

UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 08-10-2023

Section 106 of the Indian Evidence Act

The Supreme Court recently held that Section 106 of the Evidence Act does not inherently impose a burden on the accused but comes into play when the accused fails to provide any explanation regarding facts that should be within their knowledge.



About Section 106 of the Indian Evidence Act:

Section 106 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, deals with the burden of proof in cases where a fact is within the special knowledge of a person.

This section applies to civil and criminal cases alike and lays down an important principle of evidence.

The section states that when any fact is especially within the knowledge of any person, the burden of proving that fact is upon that person.

This means that if a fact is known to a particular person and not to others, it is the responsibility of that person to prove it in court.

For example, in a case where the ownership of a property is disputed, and the disputed property was in the possession of the defendant, the burden of proving that he acquired the property lawfully and has the right to possess it will be on the defendant.

Similarly, in a criminal case where the accused is alleged to have killed someone with a knife, the burden of proving that the accused used the knife to commit the crime will be on the prosecution.

The burden of proof under Section 106 is not absolute, and the person who has the special knowledge of the fact is only required to prove it to the extent that is reasonable in the circumstances.

The person is not required to prove the fact beyond all doubt, but only to the extent that a reasonable person would believe it to be true.

Ministry of Textiles celebrates ‘World Cotton Day’ 2023

Cotton Corporation of India launches “Bale Identification and Traceability System”



The Ministry of Textiles marked World Cotton Day 2023 by hosting a conference centered on the theme of "Enhancing Quality & Productivity of Indian Cotton through Policy, Innovation, & Technology Upgradation." This event was conducted in collaboration with the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) and the EU-Resource Efficiency Initiative, an initiative by GIZ.

The conference held on the eve of World Cotton Day, highlighted best practices and sustainable farming methods throughout the cotton value chain, spanning from Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign. Brainstorming sessions addressed crucial topics, including "Enhancing Sustainability & Circularity in the Cotton Value Chain" and "Cotton Mission for Enhancing Quality & Productivity."

To ensure that the quality, variety, origin, and other vital parameters of cotton are transparent to both Indian and international buyers, CCI launched the "Bale Identification and Traceability System" (BITS) using Blockchain Technology. Each cotton bale now carries a QR code that allows easy tracking of its original source, processing factory, storage details, and associated cotton quality information, including timestamps.

Additionally, the Ministry of Textiles introduced the Kasturi Cotton program, a premium certified quality cotton with traceability. TEXPROCIL, in collaboration with CCI on behalf of the Ministry of Textiles, is overseeing the implementation of this program. All ginneries in the country are empowered to produce Kasturi Cotton following quality protocols.

In conjunction with CCI, CAI, and CITI, the Ministry of Textiles unveiled the event brochure for the 81st Plenary meeting of the International Cotton



Advisory Committee (ICAC), slated to take place in Mumbai from December 2nd to 5th, 2023. The theme for this event is "Cotton Value Chain: Local Innovations for Global Prosperity," with over 400 delegates and observers expected to attend from more than 27 countries.

Ms Prajakta L Verma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, set the context and purpose of holding this event on this historical day of World Cotton Day. She highlighted India's unique position as the only country with a complete cotton value chain and immense potential for increasing cotton production. She urged all stakeholders to collaborate to elevate the cotton textile industry to become a leading producer of quality textile products globally.

Ms. Shubha Thakur, Joint Secretary (Crops), Department of Agriculture and Cooperation & Farmers Welfare, stressed the urgency of boosting both cotton productivity and quality to meet the growing demand from the industry and improve the livelihoods of cotton farmers across the country.

During her keynote address, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, emphasized the need for the textile industry to address challenges in order to maintain its position as a global leader in cotton production. The conference outcomes are envisioned to pave the way for increased cotton production and productivity while ensuring sustainability in the cotton value chain.

Recommendations of 52nd GST Council Meeting

GST Council recommends amendments in conditions of appointment of President and Member of the proposed GST Appellate Tribunals regarding eligibility and age. GST Council recommends nil rate for food preparation of millet flour in powder form and containing at least 70% millets by weight when sold in loose form, and 5% if sold in pre-packaged and labelled form. GST Council recommends to keep Extra Neutral Alcohol (ENA) used for manufacture of alcoholic liquor for human consumption outside GST. GST Council recommends reducing GST on molasses from 28% to 5% in relief to cane farmers for faster clearance of dues and to reduce cost of manufacturing cattle feed.



Issuance of clarification relating to export of services

The Council has recommended to issue a circular to clarify the admissibility of export remittances received in Special INR Vostro account, as permitted by RBI, for the purpose of consideration of supply of services to qualify as export of services in terms of the provisions of sub-clause (iv) of clause (6) of section 2 of the IGST Act, 2017.

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation chairs 24th meeting of Central Zonal Council in Narendra Nagar, Uttarakhand

Under the leadership of Prime Minister, the role of Zonal Councils have transformed from advisory to action platforms.



Prime Minister has always emphasized on strengthening the spirit of cooperative federalism, under this policy, Zonal Councils have played the role



of catalyst in solving problems, increasing financial inclusion and bringing policy changes.

The member states of Central Zonal Council are the major centres for agriculture, animal husbandry and food grain production, mining, water supply and tourism in the country, without these states adequate water supply cannot be imagined.

Central Zonal Council's States have implemented Prime Minister concept of Team India at the grassroots level.

Ending malnutrition and zero dropout of school children should be our priority.

In today's meeting, a decision was taken to get a study done by ICAR to include Lac production in Revised Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme, this will benefit farmers engaged in Lac production.

It was decided in the meeting to fix the price of Kodo and Kutki produce at par with the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Ragi, this decision will benefit crores of farmers across the country, especially in member states of Central Zonal Council.

Issues like banking facility to every village within 5 km radius, formation of 2 lakh new PACS in the country, royalty and mining related issues and creation of basic infrastructure in Left Wing Extremism-affected districts were also discussed in the meeting.

From 2004 to 2014, 11 meetings of Zonal Councils and 14 meetings of Standing Committees were held, while from 2014 to 2023, 25 meetings of Zonal Councils and 29 meetings of Standing Committees were held.

Between 2004 and 2014, a total of 570 issues were discussed, out of which 448 were resolved, while between 2014 and 2023, a total of 1315 issues were discussed, out of which 1157 issues were resolved.

The Central Zonal Council also welcomed the spectacular success of Chandrayaan-3, successful organization of the G20 Summit and the historic passage of the Women's Reservation Bill by Parliament.

Iron Dome

Iron Dome, Israel's anti-missile system recently intercepted over 5,000 rockets launched from Gaza, a narrow strip that is home to 2.3 million Palestinians.



It is Israel's air missile defense system that can defend against short-range rockets, intercepting them in the air above the state.

It is capable of successfully handling multiple rockets at a time.

Developed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems and Israel Aerospace Industries, the system became operational in March 2011.

Features:

- The Iron Dome functions by detecting, analyzing, and intercepting varieties of targets such as mortars, rockets, and artillery.
- It is powered by missile-defense batteries.
- It has all-weather capabilities and is able to function night or day and in all conditions, including fog, rain, dust storms, and low clouds.
- It is able to launch a variety of interceptor missiles.
- It is designed to shoot down missiles with a range of about 40 miles or less.
- It also has the ability to be moved, either onto ships or across land, to better suit defense needs.
- It must be reloaded to continuously intercept incoming missiles.

Iron Dome operates through three main components:

- A radar that detects incoming rockets.
- A command-and-control system that determines the threat level.
- An interceptor that seeks to destroy the incoming rocket before it strikes.

Women Entrepreneurship Platform - NITI Aayog State Workshop on Women-Led Development: A Resounding Success in Goa

The inaugural edition of the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) – NITI Aayog State Workshop Series on Enabling Women-led Development through Entrepreneurship was organized at CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) Auditorium, Goa on 3rd October 2023. The workshop was held in collaboration with the Government of Goa with a focus on the western region of the country.

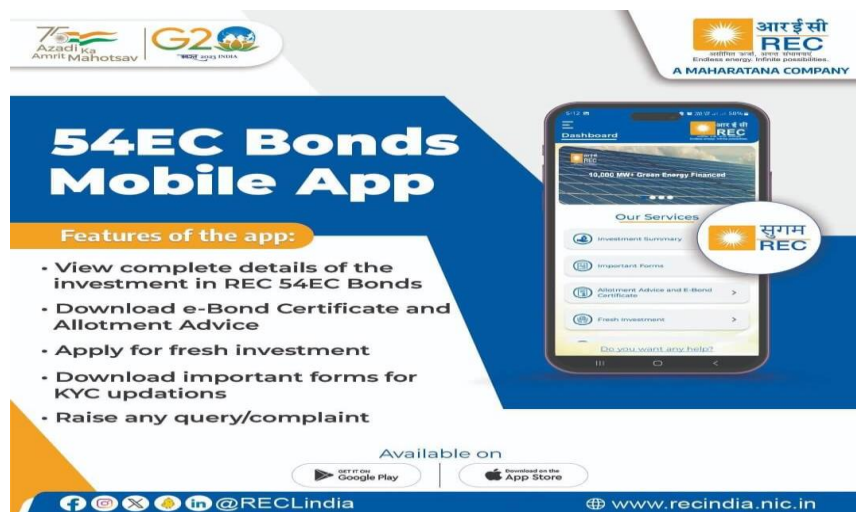
The workshop recorded over 500 participants, including women entrepreneurs, local self-help groups (SHGs) and clusters, government officials, industry representatives, incubators/accelerators, financial institutions, philanthropic foundations, and more.

Dr Pramod Sawant, Honorable Chief Minister, Government of Goa, stated that the Goa State Vision 2047 will be prepared with help from NITI Aayog.

Celebrating the three-year milestone of the Swayampurna Goa initiative, Dr. Sawant emphasized its focus on skill development and the deployment of "Swayampurna Grameen Mitras" for the doorstep delivery of government services in every block and Panchayat.

Furthermore, the Chief Minister reiterated the role of women in socio-economic progress, announcing the Swayampurna e-bazaar during Dussehra, aimed at expanding market access through Common Service Centres.

SUGAM REC App



The banner features logos for Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, G20 India 2023, and REC Limited. The main text reads "54EC Bonds Mobile App". Below this, a list of features is provided: "View complete details of the investment in REC 54EC Bonds", "Download e-Bond Certificate and Allotment Advice", "Apply for fresh investment", "Download important forms for KYC updations", and "Raise any query/complaint". A smartphone mockup displays the app's interface, including a dashboard with "10,000 MW Green Energy Planned" and sections for "Our Services" (Investment Summary, Important Forms, Allotment Advice and E-Bond Certificate, Fresh Investment) and a help section. The app is available on Google Play and the App Store. Social media icons and the website URL www.recindia.nic.in are also present.

Recently, REC Limited, the Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise launched a SUGAM REC mobile application.



About SUGAM REC App:

- It is exclusively for current and future investors in REC's 54EC Capital Gain Tax Exemption Bonds.
- Investors will be able to download their e-bond certificates, apply for fresh investment, download important forms related to updating of KYC, and also connect with REC's Investor Cell via call / email / WhatsApp.

54EC bonds

- These are also known as Capital gain bonds are fixed income instruments which provide capital gains tax exemption under section 54EC to the investors.
- These bonds allow an assessee/investor to save income tax on long-term capital gain by investing the gains.
- The investment into these bonds has to be made within 6 months from the date of long-term capital gain.
- They have a fixed lock-in period of 5 years and can be either held in Physical or Demat form.
- They are issued by various institutions managed by the Government of India to finance specific capital projects.
- They are called 54EC bonds because the taxability benefits of these bonds are mentioned under section 54EC of the Income Tax Act, 1961.

Key facts about REC Limited

- It is a 'Maharatna' company (under the administrative control of the Ministry of Power, Government of India).
- It is registered with RBI as non-banking finance company (NBFC), Public Financial Institution (PFI) and Infrastructure Financing Company (IFC).
- It was incorporated in 1969 in the backdrop of severe drought and famine in the country, to energise agricultural pump-sets for irrigation purposes, thereby reducing the dependency of agriculture on monsoons.
- It provides long terms loans and other financing products to State, Centre and Private Companies for creation of infrastructure assets in the country.
- It has been associated as nodal agency for Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (SAUBHAGAYA), Deen Dayal Upadhaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and National Electricity Fund (NEF) Scheme.

Gangetic river dolphin

A recent publication by scientists and researchers has revealed that 19 Gangetic river dolphins had been rescued from the irrigation canals of the Ganga-Ghagra basin in Uttar Pradesh between 2013 and 2020.



It is a freshwater species and one of the few river dolphins found in the world.

Distribution:

It inhabits the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems of Nepal, India, and Bangladesh.

Common Names: Blind dolphin, Ganges dolphin, Ganges susu, hihu, side-swimming dolphin, South Asian River Dolphin

It has been recognized as India's National Aquatic Animal.

Features:

- It has a long thin snout, rounded belly, stocky body and large flippers.
- It feeds majorly on fishes and is usually found in counter-current systems of the main river channel.
- Its eyes lack lens, and as a result, this species is also referred to as the "blind dolphin".
- They have a highly developed bio-sonar system that facilitates them to hunt for fish even in murky waters.
- Being a mammal, the Ganges River dolphin cannot breathe in the water and must surface every 30-120 seconds. Because of the sound it produces when breathing, the animal is popularly referred to as the 'Susu'.

Conservation status:

IUCN: Endangered

Wildlife (Protection) Act: Schedule-I

CITES: Appendix I

India is launching a national framework for climate services

India is embarking on a major programme to launch its maiden national-level framework towards providing climate services and information.

The National Framework for Climate Services (NFCS) is spearheaded by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

NFCS is based on the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS).

It envisions to bring a seamless working platform for users of climate information and services, and help decide and mitigate climate risks for key sectors — agriculture, energy, disaster management, health and water.

Background

The announcement to establish a GFCS was made during the third World Climate Conference held in Geneva in 2009.

This framework is led by National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHS) in their respective nations.

About

GFCS is a partnership of governments and organisations at a global level, for the production and better usage of climate information and services.

It aims to facilitate researchers and users of climate information and services to join hands in order to make informed and actionable decisions for the long-term betterment.

Functions

GFCS envisages to generate high-quality data from national and international databases on temperature, rainfall, wind, soil moisture and ocean conditions and other vital weather parameters.

This is aimed at creating long-term historical averages of these parameters, as well as maps, risk and vulnerability analyses, assessments and long-term projections and scenarios.

Five major components under GFCS

These are Observations and Monitoring, Research, Modelling and Prediction, Climate Services Information System, User Interface Platform and Capacity Building.

At present, the priority sectors where the GFCS focuses upon are agriculture and food security, energy, health, water and disaster risk reduction.

India is launching a national framework for climate services

In lines with the global framework, the national framework will be based on country-specific weather and stakeholder needs.

It will be a multi-stakeholder platform to enable the development and delivery of climate services.

The goal of NFCS is to coordinate institutions so they can work together to: Co-design, Co-produce, Communicate, Deliver, Use climate.

Along with the identified sectors of focus, India could add other relevant sectors like transport, tourism and other emerging sectors from time to time.

Nodal agency

The nodal agency for the formulation and implementation of the national framework in India will be the IMD.

Function

Initially, the NFCS will work in bridging functioning gaps between the various agencies who require climate services.

These include the hydrological, power, renewable energy, transport, dams and irrigation, health agencies are central, state and other levels.

Why the NFCS is needed?

There remain many gap areas across terrains and the seas, wherein no weather data is available.

There is a lack of long-term (100 years or more) climatological data from the Himalayan regions, the oceans, besides inexistence of radar and satellite-based climatology.

With NFCS, the Met department aims to:

strengthen the observational network on land and the seas,

improve the data inflow and eventually use it to run weather and climate models for deriving climate predictions.



The climate data and information products will help identify agricultural production, health trends, population distribution in high-risk areas, road and infrastructure mapping for the delivery of goods and other socio-economic variables.

The early implementation and acceleration of NFCS will be possible when planned in a mission-mode and is driven by the country's highest decision-making office.

NCFS in other countries

Since the 2009 declaration of frameworks for climate services, Switzerland, China, Germany and the United Kingdom have launched the NFCS.

With the first workshop organised recently in Pune, India has joined Cuba, Ghana, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, etc. where the NFCS-related national consultation workshops are being planned.

India will be soon releasing the statement of NFCS after consensus received from the key partnering stakeholders.