

UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 07-11-2023

Krishi 24/7, the first-ever AI-powered solution for automated agricultural news monitoring and analysis

Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (DA&FW) in collaboration with Wadhvani Institute for Artificial Intelligence (Wadhvani AI) developed Krishi 24/7, the first-ever AI-powered solution for automated agricultural news monitoring and analysis, with support from Google.org. Krishi 24/7 will aid DA&FW to identify relevant news, generate timely alerts, and take prompt action to protect farmers' interests and promote sustainable agricultural growth through improved decision-making.



The introduction of Krishi 24/7 addresses the need for an efficient mechanism to identify and manage agricultural news articles of interest to aid timely decision-making. The tool scans news articles in multiple languages and translates them into English. It extracts essential information from news articles, such as headline, crop name, event type, date, location, severity, summary, and source link, ensuring that the ministry receives timely updates on relevant events published on the web.

Joint Secretary explained about the functions of the solution which is intended to provide a near real time monitoring of the news articles on Agri ecosystem published online which will assist the DA&FW to identify news of interest and provide a comprehensive mechanism to shortlist events, create alerts, and take timely action.

OPERATION ALL CLEAR

Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk met Prime Minister Narendra Modi after a historic three-day visit to Assam.



Despite the 265.8 km border shared by Assam and Bhutan, this marked the first visit of a Bhutanese monarch to the state.

The hill kingdom was pushed to undertake its first military operation in 140 years to flush out the militants from its territory.

‘Operation All Clear’ was launched by the Royal Bhutan Army on December 15, 2003, and dealt a crippling blow to the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), the National Democratic Front of Bodoland and the Kamatapur Liberation Organization (KLO), which had set up camps in Bhutanese territory

Challenges along Bhutan-India Border: In the 1990s, Assam-based insurgent groups established camps in southeastern Bhutan, leading to strains in the



peaceful relationship between Bhutan and India, as these groups posed a threat to Bhutan's sovereignty and security.

Bhutan's Initial Approach: Initially, Bhutan refrained from engaging with the Indian insurgents on its territory, attempting diplomatic dialogues but avoiding coercive action due to its limited military capacity and lack of experience in handling such threats.

Factors Prompting the Military Operation

Threat to Bilateral Relations: The presence of insurgent groups in Bhutan was deemed a direct threat to Bhutan's bilateral relationship with India, its primary trade partner and key ally.

Impact on National Security and Development: The insurgents' activities disrupted economic development, stalled crucial projects like the Dungsam Cement Project, and jeopardized the safety of Bhutanese citizens, leading to tragic loss of innocent lives.

Fear of Ethnic Insurgency: Concerns arose that the insurgent groups might arm ethnic Nepalese Lhotshampas, potentially fueling an ethnic insurgency in southern Bhutan, thereby destabilizing the country.

Implementation and Outcome of Operation All Clear

Military Offensive: On December 15, 2003, the Royal Bhutan Army launched 'Operation All Clear' with assistance from the Indian Army, conducting coordinated attacks on the camps of United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), and Kamatapur Liberation Organization (KLO).

Successes of the Operation: The operation resulted in the neutralization of several key leaders of the insurgent groups, including ULFA's Bhimkanta Buragohain, NDFB's B. Erakdao, and KLO's Tom Adhikary, dealing a significant blow to the activities and influence of these groups.

Collaboration with India and International Implications

Indo-Bhutan Collaboration: The coordinated effort between the Royal Bhutan Army and the Indian Army during the operation highlighted the strong



collaboration between the two countries in addressing cross-border security threats.

Regional Stability and Diplomacy: The success of Operation All Clear contributed to enhancing regional stability, fostering a sense of security, and reaffirming the commitment of Bhutan and India to combating terrorism and maintaining peace in the region.

Post-Operation Developments and Reconciliation Efforts

Reconstruction and Reconciliation: Following the operation, efforts were made to promote post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation, emphasizing the need for sustainable development and peace-building in the affected areas.

Long-term Diplomatic Engagement: The operation underscored the importance of continuous diplomatic engagement and cooperation between Bhutan and India to address cross-border security challenges and maintain a stable and peaceful regional environment.

STATES APPROACH SC AGAINST THEIR GOVERNORS

Several states accuse Governors of unreasonably withholding crucial Bills, leading to a constitutional crisis that affects areas including public health, higher education, Lokayukta (anti-corruption ombudsman), and cooperative societies.

Several states express concerns over Governors' perceived reluctance to approve crucial Bills, leading to a delay in implementing laws vital for public welfare, including those related to public health, higher education, Lokayukta, and cooperative societies.

The delay in passing Bills raises fears of a constitutional crisis, as essential areas like public health and anti-corruption measures remain inadequately addressed, potentially impacting citizens' well-being and governance integrity.

Urgent action is required to resolve the deadlock, emphasizing the necessity for Governors and state authorities to collaborate efficiently, ensuring the timely



passage of these Bills to uphold democratic principles and meet the pressing needs of the public.

Constitutional Provisions

Article 200 of the Indian Constitution outlines the Governor's options when presented with a Bill passed by the state legislature. The Governor can:

Approve the Bill, allowing it to become law.

Refrain from approving the Bill, except in the case of Money Bills.

If the Bill affects the power of judicial review of the High Court, the Governor can send it for the President's consideration.

If the Governor withholds assent, they must return the Bill to the Legislative Assembly, advising reconsideration. The Governor acts based on the advice of the Council of Ministers.

The Constitution states Bills should be returned "as soon as possible," but it does not specify a timeframe.

Legal Interpretation

The Supreme Court interpreted "as soon as possible" to mean "as early as practicable without avoidable delay" in a 1972 judgment.

In a 2020 case, it was suggested that a 'reasonable time' for the process would be three months, although this is not an explicit constitutional provision.

Demands and Legal Challenges

States are demanding a clear time limit for Governors to assent or return Bills to avoid indefinite delays.

Some states, like Kerala, have urged the Supreme Court to review previous judgments that did not specify a time limit for Governors to decide on Bills.

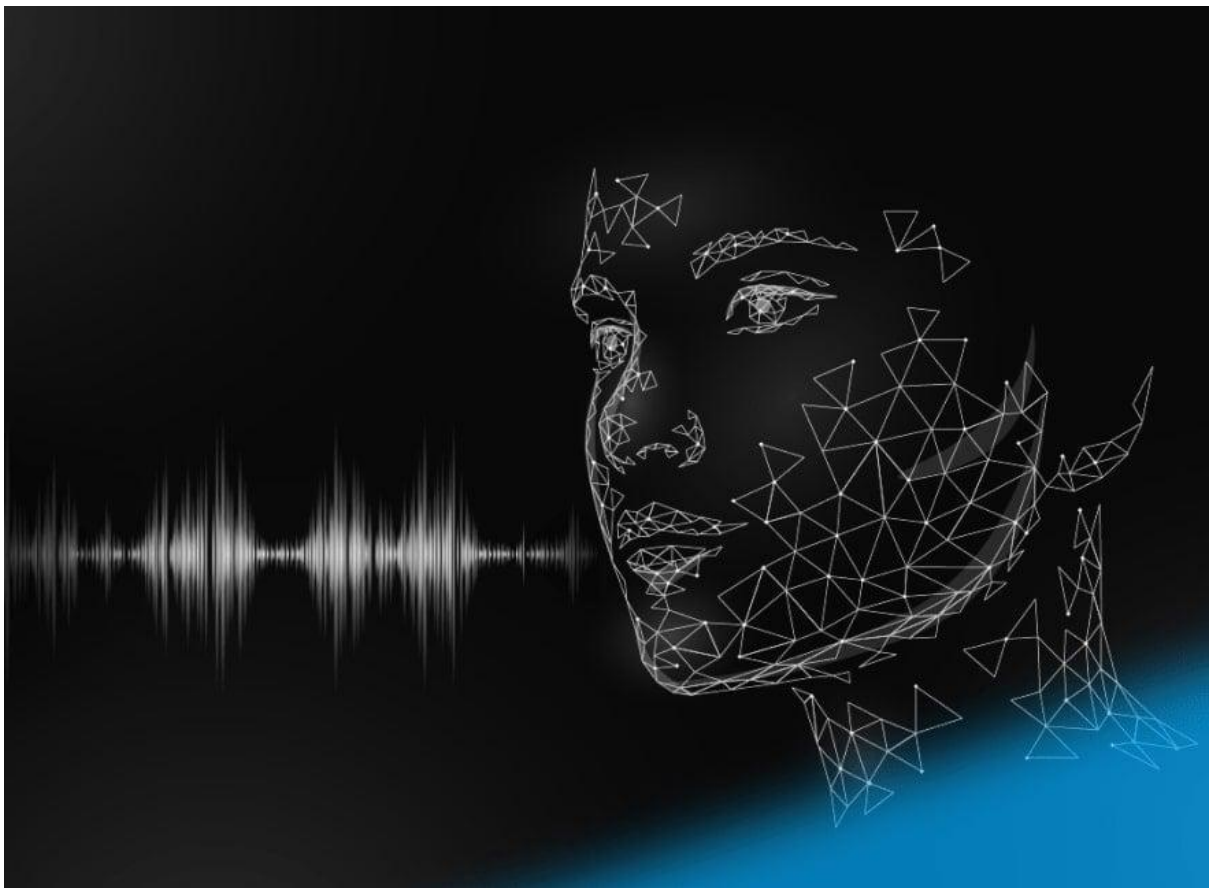
DEEPPFAKE TECHNOLOGY

A video supposedly showing an Indian actress has ignited a firestorm of controversy on the internet.

What initially appears as genuine is, in fact, a ‘deepfake’ of the actress.

Responding to the video, the Union Minister for Electronics & Technology, said that deep fakes are the latest and a “more dangerous and damaging form of misinformation” that need to be dealt with by social media platforms.

He also cited the legal obligations of social media platforms and IT rules pertaining to digital deception.



Deepfake technology, a portmanteau of "deep learning" and "fake," refers to the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to create or manipulate audio and visual content to generate realistic but fabricated media.



While initially popularized for entertainment purposes, deepfake technology has raised concerns due to its potential misuse, posing significant challenges to various aspects of society.

Understanding the Mechanism of Deepfake Creation

Deep Learning Algorithms: Deepfake technology employs sophisticated deep learning algorithms, particularly Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) and autoencoder models, to analyze and synthesize realistic human faces, voices, and gestures.

Data Training and Mimicry: By analyzing large datasets of images and videos, deepfake algorithms learn to mimic facial expressions, speech patterns, and other human characteristics, enabling the creation of convincing and deceptive digital content.

Applications and Implications of Deepfake Technology

Entertainment Industry: Deepfake technology has found applications in the entertainment industry, enabling the creation of engaging visual effects, digital doubles, and realistic character animations in movies and video games.

Social Media and Misinformation: The proliferation of deepfake content on social media platforms has amplified concerns about the spread of misinformation, as manipulated videos and audio recordings can deceive the public and influence public opinion.

Cybersecurity Threats: Deepfakes pose significant cybersecurity threats, as malicious actors can utilize this technology for identity theft, impersonation, and fraud, jeopardizing the security and privacy of individuals and organizations.

Political Manipulation and Disinformation: The potential use of deepfake technology for political manipulation and disinformation campaigns raises concerns about the integrity of democratic processes and public trust in political institutions.



Ethical and Legal Implications of Deepfake Technology

Privacy and Consent: Deepfake technology raises critical questions about privacy and consent, especially concerning the use of individuals' images and voices without their explicit permission.

Identity Theft and Fraud: The potential for identity theft and fraud through the creation of convincing fake identities using deepfake technology necessitates robust legal frameworks to deter and penalize such malicious activities.

Impacts on Journalism and Media Integrity: Deepfakes have the potential to undermine the credibility of journalistic content and media integrity, challenging the authenticity and trustworthiness of audiovisual evidence.

Regulatory Challenges: Addressing the ethical and legal implications of deepfake technology requires the formulation of comprehensive regulatory frameworks that balance innovation and freedom of expression with the protection of individuals' rights and societal integrity.

Mitigating Risks and Ensuring Responsible Use

Technological Solutions: Developing advanced deepfake detection tools and authentication mechanisms can help identify and mitigate the risks associated with the spread of deceptive content.

Public Awareness and Education: Promoting digital literacy and raising public awareness about the existence and potential impact of deepfakes are crucial steps in fostering a vigilant and informed society.

Collaborative Efforts and Policy Development: Collaborative efforts between technology companies, policymakers, and research institutions are essential for the development of robust policies and regulations that address the challenges posed by deepfake technology while preserving the benefits of technological innovation.

India's Current Stand on Deepfakes

Existing Laws: India relies on pre-existing laws, such as **Sections 67 and 67A of the Information Technology Act (2000)**, which may be applicable to some aspects of deepfakes, including defamation and explicit material dissemination.



Defamation Provision: Section 500 of the Indian Penal Code (1860) offers punishment for defamation, which can be applied in cases involving deepfakes.

Personal Data Protection Bill (2022): Although this bill might provide some protection against the misuse of personal data, it doesn't explicitly address the issue of deepfakes.

Lack of Comprehensive Legal Framework: India lacks a comprehensive legal framework dedicated to regulating deepfakes, despite their potential implications for privacy, social stability, national security, and democracy.

International Efforts

European Union (EU): In 2022, the EU updated its Code of Practice on Disinformation, which was initially introduced in 2018, with the intention of countering the spread of disinformation through deepfakes.

United States (U.S.): The U.S. has introduced the bipartisan Deepfake Task Force Act, designed to support the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in combatting the adverse effects of deepfake technology.

China: China has implemented comprehensive regulations on deep synthesis, effective from January 2023, with a focus on curbing disinformation. These regulations emphasize clear labeling and traceability of deep synthesis content, mandatory consent from individuals, adherence to laws and public morals, establishment of review mechanisms by service providers, and cooperation with authorities.

Central Information Commission

Recently, the Information Commissioner, Heeralal Samariya, was sworn in as the chief of the Central Information Commission (CIC) by the President Of India.



It has been constituted under the Right to Information Act, 2005.

The jurisdiction of the Commission extends over all Central Public Authorities.

Objectives

To exercise the powers conferred on them under the RTI Act, 2005.

To receive and inquire into complaints from any citizen (Section 18 of the RTI Act, 2005).

To receive and decide upon the second appeal from any citizen (Section 19 of the RTI Act, 2005).

To perform the duty of “Monitoring and Reporting “(Section 25 of the RTI Act, 2005).

Composition

It consists of a Chief Information Commissioner and not more than ten Information Commissioners.

Appointment:

They are appointed by the President of India on the recommendation of a committee consisting of the Prime Minister as Chairperson, the Leader of



Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister.

Eligibility

The members of CIC and SIC shall be persons of eminence in public life with wide knowledge and experience in law, science and technology, social service, management, journalism, mass media, or administration and governance.

Members shall not be a Member of Parliament or Member of the Legislature of any State or Union Territory as the case may be, or hold any other office of profit or connected with any political party or carry on any business or pursue any profession.

Tenure

The Chief Information Commissioner, or Information Commissioners, as the case may be, shall hold office for a period of three years from the date on which he enters upon his office.

GRAP Stage 4 implemented in Delhi-NCR amid severe air pollution



The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) invoked measures under Stage 4 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) with immediate effect.

This was invoked after the National Capital Region's Air Quality Index (AQI) deteriorated to the 'severe' category.

GRAP is a set of emergency measures that kick in to prevent further deterioration of air quality once it reaches a certain threshold in the Delhi-NCR region.

It was approved by the Supreme Court in 2016 and notified in 2017.

The plan was formulated after several meetings between Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA), state government and experts.

GRAP works only as an emergency measure.

The plan does not include action by various state governments to be taken throughout the year to tackle industrial, vehicular and combustion emissions.



Nature

GRAP is incremental in nature and thus, when the air quality dips from 'poor' to 'very poor,' measures listed under both sections have to be followed.

Stage 1 of GRAP is activated when the AQI is in the 'poor' category (201 to 300);

Stage 2 is when it's in the 'Very poor' category (301-400);

Stage 3 is when the AQI is the 'Severe' category (401-450); and

Stage 4 is when it rises to the 'Severe +' category (more than 450).

Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)

CAQM is a statutory body formed under the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas, Act 2021.

The commission aims at better coordination, research, identification, and resolution of problems related to air quality in NCR and adjoining areas.

News Summary: GRAP Stage 4 implemented in Delhi-NCR amid severe air pollution

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) implemented Stage IV of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in Delhi-NCR.

The decision was made to curb air pollution and prevent further deterioration of air quality.

What measures does GRAP Stage 4 entail?

A central panel directed authorities to prohibit the use of diesel four-wheelers that are not BS-VI compliant, as well as the entry of trucks in Delhi.

The BS or Bharat Stage emission standards are instituted by the government to regulate the output of air pollutants from motor vehicles from internal combustion engine equipment.

The BS-VI fuel was estimated to bring around an 80% reduction of sulphur, from 50 parts per million to 10 ppm.



Petrol cars can continue to play as usual.

Construction and demolition activities, including those on linear public projects like highways, roads, flyovers, pipelines and power lines, which were previously allowed to continue, will also be banned.

The state governments in the NCR may decide to discontinue physical classes for classes 6 to 9 and class 11, and conduct lessons online.

Moreover, the governments may also decide on whether to allow public, private, and municipal offices to work on 50% strength.

State governments may also consider other emergency measures like closure of colleges and other educational institutions, and closure of non-emergency commercial activities, permitting vehicles to run on an odd-even basis.

The central government may make an appropriate decision on permitting work from home for employees working in central government offices.

Section 437A of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)

The Supreme Court recently issued notice to the Union of India on a plea challenging the constitutionality of Section 437A of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).



Section 437A of CrPC

Bail to require accused to appear before next appellate Court.

Section 437A of the CrPC requires a person who has been acquitted to furnish a bail bond and sureties to be able to be released from custody.

This is to ensure the appearance of the accused if an appeal is filed before a higher court against the acquittal.

The provision states that accused persons must execute bail bonds with sureties to appear before the higher court when an appeal or petition is filed against the judgement of the respective court.

These bail bonds are valid for six months, and failure to appear leads to bond forfeiture and the application of Section 446

Section 446 CrPC :

It provides that once the court records its satisfaction about the forfeiture of the bond, it shall call upon the person bound by such bond to pay the penalty or to show cause why it should not be paid.



If sufficient cause is not shown and the penalty is not paid, the Court may proceed to recover the same as if such penalty were a fine imposed by it under this Code.

Neither before the trial court nor before the appellate court, there is any applicability of Section-437A CrPC in cases where the accused is convicted.

As such, the only time when the court is required to ask the accused to execute bonds is the time when the court acquits the accused.

What is Acquittal under CrPC

The term "acquittal" refers to a judge's decision that legally confirms the innocence of the accused.

As a result, it is granted when the court determines that the accused did not commit the crime charged against him.

It means the prosecutor was unable to persuade the judge that the case was beyond a reasonable doubt.

If the judge concludes that there is no evidence that the accused committed the crime after evaluating the prosecution's evidence, the judge acquits the accused person under Section 232.

If the offender is not acquitted under Section 232, however, he is allowed to present his case and evidence. The court may acquit or convict the person under Section 233 after hearing both parties'