices, facilitating their evolution into a network for citizen-centric services.
- The contentious provision in the bill allows the central government, through notification, to empower officers to intercept, open, or detain items for reasons related to national security, public order, emergency, or contravention of prevailing laws.
- The existing Indian Post Office Act of 1898 also provides for interception, albeit with some differences.
  - Section 26 of the Act empowered the central government, state government, or a specially authorized officer to issue a written order for the interception, detention, or disposal of any postal article or a specific class or description of postal articles.
  - This authority was granted "on the occurrence of any public emergency or in the interest of public safety or tranquillity."
  - In cases of uncertainty regarding whether an action constituted a public emergency or was in the interest of public safety, a certificate from the relevant government was necessary.
- In contrast, the new Post Office Bill, under clause 9, removes the requirement for a written order for interception.
  - The central government is now empowered to intercept, open, or detain any item without the necessity of issuing a written order.
- The proposed legislation empowers the director general of postal services to frame regulations for providing services and fix charges.
- The bill exempts the government and officers from liability related to the loss, misdelivery, delay, or damage to postal articles.
- It introduces the provision that the central government may prescribe liability with regard to services by India Post under the rules.
- Postage stamps will exclusively be issued by the post office.

Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (NCAP)



- Recently, the first round of crash testing of the cars under the Bharat NCAP has been successfully completed.

❖ About Bharat NCAP

- It is an indigenous star-rating system for crash testing cars,under which vehicles will be assigned between one to five stars, indicating their safety in a collision.
- Cars nominated by manufacturers undergo crash tests based on Automotive Industry Standard 197.
- Applies to passenger vehicles with up to 8 seats (excluding driver) and g[illegible]
- Only the base model of a variant is tested.
- It will be optional for the vehicle manufacturers to submit their cars for an assessment.
  - However, the central government can also ask the authority to select a particular variant of a model for assessment "in interest of public safety" at any of the designated crash test centres.
- **Evaluation Parameters:**
  - Assessment based on adult occupant protection, child occupant protection, and safety assist technologies.
  - Three types of tests used for assessment:
    - **Frontal offset test:** Vehicle at 64 kmph, 40% overlap into deformable barrier mimicking a crash.
    - **Side impact test**: Car impacted at 50 kmph on its side.
    - **Pole-side impact test**: Car crashed sideways into a rigid pole at 29 kmph.

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- **Objectives**
  - The objective of the programme is to help consumers make an informed decision before purchasing a car, thereby spurring demand for safer cars.

UN Security Council (UNSC)



➢ Recently, the USA vetoed a resolution of the UN Security Council that called for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas conflict in Gaza.

❖ About UNSC

- The UNSC is **one of the six principal organs** of the United Nations (UN) charged with ensuring international peace and security **established by UN charter in 1945.**
- **Recommend the admission of new UN members** to the General Assembly and approve any changes to the UN Charter.
- **Headquarter- New York.**
- **Members-**
  - **15 members:** The **five permanent** members (P5) and **ten non-permanent** members **elected for two-year terms.**
  - The United States, the Russian Federation, France, China and the United Kingdom are its members **with veto power.**
  - **India, for the 8th time, has entered the UNSC** as a non-permanent member last year (2021) and will stay on the council for two years i.e 2021-22.
  - Each year, the **General Assembly elects five non-permanent members** (out of ten in total) **for a two-year term**. The ten non-permanent seats are distributed on a regional basis.
- The council's presidency is a capacity that rotates every month among its 15 members.

- **The Veto Power in the UNSC**
  - Each of the P5 members has the power to veto a vote.
  - It was agreed by the drafters of the UN Charter (which lays down its governing principles) that if any one of the five permanent members cast a negative vote in the 15-member UNSC, the resolution would fail.
  - A member can choose to abstain though, allowing the resolution to be adopted if it obtains the minimum nine votes.

Surat Diamond Bourse



➢ Recently, the PM of India inaugurated the Surat Diamond Bourse, the world's biggest workspace in Gujarat.

❖ Key Highlights

- The complex has reportedly beaten the US's Pentagon in capacity by having 4,200 diamond trading offices.
- The Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB) has been planned to expand and shift the diamond trading business from Mumbai to Surat, the hub of cutting and polishing diamonds.
- Surat's diamond trading market is located at present in Mahidharpra Hira bazaar and Varachha Hira Bazaar, where traders make transactions standing on the streets with almost no security measures.
- A major part of the diamond trading, however, happens in Mumbai at Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), which has the amenities for international buyers.
- Mumbai has a space crunch and office real estate is pricey.
- Besides, a major chunk of the diamond traded in Mumbai is manufactured in Surat, from where local angadias carry them to Mumbai on trains, taking over 4.5 hours.

International Energy Agency (IEA)



➢ Despite reaching an all-time high in production this year, global coal demand is expected to decline by 2026, said a report by the International Energy Agency (IEA).

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❖ Key Highlights

- ❑ While this decline is expected to be due to a shift towards renewables and plateauing demand from China, India would remain the "driving force" for the fuel until that year.
- ❑ As per IEA India's coal demandrising 3.5% annually to 1,397 million tonnes (mt) in spite of an expected trebling of solar power capacity by 2026, compared to 2021, and a target of raising the share of green power to 50% by 2030.

❖ About IEA

- ❑ It is an **autonomous intergovernmental organization.**
- ❑ Established in the framework of the **Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** in **1974 in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis.**
- ❑ It mainly focuses on its **energy policies which include economic development, energy security and environmental protection.**
- ❑ IEA member countries are required to **maintain total oil stock levels equivalent to at least 90 days** of the previous year's net imports.
- ❑ **Membership- Only OECD member** states can become members of the IEA (31 Member)
- ❑ **India became an Associate member** of IEA in March 2017
- ❑ **Headquarter-** Paris
- ❑ **Publication-** World Energy Outlook (Annual)

Guru Teg Bahadur

- ➢ Recently, the Prime Minister of India recalled the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur (1621-1675) on December 17, calling the ninth Sikh Guru a beacon of courage and strength.

❖ About Guru Teg Bahadur



- ❑ **Born** in Amritsar on April 21, 1621.
- ❑ He was the **ninth of ten Gurus** of the Sikh religion. His term as Guru ran from **1665 to 1675.**
- ❑ Aurangzeb was the ruling Mughal emperor at the time.
- ❑ He is often **regarded as the 'Protector of Humanity'** (Srisht-di-Chadar) by the Sikhs.
- ❑ Guru Tegh Bahadur was **trained in martial arts, swordsmanship, and horseback riding as a kid.**
- ❑ Despite being a capable soldier with his father in several battles, **he seems to have chosen a life of renunciation and meditation.**
- ❑ He **traveled widely to spread Nanak's teachings.**
- ❑ **One hundred and fifteen of his hymns** are in **Guru Granth Sahib.**
- ❑ He founded the town of **Chak-Nanki in Punjab,** which later became a part of **Punjab's Anandpur Sahib.**
- ❑ He **opposed forcible conversions of non-Muslims to Islam.**
- ❑ In the year 1675, Guru Tegh Bahadur was **executed in Delhi under the orders of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb.**
- ❑ **Gurudwara Sis Ganj Sahib and Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib** in Delhi mark the places of execution and cremation of his body.
- ❑ Inspired by him, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, finally formed the Sikh group into a separate, formal, symbol-patterned society that became known as Khalsa (Martial).

The Ten Sikh Gurus – Lineage Chart		
The First Master	Guru Nanak	(1469 to 1539)
The Second Master	Guru Angad	(1504 to 1552)
The Third Master	Guru Amar Das	(1479 to 1574)
The Fourth Master	Guru Ram Das	(1534 to 1581)
The Fifth Master	Guru Arjan	(1563 to 1606)
The Sixth Master	Guru Hargobind	(1595 to 1644)
The Seventh Master	Guru Har Rai	(1630 to 1661)
The Eighth Master	Guru Harkishan	(1656 to 1664)
The Ninth Master	Guru Tegh Bahadur	(1621 to 1675)
The Tenth Master	Guru Gobind Singh	(1666 to 1708)

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