

25 August, 2022

Nebam Rebia Case

❖ Context

- The **Supreme Court** has referred the dispute between two factions of a political party in Maharashtra over their claim to the name and symbol of the party to a Constitution Bench.



❖ Key Highlights

- The Bench highlighted there were gaps in the court's earlier judgement in the Nebam Rebia case (2016).
- In that case, the then **Governor of Arunachal Pradesh**, in his discretion, had advanced the assembly session by a month & the then **Speaker of Arunachal Pradesh** had disqualified MLAs on ground of defection just a day before the agenda for his removal was to be considered by the legislative assembly on the direction of the Governor.

❖ Speaker's Power

- **Art 179(c)** of the Constitution provides that a Speaker may be removed from office by a resolution of the Assembly passed by a majority of all the then members.
- The Constituent Assembly debates revealed that the phrase 'all the then members' was preferred to 'members present and voting' as it was precise.

- Hence, the Court concluded that the Speaker's decision to disqualify rebel MLAs was an attempt to overcome voting by '**all the then members**' (**effective majority**) and evade removal.

❖ Governor's Discretion

- In the same case, the SC confirmed that the **Governor does not enjoy broad discretionary powers** and is always subject to constitutional standards. The Court concluded that the Governor's discretion did not extend to the powers to summon, prorogue or dissolve the legislature of the State under **Article 174**.
- Hence, he could not summon the House, determine its legislative agenda or address the legislative assembly without aid & advice of the Chief Minister and his cabinet (**Article 163**).

Spectrographic Investigation of Nebular Gas (SING)

❖ Context

- Indian astrophysicists are awaiting clearance from ISRO and Ministry of External Affairs, to go ahead in an ambitious project to install an **Indian-made spectroscope** aboard the developing **Chinese space station Tiangong**.



❖ Key Highlights

- The project, called **SING** has been designed and developed by research students at the **Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bengaluru**.
- It also involves collaboration with the **Institute of Astronomy, Russian Academy of Sciences**.
- It primarily deals with sending and positioning a **spectrograph**, an instrument that splits light into constituent frequencies and wavelengths, to study ultraviolet radiation.
- This will help analyse the make-up and sources of **interstellar gas** in the region that is swept by the space station as it orbits around the earth.

- The SING project will be the **1st space collaboration involving India & China**.
- The plan is to have it ready by the year-end so that it can be launched in the summer of 2023.
- ❖ **About Tiangong**
- It will be only the second such station after the International Space Station in orbit.
- The T-shaped station, when complete, is expected to be around 20% as massive as the International Space Station, or about 460 tonnes on earth.
- The space station consists of three modules, two of which have already been launched in April 2021 and July 2022, respectively.
- The third is expected to be launched this October 2022.

Vertical Launch Short Range Surface-to-Air Missile

❖ Context

- **Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)** and Indian Navy recently successfully flight tested **Vertical Launch Short Range Surface-to-Air Missile (VL-SRSAM)** from the **Integrated Test Range (ITR)**, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.



❖ Key Highlights

- The flight test was carried out from an Indian Naval Ship against a high-speed unmanned aerial target for demonstration of vertical launch capability.
- The missiles, equipped with indigenous Radio Frequency (RF) seeker, intercepted the target with high accuracy.
- The **VL-SRSAM system** has been indigenously designed and developed by DRDO.

- During the test launch, flight path and vehicle performance parameters were monitored using flight data, captured by various range instruments such as Radar, **Electro-optical tracking system (EOTS)** and **Telemetry systems** deployed by ITR, Chandipur.
- It will further strengthen the Indian Navy for neutralising various aerial threats at close ranges including sea-skimming targets.

Face to Face Centres

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Benami Law

❖ Context

- The **Supreme Court of India (SC)** recently ruled that an amendment to the **Benami Act** that came into effect on November 1, 2016, cannot be applied retrospectively to the transactions between September 5, 1988, and October 25, 2016.



❖ What is the Benami Law?

- Introduced in 1988, the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act prohibits Benami transactions & gives the government the right to recover Benami property.
- According to the act, a Benami transaction is a transaction "where a property is transferred to or is held by, a person, and the consideration for such property has been provided, or paid by, another person".



- It also includes transactions where "the property is held for the immediate or future benefit, direct or indirect, of the person who has provided the consideration."

- However, when the property is held by a member of a Hindu undivided family (HUF) on behalf of the HUF, or on behalf of his spouse or children, it cannot be considered Benami. Also, if the property is held in a fiduciary capacity, it does not come under the ambit of the law.
- According to the law, the Centre can confiscate any property that has been tagged as a Benami property.
- Cash and sensitive information can also be termed as 'property' under the act.

❖ What were the Amendments to the Act in 2016?

- The amendment that came into effect on November 1, 2016, inserted a sub-section 2 in section 3 of part 3 of the act.
- It specified that whoever enters a Benami transaction shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term of up to three years or a fine or both. The new punishment was also being applied retrospectively to the transactions that took place before 2016.

Central Bank Digital Currency

❖ Context

- Recently the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) said that digital rupee 'the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)' will be introduced in phases beginning with wholesale businesses in the current financial year.



❖ What is Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)?

- According to the RBI, "CBDC is the legal tender issued by a central bank in a digital form.
- It is the same as a fiat currency and is exchangeable one-to-one with the fiat currency.
- Only its form is different." The digital fiat currency or CBDC can be transacted using wallets backed by blockchain.
- Though the concept of CBDCs was directly inspired by Bitcoin, it is different from decentralised virtual currencies and crypto assets, which are not issued by the state and lack the 'legal tender' status.

- CBDCs enable the user to conduct both domestic and cross-border transactions which do not require a third party or a bank.

❖ Significance:

- Introduction of CBDC has the potential to provide significant benefits,
 - such as reduced dependency on cash,
 - reduced settlement risk.
 - It would also possibly lead to a more robust, efficient, trusted, regulated and legal tender-based payments option.

Carbon Zero Challenge

❖ Context

- Recently IIT Madras has launched Carbon Zero Challenge 2022.

❖ Key Highlights

- The latest edition of Indian Institute of Technology Madras' (IIT-Madras) Carbon Zero Challenge (CZC) is focusing on 'Resource depletion and pollution,' which has been accelerated by climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.
- CZC 2022, an all-India eco-innovation and entrepreneurship competition, aims to accelerate lab-to-market transition of eco-innovations in India.



- The theme for this year is CZC for 'CRC - **Circularity in Resources Conservation.**' The idea is to highlight the need to balance demand and earth's supply through resource conservation, rethinking design and materials to enable reduction, recycling, recovery and reuse of resources.

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IAF Sacks Three Officers

❖ Context

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) Court of Inquiry (Col) into the accidental firing of BrahMos supersonic cruise missile in March 2022, which landed in Pakistan, found that deviation from Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) by three officers led to the incident.



❖ Key Highlights

- Services of the officers have been terminated with immediate effect. The missile had landed 124 k.m. inside Pakistan.

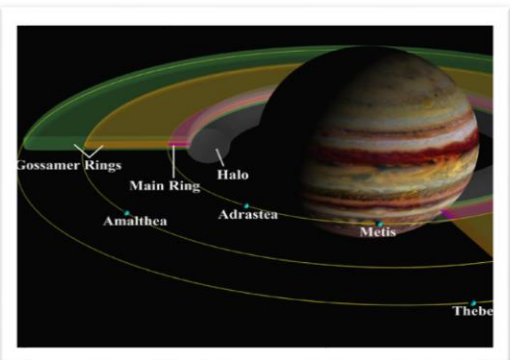
❖ About BRAHMOS

- It is a joint venture between India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya and the missile derives its name from **Brahmaputra and Moskva rivers**.
- It is a two-stage missile with a solid propellant booster engine as its first stage which brings it to supersonic speed and then gets separated.
- The liquid ramjet or the second stage then takes the missile closer to **3 Mach** speed in cruise phase.
- Stealth technology and guidance system with advanced embedded software provides the missile with special features.

- The missile has flight range of up to **290-km** with supersonic speed all through the flight, leading to shorter flight time, consequently ensuring lower dispersion of targets, quicker engagement time and non-interception by any known weapon system in the world.
- It operates on '**Fire and Forget Principle**', adopting varieties of flights on its way to the target.
- Its cruising altitude could be up to 15 km and terminal altitude is as low as 10 meters.
- Compared to existing state-of-the-art subsonic cruise missiles, BRAHMOS has:
 - 3 times more velocity.
 - 2.5 to 3 times more flight range.
 - 3 to 4 times more seeker range.
 - 9 times more kinetic energy.

News in Between the Lines

Amalthea & Adrastea



❖ Context

- An image released by NASA after processing near infrared data of **Jupiter** received from **James Webb Space telescope** includes the images of the two satellites.

❖ Key Highlights

- Amalthea and Adrastea were both found relatively long ago.
- Amalthea was found by Edward Emerson Barnard in 1892; Adrastea was discovered by the Voyager team in 1979. Both planets are **actually the moons**; They orbit **Io**, a large and dense moon of Jupiter.
- Io is one of four "**Galilean satellites**," the **first four moons discovered beyond Earth orbiting Jupiter**. They are joined by Europa, Ganymede and Callisto.

Aravind's Ground Gecko



❖ Context

- A group of researchers has discovered a new species of bent-toed gecko from **Agasthyamalai hills** in the **Western Ghats**.

❖ Key Highlights

- The new species, which has been given the scientific name **Cyrtodactylus aravindi**, has been described based on its distinctness in the morphological and molecular DNA data. It has so far been found only at two locations, **Muppandal and Thuckalay**, in Kanyakumari district falling within the Agasthyamalai biosphere reserve in Tamil Nadu.

❖ About Geckos

- Geckos are reptiles and are found on all the continents except Antarctica.
- These colorful lizards have adapted to habitats from rain forests, to deserts, to cold mountain slopes.
- Most geckos are nocturnal, which means they are active at night, but day geckos are active during the day and nibble on insects, fruits, and flower nectar.
- Most geckos don't have movable eyelids and instead have one transparent eyelid which they keep clean by licking it with their tongues.
- There are many species of geckos. Depending on the species, their endangered status can range from least concern to critically endangered.

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Types of Droughts



❖ Context

- In Europe, all three kinds of droughts are being observed currently, varying in degrees in different areas.

❖ Meteorological Drought

- A prolonged dry spell in periods when rainfall is expected.
- It is based on the degree of dryness or rainfall deficit and the length of the dry period.

❖ Hydrological Drought

- When scarcity of water begins to hit normal supplies in the system.
- It is based on the impact of rainfall deficits on the water supply such as stream flow, reservoir and lake levels, and ground water table decline.

❖ Agricultural Drought

- When scarcity of water begins to affect agricultural production.

Future of Job Forecast 2020-2040



❖ Context

- A market analytics firm, Forester, has released a report on the 'Future of Jobs Forecast' between 2020 and 2040.

❖ Key Highlights

- **69 % of Indian jobs** are theoretically under the threat of **automation** by 2040.
- However, the number of jobs lost to automation in India is likely to be lesser in comparison to other **Asia Pacific (APAC) countries** such as South Korea, Japan and Australia.
- **APAC is more at risk from physical robot automation** than those in Europe and North America.
- This is because a high share of their economies comes from industry, **construction, and agriculture**, which are more susceptible to automation.
- India is the sole major economy besides Australia, which will see an expansion in its workforce in the APAC region.
- India has one of the youngest working populations in the world.
- **The average age of an Indian worker is 38 years old**, in comparison, China's average working age is 47, in South Korea the average age of a worker is 46.
- **Workforce automation is challenging to implement in India when 80 % of the non-agricultural employment is in the informal sector.**

Semiconductor Consumer Market



❖ Context

- A joint research by the India Electronics & Semiconductor Association (IESA) and Counterpoint Research, released 'India Semiconductor Market Report, 2019-2026'.

❖ Key Highlights

- **India is poised to be the 2nd largest market in the world for semiconductors.**
- Right now, the **US is the largest consumer of semiconductors** with more than 47 %, followed by South Korea with around 20 %.

Anna Mani



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❖ Context

- Recently **Google Doodle** celebrated the **104th birth anniversary** of Indian physicist and meteorologist **Anna Mani**.

❖ Key Highlights

- One of the **first women scientists** in the country whose life's work enabled India to make **accurate weather forecasts**.
- Standardised nearly 100 weather instruments for production in India.
- She set up a workshop that made instruments for measuring **wind speed and solar energy**.
- In 1987, she was awarded the INSA K. R. Ramanathan Medal for her contributions to science.

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