

31 – 12 – 2021

News: Sale of Electoral Bonds at Authorised Branches of State Bank of India (SBI)

Electoral Bonds

- Electoral Bonds are financial instruments that allow donors to pay political parties using banks as an intermediary.
- The instrument, will not carry any interest. The bonds will not carry the name of the donor and can be brought for any value, in multiples of 1000.
- Electoral bonds will be valid for 15 days from the date of purchase.
- The bonds will be available for purchase for a period of 10 days each in the beginning of every quarter. Additional 30 days would be given for Lok Sabha Elections.
- Bonds can be purchased in January, April, July and October of every year.
- One cannot get loan, cannot pledge against purchases and it is not listed in any exchanges.
- An Indian Citizen (individual or entity) is only eligible to purchase the bonds whereas only registered parties which have secured at least 1% of votes polled in last Lok Sabha General election or elections to the State Legislative Assembly are eligible to receive the Electoral bonds.

News: AFSPA extended in Nagaland

- The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) has been extended in Nagaland for another six months by the Union Home Ministry.
- In exercise of the powers conferred under Section 4 of the Act, “the Central government hereby declares that whole of the State of Nagaland to be ‘disturbed area’ for a period of six months with effect from 30th December, 2021, for the purpose of the said Act”, the notification stated.

Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)

- Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) was enacted in **1958**, granting **extra-ordinary powers and immunity to the armed forces to bring back order in the disturbed areas.**
- 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.**
- Once a region is declared ‘**disturbed**’ then it has to **maintain the status quo for a minimum of three months**, as per The Disturbed Areas Act of 1976.

- The **state governments can suggest** whether the Act is required to be enforced or not. But under Section (3) of the act, their **opinion can be overruled** by the governor or the Centre.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is the authority that would decide on the imposition of AFSPA in the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Ladakh.
- Initially when the act came into force in 1958 the power to confer AFSPA was given only to the governor of the state. This **power was conferred on the central government with the amendment in 1978** (Tripura was declared a disturbed area by the central government, over the opposition by the state government).
- The act **does not explicitly explain the circumstances on which it can be declared as 'disturbed area'**. It only states that “the AFSPA only requires that such authority be of the opinion that whole or parts of the area are in a dangerous or disturbed condition such that the use of the Armed Forces in aid of civil powers is necessary.
- 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. A suitable notification would have to be made in the Official Gazette. As per Section 3, it can be invoked in places where “**the use of armed forces in aid of the civil power is necessary**”.

Some of the Immunities / Powers include:

- **Fire upon anyone** after giving warning who is acting against law and order in disturbed areas.
- **Arrest anyone** without warrant.
- **Stop and search** any vehicle or vessel.
- **Legal immunity** for these actions.
- Presently, AFSPA is enforced in Area **under 8 police stations of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur (excluding 7 assembly constituencies of Imphal), Mizoram, Entire state of Nagaland and Jammu and Kashmir.**

News: Odisha radio-tags rescued Indian pangolin

- The Odisha Forest and Environment Department has completed its first ever radio tagging of the Indian pangolin in an attempt to standardise the rehabilitation protocol for the animal in the State.

Indian Pangolin

- Indian Pangolin is **widely distributed in India, except the arid region, high Himalayas and the North-East.** The species is also found in **Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.**

- Within India, the Indian Pangolin is widely distributed and is found in **Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.**
- Pangolin is a **harmless nocturnal animal with no teeth.**
- Another sub-species **Chinese pangolin is also found in India.**
- IUCN Status: **Indian Pangolin– Endangered.**
- CITES Status: **Appendix I.**
- Wildlife Protection Act: **Schedule I.**
- In February 2015, **TRAFFIC**, in partnership with **WWF-India and Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)** launched a social media campaign to create awareness and divert efforts towards curbing illegal trade in pangolins.
- **World Pangolin Day** is celebrated on the **third Saturday in February** every year.
- Pangolin was included in the **"Not all animals migrate by choice"** campaign by **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB).**
- Recently, Madhya Pradesh forest department, for the first time, **has radio-tagged an Indian Pangolin.** It will help in knowing its ecology and develop an effective conservation plan for it.