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CURRENT AFFAIRS



Date - 4 June 2022

Arms control law



- Recently there were two incidents of mass shootings in the United States during the last 11 days, in which more than 30 people including elementary school children were killed.
- A total of 24,576 murders were recorded in the US in the year 2020, of which about 79%, (19,384) deaths were due to shootings.
- Arms regulation in the US is done through a shared authority existing between federal, state, and local governments.
- The US Supreme Court previously held that the Second Amendment to the US Constitution protects the right to “keep and

bear a weapon” in self-defense, while federal courts have argued for possible violations by federal, state and local The rules constrain this right.

Arms Control Laws in India:

Arms Act, 1959:

- It aims to cover all aspects related to the acquisition, possession, manufacture, sale, import, export and transport of arms and ammunition in India.

Qualifications for obtaining a gun license in India:

- The minimum age limit for obtaining a gun license in India is 21 years.
- The applicant must not have been convicted of any offense involving violence or morality, of ‘unsound mind’, or endangering public safety and peace, for five years prior to the application.
- Property qualification is not a criterion for obtaining a gun license.
- On receipt of an application the Licensing Authority (i.e., Ministry of Home Affairs) asks the Officer-in-Charge of the nearest Police Station to submit a report about the applicant after thorough investigation within the stipulated time.

Other Features of the Act:

- It defines 'prohibited weapons' as weapons that release either any harmful liquid or gas, or weapons that require the trigger to be pressed
- It allows the use of smoothbore guns with barrels of at least 20 inches for crop protection or sport.
- No entity is permitted to sell or transfer a gun that does not bear the manufacturer's name, manufacturer's number or any other visible seal or identification mark.

Amendment in Arms Act:

- The Arms Act, as amended in 2019, can reduce the number of guns a person can purchase from 3 to 2.
- The validity of the license has been increased to 5 years from the present 3 years.
- It also lists specific provisions to reduce the use of licensed weapons to ensure social harmony.

Punishment:

- Imprisonment has been increased from 7 to 14 years along with fine for the offense of possession, possession or carrying of prohibited ammunition without a licence.
- It prohibits conversion of unlicensed guns from one class to another.

- Unlawful manufacture, sale and transfer shall be punishable with imprisonment of not less than seven years, which may extend to imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine.

Swadeep Kumar

Telangana Foundation Day



- The Governor of Telangana greeted the people of the state on Telangana Foundation Day (June 2).

Introduction:

- On 2 June 2014, the 29th state of Telangana was carved out of the north-western part of Andhra Pradesh.
- The Andhra State Act (1953) separated the Telugu-speaking regions from the Madras State (now Tamil Nadu) to form the first linguistic state in India, known as the State of Andhra.

- Under the States Reorganization Act (1956), the Telugu speaking areas of Hyderabad State were merged with Andhra State to form a larger Andhra Pradesh State.
- The Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act (2014) bifurcated Andhra Pradesh into two separate states, (i.e. Andhra Pradesh (Remaining) and Telangana).
- **Capital:** Hyderabad

Boundaries:

- Telangana is surrounded by Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh in the north, Karnataka in the west and Andhra Pradesh in the south and east directions.

Four symbols of Telangana:

- **State Bird** – Palpitta (Indian Roller or Blue Jay).
- **State Animal** – Jinka (Deer).
- **State Tree** – Jammi Chettu (Prosopis cinerea).
- **State Flower** – Tangedu (Tanner Cassia).

Popular festivals:

- Hindu festivals like Ugadi, Shri Ram Navami, Bonalu, Vinayaka Chaturthi, Dussehra, Deepawali, Sankranti, Holi, Mahashivratri are celebrated with pomp, gaiety and devotion.
- Dussehra is the main festival along with 'Peda Panduga'.

Global recognition:

- The Ramappa temple in Mulugu district presents the distinctive style of the Kakatiyas. The foundation of this temple is “Sandbox Technique”. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Sadarmat Anicut across river Godavari in Nirmal district and Pedda Cheruvu River in Kamareddy district are included in the ICID Register of Heritage Irrigation Structures.

National Park:

- Kasu Brahmananda Reddy National Park
- Mahavir Harina Vanasthali National Park
- Mrigavani National Park

Wildlife Sanctuary:

- Kinnarsani Wildlife Sanctuary
- Ethurnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary
- Kawal Tiger Reserve
- Lanja Madugu Shivaram Wildlife Sanctuary
- Manjeera Crocodile Wildlife Sanctuary
- Nagarjuna Sagar-Srisailam Wildlife Sanctuary
- Pakhal Wildlife Sanctuary
- Pocharam Wildlife Sanctuary
- Pranhita Wildlife Sanctuary

Other Initiatives:

- Telangana has approved the use of i-drone, a drone-based vaccine delivery model developed by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), to deliver vaccines to remote areas.

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Taliban government and India



- For the first time since the Taliban's occupation of Afghanistan, India has sent an official delegation led by Joint Secretary 'JP Singh' in the Ministry of External Affairs to Afghanistan.

Areas of discussion:

- restarting stalled infrastructure projects,
- activating diplomatic relations, and
- Resumption of the issue of visas for Afghan students and patients.

Aid given by India to Afghanistan so far:

- In terms of humanitarian aid, India has so far sent 20,000 metric tonnes (MT) of wheat, 13 tonnes of medicines, 500,000 doses of COVID vaccines and winter clothing to the Afghan people.
- This aid has been distributed through international organizations like United Nations, World Health Organisation, World Food Program and UNICEF, because India did not have people in Afghanistan to distribute this aid material.

India's stand on Afghanistan after Taliban capture:

- 'Resolution 2593' was adopted by the 'United Nations Security Council' (UNSC) headed by India. The resolution states that the territory of Afghanistan shall not be used to threaten any country or to harbor terrorists.
- India participated in the United Nations High-Level Meeting on the 'Humanitarian Situation in Afghanistan' held in September. In this meeting, India sought normalization of the regular commercial operations of 'Kabul Airport', to help in the flow of relief material to the Afghans.
- India hosted the 'Delhi Regional Security Dialogue' on Afghanistan held in November 2021.

Related matter:

- The Taliban has established complete control over Afghanistan. Since then, people in the country have no jobs and no means of income. More than 22 million Afghans faced food insecurity this winter, and climate change-induced droughts added to their woes. All these conditions are forcing Afghans to choose between fleeing the country or starvation.

Significance of Afghan stability:

- The effect of the restoration of Taliban in Afghanistan can spread to its neighboring Central Asian countries like Tajikistan, Uzbekistan etc.
- Resurgence of Taliban will revive 'insurgency' in this region and this area can become a safe haven for 'Lashkar-e-Taiba', ISIS etc.
- A civil war in Afghanistan would lead to a refugee crisis in Central Asia and beyond.
- Afghanistan's stability will allow Central Asian countries to access ports located in the Indian Ocean region – by the shortest-distance route.
- Afghanistan is an important link for regional trade and culturally, acting as a bridge between Central-Asia and the rest of the world.

Why is it important for India to establish contact with the Taliban?

- The Taliban now have a significant presence in Afghanistan.
- India has already invested heavily in Afghanistan. To safeguard its \$3 billion assets, India should establish contact with all parties in Afghanistan.
- Taliban forging deeper state ties with Pakistan would not be in India's interest.
- If India does not establish contacts now, Russia, Iran, Pakistan and China will emerge as political and geopolitical fortune-tellers of Afghanistan, which will certainly be detrimental to Indian interests.
- The US has announced the formation of a "Quad" in the form of 'America-Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan', surprising everyone on regional-connections – which does not include India.
- India's attempt to trade with Afghanistan through the Chabahar port to boost its economy is in jeopardy.

Time Requirement:

- There is an urgent need to work collectively to protect the Afghan civilians by stopping the violence perpetrated by the Taliban.
- Afghanistan should be given adequate place in Central Asian organization like Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

- US, Iran, China and Russia should actively involve India to maintain stability in Afghanistan.
- Consolidated action should be taken when refugee crisis arises.
- India should establish contacts with Taliban to maintain peace with immediate neighbours.

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50 years of the Stockholm Convention



- Stockholm+50 is being held in Stockholm, Sweden. It is a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the 1972 United Nations (UN) Conference on the Human Environment (also known as the Stockholm Conference).
- This international meeting is being organized by the United Nations General Assembly.
- It is being held at a time when the world is still facing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and waste, loss of nature and biodiversity, among other issues, 50 years after the

Stockholm Declaration. It is a threat to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

- A sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will also be one of the agenda points.

About Stockholm Conference:

- The 'United Nations Conference on the Human Environment' was held in Stockholm, Sweden from 5 June to 16 June 1972.
- It was the first such worldwide conference on Earth's environment, and its theme was 'Only One Earth'.
- The conference culminated in the Stockholm Declaration, which included environmental principles and an action plan with recommendations for environmental policy.

The conference had three dimensions:

- The participating countries agreed not to "harm each other's environment or areas outside their national jurisdiction".
- An action plan to study the threat to the Earth's environment was prepared.
- An international body named 'United Nations Environment Program' (UNEP) was established to establish cooperation between countries.

Significance and Outcome of Stockholm Conference:

- Till the year 1972, there was no 'Environment Ministry' in any country in the world.
- Representatives of 'Norway' returned from the conference to 'establish a ministry for the environment'.
- India established its 'Ministry of Environment and Forests' in 1985.

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