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POLITY

Bhartruhari Mahtab named *pro-tem* speaker

CONTEXT: President Droupadi Murmu has appointed Bhartruhari Mahtab, seven time MP from Cuttack, the pro tem Speaker of the 18th Lok Sabha, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju said on Thursday.

But Opposition leaders questioned the Narendra Modi government for ignoring the convention of giving the honour to the senior most member and eight-term MP Kodikunnil Suresh of the Congress.



Pro- tem speaker

Pro-tem is a Latin phrase which means “for the time being”. The Pro tem Speaker is a temporary speaker appointed for a limited period of time.

The need of pro-tem speaker: The speaker of the Lok Sabha/legislative assembly vacates the office immediately before the first meeting of the newly elected house.

President/governor appoints the pro-tem speaker to preside over the sittings of the newly elected house. Usually, the senior most member of the house is made the pro-tem speaker.

Duties of pro tem speaker:

- The Pro-tem Speaker presides over the first sitting of the Lok Sabha, administers the oath of office to the newly elected MPs.
- To conduct the vote for the speaker and deputy speaker.
- On the election of new Speaker, the office of the pro tem speaker ceases to exist.
- He also administers the floor test.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

5,400 Myanmarese take refuge in Manipur

CONTEXT: Fearing “aerial bombardment and attacks”, about 5,400 people from Myanmar have taken shelter in Kamjong district of Manipur.

Kamjong district shares its eastern border with Myanmar. To its west are the Thoubal and Kangpokpi districts, dominated by Meiteis and Kuki-Zos respectively. Since the 2021 military coup in Myanmar, many people have crossed over to Mizoram and Manipur due to shared ethnic ties with the people of these States.

India and Myanmar share an unfenced border; earlier this year, however, Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced the suspension of the Free Movement Regime with the neighbouring country, and added that the 1,643-km border would be fenced. The Assam Rifles is deployed along the Myanmar border.



What is the importance of Myanmar for India

Here are some key reasons why Myanmar is important for India:

- **Strategic location:** India and Myanmar share a long 1,643 km geographical land border and maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal. Also, Myanmar is India’s gateway to South East Asia.
- **Countering China:** As part of India’s SAGAR Vision, India developed the Sittwe port in Myanmar’s Rakhine state to counter the Chinese fronted Kyaukpyu port.
- **Internal security:** Myanmar shares a border with some of India’s northeastern states, which are affected by insurgent activities. India considers Myanmar an important partner in its efforts to maintain peace and security in the region.
- **Economic cooperation:** India and Myanmar have a long standing economic relationship, and India is one of Myanmar’s largest trading partners. India has invested in various sectors



“If you invest more in your education, then you are likely to get more interest in it.”

—Benjamin Franklin

in Myanmar, including energy, infrastructure, and agriculture.

- **Cultural ties:** India and Myanmar have historical and cultural ties dating back to ancient times. Buddhism, which originated in India, is a major religion in Myanmar, and the two countries share many cultural similarities.

What are the issues and challenges in India Myanmar relations?

There are various challenges persisting in India Myanmar relations. Some of them include

- **Coup by Military Junta:** A recent coup by the military junta in Myanmar made it difficult for India to balance its strategic and economic interests with its commitment to democratic values and human rights.
- **Weak trade relations:** With a total bilateral trade of \$2 billion, India's economic engagement with Myanmar lags behind China. India's withdrawal from Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership can further increase this trade gap.
- **Rohingya issue:** The migration of Rohingyas in India is causing issues of internal security and exploitation of national resources of India.
- **Northeast insurgency:** Myanmar China border is the hotbed of local armed separatist groups operating in Myanmar soil and Indian groups, ranging from ULFA in Assam to the NSCN (IM) in Nagaland.
- **Internal security:** It is a major concern for India. The Indo-Myanmar border is porous and lightly policed, which is exploited by terrorist outfits and insurgent groups from the North Eastern part of India eg. supply of trained cadres, and arms trafficking.
- **Free movement regime:** The Free Movement Regime is being exploited by militants and cross border criminals for the illegal transportation of weapons, contraband goods, and counterfeit Indian currency.
- **Trust deficit:** It has widened in India Myanmar because of delays in the implementation of various projects.

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ECONOMY

ED makes one more arrest in Jal Jeevan Mission 'scam'

CONTEXT: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) said on Thursday that it has made a fresh arrest in connection with its money laundering investigation into the alleged irregularities in the Jal Jeevan Mission scheme being implemented in Rajasthan. Mahesh Mittal, proprietor of Shree Ganpati Tubewell Company, was taken into custody on Wednesday.

The Jal Jeevan Mission, launched by the Union government, aims to provide safe drinking water through household tap connections, and is being implemented in Rajasthan by the State's Public Health Engineering department. "Our probe found Mittal is one of the main accused and in receipt of proceeds of crime in his firm," ED said.



About Jal Jeevan Mission:

- It is envisioned to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India.
- It is based on a community approach to water and will include extensive Information, Education and communication as a key component of the mission.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation under the Jal Shakti Mantralaya.
- **Strategy:**
 - This Mission focus on integrated demand and supply side management of water at the local level, including creation of local infrastructure for source sustainability like rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and management of household wastewater for reuse in agriculture.
 - The Mission will converge with other Central and State Government Schemes to achieve its objectives of sustainable water supply management across the country.
- **Funding Pattern:**
 - 50:50 between Centre and States
 - 90:10 for Himalayan and North-Eastern States.

- In case of UTs, 100% funding is provided by the Central government.

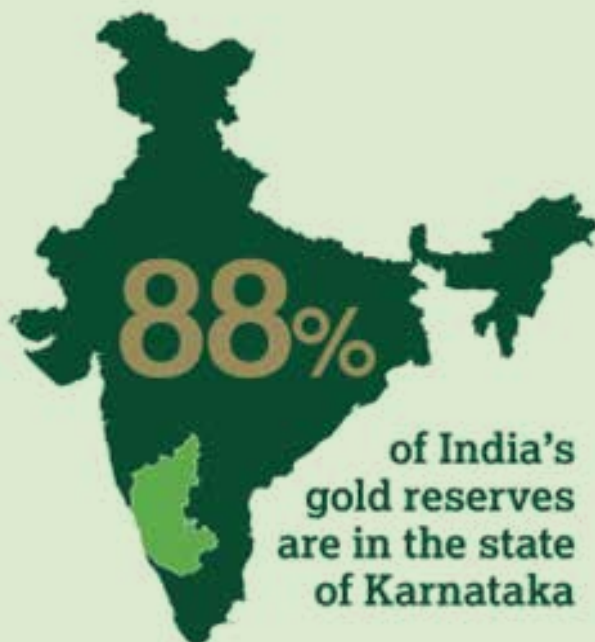
What has JJM's Performance Been?

- Currently about 12.3 crore (62%) rural households have piped water connections up from 3.2 crore (16.6%) from 2019.
- Five states viz; Gujarat, Telangana, Goa, Haryana, and Punjab and 3 Union Territories — Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Daman Diu & Dadra Nagar Haveli and Puducherry have reported 100% coverage.
- Himachal Pradesh at 98.87%, followed by Bihar at 96.30%, are also poised to achieve saturation in near future.

ECONOMY

Karnataka govt. clears Centre's proposal on reviving gold mining at Kolar Gold Fields

CONTEXT: The Karnataka government on Thursday cleared a proposal of the Centre for reviving gold mining and auctioning of 13 tailing dumps spread over 1,003.4 acres at the Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) by the Bharat Gold Mines Ltd. (BGML). The mines located at the KGF are owned by BGML, a PSU, which was established in 1972, under the Department of Mines with its office at the KGF. As much as 33 million tonnes of tailing dumps (extraction waste) is estimated to be lying at the 13 tailing dumps at the KGF. It is estimated that one tonne of dump yields one gram of gold on processing. A Cabinet meeting presided over by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah cleared the proposal submitted to the State by the Centre under column 17 of the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation Act, 1957, seeking the State's consent for reviving gold mining at the KGF.



What are the Key Facts of Kolar Gold Fields?

- Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) is a mining region located in the Kolar district of Karnataka. It is known for its historic gold mines, which were among the deepest in the world.

- Mining in KGF was started by Jhon Taylor & Sons in 1880.
- The mines remained active for 121 years before it experienced an unsystematic closure on February 28, 2001. The mines were closed owing to high operational costs and low revenues.
- Apart from mining Gold, the mines have also been used in particle physics experiments where research teams have discovered elusive, cosmic particles called atmospheric neutrinos.
 - Currently, India has three working gold mines in the country Hutti and Uti mines in Karnataka and the Hirabuddini mines in Jharkhand.
 - India's gold production is around 1.6 tonnes a year, compared to the 774 tonnes a year of gold that it consumes.

INTERNAL SECURITY

After train crash, Eastern Railway prohibits issuance of TA-912 for loco pilots

CONTEXT: Three days after the tragic crash involving a goods train and Kanchanjunga Express in West Bengal that left 10 passengers dead and 43 injured, Eastern Railway has banned issuance of Travel Authority (TA-912) authorising loco pilots to cross signals in red during signal failures.

In an order, the Senior Divisional Operations Manager said it had been decided in a meeting with the General Manager, Principal Chief Safety Officer and Principal Heads of Departments that the "issuance of TA-912 will remain suspended till further advice.

Even as confusion pre- vails over the validity of the TA-912 paper authority issued by the stationmaster of Rangapani to the loco pilot of the goods train that rammed the rear of Kanchanjunga Express in Katihar division of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), a senior railway official has put his dissent note in a joint investigation that fixed blame on the loco pilot, assistant loco pilot and train manager for the accident.



WHAT T/A 912

When a signal failure in the automatic system occurs, the rules demand that the station master issue a written pass to the driver to cross the red signals. This written authority is called PLCT (paper line clear ticket) T/A 912. According to a source, T/A 912

had been issued to the driver of the express train.

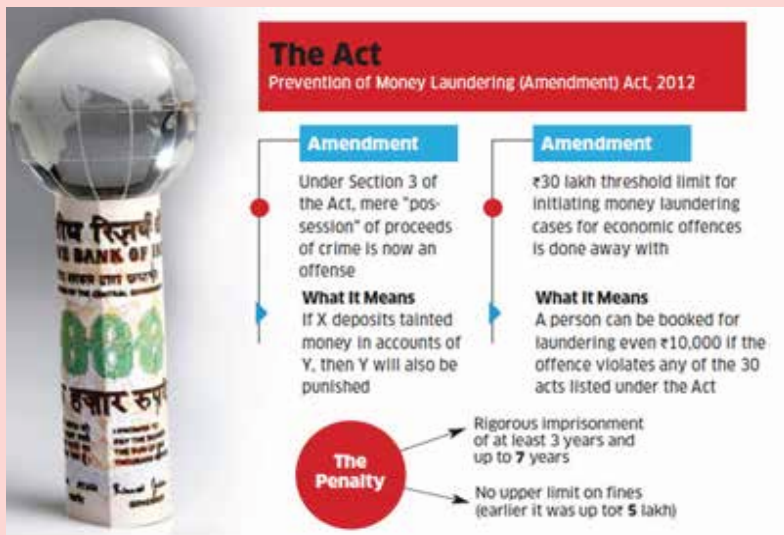
According to railway officials, when such a document (T/A 912) is given, the loco pilot needs to approach the red signal at 10 kmph, bring his train to a stop as close as possible to the rear of the signal, wait for 1 minute during day time and 2 minutes at night at the signal, and then proceed with extreme caution at speed not exceeding 15 kmph in good visibility conditions and 10 kmph in poor visibility.

The loco pilot should also ensure that a minimum distance of 150 metres or two clear OHE span is maintained between his train and the preceding train or any obstruction on the line.

ECONOMY

PMLA court takes cognisance of ED complaint of bank fraud

CONTEXT: A special PMLA court on June 13 took cognisance of the complaint filed by the ED's Mumbai zonal office over the alleged bank frauds by Ess Dee Aluminium Ltd., an official said on Thursday.



About Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002

- It is an act to prevent money laundering and to provide for the confiscation of property derived from or involved in money laundering.
- The Act was formulated for the following objectives:
 - Prevent money-laundering.
 - Combat/prevent the channelising of money into illegal activities and economic crimes.
 - Provide for the confiscation of property derived from, or involved/used in, money laundering.
 - Penalise the offenders of money laundering offences.
 - Appointing an adjudicating authority and appellate tribunal for taking charge of money laundering matters.
 - Provide for matters connected and incidental to the acts of money laundering.
- The Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, is responsible for investigating the offences of money laundering under the PMLA.

- Financial Intelligence Unit–India (FIU-IND), under the Department of Revenue, is the central national agency responsible for receiving, processing, analyzing, and disseminating information relating to suspect financial transactions.
- The scheduled offences are separately investigated by the agencies mentioned under respective acts, for example, the local police, CBI, customs departments, SEBI, or any other investigative agency, as the case may be.
- Actions that can be initiated against the person involved in money laundering:
 - Seizure/freezing of property and records, and attachment of property obtained with the proceeds of crime.
 - Any person who commits the offence of money laundering shall be punishable with:
 - Rigorous imprisonment for a minimum term of three years, and this may extend up to seven years.
 - Fine (without any limit).
- The PMLA and rules notified thereunder impose obligations on banking companies, financial institutions, and intermediaries and persons carrying on a designated business or profession, to verify identity of clients, maintain records and furnish information to FIU IND.

ECOLOGY

Limless amphibian found in Kaziranga for first time

CONTEXT: A limbless amphibian has been added to the fauna in the 1,307.49 sq. km Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve.

Assam's wildlife officials said a team of herpetologists recorded the striped caecilian (*Ichthyophis* spp) in the tiger reserve for the first time during a rapid herpetofauna survey conducted from June 14-17.

The diverse ecosystem of Kaziranga comprising flood plains grasslands, and hill tracts on the periphery, provides an ideal habitat for herpetofauna. The tiger reserve houses 24 species of amphibians and 74 species of reptiles. It is also home to 21 of the 29 species of tortoises and freshwater turtles found in India.



About Kaziranga National Park:

- **Location:** It is located in the Golaghat and Nagaon districts of Assam.
- It was declared a national park in 1974.
- It is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site and houses two-thirds of the total world population of greater one horned rhinoceros.
- It is the largest undisturbed area in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplains.
- **Vegetation:** It is a mix of eastern wet alluvial grasslands, semi evergreen forests and tropical moist deciduous forests.
- **Flora:**
 1. It is primarily famous for its dense and tall elephant grasses intermixed with small swamplands.
 2. It also includes an abundant cover of water lilies, water hyacinths and lotus.
 3. Rattan Cane, a type of climbing palm, is also found here.
- **Fauna:**
 1. Important wildlife found are One horned rhinoceros, Leopard, Fishing Cat, other Lesser cats, royal Bengal tiger, Large Indian Civet, Small Indian Civet, Sambar, Barking deer, Hog deer, Gaur, Hog Badger, Capped Langur, etc.
 2. It is also one of the last remaining homes of the endangered and endemic western hoolock gibbon, the only species of apes found in India.
 3. It is home to approximately 478 species of both resident and migratory birds.
 4. It is one of the last homes of the critically endangered Bengal florican.

These amendments are expected to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP), and benefiting creditors and other stake- holders involved in the CIRP.

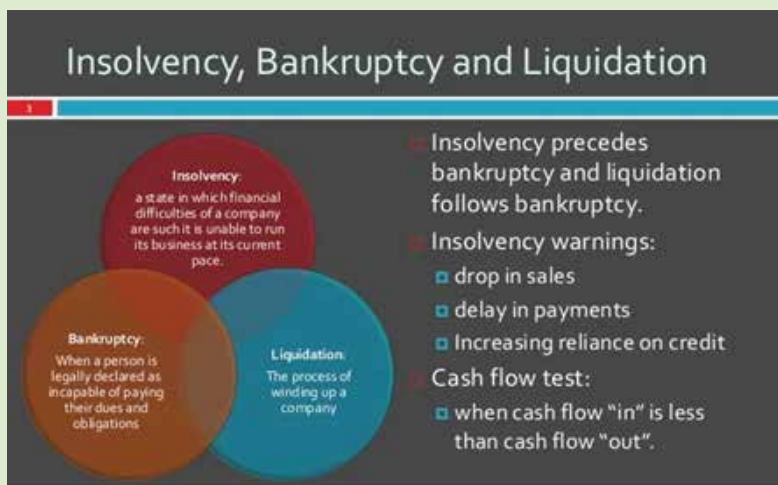
About Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI):

- It was established on 1st October 2016 under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016.
- It is responsible for the implementation of the IBC. The IBC amends and consolidates the laws relating to insolvency resolution of individuals, partnership firms and corporate persons in a time bound manner.
- **Functions:**
 - The IBBI regulates professionals as well as processes.
 - It has regulatory oversight over the insolvency professional agencies, insolvency professional entities, insolvency professionals and information utilities.
 - It enforces rules for processes of corporate insolvency resolution, individual insolvency resolution, corporate liquidation and individual bankruptcy under the IBC.
 - It specifies the minimum eligibility requirements for registration of insolvency professional agencies, insolvency professionals and information utilities and curriculum for the qualifying examination of the , insolvency professionals for their enrolment.
 - It collects and maintains records relating to insolvency and bankruptcy cases and disseminate information relating to such cases.
- **Constitution:** The Board consists of the following members who are appointed by the Central Government,
 - A Chairperson.
 - Three members from among the officers of the Central Government equivalent or not below the rank of a Joint Secretary. Out of the three members, each will represent the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Ministry of Law, exofficio.
 - One member nominated by the RBI (Reserve Bank of India), exofficio.
 - Five other members nominated by the Central Government, out of which at least three should be wholetime members.
 - The term of office of the Chairperson and members (other than exofficio members) is five years or until they attain sixtyfive years, whichever is earlier, and they are eligible for reappointment.

ECONOMY

IBBI proposes amendments to insolvency rules; seeks comment

CONTEXT: The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has proposed amendments to the Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Process regulations, to enhance efficiency and reduce costs, and sought stakeholder inputs by July 10.



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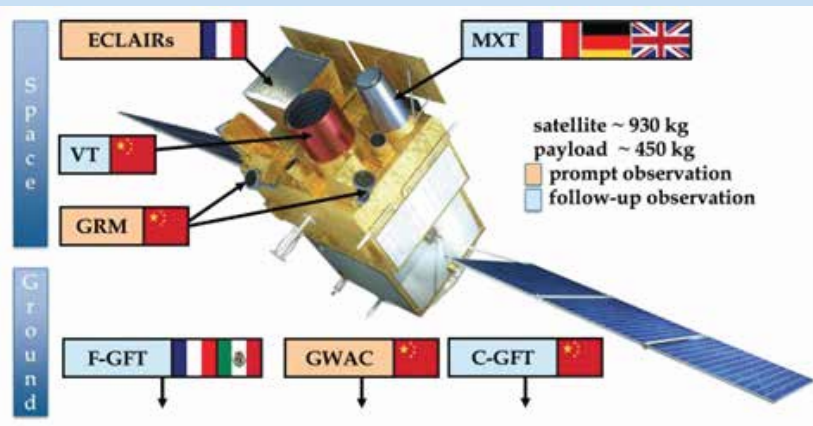
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

French-Chinese spacecraft to hunt down universe’s most powerful explosions

CONTEXT: A French Chinese telescope satellite will blast off this weekend on a mission to hunt down gamma-ray bursts, the most powerful explosions in the universe. The light from these almighty blasts has travelled billions of light years to reach Earth, so scientists believe they could hold answers to some mysteries of the universe’s youth. But these flashes are so brief they have proved difficult to observe.

Aiming to learn more, the Space Variable Objects Monitor (SVOM) is scheduled to blast off on a Chinese Long March 2C rocket from the Xichang launch site in China’s Sichuan province on Saturday.

SVOM’s mission is to use its X-ray vision to track down the source of gamma-ray bursts, which are detected in the sky around once every day. This cosmic investigation began back in “the middle of the Cold War,” said Bertrand Cordier, the chief scientist for France’s contribution to SVOM.



About SVOM Mission

The SVOM mission (Space based multiband astronomical Variable Objects Monitor) is a Franco Chinese mission dedicated to the study of the most distant explosions of stars, the gamma-ray bursts. It is to be launched end 2023 by the Chinese Long March 2C rocket from the Xichang launch base.

It is the result of a collaboration between the two national space agencies, CNSA (China National Space Administration) and CNES (Centre national d'études spatiales), with the main contributions of the Institute of Research into the Fundamental Laws of the Universe (Irfu) and the Research Institute of Astrophysics and Planetology (IRAP) for France and the National Astronomical Observatory (NAO) and the Beijing High Energy Institute (IHEP) for China.

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