

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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THE TOBACCO EPIDEMIC IS GROWING IN INDIA

Context

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, organized an event on 31 May to observe World No Tobacco Day 2024.

Tobacco Menace in India

- According to an estimate in 2016-2017 after China, India has the world's highest number of tobacco consumers, nearly **26 crore**.
- A study of WHO finds that **India loses 1% of its GDP** to diseases and early deaths from tobacco use.
- Additionally, the health of more than **60 lakh people** employed in the tobacco industry is also placed at risk because of the absorption of tobacco through the skin, which can cause various diseases.

Consequences of Tobacco Consumption

- Health burden:** A 2021 study estimated that the country incurred a loss exceeding ₹1.7 lakh crore as a result of tobacco's effects on the health of its consumers in the fiscal year 2017-2018.
- Environment degradation:** It is a highly erosive crop that rapidly depletes soil nutrients. This requires more fertilizers to be used which further worsens soil quality.
- Economic burden:** Tobacco-related illnesses lead to absenteeism, reduced productivity, and premature deaths in the workforce, impacting economic output.
 - Cleaning up tobacco waste has been estimated to cost close to ₹6,367 crore a year.

Government Measures

- Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC):** India is one of the **168** signatories of the FCTC, launched by WHO in 2005. It aims to reduce tobacco usage worldwide by helping countries develop demand and supply reduction strategies.
- The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply, and Distribution) Act (COTPA) 2003** has 33 sections governing the production, advertisement, distribution, and consumption of tobacco.

- The National Tobacco Control Program (NTCP):** India launched NTCP in 2007. It is designed to improve the implementation of COTPA and FCTC, improve awareness about the harms of tobacco use, and help people quit it.
- Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Bill, 2019:** It prohibits production, manufacture, import, export, transport, sale, distribution, storage and advertisement of e-cigarettes.
- Tobacco taxation,** a globally accepted method to effectively control tobacco use, is also applied in India.

Challenges in tobacco control measures in India

- Inadequate Penalties:** The fines for violating COTPA regulations have not been updated since 2003, with a maximum fine of only ₹5,000 for first-time packaging violations.
- Non-compliance with Packaging Guidelines:** Smokeless tobacco products often do not adhere to COTPA (Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act) packaging guidelines.
- Ambiguity in COTPA on Indirect Ads:** While direct advertisements are banned, the law is unclear on indirect advertisements, allowing surrogate ads (e.g., using elaichi to promote tobacco brands).
- Ineffectiveness of NTCP:** In 2018 a study found no significant difference in bidi or cigarette consumption between districts covered by the National Tobacco Control Program (NTCP) and those not covered.
- Evasion Tactics:** Tobacco companies evade taxes by purchasing in lower tax jurisdictions and engaging in illegal activities like smuggling, illicit manufacturing, and counterfeiting.
- Affordability of Tobacco:** Low tobacco taxes, which have not kept pace with income rises, have made tobacco products more affordable over the years.
- Government and Industry Ties:** Engagement of government officials with the tobacco industry and the Central government's 7.8% stake in ITC Ltd., India's largest tobacco company, exemplify conflicts of interest.

Way Ahead

- COTPA, PECA, and NTCP provide a strong framework to successfully control tobacco production and use in India. But they **need to be implemented more stringently**.

- In addition, the **tax on tobacco products also needs to be increased** in line with the recommendations of the FCTC, inflation, and GDP growth.
- There is also a **need for up-to-date data** to understand trends in tobacco use to tackle the tobacco industry, which modifies its sales strategies based on readily available sales trends.

Source: TH

INDIA-JAPAN JOINT WORKING GROUP ON COUNTER TERRORISM

Context

The 6th Meeting of the [India-Japan](#) Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism was held in New Delhi.

About

- Both sides exchanged views on the terrorist threats in their respective regions, including **State-sponsored cross-border terrorism** in the Asian region.
- The two sides assessed **counter terrorism challenges**, including the use of new and emerging technologies by terrorists, misuse of the internet for terrorist purposes, radicalisation and terror financing.
 - ♦ Countering terror financing, organized crime and narco-terror networks were also discussed in the meeting.
- Both sides emphasized the importance of **strengthening counter-terrorism cooperation** through exchanging information, capacity building, training programs & exercises, and cooperation at the multilateral fora, such as the **United Nations, Financial Action Task Force, and QUAD**.

What is Terrorism?

- Terrorism encompasses a **range of complex threats**: organized terrorism in conflict zones, foreign terrorist fighters, radicalized 'lone wolves', and attacks using chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive materials.
- It typically involves the **deliberate targeting of civilians** and it aims **to create a sense of terror**.
- It's a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, **often rooted in socio-political grievances, extremism, or radical ideologies**.

Challenges in Tackling Terrorism

- **Use of Evolving Techniques**: Terrorist groups continuously evolve their tactics, techniques, and procedures to evade detection and carry out attacks.
 - ♦ There has been notable increase in use of drones for cross-border trafficking of arms and drugs as well as launching terror attacks.
- **Transnational Nature**: Terrorism often transcends national borders, making it difficult for individual nations to address the threat effectively.
 - ♦ **Root Causes**: Addressing the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty, inequality, political grievances, and extremist ideologies, requires long-term strategies that go beyond traditional security measures.
- **Civil Liberties and Human Rights Concerns**: Balancing security measures with the protection of civil liberties and human rights presents a significant challenge.
 - ♦ Measures such as surveillance, detention without trial, and restrictions on freedom of speech raise ethical concerns.
- **Cyberterrorism**: The internet provides a platform for terrorist propaganda, recruitment, and coordination.
 - ♦ Addressing online radicalization and countering terrorist narratives in cyberspace requires collaboration between governments, tech companies, and civil society organizations.
- **Financing and Resources**: Tracking and disrupting terrorist financing networks can be challenging due to the use of informal channels, money laundering techniques, and legitimate financial institutions.
- **Lone Actors**: The rise of homegrown terrorists and lone actors presents a challenge for counterterrorism efforts.
 - ♦ These individuals may not have direct connections to established terrorist groups, making them harder to detect and prevent.

Global Measures Taken to Combat Terrorism

- **United Nations Counterterrorism Framework**: The UN Security Council has adopted several resolutions that provide a legal framework for counterterrorism actions, including measures to prevent terrorist financing, stem the flow of foreign fighters, and strengthen border security.

- **Financial Action Task Force (FATF):** FATF is an intergovernmental organization that sets standards and promotes policies to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.
 - ♦ Member countries implement FATF recommendations to strengthen their anti-money laundering and counterterrorism financing regimes.
- **Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF):** GCTF is a multilateral forum that facilitates cooperation and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen counterterrorism efforts worldwide.
- **Intelligence Sharing and Cooperation:** Bilateral and multilateral intelligence-sharing agreements enable countries to exchange information on terrorist threats, suspects, and activities.

India's policy on tackling Terrorism

- **Amendment in UAPA :** The Central Government amended the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in August 2019 to include the provision of designating an individual as terrorist. Prior to this amendment, only organizations could be designated as terrorist organization.
- **Policy of Zero-Tolerance Against Terrorism:** India calls for zero-tolerance against terrorism and focuses on developing a common strategy to curb it.
- **National Investigation Agency:** It is India's counter-terrorist task force and is empowered to deal with terror-related crimes across states without special permission from the states.
 - ♦ It was established after the **2008 Mumbai terror attack**.
- **Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System:** It improves the capability of Border Security Force (BSF) in detecting and controlling the cross border crimes like illegal infiltration, smuggling of contraband goods, human trafficking and cross border terrorism, etc.
- **India's action plan at UNSC:** In 2021, at the 20th anniversary of the UN Security Council (UNSC) **Resolution 1373**, India presented an eight-point action plan to deal with the scourge of terrorism.

Conclusion

- **Countering radicalization and addressing socio-economic and political grievances** are essential components of comprehensive counterterrorism efforts.

- **Collaboration on cybersecurity** is essential for combating cyberterrorism and preventing terrorist use of the internet for recruitment and propaganda.

Source: **MEA**

CLIMATE FINANCE

Context

- As per the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**, **Developed countries provided and mobilised more than \$100 billion** in climate finance to developing countries in 2022.

About

- According to the report, **\$115.9 billion** was allocated to developing countries to support climate action in 2022.
- The public climate finance, drawn from bilateral (countries) and multilateral sources (like World Bank) accounted for close to **80 percent** of the total financial flow in 2022.
- This figure increased from **\$38 billion in 2013 to \$91.6 billion in 2022**.
- Most climate finance went to **mitigation**.
- **Lower-income countries** accounted for **64 percent of total public climate finance provided as grants**, while for lower-middle-income countries, grants made up only **13 percent of the share**.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

- It is an international organization that came into force in **1961**, and currently has **38 member countries**. **India is not a member**.
- **Objective:** To promote policies that improve economic and social well-being, fostering economic growth, contributing to world trade, and enhancing the living standards of people in member countries.
- **Headquarters:** Paris, France.

What is Climate Finance?

- Climate finance refers to **large-scale investments** required for actions aiming to **mitigate or adapt** to the consequences of climate change.
- **Adaptation:** It involves anticipating the adverse effects of climate change and taking appropriate action to prevent or minimise the damage they can cause.

- **Mitigation:** It involves reducing the emission of greenhouse gases (GHG) into the atmosphere so that impacts of climate change are less severe.
- **Examples of climate finance** : It include grants provided by multilateral funds, market-based and concessional loans from financial institutions, sovereign green bonds issued by national governments, and resources mobilized through carbon trading and carbon taxes.

Importance

- Countries have put forward ambitious targets to reduce GHG emissions and increase their resilience to climate change impacts through their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), Long-term Climate Strategies (LTS), and National Adaptation Plans (NAP)
- However, a recent analysis by UNDP shows that **finance remains a fundamental barrier to the acceleration of climate action** in developing countries.
 - ♦ Climate action requires a large amount of investment and many lower- and middle-income nations are simultaneously managing debt distress and multi-dimensional crises.
- Climate finance is critical to addressing climate change because of the large-scale investments that are needed to transition to a low-carbon global economy

Progress and Developments

- The **Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement** call for financial assistance from Parties with more financial resources to those that are less endowed and more vulnerable.
- Developing countries have argued that **developed nations** should provide financial assistance to tackle climate change because it was due to the (now) rich world's **emissions over the last 150 years** that caused the climate problem in the first place.

The 1994 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) required high-income countries to provide climate finance to the developing world.

- ♦ In **2009**, developed countries pledged to provide **\$100 billion** a year to developing countries by 2020.
- ♦ In 2010, the **Green Climate Fund (GCF)** was established as a key delivery mechanism.

- ♦ The 2015 Paris Agreement reinforced this target, and extended it to **2025**.

New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG)

- In 2015, the financial assistance goal of collective mobilisation of \$100 billion by developed countries was extended to 2025.
- It was also decided that year that a new climate finance goal to succeed this one would have to be decided prior to 2025, amounting to at least **\$100 billion per year**, and 'taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries'.
 - ♦ This is the NCQG, also called the **post-2025 climate finance goal / new goal**.
- **Need of NCQG**
 - ♦ The figure of \$100 billion is inadequate for the climate finance needs of developing countries, which, by varying estimates, range from \$1-2.4 trillion per year until 2030.
 - ♦ The goal of \$100 billion was not a negotiated one – it was a political one.

India's Stand

- India is the only country that has put forth a figure in this round of submissions, **\$1 tn per year**, to be considered the quantum of money that developed countries must provide to developing countries as part of the new goal.
- For this, India has suggested a **timeframe of 10 years**, with separate annual mobilisation targets for each five year period to be in line with the cycles of **updating the Nationally Determined Contributions**.

The Road Ahead

- Developed countries have focused more on who should contribute and on bringing the need to align all financial flows into the conversation.
- These distinctions in approach are reflective of the **stark difference between the needs and priorities** of countries who have contributed to and are impacted by the climate crisis in very different ways.
- The need to **scrutinise the process** to ensure it truly considers the principles of **equity and justice** in its implementation remains significant.

- It is important for all governments and stakeholders to understand and assess the financial needs of developing countries, as well as to understand how these financial resources can be mobilized.
- Provision of resources should also aim to achieve a balance between adaptation and mitigation.

Source: DTE

INDIA TO SECURE COKING COAL AND CRITICAL MINERALS FROM MONGOLIA

Context

India looks to advance into [Mongolia](#) to secure **coking coal and critical minerals like copper and rare earth elements**.

About

- Joint working groups have been set up with the Mongolian embassy **to explore the possibility of collaborating** with the land-locked Central Asian nation.
- However, the **evacuation of minerals continues to be an area of concern**.
- India is **unwilling to route its evacuation process through China**, alternative routes through Russia are being explored.

What are Critical Minerals?

- Critical minerals are elements that are the **building blocks of essential modern-day technologies**, and are at risk of supply chain disruptions.
 - ♦ The lack of availability of these minerals or the concentration of extraction or processing in a few geographical locations could potentially lead to **“supply chain vulnerabilities and even disruption of supplies”**.

Applications of Critical Minerals

- **Clean technologies initiatives** such as zero-emission vehicles, wind turbines, solar panels etc.
 - ♦ Critical minerals such as Cadmium, Cobalt, Gallium, Indium, Selenium and Vanadium and have uses in **batteries, semiconductors, solar panels**, etc.
- **Advanced manufacturing inputs and materials** such as defense applications, permanent magnets, ceramics.

- ♦ Minerals like Beryllium, Titanium, Tungsten, Tantalum, etc. have usage in new technologies, electronics and defense equipment.
- **Platinum Group Metals (PGMs)** are used in medical devices, cancer treatment drugs, and dental materials.

List of Critical Minerals

- **Different countries have their own unique lists** of critical minerals based on their specific circumstances and priorities.
- **A total of 30 minerals were found to be most critical for India**, out of which two are critical as fertilizer minerals: Antimony, Beryllium, Bismuth, Cobalt, Copper, Gallium, Germanium, Graphite, Hafnium, Indium, Lithium, Molybdenum, Niobium, Nickel, PGE, Phosphorous, Potash, REE, Rhenium, Silicon, Strontium, Tantalum, Tellurium, Tin, Titanium, Tungsten, Vanadium, Zirconium, Selenium and Cadmium.

Minerals Security Partnership

- MSP is a strategic grouping of **15 member states** including Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, the United Kingdom, US, the European Union, Italy, Norway, Estonia and India.
- It aims to **catalyse public and private investment** in critical mineral supply chains globally.
- India is already a member of the **Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development**, which supports the advancement of good mining governance.

Coking Coal

- Coking coal, also known as **metallurgical coal or “met coal,”** is a type of coal that is used in the **steelmaking process**.
- It's **essential in the production of coke**, a key component in the steelmaking process.
- Coking coal needs to have **specific properties such as high carbon content, low sulfur and phosphorus content**, and strong coking properties to be suitable for steelmaking.
- India is dependent on coking coal **imports from Australia, the U.S. and Russia**.

Way Ahead

- India is collaborating with countries such as Africa, Argentina, Australia and Mongolia to secure its energy requirements.
- Critical minerals have become essential for economic development and national security in the country.
- Minerals such as Lithium, Cobalt etc. have gained significance in view of India's commitment towards energy transition and achieving net-zero emission by 2070.

Source: TH

WATER STORAGE AT JUST 23% IN INDIA'S KEY RESERVOIRS

In News

Water storage in India's key reservoirs was down to **just 23 per cent of their total capacity** amid a relentless heatwave in many parts of the country,

Present Status of Water storage

- As per data released by Central Water Commission (CWC) for 150 major reservoirs.
 - ♦ At least eight reservoirs had **zero storage**. These were in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh (AP), and Uttarakhand.
 - ♦ There were four others which had less than 10 per cent storage — in the states of AP, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Karnataka.
- The southern region — consisting of AP, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu — was the most affected.
- In the northern, eastern, and central region, available storage was just 30 per cent, 28 per cent, and 29.1 percent respectively of the total capacities of reservoirs.
 - ♦ Storage in the Ganga river basin was just 31.99 per cent of its capacity.

Causes

- The overall higher decline in reservoirs across India is attributed below average monsoon rainfall last year. Less monsoon rains means less storage in these reservoir during the rainy season and more withdrawal of water during the post-monsoon phase, both for drinking and irrigation purposes,

- The depleting water level is attributed to lower rainfall caused by the El Nino weather phenomenon resulting in insufficient rainfall in India, and leading to water scarcity in some regions, besides droughts and prolonged dry periods across Asia.

Impacts

- The river systems in India provide water for irrigation, drinking and domestic consumption as well as cheap transportation and electricity.
- Water shortage in the river basins gravely affects the socio-economic conditions, livelihoods and agricultural activity of the regions, which are dependent on the rivers for water supply.
- The low water availability in reservoirs can affect the yields of summer crops (sown between the Rabi and Kharif seasons).

Steps

- **Water resources projects** are planned, funded, executed and maintained by the State Governments themselves as per their own resources and priorities.
- In order to supplement the efforts of the State Governments, the Government of **India provides technical and financial assistance** to encourage sustainable development and efficient management of water resources through various schemes and programmes.
- Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater-2020 has been prepared by CGWB in consultation with States/UTs which is a macro level plan indicating various structures for the different terrain conditions of the country.
- Prime Minister of India launched the "**Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain**" (JSA:CTR)

Way Forward

- Farmers are hopeful about the forecast of an 'above normal' southwest monsoon so that it brings enough rains for them to successfully undertake sowing of the Kharif crop.
- Due to substantial variation in temporal and spatial distribution of rainfall in India, there is a need for adequate storage of water in the Country.

Source: DTE

FACTS IN NEWS

NELSON MANDELA AWARD FOR HEALTH PROMOTION FOR 2024

In News

The National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) has been awarded the Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion for 2024

About the award

- The Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion, established by World Health Organization (WHO) in 2019
- It recognizes individuals, institutions and/or governmental or non-governmental organizations that have demonstrated remarkable contributions to health promotion.

Do you know ?

- India has made major strides in the field of mental health in recent times. Mental Health Units are supported in almost all districts of the country today through the National Health Mission.
- India's national tele mental health helpline, Tele MANAS, which was launched on 10th Oct 2022 also recently achieved the landmark of having handled 10 lakh calls.

NEXT-GENERATION OFFSHORE PATROL VESSEL (NGOPV)

In News

Recently, Construction commenced on the first Next-Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (NGOPV) for the Indian Coast Guard

About NGOPV

- The NGOPVs, designed to meet the evolving challenges of maritime security, are equipped with state-of-the-art machinery and equipment.
- Powered by two diesel engines, these vessels are capable of achieving a maximum continuous speed of 23 knots and covering a distance of up to 5,000 nautical miles.
- They will also have integral twin-engine helicopter facilities and staging for heavy helicopters, enabling swift and effective aerial surveillance and response capabilities.

- The first vessel is scheduled for delivery by May 2027 under a ₹1,614.89 crore contract for six vessels signed by the Defence Ministry with MDL in December 2023.

Source: TH

AHILYABAI HOLKAR

Context

- Recently, the birth anniversary of revolutionary queen Ahilyabai Ahilyabai Holkar was observed.

About Ahilyabai Holkar (1725 - 1795)

- **Early Life:** Born in 1725 to a Dhangar/Gadariya family in present Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra.
- After the demise of her husband Khande Rao Holkar in the **Battle of Kumbher** in 1754 and later on the demise of her father-in-law and son, Ahilyabai herself undertook the affairs of the **Holkar Dynasty in Malwa**.
- The word **Punyashlok** is used behind her name.
 - ♦ Punyashlok is the ruler who frees the people from all kinds of deprivations.

Administration

- During her reign of till 1795, she ensured **stability and peace in Malwa** at a time when the whole of Central India was facing a power struggle.
- Ahilyabai's reign was characterised by **great governance**, which fostered social harmony.
- Recognizing her limitations as a woman and a widow, she **appointed Tukoji Holkar**, a trusted soldier, as the **commander of her army**, and defended the Malwa state against intruders and personally led armies into battle.

Malwa Region

- Malwa is a historical region of **west-central India** which at present includes districts of **western Madhya Pradesh** and parts of **south-eastern Rajasthan**.
- Geologically, the Malwa Plateau generally refers to the **volcanic upland north of the Vindhya Range**.

Development of Indore and Maheshwar

- Under Ahilyabai's reign, **Indore** transformed into a prosperous **trading town**.
- She established **her own capital at Maheshwar (in Madhya Pradesh)**, situated on the **banks of the Narmada River**.

- Under Holkar, the city of Maheshwar became a **literary, musical, artistic and industrial centre**.
- She helped establish a textile industry there, which is now home to the famous **Maheshwari sarees**.

Architectural Contributions

- Ahilyabai was a patron of Hindu temples and dharamshalas, and built hundreds of temples across her region.
- Her devotion led to the **restoration of jyotirlingas (sacred Shiva shrines)** across India, leaving a lasting impact on the architectural expression of Hinduism.
- She **refurbished** and reconsecrated several sacred pilgrimage sites, including **Kashi (Varanasi), Gaya, and Somnath**.
- To protect these temples from attacks and **iconoclasm**, she devised a clever **strategy: installing idols in secret shrines beneath the temple structures**, adding an extra layer of security.

Source: IE

STATUTORY BAIL

Context

- Recently, the Delhi High Court granted statutory bail to a JNU scholar and student activist in connection with a communal riots case involving allegations of sedition.

About the Statutory Bail

- It is a legal provision that **allows an undertrial to be released from custody** based on specific conditions.
 - ♦ It is a right granted to an accused, **regardless of the nature of the crime**.
 - ♦ It ensures that an undertrial is not detained indefinitely while awaiting trial.

Legal Framework

- The provision of **statutory bail** is outlined in **Section 436A of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)**.
- It was **introduced through an amendment in 2005** to address the issue of rising undertrials in Indian prisons.

Eligibility Criteria

- An undertrial becomes eligible for statutory bail if they have been in custody for more than half of the maximum period of imprisonment prescribed for the offence.
- The calculation excludes cases where the death penalty is a possible punishment.

Release Conditions

- The undertrial can be released on bail upon their **personal bond, with or without sureties**.
- If the court denies statutory bail, it must provide **written reasons for the refusal**.

Exclusions

- Statutory bail **does not apply** to offences where the **death penalty** is a potential punishment.
- Any delay caused by the undertrial themselves in legal proceedings is excluded from the detention period calculation.

Bail Provisions in India

- CrPC (1973) governs the terms of the 'Bail in India'.
- Though the CrPC **does not define 'bail'**, it expressly mentions phrases '**bailable offence**' and '**non-bailable offence**'.

Other Types of Bail

- **Interim Bail:** It is a **temporary bail** granted for a **shorter time period** during which the court can call the documents to make a final decision on the regular or anticipatory bail application.
 - ♦ It is granted **based on the individual facts of each case**.
- **Regular Bail:** A regular bail is basically the release of an accused from custody to ensure his presence at the trial.
- **Anticipatory Bail:** It is a type of bail that is given to someone who is in anticipation of getting arrested for a non-bailable offence by the police.

Source: IE

EXIT POLLS

Context

- The exit polls are expected to begin as soon as the last vote is cast, of the seven-phase Lok Sabha elections 2024.

What are Exit polls?

- Exit polls give **estimates about how people voted** in an election.
- They are arrived at on the basis of interviews with **voters right after they exit** the polling stations, as well as other calculations related to voter data.
- Normally, exit polls are **released on the last day of voting**, as agencies conducting such polls are mandated by the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** to wait until polling has been completed in all phases.
 - ◆ This is to avoid influencing voters who are yet to vote.

The basis of an exit poll

- The science of surveys, which includes exit polls, works on the assumption that data were collected after interviewing a large number of respondents using a **structured questionnaire**, whether over the telephone or face-to-face.
- It began back in **1957** during the second Lok Sabha elections when the Indian Institute of Public Opinion conducted a poll.

Source: IE

FELONY CRIMES

Context

- Donald Trump became the first former American President to be convicted of **felony crimes**.

About

- A New York jury found him guilty of all 34 charges in a scheme to illegally influence the 2016 election through a hush money payment to a porn actor.

What are felony crimes?

- Any offense punishable by death or imprisonment for more than one year is called a **felony**.
- They are the most serious crimes.
- Within the American criminal justice system, crimes are generally categorized as **infractions, misdemeanors, or felonies**, based on the perceived severity of the offense.
 - ◆ Felonies can include a wide range of offenses, such as murder, rape, robbery, burglary, arson, kidnapping, drug trafficking, and white-collar crimes like embezzlement or fraud.

Source: TH

POTENCY TEST

Context

- The Special Investigation Team (SIT) which is investigating sexual assault allegations against a Member of Parliament is likely to **have him take medical tests, including a potency test**.

About Potency Test

- It is conducted to examine **whether a male has the capacity to develop or maintain a penile erection** to be able to perform a sexual act.
- This **medical ‘evidence’** is brought in cases involving sexual assault, divorce, and even in paternity suits.
- **Section 53 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)** allows examination of “blood, blood-stains, semen, swabs in case of sexual offences on the accused for investigation.
- In sexual assault cases, the prosecution brings a **potency test report** to the court to counter any potential defence from the accused **that he is incapable of sexual intercourse**.
 - ◆ Such a defence, however, is far from foolproof.
 - ◆ **Potency is not permanent**, and can vary depending on several physiological and psychological factors.
- After the **2013 criminal law amendments**, the definition of rape was expanded.
 - ◆ Now, under the law, rape includes penetration of “any object”, “mouth” to “any part of body” of a woman.
 - ◆ A non-peno-vaginal contact **does not necessarily need a test of potency at all**.

Source: IE

OPERATION BLUE STAR

Context

- June 1 is the 40th anniversary of the beginning of Operation Blue Star.

About

- Operation Blue Star was an Indian Armed Forces operation carried out between **1 and 10 June 1984**.
- Punjab witnessed insurgency which began in the late 1970s and reached its peak in the first half of the 1980s.

- This insurgency, also known as the **Khalistan movement**, was led by **Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale** for the establishment of an independent Sikh state called 'Khalistan'.
- In 1983, Bhindranwale along with his followers occupied and fortified the **Sikh shrine Akal Takht inside the Golden Temple Complex** from which he led the insurgency campaign.
- To counter escalating violence, on June 6, 1984, Indira Gandhi government ordered a military action, known as '**Operation Blue Star**' into the Golden temple in order to remove militants from the Golden Temple complex.

Source: IE

