

My Notes....

NATIONAL

SECTION 497 OF IPC

- The **Parliamentary Committee on Home Affairs** has suggested that **adultery should be re-instituted as a crime** in the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023**, the proposed law to replace the **Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860**.
- **Until 2018**, the **IPC contained Section 497**, which defined **adultery as a criminal offence** that attracted up to **five years in prison**, or a **fine**, or **both**. However, **only men could be punished under Section 497**, not women.
- In **Joseph Shine vs Union of India** (27 September 2018), a **five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court** unanimously **struck down Section 497** (define adultery) **of the IPC** on grounds that **included discrimination**.

SPECIAL CATEGORY STATUS

- The Chief Minister **Nitish Kumar-led Cabinet** passed a **resolution** seeking the **grant of special category status (SCS) to Bihar**.
- It is a **classification granted by the Centre** to assist the **development of States** that **face geographical** or **socio-economic disadvantages**.
- The **SCS was introduced in 1969** on the recommendation of the **fifth Finance Commission (FC)**.

KASHMIRI STUDENTS HELD UNDER UAPA

- **Seven students** of an **agriculture university** in **central Kashmir's Ganderbal district** were **arrested and booked** under the **Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA)**.
- The **UAPA** gives **powers to the government to probe and prosecute people** for **acts of terrorism**, and to **designate an organisation** as an **"unlawful association"** or a **"terrorist organisation"**, or an **individual as a "terrorist"**.

UNLF SIGNED PEACE DEAL

- Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** announced the **signing of a peace agreement** with the **Meitei separatist group United National Liberation Front (UNLF)** in **Manipur**, terming it a **"historic milestone"**.
- The **UNLF was formed on 24 November 1964**, and is the **oldest valley-based insurgent group** — distinct from the insurgent groups' active in the state's **Naga-dominated** and **Kuki-Zomi dominated hills**.

INTERNATIONAL

'OPERATION 1027

- **Myanmar's military government** faces a **significant challenge** following a **coordinated offensive** by **three ethnic minority forces** known as the **Three Brotherhood Alliance**.
- This offensive, named **'Operation 1027'**, began in late October, initially targeting **junta-controlled areas on the China border in northern Shan State**.
- The alliance consists of the **Arakan Army, Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army**, and **Ta'ang National Liberation Army**.

THE BDS MOVEMENT

- **German newspaper** accused **Indian poet and curator Ranjit Hoskote** of **"anti-Semitism"** and **sympathising with the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement**. **Hostoke** then resigned from the **Finding Committee for Documenta**.

- The movement was **launched in 2005** by **more than 170 Palestinian groups** to **garner international support for Palestinian people's rights**.
- It describes itself as an **"inclusive, anti-racist human rights movement** that is opposed on principle to **all forms of discrimination**, including **anti-semitism** and **Islamophobia**."

HOUTHIS SEIZED AN INDIA-BOUND SHIP

- The **Yemen rebel group of Houthis** seized an **Israel-linked ship bound for India**, raising fears of **another dimension** being added to the **ongoing Gaza conflict**.
- The ship, **Galaxy Leader**, was heading **from Turkey towards Pipavav in Gujarat**, and **had no cargo on board**. Its **crew members** are from **Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Mexico**, and the **Philippines**.
- The **Houthis are a rebel group** locked in a **civil war with the Yemen government** for almost a decade.

HUMANITARIAN PAUSE IN GAZA

- **Qatar** announced the **success of mediation efforts** between **Israel and Hamas**, resulting in an **agreement** for a **humanitarian pause**.
- The **United Nations** defines a **"humanitarian pause"** as a **"temporary cessation of hostilities purely for humanitarian purposes"**.
- The **UN defines** "a ceasefire" it as a **"suspension of fighting agreed upon by the parties to a conflict**, typically as part of a **political process"**.

ECONOMY

INDIA SIGN SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE AGREEMENT

- **India**, the **US** and **12 other members** of the **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)** entered into a **supply chain resilience agreement** that aims to **cut dependence on China** and help shift manufacturing of crucial goods to member nations.
- The **14 countries** that are **part of IPEF** include India, Australia, the US, Japan, Fiji, Korea, New Zealand, Singapore and Thailand, and make up for 40% of global gross domestic product and about a third of global goods and services trade.
- The **IPEF** is structured around **four pillars** relating to **trade, supply chains, clean economy** and **fair economy** (issues like tax and anti-corruption). India has joined all the pillars except the trade pillar.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INDIA IS EMBRACING NFC

- This technology, which uses **radio waves** to **transmit data over short distances**, has become something of a **global phenomenon** and is being used by **billions worldwide**, primarily for payments.
- **Near-field communication (NFC)** is a **way of making devices like phones and smartwatches exchange tiny snippets of data** with other devices or **read NFC-enabled cards over short distances**.

TANTALUM FOUND IN SUTLEJ

- A team of researchers from the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar** has found the **presence of tantalum**, a **rare metal**, in the **Sutlej river sand** in Punjab.
- **Tantalum** is a **rare metal** with the **atomic number 73** — the **number of protons found in one atom of the element**.

- **Tantalum** is most prominently used in the electronic sector. The **capacitors** made from tantalum are capable of storing more electricity in smaller sizes without much leakage than any other type of capacitor.

PSYCHE MISSION FIRES LASERS AT EARTH

- A **NASA experiment** on the **Psyche spacecraft** has **beamed back a near-infrared laser** that contains test data from almost **16 million kilometres** away.
- The **distance is 40 times** that between the Moon and the Earth and is the **farthest-ever demonstration** of optical communications.
- **Optical communications** have been demonstrated previously in **low-Earth orbit** and even to the Moon, but **NASA's Deep Space Optical Communications (DSOC)** is the first test in deep space.

'AIR GLOW' TO UNDERSTAND SPACE WEATHER

- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is set to launch the **Atmospheric Waves Experiment (AWE)** to study one of the important **drivers of Space weather** – the **Earth's weather**.
- **AWE** will be launched and mounted on the **exterior of the Earth-orbiting International Space Station (ISS)**.
- From the vantage point, it will look down at the Earth and record the **colourful light bands**, commonly known as **airglow**.

25 YEARS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION (ISS)

- The **first segment of the ISS** — the **Zarya Control Module** — was **Russian** and launched 20 November 1998.
- It **passes over our heads 16 times** every 24 hours — traveling through **16 sunrises and sunsets** — at an altitude of a mere **430 kilometers (267 miles)**.

SICKLE CELL BREAKTHROUGH

- The **UK drug regulator** recently approved a **gene therapy** for the **cure of sickle cell disease** and **thalassaemia**, seen as a **landmark breakthrough by many**.
- **Called Casgevy**, the **therapy edits the faulty gene** that leads to these blood disorders, potentially **curing the person for life**.
- So far, the only permanent treatment has been a **bone marrow transplant**, for which a **closely matched donor** is needed.

METADATA ROLE IN FACT-FINDING

- **Metadata** plays an **important role in fact-checking**. Usually described as '**data about other data**', it provides **essential information** such as the **origin, context**, and the **history of a piece of text or image**.
- There are **various types of metadata** that can be associated with **digital assets**.

ASTROSAT DETECTS OVER 600 GAMMA-RAY BURSTS

- **India's AstroSat space telescope** has achieved a **significant milestone** by **detecting more than 600 Gamma-Ray Burst (GRB)**, each marking the **death of a massive star** or **merging of neutron stars**.
- **GRBs last from a fraction of a second to several minutes**, and are accompanied by the **birth of a black hole**.
- **Astrosat was launched in 2015** by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), had a **design life of five years**, but continues to be **in good health**, making **observations for astronomers**.

MISCELLANEOUS

WATER RESERVES IN SOUTHERN INDIA

- **Water levels** in the **reservoirs of India's southern states** are set to fall further in the next few months, leading to **concerns amid the stocks already being at a low** this year.
- According to a recent report from the **Central Water Commission (CWC)**, water levels in these **states' reservoirs are low compared to last year and compared to other regions of the country in 2023**.
- The **CWC monitors 42 reservoirs located in the southern states**: Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Their **collective storage capacity is 53.334 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM)**.

BAN ON HALAL CERTIFICATES PRODUCTS

- Uttar Pradesh authorities imposed a **state-wide ban** on the "production, storing, distribution and sale of **halal certified edible items**".
- **Halal** is an **Arabic word** that loosely translates to 'permissible' in English. In the **Quran**, the term '**halal**' is **contrasted with the term 'haram'** — meaning '**forbidden**' — and is used to **designate the categories of lawful** (and allowed) and **unlawful (and forbidden)**.
- In the Indian context, **halal is mostly used to refer to the slaughtering technique** used by Muslims.
- This involves **killing the livestock or poultry through a single cut to the jugular vein, carotid artery** (which carries **blood from the brain to the heart** and vice versa), and the **windpipe** with a sharp knife at the front of the neck.

MANDATORY REPORTING PROVISION UNDER POCSO

- **Failure to report sexual crimes against minors** is a **bailable offence**, the Himachal Pradesh High Court ruled.
- **Section 19 of the POCSO** states that anyone having "apprehension" that **an offence under POCSO** is likely to be committed, or knowledge that such an offence has been committed, "shall provide such information to the **Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU)** or the police.

KERALA NURSE FACING DEATH PENALTY IN YEMEN

- **Yemen's Supreme Court** has dismissed the **appeal of Nimisha Priya**, an **Indian nurse** facing the **death penalty** in that country.
- **Priya** stands **convicted of killing a Yemeni citizen in 2017**. The **HC** was hearing a petition moved by **Priya's mother Prema Kumari**, seeking the **Centre's permission to go to Yemen** and **conduct negotiations for her release**.

BENGALURU HOSTS KAMBALA RACES

- It is a **folk sport** practised in **coastal Karnataka districts**, especially in regions where **Tulu speakers form a majority**.
- The **folk sports** has come under the **scrutiny of the Supreme Court in the past – Kambala**, along with **Jallikattu** and **bullock-cart racing**, was **outlawed in 2014**. Subsequently, **state governments amended legislation** to allow them to continue.