

SASTRA Ramanujan Prize

- The SASTRA Ramanujan Prize for 2022 will be awarded to Yunqing Tang, Assistant Professor with the University of California, Berkeley, U.S.A.
- The award, instituted by the Shanmugha Arts, Science, Technology & Research Academy (SASTRA) in 2005 with a cash prize of \$10,000, is presented annually to individuals aged 32 and below, who made outstanding contributions in the field of mathematics, influenced by Srinivasa Ramanujan in a broad sense.

THE HINDU

Prachand



- THE Indian Air Force Monday formally inducted the indigenously developed multi-role Light Combat Helicopter (LCH), Prachand, which is suitable for operating on high-

altitude battlefields, and capable of destroying enemy air defence and engaging in counter-insurgency operations.

- The LCH is a 5.5-tonne class dedicated combat helicopter designed and developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL).
- According to the IAF, the induction marks India becoming the seventh country to make attack helicopters.
- The LCH has a narrow fuselage because of the tandem cockpit configuration for the pilot and co-pilot gunner one behind the other and has stealth features, armour protection, night attack capabilities and crash-worthy landing gear for better survivability.
- The fuselage is an aircraft's main body section. It holds crew, passengers, or cargo.
- In single-engine aircraft, it will usually contain an engine as well, although in some amphibious aircraft the single engine is mounted on a pylon attached to the fuselage, which in turn is used as a floating hull.

THE HINDU

UAE'S IMMIGRATION RULE

- The changes in the UAE visa rules can be broadly classified into three categories entry visa, green visa and golden visa.
- For the first time, the UAE has introduced entry visas that do not require a host or sponsor for visitors.
- All entry visas will now be available for single or multiple entries and will be valid for 60 days unlike the previous 30-day period.
- In 2020, golden visas were introduced, designed to enable exceptionally skilled foreigners to live, work and study in the UAE without the need for a national sponsor.
- The new five-year green residence visa is aimed at attracting skilled professionals, freelancers, investors, and entrepreneurs.
- It replaces the previous residence visa that was valid only for two years.

How will Indians benefit?

- The Indian expatriate community of approximately 3.5 million constitutes about 30% of the UAE population.
- The restructuring of its entry and residence system will further boost the country's image as an ideal

destination for work and investment.

- Thousands of talented professionals are expected to find employment in the UAE and tourists can now experience a hassle-free vacation with the simplified visa system.

THE HINDU

Mediation bill

Why does India need to promote mediation?

- While there is no standalone legislation for mediation in India, there are several statutes containing mediation provisions, such as the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, the Companies Act, 2013, the Commercial Courts Act, 2015, and the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- The Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee of the Supreme Court of India describes mediation as a tried and tested alternative for conflict resolution.
- As India is a signatory to the Singapore Convention on Mediation (formally the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation), it is appropriate to enact a law governing domestic and international mediation.

What are the key features of the Bill?

- The Bill aims to promote, encourage, and facilitate mediation, especially institutional mediation, to resolve disputes, commercial and otherwise.
- The Bill further proposes mandatory mediation before litigation.
- At the same time, it safeguards the rights of litigants to approach competent adjudicatory forums/ courts for urgent relief.
- The mediation process will be confidential and immunity is provided against its disclosure in certain cases.
- The outcome of the mediation process in the form of a Mediation Settlement Agreement (MSA) will be legally enforceable and can be registered with the State/ district/ taluk legal authorities within 90 days to ensure authenticated records of the settlement.
- The Bill establishes the Mediation Council of India and also provides for community mediation.

What are the concerns with the Bill?

- According to the Bill, pre-litigation mediation is mandatory for both parties before filing any suit or proceeding in a court, whether or

not there is a mediation agreement between them.

- Parties who fail to attend pre-litigation mediation without a reasonable reason may incur a cost.
- However, as per Article 21 of the Constitution, access to justice is a constitutional right which cannot be fettered or restricted.
- Mediation should just be voluntary and making it otherwise would amount to denial of justice.
- Additionally, according to Clause 26 of the Bill, court-annexed mediation, including pre-litigation mediation, will be conducted in accordance with the directions or rules framed by the Supreme Court or High Courts.
- However, the Committee objected to this. It stated that Clause 26 went against the spirit of the Constitution.
- Furthermore, the Bill considers international mediation to be domestic when it is conducted in India with the settlement being recognised as a judgment or decree of a court.
- The Singapore Convention does not apply to settlements that already have the status of judgments or decrees.
- As a result, conducting cross-border mediation in India will exclude the tremendous benefits of worldwide enforceability.

THE HINDU

Jal Jeevan mission

- Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, led by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, 10.2 crore rural households, or about 53% of the eligible population, now have tap water access.
- This, the Government claims, is a 37-percentage point rise from 2019 when the scheme was announced, where its stated aim is to ensure at least 55 litres per person per day of potable water to every rural household which implies a mere connection does not suffice.
- The Government commissions annual surveys to evaluate the success of the scheme.
- A recent audit, by a private agency, found that around 62% of rural households in India had fully functional tap water connections within their premises.
- A report of a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Water Resources in March, based on numbers provided by the nodal Jal Shakti Ministry, stated that 46% households had such fully functional tap water connections.
- The survey, however, revealed wide disparities in achievement.
- Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Goa and Pondicherry reported more than 80% of households with fully functional connections while less than half the households in Rajasthan, Kerala, Manipur, Tripura, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram and Sikkim had such connections.
- About 75% of households received water all days of the week, and only 8% just once a week.
- On average, households got water for three hours every day.
- Moreover, the report mentions a problem of chlorine contamination.
- Though 93% of the water samples were reportedly free of bacteriological contamination, most of the anganwadi centres and schools had higher than the permissible range of residual chlorine.

THE HINDU

Rupee depreciation

- The rupee is falling on account of two factors.
- The first is the widening current account deficit, mainly owing to the rise in the price of oil triggered by the Ukraine war.
- And the second is capital outflows, driven by a strengthening dollar on

the back of aggressive rate hikes by the U.S. Federal Reserve.

- Current account deficit (CAD) a broader measure than the trade deficit because it takes into account invisibles such as, for example, travel and tourism is expected to widen to beyond 3% of GDP this year, higher than 2.5%
- For all the talk of fiscal consolidation, the combined fiscal deficit of the Centre and the States is still above 10% of GDP, possibly higher if the contingent liabilities, especially of the States, are also brought to the book.
- In times of pressure, market perceptions are shaped more by how rapidly the reserves are falling the 'burn rate' rather than the absolute level of reserves.
- The RBI has been intervening in the market selling dollars from its foreign exchange kitty to defend the rupee. Presumably, the effort is to prevent volatility but not target any specific exchange rate.
- The real effective exchange rate (REER) of the rupee, which is a broader measure of its value against the currencies of India's trading partners, is overvalued, suggesting some room for depreciation.

THE HINDU
