

1. 'Aliens in US must register within 30 days'**US immigration registration rule**

If immigrants to the US are not carrying their ID and immigration documents on their person, they could face penalties. The Donald Trump administration is now enforcing a rule that anyone who has lived in the US for more than 30 days has to register with the government and carry the registration papers with them at all times, for checks and inspections.

**What is the US rule about mandatory registration?**

In a statement issued on April 11, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said, "all foreign nationals present in the United States longer than 30 days that the deadline are to register under the Alien Registration Act. This law requires all aliens in the United States for more than 30 days to register with the federal government. Failure to comply is a crime, punishable by fines, imprisonment, or both."

The Trump administration is demanding compliance with a rule that has been around for decades, but rarely enforced since World War II.

What is the background?

When Trump was campaigning, one of his major promises had been a crackdown on illegal immigration. Soon after coming to power, he on January 20 issued Executive Order 14159, 'Protecting the American People Against Invasion', which directed the DHS to enforce the registration rule strictly. Failure to comply with the registration requirement was to be "treated as a civil and criminal enforcement priority."

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: Indian Express

2. Assam's decision to withdraw Foreigner Tribunals cases against Koch Rajbongshis**Why in News?**

Earlier this month, the Assam Cabinet announced the withdrawal of around 28,000 pending cases at the state's Foreigner Tribunals against members of the Koch Rajbongshi community. The quasi-judicial bodies are meant to "furnish opinion on the question as to whether a person is or is not a foreigner within the meaning of Foreigners Act, 1946".

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the decision was taken as the state government considered them an "indigenous community".



Who are the Koch Rajbongshi?

The community traces its lineage to the Koch Dynasty of the Kamata Kingdom, which rose to power in the 16th century. Today, its members are spread across Assam and West Bengal, as well as parts of Bihar, Meghalaya, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, reflecting the geographical spread of the kingdom.

In Assam, the community has a significant presence in the western districts of Goalpara, Dhubri, South Salmara Mankachar, Bongaigaon and Kokrajhar. In 2020, given their dominant presence in some regions, the state government created a Kamatapur Autonomous Council in parts of these districts for the "social, economic, educational, ethnic and cultural

advancement of the Koch Rajbongshi community."

While the community has OBC status in Assam, it is one of six communities that has long been demanding Scheduled Tribe status – a politically fraught issue in the state. Another demand that gathered steam in the 1990s, though stronger among West Bengal-based groups, has been for a separate Kamatapur state comprising parts of northern West Bengal and western Assam.

Why have there been citizenship cases against them in Assam?

According to Khitish Koch, president of the All Koch Rajbongshi Students Union, the transborder nature of the community has played a role in the "D-voter" (Doubtful voter) tag being attached to many Koch Rajbongshis, putting a question mark on their citizenship. Foreigner Tribunals are tasked with adjudicating whether "suspected foreigners" (D-voters and cases referred to them by the border police) are foreigners, that is, people who entered India after March 25, 1971, according to the 1985 Assam Accord.

What is the political significance of this announcement?

The six communities have long been promised the fulfillment of their ST status demand. Prime Minister Narendra Modi lent his support to it while campaigning in Assam for the 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

Eleven years later, a Group of Ministers formed by the state government to examine the demand has yet to formalise its report on the quantum of reservation and measures to

safeguard the rights and interests of existing tribal communities. According to the 2011 census, 12.4% of the state's population comprises Scheduled Tribes.

As the 2026 Assam Legislative Assembly election draws closer, the groups are expected to build pressure on the state government.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: Indian Express

3. Mehul Choksi arrested in Belgium. What happens now?

Why Now?



Mehul Choksi, a key accused in the Rs 13,500 crore Punjab National Bank loan fraud case, was arrested in Belgium recently. New Delhi has pressed for his extradition from Belgium, so that the 65-year-old fugitive diamantaire can be tried in India.

Choksi is said to have arrived in Belgium last year to get cancer treatment. Prior to that, he had been living in Antigua and Barbuda as a citizen since 2018. Choksi's wife, Preeti, is said to be a Belgian citizen.

Extradition Treaty with Belgium

India first signed an extradition treaty with Belgium in 1901. The treaty allows extradition on the basis of "dual criminality", including for financial crimes. Dual criminality essentially means that an individual can be extradited only if her offence is punishable in both jurisdictions involved.

The treaty, however, prohibits extradition for offences of political nature or in cases where the individual in question can prove she is being prosecuted in the requesting country for political reasons. It also says that the fugitive arrested shall be released if the requesting country fails to present evidence of culpability within two months.

In 2020, India and Belgium signed the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty for better cooperation on fugitives.

Extradition Process

Choksi was arrested in Belgium on the requests of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which are probing the case against Choksi. Once the extradition process begins, teams from both agencies will visit Belgium, and prepare a case in accordance with the country's laws.

However, it is unlikely that Choksi will be back in India any time soon, if at all. While extraditions are typically lengthy legal processes, this is especially true in Europe.

Choksi's arrest in Belgium showcases India's diplomatic heft, but whether it can also fast track the legal process remains to be seen.

India's experience with the UK, for the extradition of Choksi's nephew and co-accused Nirav Modi and former Kingfisher Airlines owner Vijay Mallya, has not been encouraging. Mallya left India in 2016, while Modi fled to the UK in 2018.

What is Choksi accused of?

Coming from a family of diamantaires, Choksi expanded his family business by opening fancy stores across India and abroad under the aegis of Gitanjali Group. Along with his nephew Nirav Modi, he splurged heavily on marketing and advertising — roping in international stars such as Kate Winslet and Rosie Huntington-Whiteley.

Much of this, however, was funded by loans from the PNB. By the time the PNB discovered the irregularities and approached the CBI, both Choksi and Modi had fled the country, after setting the bank back by over Rs 13,500 crore. Choksi alone stands accused of defrauding the bank of more than Rs 6,000 crore.

Following the registration of the case, ED attached Choksi's assets, including the diamonds in his stores, claiming them to be of value in excess of Rs 5,000 crore. However, a laboratory examination of the diamonds revealed most of them were fake. The real value of Choksi's assets, including all his properties and investments, today stands at around Rs 2,500 crore.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Source: Indian Express

'Join PrepMate IAS'

WhatsApp 'Name' and 'State' on 75979-00000 to receive daily current affairs in simple and concise language.