



RACE IAS

# Daily current affairs

30 April 2022

## Bhima- Koregaon battle:

### Context:

NCP president Sharad Pawar recently filed an additional affidavit before the Koregaon Bhima inquiry commission to suggest “legal reforms” that include:

1. “Repeal” of Section 124A of Indian Penal Code (offence of sedition).
2. Reintroduction of Section 66A of the Information Technology Act.

### Need for:

This is necessary to ensure law enforcement agencies can maintain law and order and prevent riots.

### Misuse of Section 124A:

Section 124A is “often misused against people who criticise the government, suppressing their liberty, and tends to stifle any voice of dissent raised in a peaceful and democratic way”.

### Koregaon Bhima: Commission of Inquiry:

The two-member commission, headed by retired high court justice J N Patel with former chief secretary Sumit Malik as the other member, was constituted by the state government on February 9, 2018, to inquire into the “exact sequence” of events that led to violence on the 200th anniversary of Battle of Koregaon Bhima on January 1 that year.

### About the Bhima- Koregaon battle:

- A battle was fought in Bhima Koregaon, a district in Pune with a strong historical Dalit connection, between the Peshwa forces and the British on January 1, 1818.

- The British army, which comprised mainly of Dalit soldiers, fought the upper caste-dominated Peshwa army. The British troops defeated the Peshwa army.

#### **Outcomes of the battle:**

- The victory was seen as a win against caste-based discrimination and oppression. Peshwas were notorious for their oppression and persecution of Mahar dalits. The victory in the battle over Peshwas gave dalits a moral victory a victory against caste-based discrimination and oppression and sense of identity.
- However, the divide and rule policy of the British created multiple fissures in Indian society which is even visible today in the way of excessive caste and religious discrimination which needs to be checked keeping in mind the tenets of the Constitution.

#### **Why Bhima Koregaon is seen as a Dalit symbol?**

- The battle has come to be seen as a symbol of Dalit pride because a large number of soldiers in the Company force were the Mahar Dalits. Since the Peshwas, who were Brahmins, were seen as oppressors of Dalits, the victory of the Mahar soldiers over the the Peshwa force is seen as Dalit assertion.
- On 1 January 1927, B.R. Ambedkar visited the memorial obelisk erected on the spot which bears the names of the dead including nearly two dozen Mahar soldiers. The men who fought in the battle of Koregaon were the Mahars, and the Mahars are Untouchables.

**Sources:** times of India.

## **Uniform Civil Code:**

#### **Context:**

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) has yet again taken strong objections to the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), stating that it is unconstitutional, anti-minority and unacceptable to Muslims.

- It also stressed that the UCC issue is being raised to divert attention from real issues and promote an agenda of hatred and discrimination.

### **What is the uniform civil code?**

A generic set of governing laws for every citizen without taking into consideration the religion.

### **What the constitution says?**

Article 44 of the Constitution says that there should be a Uniform Civil Code. According to this article, "The State shall endeavor to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India". Since the Directive Principles are only guidelines, it is not mandatory to use them.

### **India needs a Uniform Civil Code for the following reasons:**

- A secular republic needs a common law for all citizens rather than differentiated rules based on religious practices.
- Gender justice: The rights of women are usually limited under religious law, be it Hindu or Muslim. Many practices governed by religious tradition are at odds with the fundamental rights guaranteed in the Indian Constitution.
- Courts have also often said in their judgements that the government should move towards a uniform civil code including the judgement in the Shah Bano case.

### **Does India not already have a uniform code in civil matters?**

Indian laws do follow a uniform code in most civil matters - Indian Contract Act, Civil Procedure Code, Sale of Goods Act, Transfer of Property Act, Partnership Act, Evidence Act etc. States, however, have made hundreds of amendments and therefore in certain matters, there is diversity even under these secular civil laws.

### **Why is UCC not desirable at this point?**

- Secularism cannot contradict the plurality prevalent in the country.
- Cultural diversity cannot be compromised to the extent that our urge for uniformity itself becomes a reason for threat to the territorial integrity of the nation.

### **Constitutional Hurdle:**

Article 25 of Indian constitution, that seeks to preserve the freedom to practise and propagate any religion gets into conflict with the concepts of equality enshrined under Article 14 of Indian Constitution.

## Karnataka anti-cow slaughter legislation:

### Context:

Accusing the Government of creating fear psychosis among farmers using the Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Act, a convention of dairy farmers has demanded that the legislation be scrapped at the earliest in their interest.

### Concerns:

- Police were harassing farmers by using the provisions of the legislation.
- While farmers are under watch by banning cow slaughter, the sale and export of beef by corporates has not been banned.
- Farmers are banned from selling their cows to slaughter houses even if they were infertile. This results in more number of farmers, particularly dairy farmers, quitting agriculture and allied activities.
- Even the transport of cattle had become difficult as farmers needed to take permission from various authorities concerned even for it.

### What are the demands?

The Government should buy infertile cows from farmers at market rates till it withdraws the legislation.

- The word 'cattle' in the legislation is defined as "cow, calf of a cow and bull, bullock, and he or she buffalo below the age of 13 years".

### Controversial Provisions:

#### Who has the power to conduct searches?

- Police officers ranked sub-inspector and above or a competent authority will have the power to search premises and seize cattle and materials used or intended to use to commit the offence.
- Such seizures, if any, will then be reported before the Sub Divisional Magistrate without unreasonable delay.

#### What are the penalties?

- It is a cognizable offence, violators can attract three to seven years of imprisonment.
- While a penalty between Rs 50,000 and Rs 5 lakh can be levied for the first offence, second and subsequent offences can attract penalties ranging between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 10 lakh.

#### **Dairy economics:**

- The sector that will take the largest hit from the legislation is the dairy industry. India's dairy industry is massive with an annual turnover of Rs 6.5 lakh crore - making it by far India's largest agricultural product.
- India's farmers earn more from dairy than wheat and rice put together. India has almost as many bovines as people in the United States with one for every four Indians.
- The problem with the bill is that that slaughter is integral to the dairy industry's economic functioning. Dairy farming in India functions on small margins. As a result, the upkeep of unproductive animals would throw their bottom lines out of alignment.

**Sources: the Hindu.**

## **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA):**

#### **Context:**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently said efforts were on to improve the law-and-order situation for the controversial **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act** of 1958 to be completely lifted from the northeast.

- He said the AFSPA could be withdrawn (from April 1) partially from Assam, Manipur and Nagaland due to peaceful conditions since 2014.

#### **What does the AFSPA mean?**

In simple terms, AFSPA gives armed forces the power to maintain public order in "disturbed areas".

#### **Powers given to armed forces:**

1. They have the authority to prohibit a gathering of five or more persons in an area, can use force or even open fire after giving due warning if they feel a person is in contravention of the law.
2. If reasonable suspicion exists, the army can also arrest a person without a warrant; enter or search premises without a warrant; and ban the possession of firearms.
3. Any person arrested or taken into custody may be handed over to the officer in charge of the nearest police station along with a report detailing the circumstances that led to the arrest.

### **What is a “disturbed area” and who has the power to declare it?**

A disturbed area is one which is declared by notification under Section 3 of the AFSPA. An area can be disturbed due to differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.

- The Central Government, or the Governor of the State or administrator of the Union Territory can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area.

### **Has there been any review of the Act?**

On November 19, 2004, the Central government appointed a five-member committee headed by Justice B P Jeevan Reddy to review the provisions of the act in the north eastern states.

- The committee submitted its report in 2005, which included the following recommendations: (a) AFSPA should be repealed and appropriate provisions should be inserted in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967; (b) The Unlawful Activities Act should be modified to clearly specify the powers of the armed forces and paramilitary forces and (c) grievance cells should be set up in each district where the armed forces are deployed.

The 5th report of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission on public order has also recommended the repeal of the AFSPA.

**Naga People’s Movement for Human Rights vs Union of India- SC’s 1997 verdict laid down guidelines for use of AFSPA:**

- The 1997 judgment of a Constitution Bench held that the power under Section 4(a) of the AFSPA to use deadly force should be employed only under “certain circumstances”.
- The court noted that the “power to cause death is relatable to maintenance of public order in a disturbed area and is to be exercised under definite circumstances”.
- These preconditions include a declaration by a high-level authority that an area is “disturbed”. The officer concerned decides to use deadly force on the opinion that it is “necessary” to maintain public order. But he has to give “due warning” first.
- The persons against whom the action was taken by the armed forces should have been “acting in contravention of any law or order for the time being in force in the disturbed area”.

#### **Naga killings point to AFSPA pitfalls:**

In December 2021, a group of daily wage workers who were returning to their village were killed by 21 Para Commando unit, reportedly after information that some NSCN(K) terrorists were travelling in the area.

- Following the killings, the Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio had demanded the repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act.
- Rio criticised the Union Government for extending the “disturbed area” tag for Nagaland every year.

**Sources: the Hindu.**

## **Recent steps to prevent Cyber Breaches:**

#### **Context:**

India’s nodal cybersecurity agency, Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has taken the following steps to prevent Cyber Breaches:

- All service providers, intermediaries, data center providers, corporates, and government organizations have to report cyber incidents within six hours of their detection.
- The new directions require virtual asset, exchange, and custodian wallet providers to maintain records on KYC and financial transactions for a period of five years.

- Companies providing cloud, virtual private network (VPN) will also have to register validated names, emails, and IP addresses of subscribers.
- Service providers will also have to provide information and assistance to CERT-In for any action taken to mitigate the impact of the cyber incident.
- To ensure the chain of events is accurately reflected in the time frame, service providers have been asked to connect and synchronize all their ICT systems clocks to the Network Time Protocol (NTP) Server of the National Informatics Centre (NIC) or National Physical Laboratory (NPL).

#### **Need for:**

The directions have been issued under the provisions of sub-section (6) of section 70B of the Information Technology Act, 2000 after CERT-In found certain gaps that were “causing hindrance to incident analysis”.

#### **Significance:**

CERT-In said these directions will enhance “overall cybersecurity posture” and guarantee “safe and trusted Internet” in the country.

#### **What is NTP?**

NTP is a protocol used for reliably transmitting and receiving accurate time sources over TCP/IP-based networks. It is used for synchronizing the internal clock of computers to a common time source.

#### **Cyber attacks in the country:**

Cyberattacks on Indian organizations have more than doubled in recent years. For instance, ransomware attacks on Indian organizations in 2021 increased 218% year-on-year (YoY), reported security firm Palo Alto Networks.

#### **What is CERT-In?**

CERT-In is the national nodal agency for responding to computer security incidents as and when they occur.

- The constituency of CERT-In is the Indian Cyber Community.
- CERT-In was established in 2004 as a functional organization of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

#### **Functions:**



The Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008 designated CERT-In to serve as the national agency to perform the following functions in the area of cyber security:

- Collection, analysis and dissemination of information on cyber incidents.
- Forecast and alerts of cyber security incidents.
- Emergency measures for handling cyber security incidents.
- Coordination of cyber incident response activities.
- Issue guidelines, advisories, vulnerability notes and whitepapers relating to information.
- Security practices, procedures, prevention, response and reporting of cyber incidents.
- Such other functions relating to cyber security as may be prescribed.

**Sources:** the Hindu.

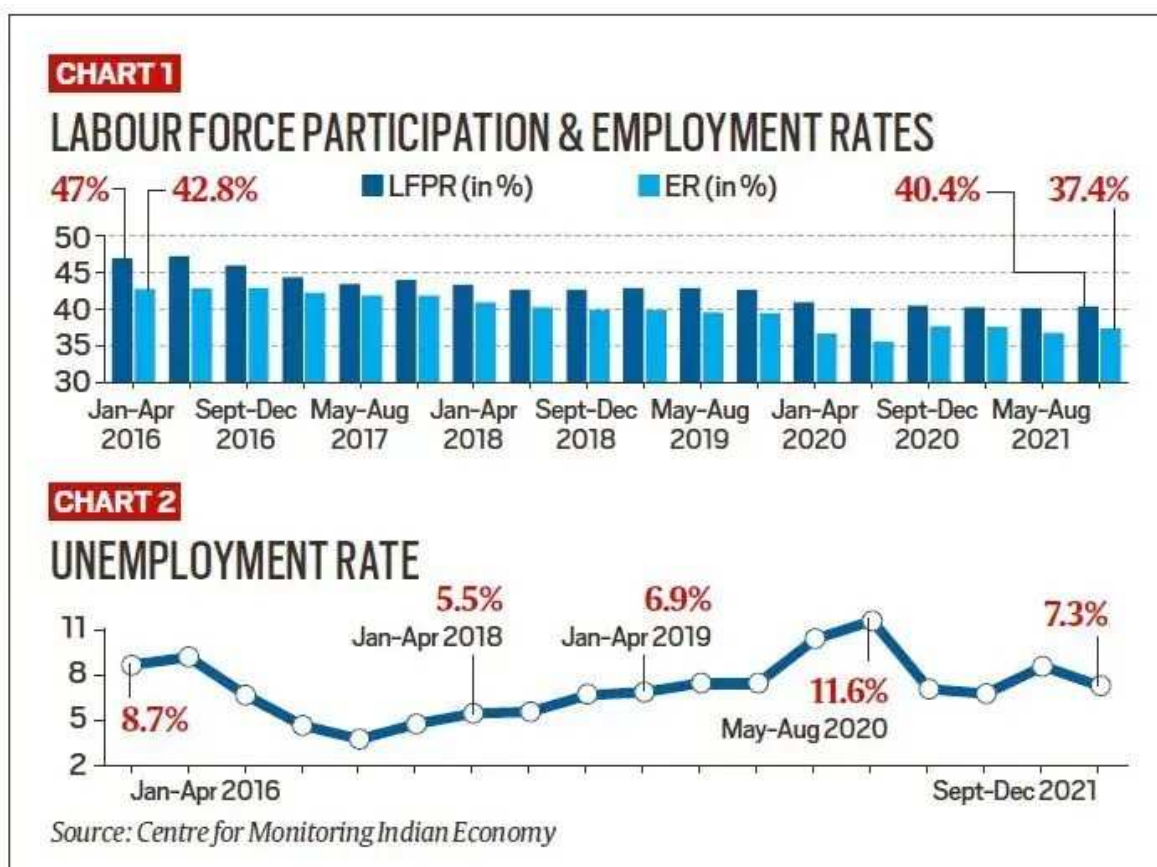
## Labour force participation rate (LFPR):

- LFPR essentially is the percentage of the working-age (15 years or older) population that is asking for a job; it represents the “demand” for jobs in an economy.
- It includes those who are employed and those who are unemployed.

### Why in News?

In India, the LFPR is not only lower than in the rest of the world but also falling.

- The world over, LFPR is around 60%. In India, it has been sliding over the last 10 years and has shrunk from 47% in 2016 to just 40% as of December 2021.



## World Book and Copyright Day 2022:

To promote awareness on the benefits of reading books, World Book Day, also known as World Book and Copyright Day 2022 is observed every year on April 23.

- The day is celebrated by UNESCO and other related organisations across the world to honour authors, and books, promote the art of reading, etc.
- In 2022, the World Book Capital is the Mexican city of Guadalajara.
- The World Book Capital of 2021 was Tbilisi, Georgia.

The theme for World Book and Copyright Day 2022 is “Read, so you never feel low”.

### Why was this day chosen?

UNESCO has selected 23rd April as World Book Day to pay tribute to great literary figures including William Shakespeare, Miguel Cervantes, and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega who died on this day.

## Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC):

- The ECGC Ltd is wholly owned by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Established in 1957.
- ECGC was established to promote exports by providing credit insurance services to exporters against non-payment risks by the overseas buyers due to commercial and political reasons.

## World Coal Association:

- The World Coal Association (WCA) is an international non-profit, non-governmental association based in London, United Kingdom.
- It was created to represent the global coal industry.
- The association was formerly called the World Coal Institute (WCI) but changed its name in November 2010.
- The WCA undertakes lobbying, organises workshops, and provides coal information to decision makers.
- It is co-author of a report on the future of coal in ASEAN nations.