DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 26-07-2024

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1. **Kadambini Ganguly**

GS-2

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5. **Ballistic missiles**

Kadambini Ganguly

Syllabus: GS-1; Important Personalities- Modern Indian History

Context

- *The article focuses on Kadambini Ganguly: A Pioneer in Indian Medicine and Women's Rights*

Early Life and Education (1861-1886)

- *Born Kadambini Bose in 1861 (though some sources say 1862) in Bhagalpur, Bengal Presidency (now Bihar, India).*
- *Father, Braja Kishore Basu, was a reformer and co-founder of India's first women's rights organization, Bhagalpur Mahila Samiti.*
- *Influenced by the* **Bengal Renaissance,** *Kadambini defied societal norms and pursued education.*
- *Attended Bethune College, the University of Calcutta (becoming the first woman graduate in 1883), and Calcutta Medical College (facing resistance as the first woman there in 1884).*
- *Due to societal disapproval, she was unable to complete her studies at Calcutta Medical College.*

Medical Career (1886-1923)

- *Traveled to Scotland and obtained qualifications from the Edinburgh College of Medicine for Women in 1886 (around the same time as Anandibai Joshi).*
- *Became the* **first Indian woman to practice medicine upon returning to India.** *(Anandibai died young, making Kadambini the first practicing doctor).*
- *Established a successful medical practice, primarily treating women and children.*
- *Focused on gynecology, a field where female doctors were especially needed due to social restrictions.*

Social Activism and Legacy (1886-1923)

- *Advocated for* **women's rights** *and social reforms throughout her life.*
- *Became the first woman speaker at the* **Indian National Congress in 1889.**
- *Played a key role in organizing the* **Women's Conference in Calcutta (1906).**
- *Actively campaigned for improving working conditions for women, particularly coal miners.*
- *Balanced her medical career with raising eight children.*
- *Passed away in 1923, leaving behind a legacy of breaking barriers for women in medicine and education.*

More to know

- *Kadambini Ganguly's story exemplifies the challenges faced by women pursuing education and professional careers in 19th century India.*
- *Her perseverance and achievements inspired future generations of women to enter the medical field.*

PMGSY

Syllabus: GS-2; Government policies and Interventions, GS-3: Infrastructure - Roadways

Context:

- *PMGSY stretches into 4th phase: 25,000 villages to be linked with all-weather roads.*

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) Phase IV

- **Announcement:** *Phase IV of PMGSY to connect 25,000 villages with all-weather roads.*
- **Allocation:** *Rs 19,000 crore for the financial year 2024-25.*
- **Background:** *Launched in 2000 by the NDA government under PM Vajpayee.*
    - **Previous Achievements:** *Over 7 lakh km road length completed out of the sanctioned 8.25 lakh km across three phases and areas affected by Left Wing Extremism.*
    - **New Phase:** *Extends the rural roads scheme beyond the initial phases.*

Earlier Phases:

PMGSY - Phase I

- **Launch***: December 2000*
- **Nature***: 100% centrally sponsored scheme*
- **Objectives***:*
    - *Provide road connectivity to 1,35,436 habitations.*
    - *Upgrade 3.68 lakh km of existing rural roads to ensure full farm-to-market connectivity.*

PMGSY - Phase II

- **Launch***: 2013*
- **Objectives***:*
    - *Upgrade 50,000 km of existing rural road networks to improve overall efficiency.*
    - *Focus on enhancing rural infrastructure by upgrading already built roads for better village connectivity.*

- **Funding**: *Cost shared between the central government and states/UTs.*

PMGSY - Phase III

- **Approval**: *July 2019 by the Cabinet*
- **Objectives**:
    - *Prioritize facilities like Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), higher secondary schools, and hospitals.*
    - *Consolidate 1,25,000 km of road length in the states.*
    - *Scheme duration: 2019-20 to 2024-25.*

Challenges:

1. *Lack of dedicated funds.*
2. *Limited involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions.*
3. *Inadequate execution and contracting capacity.*
4. *Short working season and difficult terrain, particularly in Hill States.*
5. *Scarcity of construction materials.*
6. *Security concerns, especially in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) areas.*

Angel tax

Syllabus: GS-3; Economy-Capital Market

Context

- *Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the complete* **abolition of the angel tax** *in her presentation of the Union Budget 2024.*

What is angel tax?

- *Angel tax refers to the* **income tax that the government imposes on funding raised by unlisted companies, or startups**, *if their valuation exceeds the company's fair market value. It falls under* **Section 56 (II) (viib) of the Income Tax Act.**

Why is it called Angel Tax?

- *The name comes from "angel investors," who are individuals who provide early-stage funding to startups.*
- *Since angel tax often impacts these early investments, the term stuck.*

Rationale Behind Angel Tax

- *The Angel Tax was* **introduced in 2012 to curb potential money laundering activities.**
- *The government aimed to prevent individuals from using startup investments as a way to convert unaccounted wealth into legitimate income.*

Purpose of angel tax

- *Angel Tax is intended to curb money laundering and prevent the influx of unaccounted funds.*
- *However, it has stirred controversy among startups and investors, who claim it hinders innovation and fundraising efforts.*
- *In response to these concerns, the government has implemented various exemptions and relief measures for eligible startups, alleviating the tax burden and creating a more supportive environment for entrepreneurial growth.*

Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)

Syllabus: GS-3; Economy

Context

- *India is committed to concluding a* **Free Trade Agreement with the United Kingdom,** *said Prime Minister Narendra Modi , after meeting the visiting Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs David Lammy — the highest ranking official from the United Kingdom to visit India since the Labour party won a landslide victory in the recent election.*
- *The two sides launched the U.K.-India Technology Security Initiative, that the U.K. described as 'landmark'.*

What are FTAs?

- *Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) are agreements between two or more countries aimed at reducing barriers to trade between them.*
- *These barriers can take many forms, including:*
    - **Tariffs:** *Taxes imposed on imported goods*

- **Quotas:** *Limits on the quantity of a good that can be imported*
- **Subsidies:** *Financial support provided by a government to domestic producers*
- **Non-tariff barriers***: Regulations, standards, and other measures that make it more difficult to import goods*
- *By reducing or eliminating these barriers, FTAs aim to:*
    - **Increase trade***: By making it cheaper and easier to import and export goods, FTAs can lead to a significant increase in trade volumes between the signatory countries.*
    - **Lower prices for consumers:** *Increased competition from imports can drive down prices for consumers in the FTA countries.*
    - **Boost economic growth:** *Increased trade can lead to economic growth by creating jobs, stimulating investment, and promoting innovation.*
    - **Improve relations between countries:** *FTAs can help to foster closer economic and political ties between the signatory countries.*

Key Points about FTAs

- **Scope:** *FTAs can cover a wide range of issues, including trade in goods, services, investment, intellectual property rights, and government procurement.*
- **Benefits and drawbacks:** *FTAs can have both positive and negative effects. While they can promote economic growth and efficiency, they can also lead to job losses in certain sectors and put downward pressure on wages.*
- **Negotiations:** *Negotiating an FTA can be a complex and time-consuming process. Countries must agree on a wide range of issues, and there can be significant political opposition to FTAs.*
- **Implementation and enforcement:** *Once an FTA is negotiated, it must be implemented and enforced effectively. This can be a challenge, as countries may be tempted to renege on their commitments.*

Examples of FTAs

- *North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, the United States, and Mexico*
- *European Union (EU) Single Market*
- *United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement (US-Korea FTA)*

India's Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)

Types of Agreements

- **Free Trade Agreements (FTAs):** *These are comprehensive agreements covering trade in goods, services, investment, and other areas. (Ex: India-Australia ECTA)*
- **Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs):** *These agreements focus on reducing tariffs for specific goods traded between countries. (Ex: India-Chile PTA)*

Existing Agreements

- **13 FTAs:** *Signed with countries/regions like ASEAN, Japan, South Korea, SAARC nations, Mauritius, UAE, and Australia. (https://pib.gov.in/allrelease.aspx)*
- **6 PTAs:** *Including Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA) and agreements with Afghanistan, MERCOSUR, and Chile. (https://www.commerce.gov.in/)*

Benefits of India's FTAs

- **Increased trade:** *Lower tariffs and barriers can lead to a significant rise in trade volumes between India and its FTA partners.*
- **Enhanced competitiveness:** *Increased competition from imports can push Indian companies to become more efficient and innovative.*
- **Foreign investment***: FTAs can attract foreign investment to India, creating jobs and boosting economic growth.*
- **Access to new markets:** *Indian businesses gain easier access to the markets of their FTA partners.*

Challenges of India's FTAs

- **Job losses***: Increased competition from imports can lead to job losses in certain sectors, particularly those facing difficulties competing with cheaper imports.*
- **Impact on domestic industries***: Unequal competition from countries with lower production costs can strain some Indian industries.*
- **Negotiation complexity***: Negotiating FTAs can be a lengthy process, requiring balancing various interests and concerns.*

Ballistic missiles

Syllabus: GS-3; Science and Technology

Context

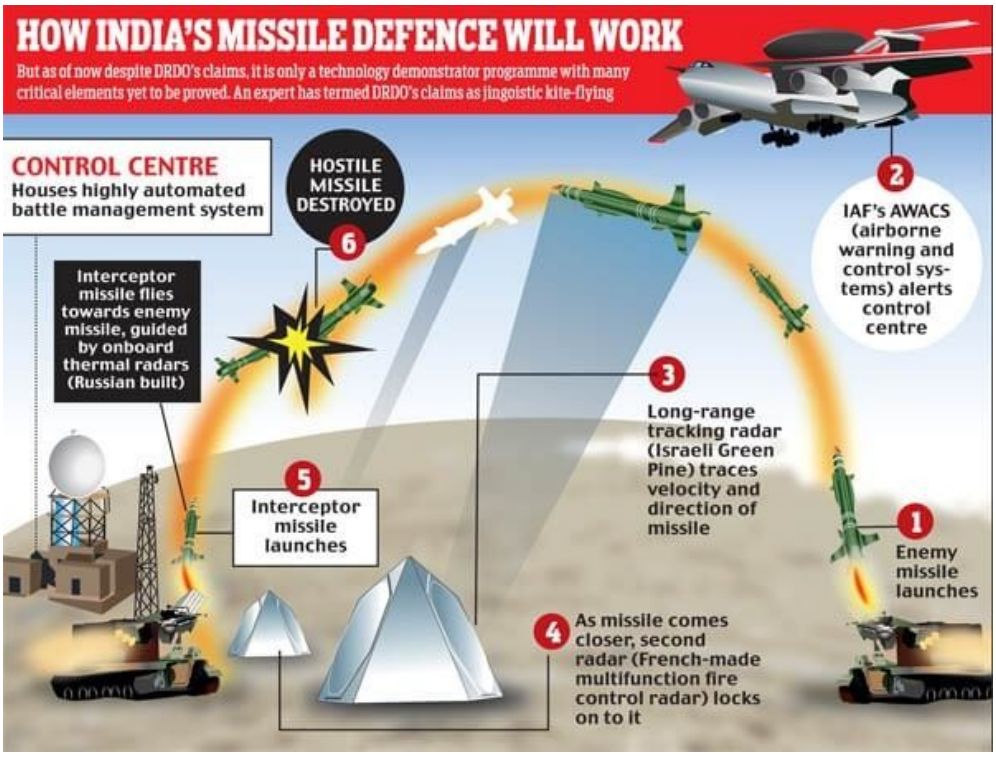
- *Recently,* **The Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)** *successfully flight-tested the Phase-II* **Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system** *demonstrating the indigenous capability to defend against ballistic missiles of 5,000 km class.*

More to know

Ballistic missiles are self-propelled, strategic weapons that follow a parabolic trajectory after launch. They are characterized by:

- **Propulsion:** *Powered by a rocket engine in the initial phase, then coast on their trajectory.*
- **Guidance:** *Guided to a target during launch phase, then follow a ballistic path.*
- **Warheads***: Can carry conventional, chemical, biological, or nuclear payloads.*
- **Launch Platforms:** *Launched from land (silos, mobile launchers), air (bombers), or sea (submarines).*

Working



Classification by Range

- **Short-Range Ballistic Missiles (SRBMs):** *Range less than 1,000 km (620 miles). Used for tactical strikes within a battlefield.*

- **Medium-Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBMs)**: *Range between 1,000 and 3,000 km (620-1,860 miles). Targets within a region or theater of war.*
- **Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs):** *Range between 3,000 and 5,500 km (1,860-3,410 miles). Can reach targets across continents.*
- **Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs):** *Range exceeding 5,500 km (3,410 miles). Can strike targets anywhere on Earth.*

Significance

- **Strategic Deterrence:**
  - **Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)**: *Ballistic missiles, especially those carrying nuclear warheads, serve as a powerful deterrent during conflicts. The threat of devastating retaliation discourages countries from launching large-scale attacks.*
- **Military Capability:**
  - **Long-Range Strikes:** *ICBMs can deliver payloads across continents, allowing countries to strike targets far beyond their borders. This capability influences military strategies and power projection.*
  - **Precision Targeting:** *Modern ballistic missiles boast improved accuracy, enabling targeted attacks on critical infrastructure or military installations.*
- **National Security:**
  - **Defense and Offense:** *Ballistic missiles bolster a nation's defense against potential aggressors. They also provide offensive capabilities for strategic counterattacks.*
- **International Relations:**
  - **Arms Control Treaties:** *The proliferation of ballistic missiles is a major concern. Treaties like the defunct Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty aimed to limit development and deployment to promote stability.*
  - **Non-proliferation Efforts:** *International efforts focus on preventing the spread of ballistic missile technology to countries or non-state actors who might use them irresponsibly.*
- **Other Considerations:**
  - **Space Exploration:** *Ballistic missile technology has applications in space exploration, with rockets like the Space Launch System derived from ballistic missile designs.*
  - **Missile Defense Systems:** *The development of ballistic missiles has spurred advancements in missile defense systems designed to intercept and destroy incoming missiles.*

Challenges

- **Destructive Power:** *Nuclear-armed ballistic missiles pose a threat of catastrophic destruction in case of conflict.*
- **Accidental Launch:** *The possibility of accidental or unauthorized launches raises concerns about global security.*
- **Black Market Proliferation:** *The potential for ballistic missile technology to fall into the wrong hands through black markets is a major security threat.*