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14 MPs suspended from the Parliament

Context: 13 MPs from Lok Sabha and 1 from Rajya Sabha was suspended over the uproar following the security breach in the Parliament.

- The Speaker of Lok Sabha and Chairman of Rajya Sabha play a vital role in maintaining order for smooth House proceedings.
- They have the authority to force a Member's withdrawal to ensure adherence to parliamentary decorum.
- This power is essential for upholding discipline and fostering a conducive environment for legislative deliberations.

➤ Rules for Suspension

• Lok Sabha Procedures:

- Rule 373: The presiding officers, as per Rule 373, can instruct a Member of Lok Sabha to leave the House in cases of disorderly conduct. The withdrawn Member must remain absent for the rest of the day's sitting.
- Rules 374 and 374A: Rule 374 authorizes the Presiding Officers to name legislators persistently disrupting the House after repeated warnings. Following this, the House can propose a motion to suspend the MP for the remainder of the session.
- Rule 374A, introduced in December 2001, allows the Speaker to name an MP for automatic suspension of five days or the remaining session, whichever is shorter. The House can resolve to terminate this suspension at any time.

• Rajya Sabha Procedures:

- Rule 255: In the Rajya Sabha, Rule 255 empowers the Chairman to immediately instruct the withdrawal of any Member engaging in disorderly conduct.
- Rule 256: This rule grants the Chairman the authority to name members persistently disregarding the Chair's authority or abusing council rules. Subsequently, the House can pass a motion to suspend the Member for a period not exceeding the remainder of the session.
- Unlike Lok Sabha's Rule 374A, Rajya Sabha cannot suspend its members without formally passing a motion for suspension.

➤ Role of Courts:

- Article 122 of the Indian Constitution bars the judicial review of parliamentary proceedings, asserting their immunity from court scrutiny.
- Despite this constitutional provision, there have been instances where courts intervened in the procedural functioning of legislatures.
- On occasion, courts may examine and intervene in matters related to the suspension of Members of Parliament or Legislative Assembly, despite the general immunity provided by Article 122.

➤ Conditions of suspension:

- Suspension lasts for the duration of the ongoing session at most.
- During suspension, members are barred from entering the chamber or participating in committee meetings.
- Suspended individuals lose the privilege of issuing notices for discussions or submissions.
- Furthermore, they forfeit the right to receive responses to their questions.

➤ Revocation of suspension:

- The Speaker does not possess the authority to lift or revoke the suspension order.
- The prerogative to revoke the suspension lies with the House itself.
- If the House wishes to do so, it can pass a motion to revoke the suspension of a Member.

Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023

Context: While the 5th edition of the Global Status Report on Road Safety reveals a global decline in road fatalities, India experiences an upward trend.

➤ Global Road Traffic Deaths Overview:

- In 2021, an estimated 1.19 million road traffic deaths occurred, marking a 5% reduction from the 1.25 million deaths recorded in 2010.
- Despite a more than doubling of the global motor vehicle fleet, significant road network expansions, and a nearly one-billion increase in the global population, efforts to enhance road safety have led to a slight overall reduction in deaths.
- **In India, there was a notable surge in fatalities, indicating a 15% increase as the numbers climbed from 1.34 lakh in 2010 to 1.54 lakh in 2021.**
- More than half of United Nations Member States succeeded in reducing road traffic deaths between 2010 and 2021.

➤ Challenges and Target Shortcomings:

- Road traffic deaths and injuries persist as a major global health and development challenge.
- Efforts to improve road safety, though showing progress, fall short of meeting the **United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030 target to halve deaths by 2030.**
- Road traffic crashes rank as the leading killer of children and youth aged 5 to 29 years, and are the 12th leading cause of death when considering all age groups.

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- **Demographics of Fatalities:**
 - Two-thirds of road traffic deaths occur among individuals aged 18–59 years, resulting in significant health, social, and economic consequences.
 - Vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists account for more than half of all fatalities.
 - Micro-mobility modes like e-scooters contribute to 3% of road traffic deaths.
- **Global Disparities:**
 - Nine in 10 road traffic deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, with the highest risk of death per population observed in low-income countries.
 - Regional disparities show 28% of all fatalities in the WHO South-East Asia Region, 25% in the Western Pacific Region, 19% in the African Region, 12% in the Region of the Americas, 11% in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, and 5% in the European Region.
 - The European Region reports the most significant decline in deaths since 2010, with a 36% reduction.
- **Legislation and Mitigation Measures:**
 - Implementation of measures to mitigate the risk of death and injury, including enacting laws aligned with WHO best practices, has progressed modestly.
 - Only six countries have achieved WHO best practice legislation on key risk factors, such as speeding, drink driving, motorcycle helmet use, and seat-belts and child restraint systems.
- **Urbanization and Mobility Systems:**
 - With a growing and increasingly urban global population, the rising demand for mobility is expected to strain transport systems, particularly those emphasizing private vehicles.
 - Many countries continue to design and build their mobility systems for motor vehicles rather than prioritizing people and safety, hindering efforts to protect vulnerable road users.
- **Safe System Approach and Success Stories:**
 - Countries applying the safe system approach to road safety, placing people and safety at the core of mobility systems, have witnessed significant gains.
 - The European Region has the highest concentration of countries with policies aligning with this approach, reporting the largest drop in road traffic deaths.
 - The Western Pacific Region follows, both in the adoption of aspects of the safe system approach and in reducing fatalities, demonstrating that fatality reduction targets can be met with political will, investment, and capacity matching the scale of the crisis.

Geminid Meteor Showers 2023

Context: The Geminid meteor shower reached its peak at about 19:00 GMT on December 14th 2023, and will remain intermittently visible until December 24.

- The Geminid meteor shower, occurring annually in December, is named after the constellation "Gemini."
- It is distinct from other meteor showers as it is one of two annual showers resulting from the Earth passing through debris left by asteroids, not comet debris.
- The primary source of Geminid meteors is an asteroid named 3200 Phaethon, discovered in the mid-1980s, categorized as a "rock comet" with a unique orbit.
- **Characteristics of Geminid Meteors:**
 - Geminid meteors are slow-moving and typically visible in December, peaking around December 4–16, with the highest intensity on the morning of December 14.
 - Recent Geminid showers have exhibited 120–160 meteors per hour under optimal conditions, occurring between 02:00 to 03:00 local time.
 - The Geminids were first observed in 1862, making them a relatively recent discovery compared to other major meteor showers.
- **Origin and Asteroidal Connection:**
 - The Geminid meteor shower is unique as it originates not from a comet but from the asteroid 3200 Phaethon.
 - Phaethon's 1.4-year orbit and its comet-like elliptical trajectory raise questions about its nature, considered a "dead comet" or a distinct celestial entity known as a "rock comet."
 - Despite its comet-like orbit, Phaethon lacks a cometary tail and exhibits spectra resembling a rocky asteroid. The meteoroids formed from Phaethon are denser than typical cometary dust flakes.
- **Radiant and Observation:**
 - Geminid meteors appear to emanate from the radiant in the constellation Gemini but can be visible anywhere in the night sky.
 - The radiant rises about sunset in the northern hemisphere, providing a usable elevation for observation from the local evening hours onwards.
 - Geminids can appear yellowish in hue, and their medium speed of about 22 miles per second makes them relatively easy to spot.

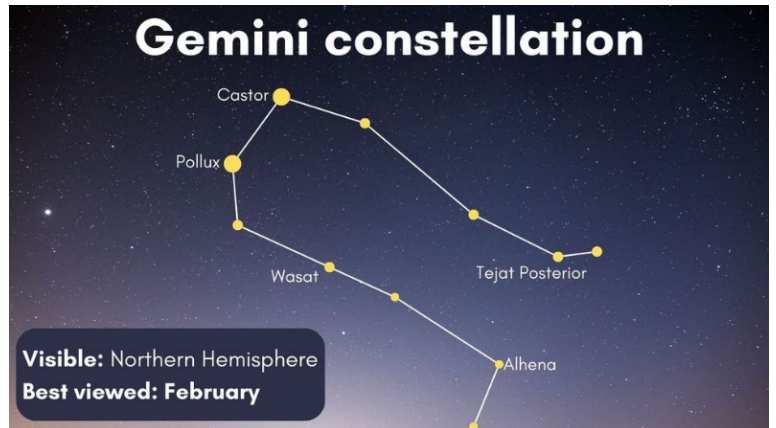
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- The Geminid meteor shower is considered one of the most consistent and active annual showers, with observers in the northern hemisphere experiencing higher Geminid rates due to the radiant's higher position in the sky.
- **Scientific Insights and Studies:**
 - Recent studies, including data from the Parker Solar Probe in 2023, suggest that the Geminids may have originated from the catastrophic breakup of a comet, forming asteroids such as 2005 UD and 1999 YC in addition to Phaethon.
- **Constellation Gemini**
 - Gemini is a zodiac constellation located in the northern celestial hemisphere and is one of the 48 constellations described by the 2nd-century AD astronomer Ptolemy.
 - It continues to be recognized as one of the 88 modern constellations and is associated with the mythological twins Castor and Pollux in Greek mythology.
 - The name "Gemini" is Latin for twins, and its old astronomical symbol is (♊).
 - **Location in the Night Sky:**
 - Gemini lies between Taurus to the west and Cancer to the east, with Auriga and Lynx to the north, Monoceros and Canis Minor to the south, and Orion to the southwest.
 - In classical antiquity, Cancer marked the location of the Sun on the northern solstice (June 21). However, axial precession shifted it into Gemini during the 1st century AD.
 - The Sun's location during the northern solstice moved from Gemini to Taurus in 1990, where it will remain until the 27th century AD before shifting into Aries.
 - Gemini is particularly prominent in the winter skies of the Northern Hemisphere and remains visible throughout the night in December–January.



NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

National Energy Conservation Awards



Recently, the President of India has presented the National Energy Conservation Awards 2023 on the occasion of National Energy Conservation Day in New Delhi.

About National Energy Conservation Awards:

- The National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) were first given out on December 14, 1991.
- The awards are presented annually on December 14th by distinguished government dignitaries to the institutions, **buildings, transport and industries sectors**, as well as **energy-efficient manufacturers**.
- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) organizes **National Energy Conservation Day** on December 14th each year.

The Bureau of Energy Efficiency:

- It is a statutory body that helps the government develop policies and strategies to reduce the energy intensity of India's economy.
- It was established on **March 1, 2002, under the Energy Conservation Act of 2001**.
- Its mission is to **develop policies and strategies** that focus on self-regulation and market principles.

Ranthambore National Park



Recently, Ranthambore National Park administration plans to implement stringent monitoring of safari vehicles with GPS trackers.

About Ranthambore National Park:

- Ranthambore National Park is **one of the biggest** and most renowned national parks in Northern India.
- It is located in the Sawai Madhopur district of southeastern **Rajasthan**.
- It was established in **1955** as the **Sawai Madhopur Game Sanctuary** and became a national park in **1980**.
- It is at the junction of the **Aravali and Vindhya hill ranges**.
- The park is home to a significant number of **Royal Bengal tigers**, as well as other wild animals such as **leopards, nilgai, wild boar, sambar** and hyena.

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<p>Asymmetric Federalism</p> 	<p>In a recent 16-day hearing, the Supreme Court deliberated on Article 370, examining its core principles of asymmetric federalism.</p> <p>About Asymmetric Federalism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Asymmetric federalism is a system where different states in a federation have different powers. ➤ In this system, one or more states have more autonomy than the others, even though they have the same constitutional status. ➤ In India, asymmetric federalism has a long history. ➤ It dates back to how the British unified the country and later integrated the territories ➤ In a system of asymmetric federalism, the principle is to treat all states equally, while being aware that some states are more equal and unequal than others. ➤ In contrast to asymmetric federalism, symmetric federalism is a system where each state in the federation has equal powers. ➤ In symmetric federalism, no distinction is made between constituent states. ➤ India is considered a quasi-federal system, meaning it has features of both a federal and a unitary system.
<p>Barracuda</p> 	<p>Recently, a solar-electric boat, Barracuda, was launched on at the yard of Navalt Solar and Electric Boats, located off Aroor in Alappuzha.</p> <p>About Barracuda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Barracuda is India's fastest solar-electric boat designed by Navalt Solar and Electric Boats. ➤ It is a 14-meter-long, 4.4-meter-wide vessel capable of ferrying 12 passengers and cargo. ➤ It can reach a top speed of 12.5 knots (23 kmph) and has a range of seven hours on a single charge. ➤ It features twin 50 kW electric motors, a marine-grade LFP battery and 6 kW solar power. ➤ Barracuda can navigate through rough seas with waves up to four meters tall. ➤ Its operation is noiseless, without vibration or air pollution. ➤ This eco-friendly workboat, aims to provide an affordable alternative to conventional fossil-fuelled boats, contributing to cleaner oceans. ➤ It won the world's best startup award in the mobility and transportation category at the Berlin Start-up Energy Transition Awards 2023.
<p>e-cigarettes</p> 	<p>Recently, the World Health Organization has emphasized an urgent need to control use of e-cigarette.</p> <p>About e-cigarettes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An electronic cigarette or e-cigarette, is a battery-powered device that emits a vaporized solution for inhalation. ➤ Its liquid contains nicotine, propylene glycol, glycerin, flavorings and other chemicals. ➤ E-cigarettes produce a number of dangerous chemicals including acetaldehyde, acrolein, and formaldehyde. ➤ Cigarettes Act, 1975, mandates the display of statutory health warnings in advertisements and on cartons and cigarette packages. ➤ This act was repealed by Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) in 2003.
<p>Place in News</p> <p>Finland</p>	<p>Recently, Finland announced plans to sign a defense cooperation agreement with the United States on December 18.</p> <p>Finland (Capital: Helsinki)</p> <p>Location: Finland is a Nordic country located in Northern Europe.</p> <p>Boundaries: Finland shares its borders with Norway (North), Russia (East), Gulf of Finland (South), Gulf of Bothnia (South-west), Sweden (Northwest) and Baltic Sea (South and southwest).</p> <p>Physical Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Northern Finland features fells (rounded, barren mountains) in Lapland, such as the famous Levi and Yllas. ➤ Kemijoki is the longest river in Finland, originates near Sokosti peak. ➤ Lake Saimaa is the largest lake of Finland. 

POINTS TO PONDER

- ❖ Who has been recently, remembered on his death anniversary for his courageous stand against the British forces? - **Pa Togan Nengminja Sangma (A Garo tribal leader)**
- ❖ What era does the construction of Barquq Castle in Khan Yunis city belong to? - **The Mamluk era**
- ❖ Under which Act is National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited (NARCL) registered with the Reserve Bank of India? - **SARFAESI Act, 2002**
- ❖ Under which article of the Indian Constitution does the Election Commission operate? - **Article 324**
- ❖ When was the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) established? - **1948**

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