

UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 12-01-2024

Article 30 of the Indian Constitution

The Supreme Court recently attempted to strike a balance by remarking that the intent of Article 30 of the Constitution was not to ghettoise minorities by insisting they had the upper hand in administration of the institution.

About Article 30

It is one of the many provisions that ensure the preservation of minority rights.

Article 30 of the Indian Constitution states the right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.

It says: “All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.”

It was adopted on December 8, 1948.

Features:

It consists of provisions that safeguard various rights of the minority community in the country, keeping in mind the principle of equality as well.

Article 30(1) says that all minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

The right is provided by this clause on two types of minorities, namely, religious and linguistic minorities.

Article 30(1A) deals with the fixation of the amount for the acquisition of property of any educational institution established by minority groups.

Article 30(2) states that the government should not discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language, while giving aid.

Concept of Minorities:

The Constitution of India uses the word minority but does not define it.

Article 29 of the Indian Constitution uses the word ‘minorities’ in its marginal heading, but it speaks about "any section of the citizens inhabiting the territory of India or any part of the country should have the right to protect their language or script or culture, which is different and varied.



It also says that citizens should be allowed to take admission in any educational institution which is maintained by the State or getting help from State funds whether they vary in religion, race, caste, language, or any of them.

Article 30 of the Constitution of India talks only about religious and linguistic minorities.

Religious Minority: The basic ground for a community to be nominated as a religious minority is the numerical strength of the community.

Section 2, clause (c) of the National Commission of Minorities Act, declares six communities as minority communities. They are:

Muslims

Christians

§ Buddhists

Sikhs

Jains and

Zoroastrians (Parsis)

Linguistic Minorities:

Class or group of people whose mother language or mother tongue is different from that of the majority groups is known as the linguistic minorities.

Article 350-A of the Indian Constitution imposes an obligation on the states to try to provide enough facilities for instruction in the mother language at the primary

Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS)

The Udupi station under the Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd. (KRCL) network was recently included in the Railway Ministry's Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) for redevelopment.



About Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS)

It is an ongoing Indian Railways mission launched in February 2023 by the Ministry of Railways to redevelop 1,309 stations nationwide.

The scheme aims to transform railway stations into modern, well-equipped hubs with improved passenger amenities, better traffic circulation, inter-modal integration, and enhanced signage.

It is based on Master Planning for the long term and the implementation of the elements of the Master Plan as per the needs and patronage of the station.

The scheme shall cater for the introduction of new amenities as well as the upgradation and replacement of existing amenities.

The ultimate goal is to transform these stations into vibrant city centres over the long term.

Key Features:

Modern passenger amenities: This includes providing clean and hygienic waiting areas, restrooms, Special amenities for the disabled, and food and beverage outlets.

Improved traffic circulation: This includes creating separate entry and exit points for passengers and vehicles, widening roads and footpaths, and providing adequate parking facilities.

Inter-modal integration: This includes providing seamless connectivity between railway stations and other modes of transport, such as buses, taxis, and auto-rickshaws.

Upgraded signage: This includes providing clear and visible signage in multiple languages to guide passengers.

Sustainability: This includes using energy-efficient lighting and appliances.

Eco-friendliness:

Rainwater harvesting systems and green spaces

Ballastless tracks, which reduce noise and vibration

Roof plazas, where available, provide additional space for commercial activities and passenger amenities. Level of education to children belonging to the linguistic minority community.

Congo River

The Congo River has risen to its highest level in more than 60 years, causing flooding throughout the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Congo Republic that has killed more than 300 people recently.

About Congo River

It is a River in west-central Africa.

It is also called the Zaire River.

With a length of 2,900 miles (4,700 km), it is the continent's second-longest river, after the Nile, and the ninth-longest in the world.

The river gets its name from the ancient Kongo Kingdom, which existed near the mouth of the river.





The Congo River system runs through the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, western Zambia, northern Angola, and parts of Cameroon and Tanzania.

Course:

It rises in the highlands of northeastern Zambia between Lakes Tanganyika and Nyasa (Malawi) as the Chambeshi River at an elevation of 5,760 feet (1,760 metres).

Its course then takes the form of a giant counterclockwise arc, flowing to the northwest, west, and southwest before draining into the Atlantic Ocean at Banana (Banane) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Its course through the rainforest causes it to cross the equator twice.

It is the deepest river in the world. It reaches depths of over 750 feet (230 meters).

The river also has the second-largest flow in the world, with a discharge of 1.5 million cubic feet of water per second, trailing only the Amazon, and the second-largest watershed of any river.

It drains an area of 3.7 million square kilometers (1.4 million square miles) known as the Congo Basin.

Much of the basin is covered by rich tropical rainforests and swamps. Together these ecosystems make up the bulk of Central Africa's rainforest, which, at 178 million hectares (2005), is the world's second-largest rainforest, second only to the Amazon Rainforest in South America.

The main tributaries are the Ubangi, Sangha, and Kasai.

DIRECT TAX COLLECTIONS

Context: The current status of India's net direct tax collections, indicates significant growth and meeting a substantial portion of the targeted amount for the fiscal year 2023-24.

India's net direct tax collections reached ₹14.7 lakh crore by January 10.

This amount represents over four-fifths (80.61%) of the total budget estimates for direct taxes for the fiscal year 2023-24.

Growth and Performance



The net direct tax kitty has grown by ₹1 lakh crore since December 17, when it had already crossed ₹13.7 lakh crore.

This reflects a growth of 19.4% over the same period in the previous fiscal year (2022-23).

Composition of Collections

Gross collections rose by 16.77% to ₹17.18 lakh crore.

Personal Income Tax (PIT) inflows saw a significant increase of 26.11%, while Corporate Income Tax (CIT) collections grew at a relatively muted pace of 8.32%.

Refunds and Adjustments

Refunds amounting to ₹2.48 lakh crore had been issued to taxpayers by the specified period.

Net of refunds, the growth in CIT collections was 12.37%, and in PIT collections, it was 27.26% (PIT only). Net of refunds, PIT and Securities Transaction Tax receipts were up 27.22%.

Future Projections

The Central Board of Direct Taxes expressed that provisional direct tax collections continue to register steady growth.

Rating agency ICRA anticipates that the full year's direct tax collections will exceed Budget estimates by ₹1 lakh crore, with a projected growth of around 18% over the provisional numbers for 2022-23.

2024-25 Projections

ICRA projects a 12% growth in direct tax revenues for the fiscal year 2024-25, based on expectations of favourable commodity prices on corporate profitability and government efforts to improve compliance.

SWACHH SURVEKSHAN AWARDS 2023

The Swachh Survekshan Awards 2023, announced on January 11, 2024, by the President of India, recognize achievements in urban sanitation and cleanliness across 4,500 cities through a survey conducted by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on 46 indicators, supporting the Swachh Bharat Urban Mission.



Surat (Gujarat) and Indore (Madhya Pradesh) jointly bagged the top spot as the cleanest cities in India. This is the seventh consecutive time that Indore has won this award, while Surat has improved its rank from second to first this year. Both cities have shown exemplary performance in waste management, sanitation, and citizen engagement.

Cleanest City (population less than 1 lakh)

Saswad (Maharashtra) won the award for the cleanest city among urban centres with a population of less than 1 lakh. Patan (Chhattisgarh) and Lonavala (Maharashtra) were the second and third runners-up, respectively.

Ganga Towns

Varanasi and Prayagraj won the top two awards among the Cleanest Ganga Towns, emphasizing the importance of maintaining cleanliness in areas surrounding the Ganga River.

Best Performing State

Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh won the top three awards for Best Performing State, recognizing their comprehensive efforts in promoting cleanliness.

SafaiMitra Suraksha

Chandigarh walked away with the award for the Best Safaimitra Surakshit Sheher, acknowledging initiatives that prioritize the safety, dignity, and well-being of sanitation workers.

President's Emphasis on Waste Management

The President highlighted the theme for the year 2023, "Waste to Wealth," and stressed the importance of creating wealth from waste. She connected this theme with the G20 Leaders' Delhi Declaration commitment to environmentally sound waste management and substantial waste reduction by 2030.

Circular Economy and Sustainability

The President commended the adoption of circular waste management in the second phase of the Swachh Bharat Mission. The focus on recycling and reusing items aligns with the principles of sustainable development.

Swachh Survekshan Dashboard Launch

The President launched the Swachh Survekshan 2023 dashboard, emphasizing the importance of everyone's contribution to and participation in the survey.



Swachh Survekshan Awards

The Swachh Survekshan Awards, launched in 2016, are part of the Swachh Bharat Mission initiated by the Government of India to promote cleanliness and sanitation in urban areas.

The annual survey ranks cities based on various sanitation parameters like door-to-door waste collection, waste treatment, public toilet management, citizen participation, and innovation in sanitation practices.

Winning cities and states receive recognition and financial incentives, aiming to motivate them to maintain and improve their sanitation standards.

The survey relies heavily on citizen feedback, encouraging public involvement in sanitation. However, ensuring equitable and inclusive participation, particularly from marginalized communities, remains a challenge.