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International & National News

Leave benefits for women in the armed forces



Context

The Defence Minister has approved a proposal to grant maternity, childcare, and child adoption leave to women soldiers, sailors, and air warriors on a par with the officers.

Key points

- The move was in line with the vision of “inclusive participation” of all women in the armed forces, irrespective of their ranks.
- At present, women officers get maternity leave of **180 days** with full pay for each child, subject to a maximum of two children.
- Childcare leave of **360 days** is granted in total service career (subject to the child being less than 18 years of age) to women officers.
- Child adoption leave of **180 days** is granted after the date of the valid adoption of a child below one year of age.

Air pollution in states

Context

Delhi and parts of the surrounding States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh encounter their annual air quality inflection point.

Reasons for pollution of North India in winters

- Stubble Burning
- Geographical location
- Temperature inversion
- Firecrackers due to the festive season
- Vehicular Pollution
- Construction

About CAQM

- CAQM stands for **Commission for Air Quality Management**.
- CAQM is a **statutory mechanism to coordinate and oversee diverse efforts to improve air quality** in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and UP, with the underlying remedial approach.

Russia test-fires nuclear-capable ballistic missile from submarine

Context

- Russia had successfully test-launched an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads from one of its submarines.



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- The launch of the “**Bulava**” missile comes as Russia ramps up nuclear rhetoric since revoking its ratification of a key nuclear test ban treaty

About Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

- The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty prohibits “**any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion**” anywhere in the world.
- The treaty was opened for signature in September 1996 and has been signed by 187 nations and ratified by 178.
- The treaty cannot formally enter into force until it is ratified by 44 specific nations, eight of which have yet to do so: **India, China, Pakistan, North Korea, Israel, Iran, Egypt, and the United States.**
- In order to verify compliance with its provisions, the treaty establishes a global network of monitoring facilities and allows for on-site inspections of suspicious events.
- Since the conclusion and opening for signature of the CTBT, nuclear testing has become taboo.
- Today, even those nuclear-armed states that have not signed or not ratified the CTBT, including **India, Israel, and Pakistan**, observe nuclear testing moratoriums.
- Only one country has conducted nuclear test explosions in this century, and even that country—**North Korea**—halted nuclear testing in 2017.
- Although the CTBT has not formally entered into force, the treaty has, for now, achieved its primary goal: ending nuclear weapon test explosions.

Enemy property’ Butler Palace to turn into a tourist Haven

Context

Lucknow’s once-grand three-story Butler Palace, left deserted and in darkness for many decades, will see a facelift.

Key points

- Built a century ago, the palace is a mix of **Rajasthani and Indo-Mughal styles**
- The palace, originally built as the official residence of the Commissioner of Avadh, **Harcourt Butler**, in 1915, was owned by the royal family of Mahmudabad.



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- By its own account, the family migrated to India in the 13th century and settled in erstwhile Avadh, current Lucknow, in the 16th century, and owed allegiance to the Mughals.
- **Mohammed Amir Ahmad Khan**, the king at the time of Independence, migrated to Pakistan, while his son Mohammad Amir Mohammad Khan, stayed on in India as a citizen, fighting a legal battle over several properties, including Butler Palace.
- After the **India-Pakistan war in 1965**, Butler Palace was declared “**enemy property**” by the Government of India
- After being declared enemy property in the 1960s, the premises were handed over to the Uttar Pradesh government, who used it as a sales tax office.
- In the 1980s, it was given to the **Indian Council of Philosophical Research**, an organization under the Union Human Resource Development Ministry.

Traffic Collision Avoidance Systems (TCAS)- Kavach

Context

The deadly collision between two passenger trains in southern India’s Vizianagaram district in Andhra Pradesh which killed 14 people and injured fifty persons could have been averted if **Traffic Collision Avoidance Systems (TCAS)** were in place.

About TCAS - Kavach

- Kavach is a **cab signaling train control system** with anti-collision features.
- Simply put, it plays the role of a watchdog over the existing signaling system.
- It was developed over a period of 10 years, starting in 2012, by the **Indian Railways Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO)**.
- Kavach is designed to give out warnings to the loco pilot in case he does not notice the ‘red signal,’ and instead of stopping, is going to overshoot the signal.
- After giving warnings on the loco pilot’s display, if the pilot does not slow down below 15 kilometers per hour, the Kavach system automatically applies brakes to bring the train to a halt.

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