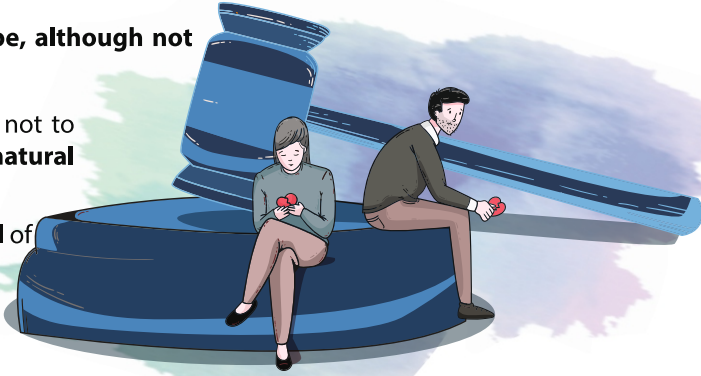


NEWS TODAY

MARITAL RAPE A GROUND FOR DIVORCE, RULES KERALA HC

- Kerala High Court, in a significant judgment, **upheld that marital rape, although not penalised in India, is a good ground to claim divorce.**
 - Court observed that a spouse in a marriage has a choice, a choice not to suffer, **which is fundamental to the autonomy guaranteed under natural law and the Constitution.**
 - Law cannot compel a spouse to suffer against his or her wish by denial of divorce by the court.
- Section 375 of the Indian penal Code (IPC) exempts unwilling sexual intercourse between a husband and a wife **over 18 years of age from Section 375's definition of "rape" and thus immunizes such acts from prosecution.**
- India is one of only 36 countries where marital rape is not a legal crime.
 - In 2013, the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) recommended that the **Indian government should criminalize marital rape.**
 - The **JS Verma committee** set up in the aftermath of nationwide protests after 2012 gang rape case had also recommended the same.



○ Legal provisions available to women

- **Section 498A deals** with women being subjected to cruelty by her husband or any relative of her husband.
- **Domestic Violence Act, 2005 recognises** forced sexual activity as punishable under the Indian law.
 - » However, a magistrate under the law has absolutely no power to criminalise the act of a man raping his wife, neither can the man be sentenced.

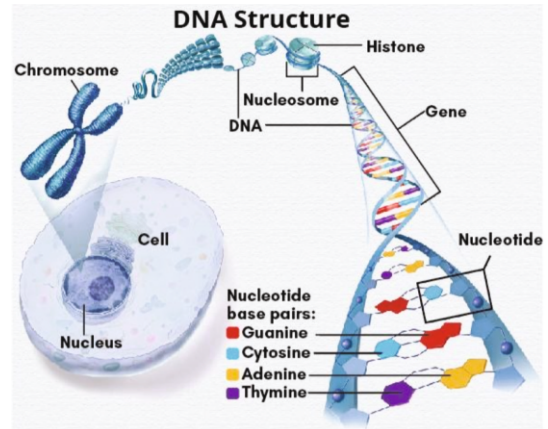
MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS LAUNCHES SIXTH BID ROUND OF OPEN ACREAGE LICENSING PROGRAMME (OALP)

- Under **Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP)**, OALP mechanism has been launched to boost domestic hydrocarbon production.
 - **OALP gives an option to a company looking for exploring hydrocarbons to select the exploration blocks on its own**, without waiting for the formal bid round from the Government.
 - **India's domestic energy production has been low.**
 - Crude, oil and gas production fell 5.22% and 8.06% respectively in the last financial year.
 - Bid Round-VI is expected to add further 35,346 sq. km, taking the total area for exploration to 191,926 sq. km. under the HELP regime.
- **HELP was unveiled in 2016 that replaced the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP).**
- **How HELP is better than NELP**
 - **Single License** for all Hydrocarbons instead of separate licenses in NELP.
 - **Revenue Sharing Model** instead of profit sharing in NELP.
 - Pricing & Marketing Freedom.
 - **Lower Royalty Rates** (Varies from 2% in Ultra-Deep Offshore to 12.5% Onland) with no royalty for the first 7 years incase of deep-sea drilling.
 - **Further concession in Royalty Rates** for Early Production.
 - Simplified Dispute Resolution Mechanism.



SCIENTISTS FROM FOUR BRICS COUNTRIES TO CARRY OUT GENOMIC SEQUENCING OF THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

- **Indian Scientists, in partnership with Scientists from China, Russia and Brazil, will carry out genomic sequencing of SARS-CoV-2** to help trace genetic mutations and also make projections about the future of its spread using mathematical modelling.
 - Under this research, supported by Department of Science and Technology, **India and Brazil will assess distribution of SARS-CoV-2 in environmental samples.**
 - **Chinese and Russian scientists will carry out Real-Time PCR detection** of SARS-CoV-2 in biological material (nasal swabs) from patients.
- Genome sequencing means **deciphering the exact order of base pairs** (refer infographic) in an individual.
 - **A genome is an organism's complete set of DNA.** It includes all chromosomes, which houses DNA, and genes (specific sections of DNA).
- **About BRICS**
 - BRICS is an acronym for 5 emerging economies of the world viz. – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa.
 - They comprise **41% of world population, having 24% of world GDP and over 16% share in world trade.**
 - **India will host the 13th BRICS summit**, which also marks the 15th anniversary of the grouping.



CHINA BEGINS NAVAL EXERCISES IN SOUTH CHINA SEA (SCS)

- China has begun **five-day-long naval drills in the disputed SCS**, amid the military exercises being conducted by the US in the Indo-Pacific.
 - The Indian Navy is also deploying a naval task group to the SCS, Western Pacific and South East Asia **aimed at enhancing its profile in the strategically key sea lanes.**
 - **Recently, India at the 11th East Asia Summit (EAS) Stressed that Code of Conduct** on the SCS should be fully consistent with UNCLOS 1982.
- **Importance of SCS**
 - **Strategic Location:** It is a **key sea lane of communication** connecting Asia with Europe and Africa.
 - **Natural Resource:** The SCS is believed to contain major reserves of natural gas and oil.
 - **ONGC Videsh**, the overseas arm of Oil and Natural Gas Corp. Ltd (ONGC) has a presence in **Vietnam through 45% and 100% stakes in 2 hydrocarbon blocks.**
- **Issues with South SCS**
 - **Territorial conflict (refer infographic).**
 - **Violation of International rules:** In 2016, **China rejected UNCLOS Arbitral Tribunal ruling** which said that China cannot claim historic rights to resources in the waters within a "nine-dash line" encompassing much of SCS.



○ About UNCLOS

- It is an international agreement that resulted from the third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III).
- It defines the rights and responsibilities of nations with respect to their use of the world's oceans, establishing guidelines for businesses, the environment, and the management of marine natural resources.
- India signed the Convention in 1982 and ratified in 1995.

PM SUGGESTS 4-POINT STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE \$400-B EXPORTS IN FY22

- The Prime Minister listed **four factors to boost exports** and urged all stakeholders to identify **75 new products and destinations to broad base exports to mark 75th Independence Day.**
 - Increasing **quality competent manufacturing.**
 - Centre and States to put in effort to **sort out logistical problems.**
 - Strengthening **coordination between exporters and government.**
 - **Finding more global markets for Indian products.**
- At present, **India's exports constitute 20% of GDP.**
 - Diversification is necessary as **India's exports comprised items from just a handful of sectors** such as petroleum products, gems & jewellery, engineering goods and pharmaceuticals.
 - **Top 3 Export Destinations for India:** USA, China, UAE.
- **Export promotion schemes by government**
 - Services Exports from India **Scheme (SEIS) under Foreign Trade Policy** for increasing exports of services.
 - **Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export Product (RoDTEP)** - to replace existing Merchandise Exports from India Scheme for exports of goods from India.
 - Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES).
 - **Agriculture Export Policy, 2018.**
 - **Niryat Bandhu Scheme** to reach out to new and potential exporters.

CESL ISSUES FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND TENDER FOR PROCUREMENT OF 1 LAKH ELECTRIC THREE-WHEELERS (E3W)

- **Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL)**, a subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Limited invited proposals for E3W from original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) to use E3W in **municipal solid waste collection, freight loaders, food and vaccine transport and passenger autos.**
 - Deployment of E3Ws for **refrigerated cold storage and vaccine drives** can help make **India's COVID recovery green and eco- friendly.**
 - **Further**, all E3Ws have to comply with **Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India Phase II (FAME II)** policy requirements.
- CESL has been supported by **USAID's Smart Power for Advancing Reliability and Connectivity (SPARC) Program.**
 - It is a **three year bi-lateral program** of USAID with Ministry of Power **to modernize electricity distribution utilities to improve their performance.**
- **FAME** was notified in **2015** under **Department of Heavy Industries** as part of **National Electric Mobility Mission Plan 2020** to support **hybrid/electric vehicles market development and Manufacturing eco-system.**
 - **Phase 2 of FAME (2019 to 2022)** has been given an outlay of ₹10,000 crores to generate demand by way of supporting e-Buses, e-3 Wheelers, e-4 Wheeler Passenger Car.



NEWS



G20 Digital Ministers' Meeting

- **The meeting was hosted by Italy and it adopted a declaration for "Leveraging Digitalization for a Resilient, Strong, Sustainable and Inclusive Recovery".**
- Steps taken towards **digitization in India**
 - Digital India Mission.
 - Providing digital identity Aadhaar to 1.29 billion users, opening bank accounts of 430 million poor people, Direct benefit Transfer etc.
- **G20 is an informal group of 19 countries and the European Union.**
 - It represents **two-thirds of world's population and 85% of global gross domestic product.**



Stagflation

- Recently, Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India decided to keep the policy rate unchanged at 4% despite **upward revision in the inflation forecast reflecting the dilemma of stagflation.**
- Stagflation is an economic situation in which the **inflation rate is high, economic growth rate slows, and unemployment remains steadily high.**
 - It creates a **dilemma for government since most actions designed to lower inflation** may raise unemployment levels, and policies designed to decrease unemployment may worsen inflation.



Reform and Regulatory Knowledge Base for Power Sector

- It is an **e-certification program** launched by the Ministry of Power **to provide regulatory training to the practitioners** from diverse backgrounds.
- Also, a **Regulatory Data Dashboard** was launched, which is an **e-compendium of data containing State-wise details of tariff and DISCOM performance.**
 - It would **assist benchmarking** of the sector's performance, over time and across the power sector utilities, thus **helping to identify areas for improvement.**
 - Both have been **developed by IIT Kanpur.**



- **Major Dhyan Chand**
 - **India's highest sporting honour Khel Ratna Award** has been renamed Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award.
 - It was earlier named after **former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.**
 - He played an important role in **helping India complete their first hat-trick of Olympic gold medals with wins at the 1928, 1932 and 1936 Summer Olympics.**
 - He was awarded **Padma Bhushan in 1956.**
 - **National Sports Day** is celebrated on Dhyan Chand's birthday on August 29 to honour the hockey legend.



• **Abanindranath Tagore**

- Celebrations have begun to mark 150 years of this iconic artist.
- He was the **nephew of Rabindranath Tagore** and was the first major supporter of swadeshi values in Indian art.
- He First created '**Indian Society of Oriental Art**' and later established **Bengal school of art** with the aim to counter English influence on Indian artists
- He is widely hailed as the '**Father of Modern Indian Art**'.

• **Hiroshima** (Japan)

- **August 6** is observed solemnly as **Hiroshima Day**.
- The **Manhattan Project** created two atomic bombs- the **first one**, called '**The Little Boy**' was **dropped** in the city of **Hiroshima** while the **second one**, dubbed '**The Fat Man**', was dropped in **Nagasaki** on August 6 and 9, respectively.



• **Pensilungpa Glacier** (Zaskar, Ladakh)

- A recent study has **attributed the retreat of the glacier to:**
 - **Increase in the temperature**
 - **Decrease in precipitation during winters**
- The study was **conducted by the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology** (Dehradun), an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology.



• **Zaranj, Nimroz Province** (Afghanistan)

- Zaranj became the **first provincial capital to fall to the Taliban** since the US has reached a deal with the group for a US troop pullout in 2020.
- As a symbol of India's commitment to Afghanistan's reconstruction and rebuilding, **India built the Zaranj-Delaram Highway**.
 - **Through it**, India could **extend supplies to Afghanistan via the Chabahar Port** in Iran.



Places in news