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Fast Radio Bursts

- According to recent observations Intense pulses of radio waves known as fast radio bursts (FRB) that have been frequently detected in other galaxies, have now been found in the Milky Way.
- The latest studies reported that two radio telescopes, one in the United States and the other in Canada detected a FRB, and it was named FRB 200428.
- FRBs were first discovered in 2007 and there are still many gaps in information regarding them.
- Many theories have also suggested that FRBs are caused by neutron stars,that are the corpses of stars which died in explosions called supernovas.
- Recent study identifies FRBs are in fact generated by a rare type of neutron star known as a 'magnetar'.
- The source of the FRB was traced to a magnetar known as SGR 1935+2154, located about 30,000 light-years from the earth.
- It lies in the centre of the Milky Way, in the constellation Vulpecula.
- The FRB generated by this magnetar was so powerful that it emitted as much energy in one millisecond as the sun does in 30 seconds, according to the scientists.
- The scientists also concluded that most FRBs in other galaxies also were generated by magnetars.

Magnetars

- Magnetars are the most powerful magnets in the cosmos.
- Their magnetic fields are 5,000 trillion times more powerful than that of the Earth.

WWF Report on Water Scarcity

- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has recently release a report on water scarcity.
- According to the recent report hundred cities worldwide, including 30 in India, face the risk of 'severe water scarcity' by 2050.

- This will be due to a dramatic increase in Cities population percentage to 51 per cent by 2050, from 17 per cent in 2020.
- The cities include global hubs such as Beijing, Jakarta, Johannesburg, Istanbul, Hong Kong, Mecca and Rio de Janeiro.
- In the report more than half of the identified cities are from China and India.
- Thirty Indian cities are included in the list, the top five cities are as follows

1. Jaipur
2. Indore
3. Thane
4. Vadodara
5. Srinagar

- The report suggested that, Cities needed to invest more in nature-based solutions and enhance the health of river basins, watersheds and wetlands to build resilience to water risks.

WWF Water Risk Filter

- WWF also launched an online tool called the WWF Water Risk Filter.
- It aims to help cities imagine future water risks and plan a better and sustainable future facilitating climate and water resilience.
- While a lot of initiatives taken by government were based on old data, the simulation that WWF had designed could help cities and its stakeholders plan better.

Baghjan Oilfield

- The Baghjan oilfield is located in Tinsukia district of Assam, in June 2020, a gas leak has occurred at the oil well following a blowout.
- It has been burning for 160 days by now, it continues to impact an area of 10 kilometres around.
- The Baghjan well is a purely gas-producing well in Tinsukia district, and is at an aerial distance of 900 metres from the Dibru-Saikhowa National Park.
- NGT's principal bench headed by AK Goel, constituted a committee led by former Judge BP Katakey June 26 to investigate the cause and the impact of the blowout.
- According to committee's report NGT Baghjan oil field along with 26 oil wells in Assam was operating without mandatory environmental

clearances.

Arbitration and Conciliation Ordinance

- Recently Indian President promulgated the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020.
- It will further amend Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996.
- The Ordinance aims to ensure that all the stakeholders get an opportunity to seek unconditional stay of enforcement of arbitral awards where the underlying arbitration agreement or contract or making of the arbitral award are induced by fraud or corruption.
- The ordinance also does away with the 8th Schedule of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 which contained the necessary qualifications for accreditation of arbitrators.
- This provision had faced criticism from some quarters that the conditions prescribed in the law came in way of India getting the benefit of having foreign arbitrators.
- Now, the qualifications based on which arbitrators will be accredited will be prescribed by regulations, which will be framed by a proposed arbitration council.
- Till recently, an arbitration award was enforceable even if an appeal was filed against it in the court under Section 36 of the law.
- But the court could grant a stay on the award on conditions as it deemed fit.
- The provisions will come into effect retrospectively from October 23, 2015.

Gandhian Young Technological Innovation (GYTI)

- Union Ministry of Science & Technology announced Gandhian Young Technological Awards in two categories.
- The awards and appreciations are given under these two categories to encourage technology students to move towards setting up Biotech and other start-ups.
- **SITARE-GYTI -** Students Innovations for Advancement of Research Explorations - Gandhian Young Technological Innovation (SITARE-GYTI) under Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), Department of Biotechnology (DBT).
- The SITARE-GYTI awards are given every year to the most promising technologies developed by the students in life sciences, biotechnology, agriculture, medical devices etc.

- **SRISTI-GYTI** - Sustainable Technological Innovations-Gandhian Young Technological Innovation (SRISTI-GYTI) given by SRISTI.
- This awards is given to students in other engineering disciplines.

Source: Times of India, Economic Times, Down To Earth

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