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Plea Bargaining

- It is a process in which a person charged with a criminal offence negotiating with the prosecution for a lesser punishment than what is provided in law by pleading guilty to a less serious offence.
- The practice would ensure speedy trial, end uncertainty over the outcome of criminal cases, save litigation costs and relieve the parties of anxiety.
- It could also increase the conviction rates as seen in the United States where the practice is common.
- In India, Plea bargaining was introduced in 2006 as part of a set of amendments to the CrPC as Chapter XXI-A, containing Sections 265A to 265L.
- In India, the process of plea bargaining can be initiated only by the accused, who will have to apply to the court for invoking the benefit of bargaining.
- **Eligibility** – One who has been charge sheeted for an offence that does not attract the death sentence, life sentence or a prison term above 7 years can make use of the scheme.
- It is also applicable to private complaints of which a criminal court has taken cognizance.
- Recently, many members of the Tablighi Jamaat belonging to different countries have obtained release from court cases in India by means of plea bargaining.

National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA)

- It is an independent regulator to oversee the auditing profession and accounting standards in India.
- It was formed in 2018 under Companies Act 2013.
- It consists of one chairman, 3 full-time members and one secretary.
- It is responsible for transparency and reliability of financial statements and information presented by listed companies and large unlisted companies in India.
- **Recent Developments** – It has constituted a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) under the Chairmanship of R Narayanaswamy, Professor

IIM-Bangalore.
- The TAC comprises 7 members, including the Chairman.
- It would aid and advise the NFRA on issues related to the drafts of accounting standards and auditing standards.

Asteroid 2020 ND

- NASA has issued a warning that a huge Asteroid 2020 ND is expected to move past the Earth.
- It will be as close as .034 astronomical units (5,086,328 kilometers) to our planet.
- It is travelling at a speed of 48,000 kilometers per hour.
- Its distance from Earth has placed it in the potentially dangerous category.
- Potentially Hazardous Asteroids (PHAs) are those with a minimum orbit intersection distance (MOID) of 0.05 au or less.
- NASA classifies these objects as near-Earth objects (NEOs).
- However, it is not necessary that asteroids classified as PHAs will impact the Earth.
- It only means there is a possibility for such a threat.

Mission Hope

- United Arab Emirates' (UAE) first mission to Mars "Hope" was recently launched successfully from Japan Tanegashima Space Center.
- The mission was announced in 2015 with the aim of creating mankind's first integrated model of the Red planet's atmosphere.
- It is the Arab world's first mission to Mars and also first interplanetary mission.
- The Al Amal probe, as it is called in Arabic, is expected to reach Mars by February 2021.
- The probe will stay in orbit for a Martian year, equivalent to 687 days on Earth, to gather data about Mars' atmosphere.
- It will carry the following scientific instruments mounted on one side of the spacecraft -

i. High-resolution camera called Emirates eXploration Imager (EXI),
ii. Far-UV imaging spectrograph called Emirates Mars Ultraviolet Spectrometer (EMUS), and
iii. Emirates Mars InfraRed Spectrometer (EMIRS) and FTIR scanning spectrometer.

Inflammageing

- Inflammageing refers to the inhibition of one's immunity as the body's inflammation reaches higher levels as one ages.
- As this happens, our bodily defence systems respond more slowly to bacterial and viral infections, leaving the elderly more vulnerable.
- It is characterized by chronic low-grade inflammation, which occurs without an infection.
- While inflammation is essential to the immune response, inflammageing is not.
- The state of elevated inflammation can worsen many age-related diseases, and further inhibit the response from an already declining immune system.
- The most severe Covid-19 cases have occurred mostly in older people, researchers are investigating whether inflammageing has a role.

Indo-US PASSEX

- Indian navy conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the U.S. Navy's USS Nimitz carrier strike group.
- It was conducted near the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as it is transiting the Indian Ocean.
- Nimitz, is the U.S. Navy's largest aircraft carrier, was returning from the South China Sea through the Malacca Straits.
- Front line Indian Naval Ships - Shivalik, Sahyadri, Kamorta and Rana
- The exercise comes amid a high alert in the Indian Ocean Region due to the stand-off with China along the border in Ladakh.
- Indian Navy had conducted similar PASSEXs with the Japanese Navy and the French Navy in the recent past.

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express

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