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GUJARAT UNIFORM CIVIL CODE BILL: PRESIDENT'S ASSENT

- The law aims to regulate and govern matters relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, live-in relationships and related issues.
- The law will apply not only throughout Gujarat, but also to Gujaratis residing outside the State.
- However, the law will not apply to Scheduled Tribes covered under Article 342 of the Constitution.
- Similarly, it will not apply to individuals or communities whose customary rights are protected under Part XXI of the Constitution.
- Under the law, marriages may continue to be solemnised according to customary marriage practices, religious beliefs, marriage rituals and traditions.
- Marriage ceremonies such as : Saptapadi, Nikah, Anand Karaj, Mangal Phera have been specifically recognised.
- Compulsory Marriage Registration : Registration of marriage has been made mandatory.
- If a person deliberately fails to submit the required documents for compulsory registration, a fine of Rs.10,000 may be imposed.
- Ban on Multiple Marriages : Marriage to more than one person at the same time has been prohibited.
- People in Gujarat who are in a live-in relationship must mandatorily submit details regarding the relationship.
- Children born out of such live-in relationships will be recognised as legitimate children under the law.

INTERNATIONAL HORTICULTURE CENTRE IN ANDHRA PRADESH

- An International Horticulture Centre and an Indian Agricultural School are proposed to be established at Madanapalle in Annamayya district, near Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, at a total cost of Rs.1 lakh crore.
- The project is to be implemented with: Rs.40,000 crore assistance from the Central Government, and Rs.60,000 crore through private investment.
- Through this project, the area under fruit production in the State is expected to increase by 6 lakh acres.

ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

» Madhav Gadgil Committee

- An expert committee headed by ecologist Madhav Gadgil was constituted to study the environmental degradation in the Western Ghats.
- The committee submitted its report in 2011.
- The Gadgil Committee defined about 1.29 lakh sq. km as the Western Ghats region and recommended that the entire region be declared an Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA).
- The committee divided the region into three zones.
- In Zones 1 and 2, it recommended that activities such as the following should not be permitted : Construction of new dams, Railway projects, Road construction projects, Establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs)
- The Gadgil Committee also recommended the phased elimination of mining activities and the use of plastics and chemical fertilisers within a specified period.

» Kasturirangan Committee

- States including Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Goa and Maharashtra opposed the recommendations of the Gadgil Committee, arguing that they would adversely affect the development of their States.
- Following this opposition, the then Manmohan Singh Government constituted another committee under the chairmanship of former ISRO Chairman K. Kasturirangan to review the recommendations of the Gadgil Committee.
- The Kasturirangan Committee submitted its report in 2013.
- The committee defined around 1.64 lakh sq. km as the Western Ghats region.
- Of this, it recommended that approximately 60,000 sq. km should be declared an Ecologically Sensitive Area.
- State-wise Ecologically Sensitive Areas identified by the Kasturirangan Committee
- Karnataka – 20,668 sq. km, covering 1,576 villages, Maharashtra – 17,340 sq. km, covering 2,159 villages, Kerala – 13,108 sq. km, covering 123 villages, Tamil Nadu – 6,914 sq. km, covering 135 villages, Goa – 1,461 sq. km, covering 99 villages, Gujarat – 449 sq. km, covering 64 villages.
- These areas were identified by the Kasturirangan Committee as Ecologically Sensitive Areas in the Western Ghats.