



**CENTRE FOR AMBITION**  
(An Institute for Civil Services)

### Justice Verma Committee

**Context:** The Centre recently announced its plan to set up a panel of judges to look into the legal and institutional framework to curb sexual harassment at workplaces following the **#MeToo campaign** on social media.

- However, as early as 2013, the **Justice J.S. Verma Committee**, in its landmark report on gender laws, had recommended setting up of an employment tribunal instead of an internal complaints committee (ICC) in sweeping changes to the Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Bill.
- The panel was formed in the aftermath of the December 16 Nirbhaya gangrape in 2012 and the ensuing nationwide protests, and submitted its report on January 23, 2013.

### **Background:**

At that time of the submission of the report, the Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill had already been passed by the Lok Sabha and was awaiting the Rajya Sabha's nod. The Bill was passed unchanged by the Upper House a month later.

The Committee, chaired by Justice Verma and including Justice Leila Seth and senior lawyer Gopal Subramaniam, termed the Sexual Harassment Bill "unsatisfactory" and said it did not reflect the spirit of the Vishakha guidelines — framed by the Supreme Court in 1997 to curb sexual harassment at the workplace.

### **Major recommendations made by the panel:**

**Punishment for Rape:** The panel has not recommended the death penalty for rapists. It suggests that the punishment for rape should be rigorous imprisonment or RI for seven years to

**Punishment for other sexual offences:** The panel recognised the need to curb all forms of sexual offences and recommended – Voyeurism be punished with upto seven years in jail; stalking or attempts to contact a person repeatedly through any means by up to three years. Acid attacks would be punished by up to seven years if imprisonment; trafficking will be punished with RI for seven to ten years.

**Registering complaints and medical examination:** Every complaint of rape must be registered by the police and civil society should perform its duty to report any case of rape coming to its knowledge. Any officer, who fails to register a case of rape reported to him, or attempts to abort its investigation, commits an offence which shall be punishable as prescribed.

**Marriages to be registered:** As a primary recommendation, all marriages in India (irrespective of the personal laws under which such marriages are solemnised) should mandatorily be registered in the presence of a magistrate. The magistrate will ensure that the marriage has been solemnised without any demand for dowry having been made and that it has taken place with the full and free consent of both partners.

**Amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure:** The panel observed, "The manner in which the rights of women can be recognised can only be manifested when they have full access to justice and when

notification on Payment Data Storage 2018, and the Guidelines for Government Departments for Contractual Terms related to Cloud Storage 2017, show signs of data localisation.

The rationale behind such mandates has been attributed to various factors, such as: securing citizen's data, data privacy, data sovereignty, national security, and economic development of the country. The extensive data collection by technology companies, due to their unfettered access and control of user data, has allowed them to freely process and monetise Indian users' data outside the country.

### **Why technology firms are worried?**

Stricter localisation norms would help India get easier access to data when conducting investigations, but critics say it could lead to increased government demands for data access. Technology firms worry the mandate would hurt their planned investments by raising costs related to setting up new local data centres.

### **Why government is in favour of data localisation?**

- Greater use of digital platforms in India for shopping or social networking have made it a lucrative market for technology companies, but a rising number of data breaches have pushed New Delhi to develop strong data protection rules.
- Also, minimal or deregulated governance on critical data, due to absence of localisation requirements, could be detrimental to India's national security as data would be outside the purview of existing data protection legislation. The ineffectiveness of Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs) in this realm aggravates such government fears.
- In addition to these, India also aspires to become a global hub for, among others, cloud computing, data hosting and international data centres, all of which are prompting the government to enact data localisation requirements for accelerating the nation's economic growth, especially in the sphere of digital technologies.

### **Is data localisation the solution to physical data access and decryption of enciphered data? Can data localisation be conflated with access?**

The proposed law by Srikrishna Committee cannot be a knee-jerk reaction to some events; it has to be in line with the SC judgement, which supports the march of technology, innovations, growth of knowledge, and big data analytics for the growth of economies, and for better services to citizens. It recognizes the role of data driven innovation (DDI) for the growth of economies, and for job creation. But it emphasises that the data so collected be utilised for legitimate purposes.

### **Way ahead:**

Though these policy goals are justifiable, a deeper analysis is required to determine the possible adverse spill-over effects on relevant stakeholders in case a faulty roadmap is adopted to achieve them.

Adequate attention needs to be given to the interests of India's Information Technology Enabled Services (ITeS) and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industries, which are thriving on cross-border data flow.

### **Sikkim wins FAO's Future Policy Award 2018**

**Context:** Sikkim has been awarded UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) Future Policy Gold Award (Gold Prize) for its achievement in becoming the world's first totally organic agriculture state.

### **Background:**

Sikkim became the first fully organic state of India in 2016. Over the years around 75000 hectares of land in the state has been converted into certified organic farms following the guidelines as prescribed by National Programme for Organic Production.

Within 1.24 million tonnes of organic production in the country around 80000 million is supplied by Sikkim alone.

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- It will then make a 5.2bn mile (8.5bn km) journey over seven years to reach its destination by 2025.

### **About BepiColombo:**

BepiColombo is a joint mission between ESA and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), executed under ESA leadership.

**The mission comprises two spacecraft:** the Mercury Planetary Orbiter (MPO) and the Mercury Magnetospheric Orbiter (MMO). The MPO will study the surface and internal composition of the planet, and the MMO will study Mercury's magnetosphere, that is, the region of space around the planet that is influenced by its magnetic field.

**Need:** The scientific interest in going to Mercury lies in the valuable information that such a mission can provide to enhance our understanding of the planet itself as well as the formation of our Solar System; information which cannot be obtained with observations made from Earth.

**Challenges:** Europe's space scientists have identified the mission as one of the most challenging long-term planetary projects, because Mercury's proximity to the Sun makes it difficult for a spacecraft to reach the planet and to survive in the harsh environment found there.

**Significance:** Mercury is a poorly explored planet. So far, only two spacecraft have visited the planet: NASA's Mariner 10, which flew past three times in 1974–5 and returned the first close-up images of the planet, and NASA's MESSENGER spacecraft, which performed three flybys (two in 2008 and one in 2009) before entering orbit around the planet in March 2011. The information obtained when BepiColombo arrives will throw light not only on the composition and history of Mercury, but also on the history and formation of the inner planets in general, including Earth.

### **POCSO Act**

**Context:** The government has clarified that there is no time bar on reporting crimes related to child sexual abuse.

Survivors of child sexual abuse can file a police complaint after they become adults.

- The Ministry of Law, after examining the provisions of POCSO Act vis-à-vis provisions of CrPC, has advised that there appears no period of limitation mentioned in Section 19 in regard to reporting of the offences under the POCSO Act, 2012.

### **Legal provisions:**

**Section 19 of the POCSO Act**, which deals with sexual crimes against children, lays down the procedure for reporting a crime but doesn't specify a time limit or statute of limitation for reporting it.

**Whereas the CrPC lays down different time-limits** for crimes which carry a punishment of up to three years, there is no time bar for crimes that would attract a jail term of more than three years.

### **Significance:**

This is an important step for survivors of child abuse, who may try to file a complaint as adults but are turned away at police stations.

The development assumes significance after considering the fact that on many occasions children are unable to report crimes that they suffered as the perpetrator in many cases happens to be from the family itself or any other known person. Several cases have been reported where the victims have grown up and understood the crime.

### **POCSO Act:**

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act) 2012 was formulated in order to effectively address sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children.

**Role of police:** The Act casts the police in the role of child protectors during the investigative process. Thus, the police personnel receiving a report of sexual abuse of a child are given the responsibility of making urgent

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medicines to all PMBJP Kendra functional across the country.

### **About PMBJP:**

'Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana' is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Govt. Of India, to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses through special kendra's known as Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra.

**Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra (PMBJK)** have been set up to provide generic drugs, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs.

**Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI) is the implementing agency of PMBJP.** BPPI (Bureau of Pharma Public Sector Undertakings of India) has been established under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Govt. of India, with the support of all the CPSUs.

### **What is a Generic Medicine?**

Generic medicines are unbranded medicines which are equally safe and having the same efficacy as that of branded medicines in terms of their therapeutic value. The prices of generic medicines are much cheaper than their branded equivalent.

### **Ask Disha**

**Context:** Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has launched Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered chatbot– Ask Disha ((Digital Interaction to Seek Help Anytime) to help its users answer various queries.

### **About Ask Disha:**

- The chatbot is special computer programme designed to simulate conversation with users, especially over the internet.
- The first-of-its-kind initiative by IRCTC is aimed at facilitating accessibility by answering users' queries

pertaining to various services offered to railway passengers.

- The chatbot is voice enabled and will support several regional languages in the near future. It will offer greatly improved and intuitive customer support by answering customer queries pertaining to all aspects of the services that IRCTC provides.
- The essential features of AskDisha include ability to quickly answer to customer queries, ability to provide round-the-clock customer support, ability to multitask, zero waiting time for query to get answered and overall ability to provide customer with stress-free experience and overall customer satisfaction.

### **#Self4Society app**

**Context:** #Self4Society app, developed by MyGov, has been launched by the government to help coordinate volunteer work undertaken by professionals.

### **About #Self4Society App:**

- This platform will help to create better synergies among so many CSR and other initiatives and lead to a much better outcome of the efforts of professionals.
- Companies have observed that a spirit of service and volunteering improves employee satisfaction and reduces employee attrition.
- The app will have incentives, gamification and intra- and inter-company competitions, and social networking.
- The volunteer time for the government's flagship programmes such as Swachh Bharat is expected to increase.

### **Unified payments interface (UPI)**

**Context:** The Reserve Bank of India has released the guidelines for interoperability between prepaid payment instruments (PPIs) such as wallets and cards that will effectively allow users of popular payment wallets such

century Mughal emperor Akbar founded a fort near the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna, known as Sangam, as he was impressed with its strategic position.

- Hence, Akbar named the fort and its neighbourhood as Ilahabad, which meant the “Abode of God”, inspired by the religion he had founded, Din-i-Illahi. In the later years, Akbar’s grandson Shah Jahan renamed the entire city as Allahabad. However, the area near the Sangam, which is the site of the Kumbh Mela, continued to be called Prayag.

### **Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE)**

**Context:** The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) has signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) and Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS).

#### **Key Highlights:**

- The agreements were signed to launch ‘**Prakriti**’ **programme**, which aims to promote awareness about forests and environment and stimulate interest among the students of NVS and KVS in maintaining a balanced environment and for acquiring skills that reflect care and protection towards forests, environment and society.
- The **main objective** behind the agreements is to provide a platform for the school children to learn practical skills towards sustainable use of the resources.
- The two agreements have been signed for a period of 10 years. They aim to make the Indian youth more sensitive towards national and global issues of environment and thus, help them become responsible citizens.
- The agreements also aim to mobilise a cadre of youth for raising a peoples’ movement, which is committed to the conservation of forest and environment.

- The collaboration will enable transfer of knowledge to students and teachers of NVS and KVS on environment, forest, environmental services and contemporary areas of forestry research through lectures and interactive sessions by ICFRE scientists.

#### **About ICFRE:**

- The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) is **an autonomous council under the Union Environment Ministry**.
- The council mainly guides, promotes and coordinates forestry research, extension and education at the national level through its nine institutes and five centres located across the country.

#### **Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS):**

The Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti is **an autonomous organisation established under the Department of School Education and Literacy in the Ministry of Human Resource Development**. The organisation was established to provide modern quality education to talented children, predominantly from rural areas, without regard to their family’s socio-economic condition.

#### **Currency monitoring list**

**Context:** In its latest report, the US has said that it could remove India from its currency monitoring list of major trading partners citing certain developments and steps taken by New Delhi, which address some of its major concerns.

#### **Background:**

India was for the first time, in April, placed by the US in its currency monitoring list of countries with potentially questionable foreign exchange policies along with five other countries — China, Germany, Japan, South Korea and Switzerland.

#### **Recent developments:**

- India’s circumstances have shifted markedly, as the central bank’s net sales of foreign exchange over

with Earth. It will remain in a silent orbit around Ceres for decades.

### **Dawn mission:**

- NASA's Dawn mission was aimed at studying the asteroid Vesta and dwarf planet Ceres, celestial bodies believed to have accreted early in the history of the solar system. The mission characterized the early solar system and the processes that dominated its formation.
- Dawn is the only mission ever to orbit two extraterrestrial targets. It orbited giant asteroid Vesta for 14 months from 2011 to 2012, then continued on to Ceres, where it has been in orbit since March 2015.

### **Bihar's 'Shahi Litchi' Gets GI tag**

**Context:** Bihar's Shahi litchi has got the Geographical Indication (GI) tag and has become an exclusive brand in the national and international market.

### **Key facts:**

- The famous Shahi litchi, which is famous for its sweet, juicy, unique flavour and aroma, is mostly grown in Muzaffarpur and neighbouring districts including East Champaran, Vaishali, Samastipur and Begusarai.
- The GI registration was done in the name of Litchi Growers Association of Bihar, which had applied for the tag.

### **Significance:**

Bihar produces 40% of the litchi grown in the country on 38% of the area. The GI tag to Shahi litchi will boost up its demand in the market and will minimise the fear of fake and poor quality litchis. The GI tag for the fruit will help and benefit thousands of litchi growers who will gain access to more markets and get better price in the country and abroad.

### **About GI tag:**

#### **What is it?**

A GI is primarily an agricultural, natural or a manufactured product (handicrafts and industrial goods) originating from a definite geographical territory.

#### **Significance of a GI tag:**

Typically, such a name conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness, which is essentially attributable to the place of its origin.

#### **Security:**

Once the GI protection is granted, no other producer can misuse the name to market similar products. It also provides comfort to customers about the authenticity of that product.

#### **Provisions in this regard:**

- GI is covered as element of intellectual property rights (IPRs) under Paris Convention for Protection of Industrial Property.
- At international level, GI is governed by WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- In India, Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection Act), 1999 governs it.

### **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)**

**Context:** The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi recently chaired the sixth meeting of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) at New Delhi.

- Prime Minister reviewed the activities of NDMA to effectively manage and respond to disasters affecting the country. He also reviewed ongoing projects undertaken by NDMA.
- Prime Minister emphasized on the need for better coordination between the various stakeholders and undertake more joint exercises to bring about

**What is inner core made of?**

- The inner core is made up of two layers outer and inner.
- Outer core is 1,355 miles (2,180 km) thick.

**Why is the radius of inner core unknown?**

- There is no estimated radius of the inner core; however, it plays a distinct role in making Earth's magnetic field.
- The inner core is measured by shear waves, a seismology term, which so tiny and feeble that it can't be observed directly.
- In fact, detecting them has been considered the 'Holy Grail' of global seismology since scientists first predicted the inner core was solid in the 1930s and 40s.

**Purpose of the Earth's inner core:**

When charged particles from the solar wind collide with air molecules above Earth's magnetic poles, it causes the air molecules to glow, causing the auroras – the northern and southern lights.

**How has it been discovered?**

Researchers came up with a way to detect shear waves, or "J waves" in the inner core – a type of wave which can only travel through solid objects.

According to the research published by the university, the wavefield method looks at the similarities between the signals at two receivers after a major earthquake, rather than the direct wave arrivals. The study shows these results can then be used to demonstrate the existence of J waves and infer the shear wave speed in the inner core.

It has been found that the inner core shares some similar elastic properties with gold and platinum.

**What is the significance of this method?**

The understanding of the Earth's inner core has direct consequences for the generation and maintenance of the geomagnetic field, and without that geomagnetic field there would be no life on the Earth's surface.

**Large vacancies for judges in lower courts**

**Context:** Describing as "unacceptable" the existence of 5,133 vacancies of judges in "Higher Judicial Service" and "Lower Judicial Service", the Supreme Court has sought the response of the State governments and the High Courts whether the time for the ongoing recruitment of 4,180 judicial officers could be shortened.

**Directions issued:**

- Passing a suo motu order on the huge number of vacancies in the subordinate judiciary across the country, the court has sought the response from the High Courts/State governments as it noted that the recruitment process for filling 4,180 posts was already underway.
- Noting that there was a mismatch in the number of vacancies, the number of posts for which recruitment process is underway and those still pending, the apex court also sought details of the vacancies that have occurred since the current recruitment process commenced.
- The court also sought information whether "infrastructure and manpower available in the different states is adequate if all the posts that are borne in the cadre are to be filled up.

**Malik Mazhar Sultan case:**

A seven-month schedule for recruitment has been formulated by the top court in the Malik Mazhar Sultan case. If the time taken exceeds the schedule fixed by this Court, the reasons thereof should be furnished by the Registries of such High Courts/concerned authorities of the State where the recruitment is done through the Public Service Commission(s) which are in default.

## **The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty**

**Context:** U.S. President Donald Trump has announced that he would “terminate” the INF Treaty in response to a long-running dispute over Russian noncompliance with the treaty.

### **What’s the issue?**

The United States first alleged in its July 2014 Compliance Report that Russia is in violation of its INF Treaty obligations “not to possess, produce, or flight-test” a ground-launched cruise missile having a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers or “to possess or produce launchers of such missiles.” Subsequent State Department assessments in 2015, 2016, and 2017 repeated these allegations. Russia denies that it is in violation of the agreement. On December 8, 2017, the Trump administration released a strategy to counter alleged Russian violations of the Treaty.

### **About the Intermediate- Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty:**

The 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty required the United States and the Soviet Union to eliminate and permanently forswear all of their nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges of 500 to 5,500 kilometers.

- The treaty marked the first time the superpowers had agreed to reduce their nuclear arsenals, eliminate an entire category of nuclear weapons, and utilize extensive on-site inspections for verification. As a result of the INF Treaty, the United States and the Soviet Union destroyed a total of 2,692 short-, medium-, and intermediate-range missiles by the treaty’s implementation deadline of June 1, 1991.
- Despite its name, the INF Treaty covers all types of ground-launched cruise and ballistic missiles — whether their payload is conventional or nuclear. Moscow and Washington are prohibited from deploying these missiles anywhere in the world, not just in Europe. However, the treaty applies only to

ground-launched systems. Both sides are free to deploy air- and sea-launched missiles within the 500-to-5,500-kilometer range.

### **What are the military implications of withdrawal?**

It is unclear what INF-prohibited systems the United States could deploy to Europe or Asia in the near term. The U.S. military has not developed any land-based missiles within the prohibited ranges for decades and has only just started funding a new ground-launched cruise missile to match the 9M729.

- Moscow is in a very different position and could rapidly expand deployment. The number of operational 9M729 missiles has been quite limited, but released from its official obligations under the treaty, Moscow could deploy more units rapidly.
- Russia could also effectively reclassify the RS-26 Rubezh, an experimental system that has been tested just above the INF Treaty’s 5,500-kilometer limit. To avoid violating the INF, Russian officials previously described the RS-26 as an intercontinental ballistic missile. However, it could form the basis for a missile of a slightly shorter range if Moscow wished to boost its INF forces — without counting it under the U.S.-Russian New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or New START, governing longer-range systems.

### **What are the diplomatic implications of withdrawal?**

Withdrawal is likely to be controversial with U.S. allies in NATO, further splitting the alliance at a difficult time for transatlantic relations. Many Western European NATO states favor retaining the INF, in conjunction with previous U.S. policy designed to push Moscow back into compliance. This raises concerns that divisions within NATO may worsen when the United States officially withdraws from the INF.

Withdrawal will probably not lead to a new INF deal. Given its heavy investment in intermediate-range systems, China will not take up Trump’s offer of talks with the

**Need for cross-border insolvency framework:**

As the size of the Indian economy grows, business and trade have adopted an increasingly international character. Creditors and corporates frequently transact business in more than one jurisdiction. Foreign banks and creditors finance Indian companies and Indian banks have foreign exposure. Also, as part of its Ease of Doing Business and Make in India policies, India seeks to attract foreign companies to set up manufacturing facilities in India.

Besides, global experience demonstrates that cross-border investment decisions and their outcomes, are considerably affected by the insolvency laws in force in a country. Towards this end, even though the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 has resulted in significant improvement in India's insolvency regime, there is a need to include cross-border insolvency in the Code to provide a comprehensive insolvency framework.

**Benefits associated:**

Inclusion of cross-border insolvency framework will further enhance ease of doing business, provide a mechanism of cooperation between India and other countries in the area of insolvency resolution, and protect creditors in the global scenario.

Also, it will make India an attractive investment destination for foreign creditors given the increased predictability and certainty of the insolvency framework.

**UNCITRAL Model Law of Cross Border Insolvency, 1997:**

The UNCITRAL Model Law has till now been adopted in 44 countries and forms part of international best practices in dealing with cross border insolvency issues. The model law gives precedence to domestic proceedings and protection of public interest.

The advantages of the model law include greater confidence generation among foreign investors, adequate flexibility for seamless integration with the domestic Insolvency Law and a robust mechanism for international cooperation.

**Four major principles of UNCITRAL Model Law- The model law deals with four major principles of cross-border insolvency, namely:**

- Direct access to foreign insolvency professionals and foreign creditors to participate in or commence domestic insolvency proceedings against a defaulting debtor.
- Recognition of foreign proceedings & provision of remedies.
- Cooperation between domestic and foreign courts & domestic and foreign insolvency practitioners.
- Coordination between two or more concurrent insolvency proceedings in different countries. The main proceeding is determined by the concept of centre of main interest (COMI).

**Global scenario:**

On the global scale, the UNCITRAL (United Nations Commission on International Trade Law) Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency, 1997 (Model Law) has emerged as the most widely accepted legal framework to deal with cross-border insolvency issues while ensuring the least intrusion into the country's domestic insolvency law. Due to the growing prevalence of multinational insolvencies, the Model Law has been adopted by 44 States till date, including Singapore, UK and US.

**Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali campaign**

**Context:** Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has launched Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali campaign. MOEFCC has merged this year's campaign with "Green Good Deed" movement that has been initiated as social mobilization for conservation and protection of environment.

**Aim:** To reduce adverse environmental conditions especially pollution in the country after post Diwali celebrations due to excessive bursting of crackers which contributes significantly to air and noise pollution.

- Including its access roads, the bridge spans 55km (34 miles) and connects Hong Kong to Macau and the mainland Chinese city of Zhuhai.
- The bridge has cost about \$20bn (£15.3bn) and seen several delays. The bridge, designed to withstand earthquakes and typhoons, was built using 400,000 tonnes of steel, enough to build 60 Eiffel Towers.
- About 30km of its total length crosses the sea of the Pearl River delta. To allow ships through, a 6.7km section in the middle dips into an undersea tunnel that runs between two artificial islands.

other than an office declared not to disqualify its holder by a law passed by Parliament or state legislature.

### **What are the basic criteria to disqualify an MP or MLA?**

Basic disqualification criteria for an MP are laid down in Article 102 of the Constitution, and for an MLA in Article 191. They can be disqualified for: a) Holding an office of profit under government of India or state government; b) Being of unsound mind; c) Being an undischarged insolvent; d) Not being an Indian citizen or for acquiring citizenship of another country.

### **Office of Profit**

**Context:** President R N Kovind has dismissed a petition seeking disqualification of 27 AAP MLAs from Delhi on grounds of having held ‘**office of profit**’ as chairpersons of patient welfare committees (Rogi Kalyan Samiti) constituted by Delhi government.

#### **Background:**

The decision was based on an opinion tendered by the Election Commission in July, stating that the said office was exempt from purview of ‘office of profit’ under provisions of the Delhi MLAs (Removal of Disqualification) Act, 1997.

Government of NCT of Delhi, in its submission to EC, had made it clear that **Rogi Kalyan Samitis** were constituted by it and that their chairpersons were not entitled to any remuneration and would therefore fall under the exemption granted by item 14 of the Schedule of the Delhi MLAs (Removal of Disqualification) Act. The Act provides for exemption of office of chairman, vice-chairman and members of the hospital advisory committee, Delhi, from purview of “office of profit”.

#### **What is an ‘office of profit’?**

If an MLA or an MP holds a government office and receives benefits from it, then that office is termed as an “office of profit”. A person will be disqualified if he holds an office of profit under the central or state government,