

## POCSO ACT

- A significant feature of the POCSO Act is its gender-neutral nature
- Second, there is sufficient general awareness now to report cases of sexual exploitation of children not only by individuals but also by institutions as non-reporting has been made a specific offense under the POCSO Act.
- The POCSO Act provides for recording the statement of the affected child by a woman sub-inspector at the child's residence or place of choice.
- But it is practically impossible to comply with this provision when the number of women in the police force is just 10%, and many police stations hardly have women staff.
- Similarly, despite funds being provided by the Centre to strengthen mahila desks, many police stations still do not have even a single woman staff.
- Similarly, though there is a provision to record statements using audio-video means, and a Supreme Court judgment, *Shafhi Mohammad vs The State of Himachal Pradesh* (2018), on capturing and preserving the scene of the crime of heinous offenses using audio-video means (followed by standardization of technical specifications by the Bureau of Police Research and Development for uniformity), the pilot project has yet to be implemented across States.
- In the absence of proper infrastructure to ensure the integrity of electronic evidence, the admissibility of evidence recorded using any audio-video means will always remain a challenge.
- The Supreme Court in *Jarnail Singh vs the State of Haryana* (2013) held that the given statutory provision should also be the basis to help determine age even for a child who is a victim of crime.
- However, in absence of any change in the law or even specific directions, the investigating officers (IOs) continue to rely on the date of birth recorded in school admission-withdrawal registers which, in most cases, parents (in the absence of a hospital or any other authentic records) are not able to defend in the court.
- Further, the time mandated to complete the investigation of rape (as in the CrPC, without a similar provision in the POCSO Act) is two months.
- Though the aim is to expedite the investigation, it has resulted in two significant changes in the field.

- One, there is much pressure on the IOs to somehow submit a charge sheet in two months irrespective of what stage the investigation is at.
- The IOs do not want to invite internal punishment as the Ministry of Home Affairs supervises POCSO cases through the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) and State police headquarters.

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### IR in news

#### IR IN NEWS

- New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, a global figurehead of progressive politics, shocked the country on Thursday by announcing she would resign from office in a matter of weeks.
- The 42- year- old who steered the country through natural disasters, the COVID pandemic, and its worst-ever terror attack.

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### Nano urea

#### What is a nano urea liquid?

- Nano urea liquid is a nanotechnology-based fertilizer to increase the growth of crops by restoring nitrogen to plants as an

alternative to conventional urea. It enhances the nutritional quality and productivity of the crop along with improving the underground water quality.

- Conventional Urea, a chemical fertilizer, is used to artificially fulfill the nitrogen need of the plant while Nano urea liquid is developed to replace the former and cut down its requirement by 50%.
- The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO), a cooperative society, has developed and patented nano urea liquid technology.

#### What are the benefits of nano urea liquid?

- “The power of a full sack of urea has come into a half-liter bottle, leading to huge savings in logistics. The Plant will produce about 1.5 lakh bottles of 500 ml per day.”
- Nano urea liquid will help in reducing the use of chemical fertilizers to save the environment because the imbalanced use of fertilizers is deteriorating the health of the soil. It is also causing air and water pollution. Nano Urea can be a game-changer as it will cut down the use of conventional urea by up to 50%.

- It will also help in direct savings, reduce transportation costs, and make storage much easier.

#### **How does it work?**

- According to the IFFCO website, "When sprayed on leaves, Nano Urea easily enters through stomata and other openings and is assimilated by the plant cells.
- It is easily distributed through the phloem from the source to sink inside the plant as per its need. Unutilized nitrogen is stored in the plant vacuole and is slowly released for proper growth and development of the plant.

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#### **French protest**

- French train drivers, teachers, and refinery workers were among those who walked off their jobs in a nationwide day of strikes against government plans to raise the retirement age by two years to 64.
- The strikes, and protests expected across the country, are a major test for President Emmanuel Macron, who says his pension reform plan.
- Under the proposals outlined by the prime minister earlier this month, from 2027 people will have to work

43 years to qualify for a full pension, as opposed to 42 years now.

- Hailed by the government as a vital measure to safeguard France's share-out pension system, the reform is proving deeply unpopular among the public.
- Pushing back the retirement age by two years and extending the pay-in period would bring an additional 17.7 billion euros (\$19.1 billion) in annual pension contributions, allowing the system to break even by 2027.

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#### **SC upheld the Penalty on google**

- The Supreme Court on Thursday affirmed a National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) order refusing interim relief to Google against a Competition Commission of India (CCI) directive to pay a penalty of ₹1,337.76 crores for "abuse of dominance" in the Android ecosystem.

#### **WHY is a Penalty imposed on google?**

- The Google Play Store is a marketplace for apps and services and has a collection of more than three million applications.

- In the current matter involving Google, the CCI examined if the company violated the Competition Act through its policy of requiring app developers to mandatorily use Google Play's billing system (GPBS) not only for receiving payments for paid app downloads but also for in-app purchases.
- The probe also noted that if the app developers did not comply with Google's policy of using GPBS, they would not be permitted to list their apps on the Play Store.
- The CCI thus concluded that making access to the Play Store contingent on mandatory usage of GPBS was "one-sided and arbitrary" and it also denied app developers "the inherent choice to use payment processor[s] of their liking from the open market."
- According to Counterpoint research, 97% of India's 600 million smartphones are powered by Google's Android OS. While Android is an in-principle open-source OS, the CCI found that it is controlled by Google.
- The Commission noted that through its restrictive agreements with smartphone manufacturers, Google made sure that manufacturers who wished to use its proprietary apps such as Chrome, Play Store, and YouTube and so on had to use Google's version of Android.
- The CCI also concluded that the Google Play Store is the largest app store in terms of users, availability of apps, and developers compared to other app stores.
- The order noted that the Play Store, which is a part of the Google Suite (Chrome, Gmail, YouTube, etc.) comes pre-installed in 100% of Android OS devices, and owing to the mandatory pre-installation and entry barriers in the market, users did not have the option of side-loading or downloading apps outside of the Play Store.

#### **About NCLAT**

- National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) was constituted under Section 410 of the Companies Act, 2013 for hearing appeals against the orders of the National Company Law Tribunal(s) (NCLT), with effect from 1st June 2016.
- NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by NCLT(s) under Section 61 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC), with effect from 1st December 2016.
- NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by the Insolvency and

Bankruptcy Board of India under  
Section 202 and Section 211 of IBC.

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