WHAT IS CONTEMPT OF COURT?

The Allahabad High Court recently observed that orders issued by the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) under the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, are subject to appeal solely to the Supreme Court and not the High Court.

About Contempt of Court:

- **Constitutional Provisions: Article 129** of the Constitution says that the **Supreme Court** shall be the 'Court of Record' and it has all the powers of such courts including the power to punish for contempt of itself. **Article 215** conferred a corresponding power on **the High Courts.**
- According to the **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971**, contempt of court can either be civil contempt or criminal contempt.
- **Civil contempt** means **wilful disobedience to any judgment,** decree, direction, order, writ or other process of a court or wilful breach of an undertaking given to a court.
- On the other hand, **criminal contempt** means the publication (whether by words, spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representations, or otherwise) of any matter or the doing of any other act whatsoever which:
    - **scandalises** or tends to scandalise or lowers or tends to lower the authority of any court; or
    - **prejudices**, or **interferes** with, or tends to interfere with, the due course of any judicial proceeding; or
    - **interferes** or tends to interfere with, or **obstructs** or tends to obstruct, the **administration of justice** in any other manner.
- A contempt of court may be **punished with simple imprisonment** for a term which may **extend to six months**, or **with fine** which may extend to two thousand rupees, or with both, provided that the accused may be discharged or the punishment awarded may be remitted on apology being made to the satisfaction of the court.

What is not contempt of court?

- **Fair and accurate reporting of judicial proceedings** will not amount to contempt of court. Nor is any **fair criticism on the merits of a judicial order** after a case is heard and disposed of.

INDIA REJECTS CHINA'S SENSELESS ARUNACHAL ACT

India rejected as senseless China renaming of some places in Arunachal Pradesh. It said that assigning invented names does not alter the reality that the state "is, has been, and will always be" an integral part of India.

India's sharp response came after the Chinese government announced names for 30 more places in Arunachal Pradesh which it claims as the southern part of Tibet.

Border Dispute in Eastern Sector of LAC

McMahon Line

- The disputed boundary in the Eastern Sector of the India-China border is over the McMahon Line.
- Representatives of China, India and Tibet in 1913-14 met in Shimla to settle the boundary between Tibet and India, and Tibet and China.
- During the Shimla conference, Sir Henry McMahon, the then foreign secretary of British India, drew up the 550-mile (890 km) McMahon Line as the border between British India and Tibet.
    - This line was drawn from the eastern border of Bhutan to the Isu Razi pass on the China-Myanmar border.

The dispute between India and China is eastern sector

- The McMahon line moved British control substantially northwards. This agreement ceded Tawang and other Tibetan areas to the imperial British Empire.
    - Though the Chinese representatives at the meeting initialled the agreement, they subsequently refused to accept it.

- Subsequently, the Chinese government stated that it does not recognize the "illegal" McMahon Line.

- China accuses India of occupying areas in Arunachal, which it calls part of Southern Tibet.
    - China claims territory to the south of the McMahon Line, lying in Arunachal Pradesh.
- China also bases its claims on the historical ties that have existed between the monasteries in Tawang and Lhasa.

Indo-China 1962 war and Arunachal Pradesh

- The Arunachal Pradesh border, that China claims to be its own territory, is the largest disputed area, covering around 90000 sq. km.
- During the 1962 war, the People's Liberation Army occupied it but they announced a unilateral ceasefire and withdrew respecting the McMahon Line.
- However, it has continued to assert its claim over the territory. Nowadays, almost the whole of Arunachal is claimed by China.

Renaming of places by China

- Recently, in March 2024, the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs released the fourth list of standardised geographical names in Arunachal Pradesh.
    - In April 2023, Beijing had released the third list of standardised names of 11 places in Arunachal Pradesh.
    - The first batch of the standardised names of six places in Arunachal Pradesh was released in 2017 while the second batch of 15 places was issued in 2021.

Why is China giving names to places that are in India?

- China claims some 90,000 sq km of Arunachal Pradesh as its territory.
- It calls the area Zangnan in the Chinese language and makes repeated references to "South Tibet".
    - Chinese maps show Arunachal Pradesh as part of China, and sometimes parenthetically refer to it as "so-called Arunachal Pradesh".

POWERS OF THE ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE

Enforcement Directorate:

- The Directorate of Enforcement or Enforcement Directorate (ED) is a domestic law enforcement agency and economic intelligence agency.
- It is responsible for enforcing economic laws and fighting economic crimes in India.
- The origin of the ED goes back to May 1956, when an "enforcement unit" was formed, for handling Exchange Control Laws violations under the **Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947**.
- In 1957, the unit was renamed as the Enforcement Directorate.
- **Nodal Ministry**: Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance

Objectives of the ED:

- The prime objective of the Enforcement Directorate is the enforcement of three key Acts of the Government of India namely:
    - Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA),
    - Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA), and
    - Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA).

About Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002:

- The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 was enacted in January, 2003.
- The Act seeks to combat money laundering in India and has three main objectives:
    - To prevent and control money laundering
    - To confiscate and seize the property obtained from the laundered money; and
    - To deal with any other issue connected with money laundering in India.
- Section 3 of the Act defines offence of money laundering as whosoever directly or indirectly attempts to indulge or knowingly assists or knowingly is a party or is actually involved in any process or activity connected with the proceeds of crime and projecting it as untainted property shall be guilty of offence of money-laundering.

- The Act was amended by the Prevention of Money Laundering (Amendment) Act, 2009 and by the Prevention of Money Laundering (Amendment) Act, 2012.
- Most recently, the PMLA was amended through the -
    - Finance Act, 2015 (2015 Amendment)
    - Finance Act, 2018 (2018 Amendment)
    - Finance Act, 2019 (2019 Amendment)

Powers of the ED under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA):

- Sections 48 & 49 of the PMLA empower the ED officers to investigate cases of Money Laundering.
- Section 50 (2) of the PMLA **empowered the ED to summon "any person"** whose attendance was considered necessary for giving evidence or production of records in the course of "any investigation or proceeding" under the statute.
- **Section 50 (3) mandated that the individual summoned was "bound to attend in person or through authorised agents"** and would be required to make truthful statements and produce the required documents.
- The ED has special powers for **confiscating property** under the PMLA Act.
- In 2022, the Supreme Court, in its rulings, upheld the powers of the ED under the PMLA, emphasizing its crucial role in preventing money laundering.
- However, the **Supreme Court clarified that ED officials were not equivalent to police officers and could not make arrests under the PMLA**.
    - The court highlighted the importance of adherence to the rule of law and establishing checks and balances in the ED's operations.

JOBS FOR RESILIENCE REPORT

Why in News?

The World Bank (WB) has warned in its 'South Asia Regional Update: Jobs for Resilience report' that the **South Asia region including India was not making use of its demographic dividend**.

This is because the pace of job creation in the region fell well short of the growth in the working-age population, even as it projected a strong 6.0-6.1% growth for 2024-25 for the region.

Risks Highlighted in the Jobs for Resilience Report:

- **Efforts to reduce high debt**, borrowing costs, and fiscal deficits **may eventually slow growth** and limit governments' ability to respond to increasingly frequent **climatic shocks**.
- **The provision of public goods** is among the most effective strategies for **climate adaptation**.
    - This is especially the case for households and farms, which tend to rely on shifting their efforts to non-agricultural jobs.
    - These strategies are less effective forms of climate adaptation because **opportunities to move out of agriculture are limited.**
- The weak employment trends in the region were concentrated in non-agricultural sectors.
    - Because employment growth is falling short of working-age population growth, **the region fails to fully capitalise on its demographic dividend**.
    - The region **could have 16% higher output growth** if the share of its working-age population that was employed was on a par with other EMDEs.

Case of India:

- **India's employment growth** was well below the average growth in its working age population for the 2000-23 period.
- The country's employment ratio had declined more than in any other country in the region except Nepal up till 2022.
- However, preliminary data suggested **a 3-percentage point rebound in 2023**, which had partially reversed the decline.
- Noting that India's economy was expected to post **a robust growth of 7.5% in FY23/24,** the WB said this expansion coupled with recoveries in Sri Lanka and Pakistan, was largely driving the strong numbers for the South Asian region.

Way Ahead Suggested in the Jobs for Resilience Report:

- **Stronger job creation** and the easing of financial market restrictions could help boost growth, private investment and government revenues and put in place conditions conducive to climate adaptation.
- **Sustained accelerations in private investment** are most likely to occur when institutional quality is strong, the real exchange rate is competitive, and economies are more open to trade and capital flows.
- **Adaptations that involve public support** tend to be more effective than purely private strategies. The analysis suggests that policy should be guided by three principles:
    - Implementing a comprehensive package of policies;
    - Prioritising policies that generate "**double dividends**"; and
    - Designing policies that target non-climate goals in a manner that does not set back climate-related goals.
- **Sustaining growth** will require increasing employment ratios, especially in the non-agriculture sector and among women, through -
    - Measures to remove obstacles to growth for businesses,
    - Increase openness to international trade,
    - Ease labour market and product market restrictions,
    - Build human capital, and
    - Strengthen equality of women's rights.

TORNADO

Recently, a deadly tornado struck the Mainaguri area of Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal for 10 minutes and killed five people and injured over a 100.

Tornado is a **land-based** vertical column of **violently rotating air** that forms from a thunderstorm to the ground. It can have wind speeds in the range of 105-322 km/h. The tornado over the sea is called **waterspouts.**

- The rotating column is physically connected to the cloud base or wall cloud and is often visible as a **cloud-filled "condensation funnel".** If the air is dry enough, the tornado may only appear as a swirl of dirt on the ground without a visible connection to the cloud above.
- **Formation:** Any collision of warm, moist air with dry, cool air in the **presence of a low pressure system** like a trough causes thunderstorms and tornadoes.
- **Geographical distribution:**
    - It occurs most commonly on continents in the **mid-latitudes** (between 20 and 60 degrees north and south), where they are frequently associated with thunderstorms that develop in regions where cold polar air meets warm tropical air.
    - They are the most common in the **United States, Argentina and Bangladesh.**
- The **Enhanced Fujita scale** is used to measure tornado strength. It is used to assign tornado a 'rating' based on estimated **wind speeds and related damage.**

MOTHER OF DRAGONS COMET

A rare, formerly-horned comet that astronomers have dubbed the "Mother of Dragons" is now visible after dusk in the Northern Hemisphere.

Mother of Dragons comet is officially known as **Comet 12P/Pons-Brooks**. It is a '**Halley-type' comet** with an orbital period of roughly **71 years** and a nucleus approximately 30 km wide.

- **Composition:** It is composed of **ice, dust and rocky material**. When it approaches the Sun, heat causes the ice inside the comet to turn from solid to gas.
- It is classified as a **Jupiter-family comet**, meaning its orbit is influenced by Jupiter's gravitational pull.
- It typically reaches perihelion (closest approach to the Sun) around the orbit of Mars and can become visible to observers on Earth during its close approach. Its closest approach to Earth will occur in June 2024.

Key facts about Comets:

- Comets are ancient cosmic icebergs. They are **roughly 4.6 billion years old** and formed at the same time as the Sun, Earth and the other planets.
- They are made of **dust and ice**, which partly goes from solid to gas when the comet is warmed by the Sun.

PUNNETT SQUARE

Punnett squares are a way to predict the possible genetic outcomes of the offspring when two individuals with known genotypes are crossed.

Punnett square is named after **British geneticist Reginald Punnett.**

- **How does it work?**
  - Along the top and side of the grid, the possible genetic traits of one parent on one side and the other parent on the other side is listed.
  - Then, you fill in the squares by combining the traits from each parent. Each square effectively represents a possible combination of traits that their offspring could inherit.
  - It's a simple way to visualise the probabilities of different traits showing up in the offspring.

Applications:

- They are commonly **used in biology** to understand **inheritance patterns**, like when you learn about dominant and recessive genes in school.
- It is a useful tool that helps predict the **variations and probabilities** resulting from **cross-breeding.**
- It can also be used to understand the **genetic traits** in the offspring of animals, including humans.
- Researchers typically use them together with Mendelian inheritance.
