

Collegium vs NJAC

❖ Context

➤ The Supreme Court and the Centre are at odds over how judges should be appointed in the higher judiciary.

Key Highlights

- In recent weeks, the **government has reiterated the need for a National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC).**
- The SC has been defending the present Collegium system.
- **Article 124(2)** - Judges of the SC are **appointed by the President** after consultation with such a number of the Judges of the SC and of the High Courts in the States as the President may deem necessary for the purpose.

Collegium System

- It is the **system of appointment and transfer of judges.**
- It has **evolved through judgments of the SC**, and not by an Act of Parliament or by a provision of the Constitution.
- SC collegium is **headed by the CJI** and **comprises four other senior most judges** of the court.
- Judges of the SC and HC are appointed only through the collegium system and the government has a role only after names have been decided by the collegium.
- The collegium sends its final recommendation to the President of India for approval through the Law minister.
- The President can either accept it or reject it.
- In the case it is rejected, the recommendation comes back to the collegium.
- **If the collegium reiterates its recommendation** to the President, then he/she is **bound by that recommendation.**

Issues with Collegium System

- Critics of this system say it **lacks transparency**, since it does not involve an official mechanism or secretariat.
- It is a closed-door affair in every sense — no one knows when the Collegium meets or how it takes its decisions.

Process of Replacing Collegium System

- Replacing the Collegium system calls for a Constitutional Amendment Bill.
- it **requires a majority of not less than two-thirds** of MPs (Members of Parliament) present and voting in Lok Sabha as well as Rajya Sabha.
- It also needs the ratification of legislatures of not less than one-half of the states.

National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)

- The Constitution **(99th Amendment) Act established the NJAC** and the NJAC Act.
- It was passed by Parliament in 2014 to set up a commission for appointing judges, replacing the Collegium system.
- This would essentially **increase the government's role in the appointment of judges.**
- **The NJAC was to comprise**
 - The Chief Justice of India as the ex officio Chairperson.
 - Two senior-most Supreme Court Judges as ex officio members.
 - The Union Minister of Law and Justice as ex officio member.
 - Two eminent persons from civil society.
 - One of whom would be nominated by a committee consisting of the CJI, Prime Minister and the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha.
 - The other would be nominated from the SC/ST/OBC/minority communities or women.
- The **laws were repealed in October 2015** after the Supreme Court struck them down.

INS Mormugao

❖ Context

➤ Recently, the second of the **Project 15B stealth guided missile destroyers** built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDSL), **INS Mormugao (Pennant D67)**, was commissioned into the Indian Navy.

Project 15A

- A ship 'class' describes a group of vessels of similar tonnage, usage, capabilities, and weaponry.
- Over the last decade, the Indian Navy has commissioned three guided missile destroyers of the **Kolkata class — INS Kolkata, INS Kochi, and INS Chennai** — under the project codenamed 15A.

INS Mormugao

- **Launching**
 - The keel of Mormugao (Yard 12705), was laid in June 2015 and the ship was launched in September 2016.
- **Dimensions**
 - INS Mormugao — and the other three ships in the class — are 163 m long and 17.4 m wide, with a displacement of 7,300 tonnes.
- **Features**



- These ships were a step ahead of their precursor **Delhi class of ships — INS Delhi, INS Mysore, and INS Mumbai.**
- All these ships were built by MDSL, one of the country's most important Defence PSUs.

Project 15B

- The contract for four guided missile destroyers more advanced than the Kolkata class was signed in January 2011.
- This was Project 15B, and the lead ship, **INS Visakhapatnam (Pennant D66)** was commissioned into the Navy in November 2021.
- Designed by the Warship Design Bureau, Indian Navy's in-house warship design body, and built by MDSL in Mumbai, the four ships of Project 15B were to be named after four major cities around the country — **Visakhapatnam, Mormugao, Imphal, and Surat.**
- A ship class is identified by its lead ship, in this case INS Visakhapatnam.

- The Visakhapatnam class destroyers have multiple fire zones, battle damage control systems, and distributional power systems for improved survivability and reliability in extreme operational and conflict scenarios.
- The warships have a secure network for data from its sensors and weapons systems.
- The ship's firepower consists of vertically launched Barak-8 surface-to-air missiles and BrahMos surface-to-surface cruise missiles.
- The destroyer will also be armed with indigenously developed 533 mm torpedo launchers and RBU-6000 anti-submarine rocket launchers.
- It can operate two multi-role helicopters — Sea King or HAL Dhruv.
- **Significance**
 - Because of its speed, manoeuvrability, and strike capability, this is a key asset in various types of naval operations, mainly offensive and in the modern "network centric warfare".

Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2022-23 – Series III

❖ Context

- Recently, The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2022-23 – Series III, which will be open for subscription during December 19-23, 2022.

Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme (SGB)

- It was **launched in November 2015.**
- The scheme was implemented as an **alternative to purchasing metal gold** and mobilise the idle gold held by households and institutions into productive use in the long run.
- A sovereign gold bond scheme (SGB) is **issued to resident Indian entities** by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on behalf of the central government.
- The Gold Bonds are issued as Government of India Stock under the **Government Securities (GS) Act, 2006.**
- This is a **long-term form of market instrument.**
- Gold bonds are government securities denominated in grams of gold.
- They are **substitutes for holding physical gold.**
- Investors have to pay the **issue price in cash** and the bonds will be **redeemed in cash on maturity.**
- The bonds are held in the books of the RBI or in demat form eliminating risk of loss.
- Minimum investment in sovereign gold bonds is one gram with a maximum limit of subscription of 500 grams per person per financial year (April-March).
- The tenor of bonds is eight years, it can be redeemed after five years.

- These **bonds are sold through banks**, designated post offices, Stock Holding Corporation of India (SHCIL) and recognised stock exchanges - National Stock Exchange (NSE) and the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE).

Advantages

- These bonds offer a **superior alternative to holding gold in physical form.**
- The **risks and costs of storage** are eliminated.
- Investors are assured of the market value of gold at the time of maturity and periodical interest.
- It's free from issues like making charges and purity in the case of gold in jewellery form.
- It helps in **reducing the current account deficit (CAD)** by reducing the country's reliance on the import of gold.

Disadvantages

- This is a long term investment unlike physical gold which can be sold immediately.
- Sovereign gold bonds are listed on exchange but the trading volumes are not high, therefore it will be difficult to exit before maturity.



News in Between the Lines

Review Petition



❖ Context

- Recently, the Supreme Court rejected a review petition filed by Bilkis Bano.
- The petition challenged the apex court's May order that permitted the Gujarat government to decide on the remission of the 11 convicts who gangraped her and murdered seven members of her family during the 2002 Godhra riots in Gujarat.

❖ Review Petition

➤ About

- Review means when the **court re-examines the decisions** made by itself, the examination of any legislation made by the government or any act of the administrative organizations.
- When a review takes place, the law is that it is allowed **not to take fresh stock of the case** but to correct grave errors that have resulted in the miscarriage of justice.
- The main purpose of this law is to protect the rights of the people as the judgments made by the courts, not mostly, but at times are fallible.
- As per the Civil Procedure Code and the Supreme Court Rules, **any person aggrieved by a ruling can seek a review.**

➤ Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 137** of the Constitution of India grants the Supreme Court the power to review any of its judgments or orders.
- This power is however subject to the Rules made by the Supreme Court under Article 145, as well as the provisions of any law enacted by parliament.

➤ Time Period to File Review Petition

- A review Petition **must be filed within 30 days** from the judgment or order of which review is sought and must be placed before the same Bench which had delivered the decision.

➤ The Supreme Court has laid down three grounds for seeking a review of a verdict it has delivered

- The discovery of new and important matter or evidence which, after the exercise of due diligence, was not within the knowledge of the petitioner or could not be produced by him;
- Mistake or error apparent on the face of the record; or
- Any other sufficient reason that is analogous to the other two grounds.

Coalition for Nature



❖ Context

- Recently, Some **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)** agreed to form a '**Coalition for Nature**' for the implementation and adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) at the **15th Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity.**

❖ Key Highlights

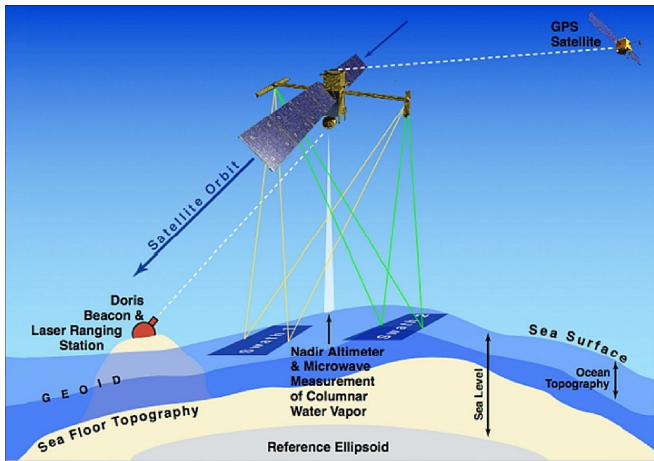
➤ The goal of the coalition

- To advocate for **agreed common SIDS priorities** and needs such as greater means of implementing biodiversity objectives in these places by putting up a unified front.

- The SIDS Coalition called for "a capacity development plan for SIDS to support the implementation of the global biodiversity framework (GBF)".

- This will be a strategic vehicle to catalyse technical and financial support for SIDS’ national implementation of GBF.
- **GBF**
 - It is a new framework that **will guide actions worldwide through 2030**, to preserve and protect nature and its essential services to people.
- **Significance**
 - The purpose of the SIDS Coalition is to underline how SIDS are home to a large portion of the world’s biodiversity and show that they have been using nature-based solutions and leading the world by example.
 - It will also highlight how enhancing the means of implementation of SIDS will be strategic to save the planet.

Surface Water and Ocean Topography (SWOT)



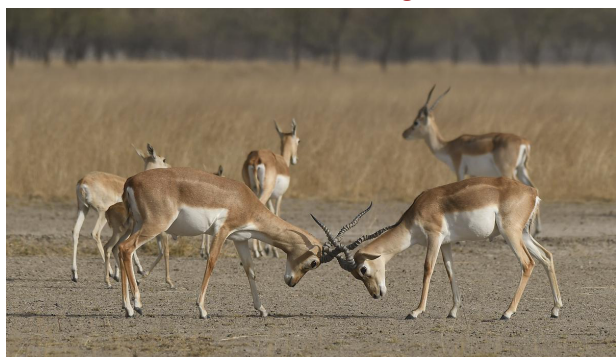
- ❖ **Context**
 - Recently, a **SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket launched with the Surface Water and Ocean Topography (SWOT)** spacecraft onboard from Space Launch Complex 4E at Vandenberg Space Force Base in California.
- ❖ **Key Highlights**
 - It is Jointly **developed by NASA** and **Centre National D’Etudes Spatiales (CNES)**, with contributions from the **Canadian Space Agency (CSA)** and United Kingdom Space Agency.
 - SWOT is the first satellite mission that will **observe nearly all water on Earth’s surface**, measuring the height of water in the planet’s lakes, rivers, reservoirs, and the ocean.
 - It will **cover the globe between the Arctic and Antarctica** at least once every three weeks, as it orbits more than 550 miles (890 kilometres) high.
 - The mission is expected to last **three years**.
 - **Significance**
 - This data will provide new insights into
 - How the ocean influences **climate change**.
 - How a warming world affects lakes, rivers, and reservoirs; and
 - How communities can **better prepare for disasters, such as floods**.

Glyphosate



- ❖ **Context**
 - Recently, Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare informed the Rajya Sabha that **the government has not banned the sale, distribution and use of Glyphosate** or any other pesticide that contains glyphosate.
 - He said the registered pesticides if used as per Label and Leaflets do not pose any harm to human beings, animals, living organisms other than pests.
- ❖ **Glyphosate**
 - It was **developed in 1970**, and its scientific name is **N-(phosphonomethyl) glycine** under the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) system of nomenclature.
 - Glyphosate is a **widely used herbicide** that can kill certain weeds and grasses.
 - Glyphosate works by blocking an enzyme essential for plant growth.
 - The product is used primarily in agriculture, but also in forestry and lawn and garden care.
 - **Concerns**
 - Although glyphosate has cut farmers' costs and helped landscapers remove invasive plants, people have grown increasingly skeptical about

Tal Chhapar blackbuck sanctuary



whether the benefits outweigh the risks to human and environmental health.

- Recent research has shown that the **chemical may be harming the wrong plants**, in addition to wildlife and people.
- Some **35 countries have banned or restricted the use of glyphosate**. These include Sri Lanka, Netherlands, France, Colombia, Canada, Israel and Argentina.
- In India, **glyphosate has been approved for use only in tea plantations and non-plantation** areas accompanying the tea crop.

❖ Context

- Recently, The famous **Tal Chhapar blackbuck sanctuary** received a protective cover against a proposed move of the State government to reduce the size of its eco-sensitive zone.

❖ Key highlights

- The **World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF)** has taken up a major project for the conservation of raptors in the sanctuary.
- The **Rajasthan High Court has intervened** through a suo motu public interest litigation to protect the sanctuary.
 - It took cognisance of reports that its area was going to be reduced to three sq. km. under pressure from mine owners and stone crusher operators.

❖ About Tal Chhapar Black Buck Sanctuary

- It is **situated in Rajasthan's Churu district**
- It is spread over an area measuring 7.19 sq. km.
- Tal Chhapar was given the status of a sanctuary on May 11, 1966.
- The **"Tal" word is Rajasthani word means plane land**. The water during the rain goes through thin little lying regions and gets in the tiny seasonal ponds of water.
- **Wildlife**
 - It is known as the **home of blackbuck** and a variety of birds in Rajasthan.
 - The sanctuary is flanked by the **Great India Desert**, Thar and boasts a unique ecosystem and is an important birdwatching destination in India.
 - Tal Chhapar Sanctuary is one of the top **halting places for migratory birds such as harriers**.
 - The migratory birds pass through Tal Chhapar Sanctuary during September.
 - The commonly seen migratory birds in the sanctuary are **harriers, eastern imperial eagle**, tawny eagle, short-toed eagle, sparrow, and little green bee-eaters, black ibis and demoiselle cranes, whereas skylarks, crested larks, ring doves, and brown doves are seen round the year.
 - Apart from birds, desert fox and desert cat can be spotted in the sanctuary.
 - The sanctuary is host to about 4,000 blackbucks and other wild animals, over 40 species of raptors and more than 300 species of resident and migratory birds.

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