

12 January, 2022

Recusal of SC Court Judges

❖ Context

- Recently, Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and A.S. Bopanna of the SC recused themselves from hearing a **dispute among the States of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka on the allocation of the Krishna river water.**

❖ Key Highlights

- Justice Chandrachud is from Maharashtra and Justice Bopanna hails from Karnataka.
- Earlier, judges similarly placed like them hailing from the States in dispute had recused themselves from the case.

❖ About Recusal

- When there is a **conflict of interest**, a judge can withdraw from hearing a case **to prevent creating a perception that He/she carried a bias while deciding the case.**
- The **conflict of interest can be in many ways-** from holding shares in a company that is a litigant to having a prior or personal association with a party involved in the case.
- The practice stems from the cardinal principle of **due process of law** that nobody can be a judge in her own case.
- Any interest or **conflict of interest would be a ground to withdraw** from a case since a judge has a duty to act fair.

❖ Process for Recusal

- There are **no formal rules governing recusals**, although several Supreme Court judgments have dealt with the issue.
- The decision to recuse **generally comes from the judge herself** as it rests on the conscience and discretion of the judge to disclose any potential conflict of interest.
- In some circumstances, **lawyers or parties in the case bring it up before the judge.**
- **If a judge recuses, the case is listed before the Chief Justice for allotment to a fresh Bench.**
- In **Ranjit Thakur v Union of India (1987)**, the SC held that the test of the likelihood of bias is the reasonableness of the apprehension in the mind of the party.
 - The judge needs to look at the mind of the party before him, and decide that he is biased or not.

Ramsar Tag for 13 Wetlands

❖ Context

- There is a renewed push from the **Tamilnadu Govt to get the Ramsar Tag for 13 more Important Wetlands**, for which proposal has been recently submitted to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

❖ Key Highlights

- National Atlas prepared by ISRO in 2011 proved that **Tamil Nadu is a wetland-rich State.**
- It has a whopping **43,916 wetlands, accounting for 6.92 per cent of its geographical area**, as against the country's 4.7 per cent.
- Despite this richness, it's an intriguing fact that floods and droughts are becoming recurrent features.

❖ About Wetlands

- Wetlands are **ecosystems saturated with water, either seasonally or permanently.**
- They include mangroves, marshes, rivers, lakes, deltas, floodplains and flooded forests, rice-fields, coral reefs, marine areas **no deeper than 6 metres** at low tide, as well as human-made wetlands such as waste-water treatment ponds and reservoirs.

❖ About Ramsar Convention

- The Convention was **adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971** and came into force in 1975.
- It is one of the **oldest intergovernmental treaties** signed by member countries to preserve the ecological character of their wetlands of international importance.
- The convention **entered into force in India on 1 February 1982.**
- **Purpose:** To develop and **maintain an international network of wetlands** that are **important for the conservation of global biological diversity** and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits.
- Wetlands declared as **Ramsar sites are protected under strict guidelines of the convention.**

Bulli Bai App and Anti Cyberbullying Laws in India

❖ Context

- Bulli Bai was created in November last year and updated during New Year's Eve to **put up hundreds of Muslim women on an "online auction".**

❖ Key Highlights

- According to reports, the pictures included in the app belonged to **Muslim women active on social media**, including prominent journalists, activists, and artists.
- The **Bulli Bai and other similar app Sulli Deals were developed using GitHub**, which is an open-source platform. The app was not available via Google Play Store or Apple's App Store.

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❖ About Cyber Bullying

- Bullying may be characterized as an **intentional act by a perpetrator which, though may not amount to a criminal offense, causes pain or anguish or suffering to the victim, either physically or emotionally.**
- Cyber bullying**- It refers to bullying or harassment of any kind inflicted through **electronic or communication devices** such as computers, mobile phones, laptops, and usually involves text messages, phone calls, e-mails, instant messengers, social media platforms, or chat rooms.

❖ Laws Against Cyberbullying

- The **Indian Penal Code, 1860 ("IPC")**, neither defines bullying nor punishes it as an offense.
- However, various provisions of the **IPC** and the **Information Technology Act, 2000 ("IT Act")** can be used to fight cyber bullies

❖ Legal Provisions

- Sections 354A** (sexual harassment and punishment for sexual harassment) and **354C (voyeurism)**, **Section 354D (Cyber stalking)** of IPC.
- Section 66E of the IT Act** prescribes punishment for violation of privacy.
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986.**
- Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021:** Its provision include "Due diligence by intermediaries and grievance redressal mechanism" which requires them to inform their users not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, store, update or share any illegal information.

AQEES

❖ Context

- Labour Ministry released the report of **2nd Quarter of Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)** part of All India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey.

❖ About the survey

- The AQEES has been taken up to provide **frequent (quarterly) updates** about the employment and related variables of **establishments in both organized and unorganized segments** of nine selected sectors which account for **85% of the total employment** in the **non-farm establishments**.
- The nine selected sectors are **Manufacturing, Construction, Trade, Transport, Education, Health, Accommodation & Restaurant, IT/BPO and Financial Services**.
- It is a **demand side survey** while Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) (conducted by NSO) is the supply side survey
- The survey is **conducted by the Labour Bureau**. The four other surveys conducted by Labour bureau are All India Survey of Migrant Workers, All India Survey of Domestic Workers, All India Survey of employment generated by Professionals and All India Survey of employment generated in Transport sector
- The report provides useful data for policy-makers, Central/ State Governments officials, researchers and other stakeholders.

❖ Findings

- The **estimated total employment** in the nine selected sectors in this round of QES (July-September, 2021) came out as **3.10 crore** approximately, which is **2 lakhs higher** than the estimated employment (3.08 crore) from the **first round** of QES (April-June, 2021)
- Manufacturing accounted for nearly 39%**, followed by Education with 22% and Health as well as IT/BPOs sectors both around 10%
- Nearly 90% of the establishments** have been estimated to work with **less than 100 workers** **23.5%** of all the establishments were registered under the **Companies Act. 53.9%** were registered under the **Goods and Service Tax Act, 2017**
- Regular workers** constitute **87%** of the estimated workforce in the nine selected sectors, with only **2% being casual workers**.
- However, in the **Construction sector**, **20%** of the workers were **contractual** and 6.4% were casual workers.
- The **over-all percentage of female workers** stood at **32.1**, higher than **29.3%** reported during the **first round** of QES
- 16.8% of the establishments** provided **formal skill development** programmes, although mostly for their own employees.
- 5.6%** of the establishments were having **vacancies** in positions and the estimated number of total vacancies was **4.3 lakhs**.

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News in Between the Lines

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Carbon Capturing Plant



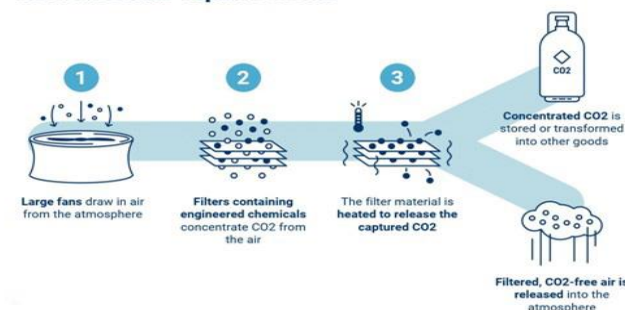
❖ Context

- The Orca Plant in Iceland is the world's largest carbon-capturing plant.

❖ Key Highlights

- It sucks carbon dioxide directly from the air and deposits it underground where it slowly turns into rock.
- This technology is powered by renewable energy sourced from a nearby geothermal power plant.
- Direct air capture is still a fledgling and costly technology. It sucks out up to 4,000 tons of CO₂ per year.
- Direct air capture is one of the few technologies extracting carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and is viewed by scientists as vital to limit global warming, blamed for causing more heatwaves, wildfires, floods and rising sea levels.

How direct air capture works



Khadi Handmade Paper Slippers



❖ Context

- Starting 14th January, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is beginning the sale of Khadi handmade paper "Use & Throw" slippers for the use of the devotees and the workers.

❖ Key Highlights

- It will be sold from the Khadi sales outlet located at the parking lot of the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor.
- These are 100% eco-friendly and cost-effective and will be sold by Kashi Hastkala Pratisthan, a registered Khadi Institution in Varanasi.
- The "use & throw" slippers made of handmade paper will maintain the sanctity of the temple.
- It will also save devotees from heat and cold during harsh weather conditions and will prevent any kind of pollution. Developed for the first time in India.
- The Handmade paper used is completely wood-free and made of natural fibres like Cotton & Silk rags and agro waste.

❖ About KVIC

- Statutory body established under KVIC Act, 1956
- Work under the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises.
- It is charged with the planning, promotion, organisation and implementation of programmes for the development of Khadi and other village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary.

National Conference on e-Governance



❖ Context

- Recently, the 24th National Conference on e-Governance 2021 has successfully concluded.

❖ Key Highlights

- Organised by- Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) and Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) in association with the State Government of Telangana.
- Theme- "India's Techade: Digital Governance in a Post Pandemic World".

❖ Aims:

- It provides a platform for Government officers, industry stalwarts and researchers to share best practices, the latest technology developments

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MPATGM



- so that we can use them for achieving effective governance and public service delivery.
- In this conference, the **National Awards for e-Governance are presented for exemplary implementation of e-Governance initiatives** to recognize and promote excellence in the implementation of e-Governance initiatives.
 - **Hyderabad Declaration on e-Governance** was adopted. It aims to **bring citizens and governments closer** through digital platforms and transform citizen services through the use of technology.

❖ Context

- DRDO successfully flight tested the final deliverable configuration of **Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM)**

❖ Key Highlights

- The **indigenously developed anti-tank missile** is a low weight, **Indian 3rd generation fire & forget missile**
- Launched from a **man portable launcher**, it is integrated with thermal sight
- The missile has **miniaturized infrared imaging seeker** and **advanced avionics** for on-board control and guidance.
- It is fitted with **HEAT (High explosive Anti Tank) warhead**
- Its range is **200 - 4000 m**. It will be manufactured by **Bharat Dynamic Ltd**
- It will eliminate the need to import Spike ATGMs from Israel or Javelin ATGM from USA. The MoD's first "import embargo list" of 101 items prohibits the import of "short range surface to surface missiles" from December 2020 onwards.

Hindi description of India's World Heritage sites



❖ Context

- On the occasion of World Hindi Day, **UNESCO's World Heritage Centre** agreed to publish Hindi descriptions of India's UNESCO World Heritage Sites **on WHC website**.

❖ Key Highlights

- World Hindi Day (Vishwa Hindi Diwas) is celebrated every year on **January 10 since 2006**
- It commemorates the **anniversary of the first World Hindi Conference** held in **Nagpur on January 10, 1975**, inaugurated by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi.
- **World Heritage Sites** are **designated by UNESCO** for having cultural, historical, scientific or other form of significance.
- The sites are judged to contain "**cultural and natural heritage** around the world considered to be of **outstanding value to humanity**"
- The World Heritage Sites list is maintained by the **international World Heritage Program** administered by the **UNESCO World Heritage Committee**, composed of **21 "states parties"** that are **elected by their General Assembly**. **India is currently one of its members**.
- The programme began with the "**Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage**", which was **adopted** by the General Conference of UNESCO on 16 November **1972**.
- **India has in total 40 cultural sites on the list**. The **first sites** to be inscribed were **Ajanta Caves, Ellora Caves, Agra Fort, and Taj Mahal**, of which all were inscribed in the **1983** session of the World Heritage Committee. The **latest site** to be inscribed is **Dholavira, Gujarat** in **2021**.

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