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B. GS2 Related

Category: POLITY

1. [SC orders CBI probe into Manipur extra-judicial killings](#)

In news:

- The Supreme Court directed a probe by the CBI into the alleged **extra-judicial killings** by the Army, the Assam Rifles and the Manipur Police in the insurgency-hit Manipur State.

Public Interest Litigation

- The court was hearing a PIL seeking probe and compensation in the alleged 1,528 extra-judicial killings in Manipur from 2000 to 2012 by security forces and police.

Army's Response

- It cannot be subjected to FIRs for carrying out anti-militancy operations in insurgency-prone areas like Jammu and Kashmir and Manipur.
- Local bias in judicial inquiries conducted against army in these regions, have tarnished its image.

Governments response

- The alleged extra-judicial killing cases in Manipur are not cases of massacre, rather these are cases of military operations
- Every judicial inquiry cannot be against the Army
- **July-2016:** the apex court had directed a thorough probe into the alleged fake encounter killings in Manipur saying the use of **“excessive or retaliatory force”** by the armed forces or police was not permissible in “disturbed areas” under the controversial Armed Force Special Powers Act.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [EU, India set up fund for investments](#)

In news:

- European Union (EU) and India announced the establishment of an **Investment Facilitation Mechanism (IFM)** for EU investments in India.
- The mechanism will allow for a close coordination between the European Union and the Government of India with an aim to promote and facilitate EU investment in India.

Objective

- The IFM has been established with the key objectives of paving the way for identifying and solving problems faced by EU companies and investors with regard to their operations in India.
- The IFM is also going to serve as a platform for discussing general suggestions from the point of view of EU companies and investors with regard to ease of doing business in India

2. [Nepal to soon get internet services from China, India's monopoly to end: Report](#)

In News:

- Nepal is scheduled to get Chinese internet services from August ending India's monopoly over the same
- With Chinese firms offering services, Nepali people will now have alternatives to choose from alongside Indian firms

Concern for India:

- Currently, the tiny Himalayan country accesses internet using Indian bandwidth
- China linking Nepal with optical fibre cables is seen as yet another attempt to ratchet up its presence in the south Asia region challenging India
- India has already made its opposition clear to the economic corridor it is building in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) apart from the Belt and Road Initiative

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Category: ECONOMICS

1. [APG meet on money laundering in Colombo](#)

In news:

Asia Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering meet:

- **Main issue focus:** Policy frameworks on checking terror financing. The Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) initiatives on curbing money laundering and terror funding in different parts of the world will also be discussed.
- Meeting to be held in Colombo.

2. [WPI inflation slows to 11-month low of 0.9% in June](#)

In news:

- Wholesale price inflation slowed to a 11-month low of 0.90% in June due to **subdued food inflation and weak manufacturing prices**, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce.
- **WPI components weight**
 - Manufactured Products: Weightage-64.97
 - Primary Articles: Weightage-20.12
 - Fuel & Power: Weightage-14.91

3. [Web nod soon for dry ports, cargo stations](#)

In news:

- The Centre will soon announce a mechanism that will facilitate online submission and processing of applications for setting up Inland Container Depots (ICD), Container Freight Stations (CFS) and Air Freight Stations (AFS).
- ICDs (considered as dry ports), CFS and AFS provide- services for handling and temporary storage of import/export laden and empty containers carried under customs control. Transshipment of cargo can also take place from such stations.
- The newly proposed web-based mechanism, being developed by the government-owned **National Informatics Centre Services Inc.**, is aimed at enabling the developer to submit applications online and track their status on a real-time basis.
- **More transparency:** The objective is also to ensure greater transparency and accountability in the IMC mechanism. The web-based module is also expected to lower entry barriers and help more players enter the field.

4. [USIBC plans to break free from Chamber](#)

In News

Delinking from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce

- The U.S. India Business Council (USIBC) has decided to delink from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and function as an autonomous entity

- MasterCard, Pepsi, Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Federal Express are on the board that decided that the USIBC must maintain its policy and financial autonomy in the face of Chamber of Commerce interference

More about the USBIC

- The U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) was formed in 1975 as a business advocacy organization to enlighten and encourage the private sectors of both India and United States to enhance investment flows
- The organization serves as a direct link between business and Government leaders, resulting in increased trade and investment to strengthen ties between the two nations

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. [Saraswati, a supercluster of galaxies](#)

In news:

- Saraswati- a massive supercluster of galaxies discovered by a group of Indian astronomers.
- The supercluster is about 4 billion light years away and spreads over a "great wall" about 600 million light years across. This makes it one of the largest superclusters to be discovered and also the furthest.

Galaxies discovered till now:

- The first supercluster of galaxies, the **Shapley Supercluster**, was discovered in 1989.
- The second, the Sloan Great Wall in 2003.
- The Milky Way galaxy is part of the Laniakea Supercluster, which was discovered in 2014.

Clumpy universe:

- The structure of the universe is not a homogeneous distribution of matter.
- It is clumpy with galaxies forming clusters and these in turn forming superclusters.
- There are thin "filaments" that connect galaxies, forming a cosmic web, and there are large voids in between. The current belief is that infant galaxies form in these filaments and then drift to the intersections of the filaments where they grow.
- Dark matter and dark energy are invoked to explain the structure of the universe. Dark matter, being massive, binds together the universe while dark energy, exciting the surrounding space, drives it apart; the balance of the two effects helps in maintaining the universe in its present form.

Light year

- A light year is the distance travelled by light in one year.

What are galaxy clusters? How big are they?

- Galaxies are like the building blocks of the universe, they contain a huge number of stars, something like 100 billion at a count. Galaxy groups can have three to 20 galaxies, the richest systems are called clusters (like the Virgo cluster) which can have several hundred galaxies.
- Superclusters are clusters of clusters. They can have as few as two clusters, and superclusters with two to four clusters are common. Saraswati has 42.
- Within superclusters, clusters are connected by filaments and sheets of dark matter with galaxies embedded in them.
- It is supposed that the galaxies are born in the filaments and then migrate towards the intersection of the filaments where they are assimilated into clusters.

What are superclusters?

- These are the largest coherent structures seen in the universe. Firstly there are clusters of galaxies together with associated gas and dark matter. Large groups of such clusters, linked by filaments, separated by voids together form the superclusters. Though initially a supercluster was used to describe groups of two-four clusters, now it is understood that much larger superclusters, comprising clusters that number an order of magnitude higher, exist. The first such large supercluster to be discovered was the Shapley supercluster.

How does the Saraswati supercluster compare with the Milky Way?

- The newly discovered Saraswati supercluster is 600 million light years across. The Milky Way is 150,000 light years across.

Where does the supercluster Saraswati lie in the sky?

- The supercluster Saraswati lies in the Stripe 82 of the Sloan Digital Sky Survey. It is about 4000 million light years away from us. It is in the constellation of Pisces.

What is "Stripe 82 region of SDSS"?

- SDSS stands for the Sloan Digital Sky Survey. This is an ambitious plan to make a digital 3D map of the universe. Started in 2000, it has, over eight years, mapped more than a quarter of the sky. It has mapped nearly 930,000 galaxies. The SDSS has found nearly 50 million galaxies so far.

What is the significance of this discovery? Is there a puzzle posed by the discovery of Saraswati?

- Spotting a supercluster which is 4000 million light years away means that you are looking at light that has come in from four billion years ago. This is because a light year is the distance travelled by light in one year. Since the

- universe is believed to be 13.8 billion years old, this means we are looking at light from when the universe was about 10 billion years old, just about 70% of its present age.
- This poses a puzzle. According to present theories, it is difficult for such a huge galaxy to have formed so early in the universe's lifetime.

2. [When DNA is the new hard drive](#)

In News

- Scientists store film clip in hereditary unit, where it can be retrieved at will and multiplied indefinitely
- It is now the first movie ever to be encoded in the DNA of a living cell.
- Astonishing example of the genome's potential as a vast storage device.

Gene editing technique

- The vast chains of DNA in each cell are made of just four molecules – adenine, guanine, thymine and cytosine – arranged in enormously varied configurations.
- The geneticists ended up with a sequence of DNA molecules that represented the entirety of the film.
- Then they used a powerful new gene editing technique, Crispr, to slip this sequence into the genome of a common gut bacteria, coli.
- Despite the modification, the bacteria thrived and multiplied.
- The film stored in the genome was preserved intact with each new generation of progeny

Basic Information:

CRISPR/CAS9:

- It is a new gene-editing technology that promises to revolutionize the genetics field.
- Using this technology, genes of any living organism can be edited at a faster and cheaper rate than the present technologies.

D. GS4 Related

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E. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn

PRELIMS WORTHY FACTUAL INFORMATION

- International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), South Asia Regional Center (ISARC) in Varanasi: The Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday approved the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), South Asia Regional Center (ISARC) in Varanasi, which will work to develop special rice varieties.
- It will be the first such international centre in eastern India and will play a major role in sustaining rice production in the region.
- The ISARC will be established on the campus of the National Seed Research and Training Centre.

F. Bills/Acts/Schemes/Orgs in News

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