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cVIGIL app of Election Commission of India

Why in News?

- cVIGIL is a mobile application developed by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to enable citizens to report violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during elections. C-Vigil is part of ECI's steps to leverage digital tech to ensure free, fair and inducement-free polls.



More About the News

- The cVIGIL app has been praised for its simplicity, ease of use, authenticity, and user secrecy. It has also been credited with helping to increase the number of MCC violations reported during elections.
- The cVIGIL app of Election Commission of India has become an effective tool in the hands of people to flag election code violations.
- Since the announcement of General Elections 2024, over 79,000 complaints have been received as of today. Over 99% complaints have been resolved and close to

89% of these complaints have been resolved within 100 minutes. Speed and transparency are the cornerstones of cVIGIL app.

- cVIGIL app marks a significant leap forward in electoral oversight and reducing campaign clutter.
- It may be recalled that in the press conference for the announcement of the General Elections 2024, Chief Election Commissioner Shri Rajiv Kumar had urged citizens to be vigilant and use the app to report model code of conduct violations and distribution of any kind of inducements to voters.
- cVigil is user-friendly and easy to operate application, which connects vigilant citizens with the District Control Room, Returning Officer and Flying Squads Teams.
- By using this app, the citizens can immediately report on incidents of political misconduct within minutes and without having to rush to the office of the returning officer. As soon as the complaint is sent on the cVigil app, the complainant will receive a unique ID through which the person will be able to track the complaint on their mobile.
- The app automatically enables a geo-tagging feature as soon as the user switches on their camera in the cVIGIL to report a violation. This means that flying squads could know the precise location of a reported violation, and the image captured by citizens could be used as evidence in the court of law.
- The app is one amongst the armoury of Apps built by the Commission to leverage technology and facilitate voters and political parties.

Indian Navy Rescues 23 Pakistani Nationals From Somali Pirates In Arabian Sea

Why in the News?

- Indian Navy rescued 23 Pakistani nationals from Somali pirates during a 12-hour-long operation in the Arabian Sea on 28th March 2024.

More About the News

- Utilizing their tactical expertise and strategic coordination, Indian naval forces initiated negotiations with the pirates, compelling them to surrender without bloodshed.
- The surrender marked a decisive victory for the Indian Navy in combating piracy and ensuring the safety of maritime activities in the region.
- Based on the inputs on a potential piracy incident onboard Iranian Fishing Vessel 'Al Kambar 786' on the 28th of March, two Indian Naval ships, INS Sumedha and INS Trishul deployed in Arabian Sea for maritime security operations were diverted to intercept the hijacked fishing vessel.
- The Fishing Vessel at the time of incident was approximately 90 km South West of Socotra.
- Indian Naval specialist teams are presently undertaking thorough sanitization and seaworthiness checks of the Fishing Vessel to escort her to a safe area for resuming normal fishing activities.



About INS Sumedha

- INS Sumedha is the third of indigenously developed Saryu-class of Indian Navy.

Commissioned on 07 March 2014, the ship is deployed for multiple roles independently and in support of fleet operations.

- The ship is equipped with an array of weapons and sensors and can carry multi-role helicopters.

About INS Trishul

- INS Trishul (F43) is the second frigate of the Talwar class of the Indian Navy. Trishul, the guided missile frigate, joined the arsenal of Indian Navy in 2003.
- It has a displacement capacity of 4,000 tons and a speed of 30 knots and is capable of accomplishing a wide variety of naval missions, primarily, finding and eliminating enemy submarines and large surface ships.

Swami Smaranananda Maharaj

Why in the News?

- The Chief of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Smaranananda Maharaj, died at 95 due to age-related ailments, according to Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. He was the 16th president of the Ramakrishna Mission and took charge in 2017.

More About the News

- Swami Smarananandaji was born at village Andami in the district of Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, in 1929. He came in contact with the Mumbai branch of the Ramakrishna Order when he was about 20 years old.
- Inspired by the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, he joined Mumbai Ashrama in 1952 at the age of 22 and embraced monastic life.
- He travelled extensively in India and different parts of the world, visiting many branches of the Math and Mission and also unaffiliated centres, spreading the message of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and Vedanta among a vast number of people.
- Swami Smarananandaji was loved and respected by all for his spiritual wisdom, simplicity, unassuming nature, sense of humour and spiritual fervour.



About Ramakrishna Mission

- The Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission are twin organizations which form the core of a worldwide spiritual movement known as the Ramakrishna Movement or the Vedanta Movement.
- Headquartered at Belur Math on the bank of river Ganga in West Bengal, the movement aims at the harmony of religions, of the East and the West and of the ancient and the modern, as also at the all-round development of human faculties, social equality, peace, and above all, spiritual fulfillment for all of humanity without any distinctions of creed, caste, race or nationality.
- The Ramakrishna Mission (originally called The Ramakrishna Mission Association) was started in 1897 by Swami Vivekananda with monastic and lay disciples of Sri Ramakrishna to actualize in light of Sri Ramakrishna's realization the Vedantic teaching that all beings are veritable manifestations of the divine.
- In addition to providing religious and spiritual teaching, the organization engages in extensive educational and social work both in India and abroad.

Food Waste Index Report 2024

Why in the News?

- Recently, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) have jointly published the Food Waste Index Report 2024.

More About the News

- The report defines "food waste" as "food and the associated inedible parts removed from the human food supply chain". On the other hand, "food loss" is defined as "all the crop and livestock human-edible commodity quantities that, directly or indirectly, completely exit the post-harvest/slaughter production/supply chain...up to, and excluding, the retail level".
- The report, released ahead of the International Day of Zero Waste (March 30), noted that in 2022, there were 1.05 billion tonnes of food waste generated (including inedible parts), amounting to 132 kilograms per capita and almost one-fifth of all food available to consumers.
- Households across the globe wasted over one billion meals a day in 2022, even as 783 million people struggled with hunger and a third of humanity faced food insecurity.
- The report stressed the importance of expanding and strengthening data infrastructure to enable the tracking and monitoring of food waste, pointing out that "many low- and middle-income countries continue to lack adequate systems for tracking progress to meet Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 of halving food waste by 2030, particularly in retail and food services.
- Contrary to popular perception, food waste was not a 'rich country problem', the report stated, with observed average levels of household food waste for high-income, upper-middle, and lower-middle-income countries differing by just 7 kg per capita.
- Detailing the link between food waste and climate change, the report found that food loss and waste generated "8-10% of annual global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions – almost 5 times that of the aviation sector – and significant biodiversity loss by taking up the equivalent of almost a third of the world's agricultural land."
- Another trend revealed by the data was that compared to urban areas, rural ones generally wasted less food, due to "greater

diversion of food scraps to pets, livestock, and home composting”.

- UNEP is its custodian.

Pakistan's 'piracy' of Indian basmati rice varieties

Why in the News?

- Scientists at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) and exporters have red-flagged the “illegal” cultivation of its improved basmati rice varieties in Pakistan.

More About the News

- The issue came to the fore after the emergence of promotional YouTube videos, featuring recently-released IARI varieties, by Pakistani seed firms in places such as Multan, Bahawalnagar and Hafizabad.
- The threat relates to the alleged seed piracy and unlawful cultivation in Pakistan of improved high-yielding varieties of basmati rice developed by IARI.
- The basmati rice is grown only in India and Pakistan. Pakistan predominantly exports Super Basmati, a high-yielding variety (similar to IARI's PB-1) bred by the Rice Research Institute at Kala Shah Kaku, near Lahore.

- This variety, released in 1996, has helped Pakistan gain a 66-70% share in the European Union-United Kingdom market for brown (unpolished/husked) basmati rice. That share has further gone up to 85% in the new marketing year from September 2023.
- India is a clear market leader in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, United Arab Emirates and other West Asian countries, it has largely to do with consumer preference there for parboiled basmati rice.
- This rice — where paddy is soaked in water and partially boiled in the husk before milling — has harder grains, less susceptible to breakage after cooking for long than regular white rice. But with Pakistan mills increasingly adopting parboiling technology — and its farmers planting superior IARI basmati varieties — there could be challenges going forward.
- The sale of seeds and cultivation of the above protected basmati varieties in Pakistan would arguably qualify as an intellectual property rights (IPR) violation, which India can raise in relevant bilateral forums and at the World Trade Organisation.



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