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Parker Solar Probe

- Recently Parker Solar Probe, launched last year, has completed its second orbit around the sun, that captures solar wind.
- It is a NASA's robotic spacecraft, with the mission of probing and making observations on the outer corona of the Sun.
- It aims to trace how energy and heat move through the Sun's corona and to study the source of the solar wind's acceleration.
- It is part of NASA's "Living With a Star" programme that explores different aspects of the Sun-Earth system.
- It is also the closest a human-made object has ever gone to the Sun.
- 'Wide-Field Imager for Solar Probe' (**WISPR**) is an imaging instrument, captures solar winds, shocks and solar ejections.
- The information gathered helps to understand the extreme temperatures of the sun and how it ejects particles and plasma out into space.

Legislative Council

- Recently Madhya Pradesh has indicated that it plans to initiate steps towards creation of a Legislative Council.
 - Article 71 of the Constitution provides for the option of a state to have a Legislative Council.
 - As in Rajya Sabha, the Members of a Legislative Council (MLC) are not directly elected by voters.
 - The tenure of a MLC is 6 years, with 1/3rd of members retiring every 2 years.
 - Opinion in the Constituent Assembly was divided on the idea,
1. Arguments in favour, it help check hasty actions by the directly elected House, and also enable non-elected individuals to contribute to the legislative process.
 2. Arguments against the idea, it can be used to delay legislation, and to park leaders who have not been able to win an election.
- Under Article 169, a Legislative Council can be formed if the Legislative

Assembly of the State passes a resolution.

1. The resolution has to be a majority of the total membership of the Assembly and by a majority of not less than $2/3^{\text{rd}}$ of the members of the Assembly present and voting.
2. Parliament can then pass a law to this effect.
 - Under Article 171 of the Constitution, the Legislative Council of a state shall not have more than $1/3^{\text{rd}}$ of the number of MLAs of the state, and not less than 40 members. In that,
 1. $1/3^{\text{rd}}$ of the MLCs are elected by the state's MLAs,
 2. Another $1/3^{\text{rd}}$ by a special electorate comprising sitting members of local governments such as municipalities and district boards
 3. $1/12^{\text{th}}$ by an electorate of teachers and
 4. Another $1/12^{\text{th}}$ by registered graduates.
 - 5. The remaining members are appointed by the Governor for distinguished services in various fields.
- The legislative power of the Councils is limited,
 1. Unlike Rajya Sabha which has substantial powers to shape non-financial legislation, Legislative Councils lack a constitutional mandate to do so.
 2. Assemblies can override suggestions/amendments made to a legislation by the Council.
 3. MLCs cannot vote in elections for the President and Vice President.
 4. The Vice President is the Rajya Sabha Chairperson; an MLC is the Council Chairperson.
- Currently, 6 states have Legislative Councils,
 1. A.P, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telengana, U.P.
 2. Jammu and Kashmir had it, until the state was bifurcated into the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh.
- The Odisha Assembly recently passed a resolution for a Legislative Council.
- Proposals to create Councils in Rajasthan and Assam are pending in Parliament.

The BASIC countries

- The BASIC countries, 28th Ministerial meeting on 'Climate Change' was recently held in Sao Paulo, Brazil.
- It is a grouping of Brazil, South Africa, India and China.
- It has its significance because of the size of the economies and populations of the member countries.

- The group was formed as the result of an agreement signed by the 4 countries in 2009.
 - The signatory nations, all recently industrialised, committed to act together at the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference, commonly known as the 'Copenhagen Summit'.
 - They reaffirmed their commitment to the successful implementation of the UNFCCC, its Kyoto Protocol and its Paris Agreement.
1. It is based on the principles of 'Equity and Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities' (CBDR-RC).
 - They have a common position on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and raising the funds needed to fight climate change.
 - The BASIC countries constituted one of the parties in the Copenhagen Accord reached with the US-led grouping.
 - The Accord, was however, not legally binding.
 - Other groups who are working together to fight climate change are,
 1. Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC),
 2. The group of countries of Central Asia, Caucasus, Albania and Moldova (CACAM),
 3. The Cartagena Dialogue,
 4. The Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC), and
 5. The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA in Spanish)
 6. Group of 77 developing countries,
 7. The African Group,
 8. The Arab States,
 9. The Environmental Integrity Group,
 10. The Least Developed Countries the Small Island Developing States.
 - CoP25 is scheduled in December in the Chilean capital of Santiago.

Kurki ban on farm land

- Punjab government notified a ban on kurkis by banks in the event of their defaulting on loan payments in 2017.
- But kurkis are still happening despite the ban by government.
- 'Kurki' is attachment of farmers' land by banks or arhtiyas/sahukars/traders (commission agents and private money lenders) in the event of non-payment of loan or debt.
- Kurkis are executed under Section 60 of the Civil Procedure Code, 1908.
- The land, which is pledged by the farmer to the banks, sahuks (private money lenders, gets registered in their name through court order in the event of non-repayment of the loan amount.

- The lenders, in turn, either take possession of the land or get it auctioned to recover their money.
- The main drawback of that notification was that it covered only cooperative banks and does not the commercial banks, private money lenders/arhatiyas and shadow banks.
- They are, therefore, obtaining decrees from courts to attach the lands of defaulting farmers”.
- The system of making farmers sign pro-notes as a factor responsible for the kurkis.
- There are numerous cases where farmers have repaid twice or thrice the amount taken on loan.
- So strict implementation is needed to end kurki cases in the state.

Source: PIB, The Indian Express



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