

3rd MAY

News Analysis of THE HINDU

COLLEGIUM PUTS OFF DECISION ON PRESSING JOSEPH'S CASE

- The five-judge collegium led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra deferred its decision on the government's objections to the elevation of Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court K.M. Joseph to the Supreme Court.
- Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the government's objection to Justice Joseph had nothing to do with the judgment he authored in 2016 quashing President's rule in Uttarakhand and restoring the Congress government in the State.
- If the collegium reiterates its recommendation of Justice Joseph, it would be binding on the government.

CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA 'CEASING OPERATIONS'

- **CONTEXT** : Cambridge Analytica, the U.K. marketing analytics firm at the heart of the Facebook data scandal, announced it was “immediately ceasing all operations” and filing for insolvency in Britain and the U.S.
- CA, hired by Donald Trump’s presidential campaign, said it had been “vilified” in recent months over “numerous unfounded accusations”, which had decimated its business.
- It has vehemently denied exploiting Facebook users’ data for the election campaign of Mr. Trump following revelations it gathered up profile information via a personality prediction app though Facebook has admitted that up to 87 million users may have had their data hijacked by the firm.
- CA claims it deleted data about Facebook users obtained in breach of the social network's terms of service.

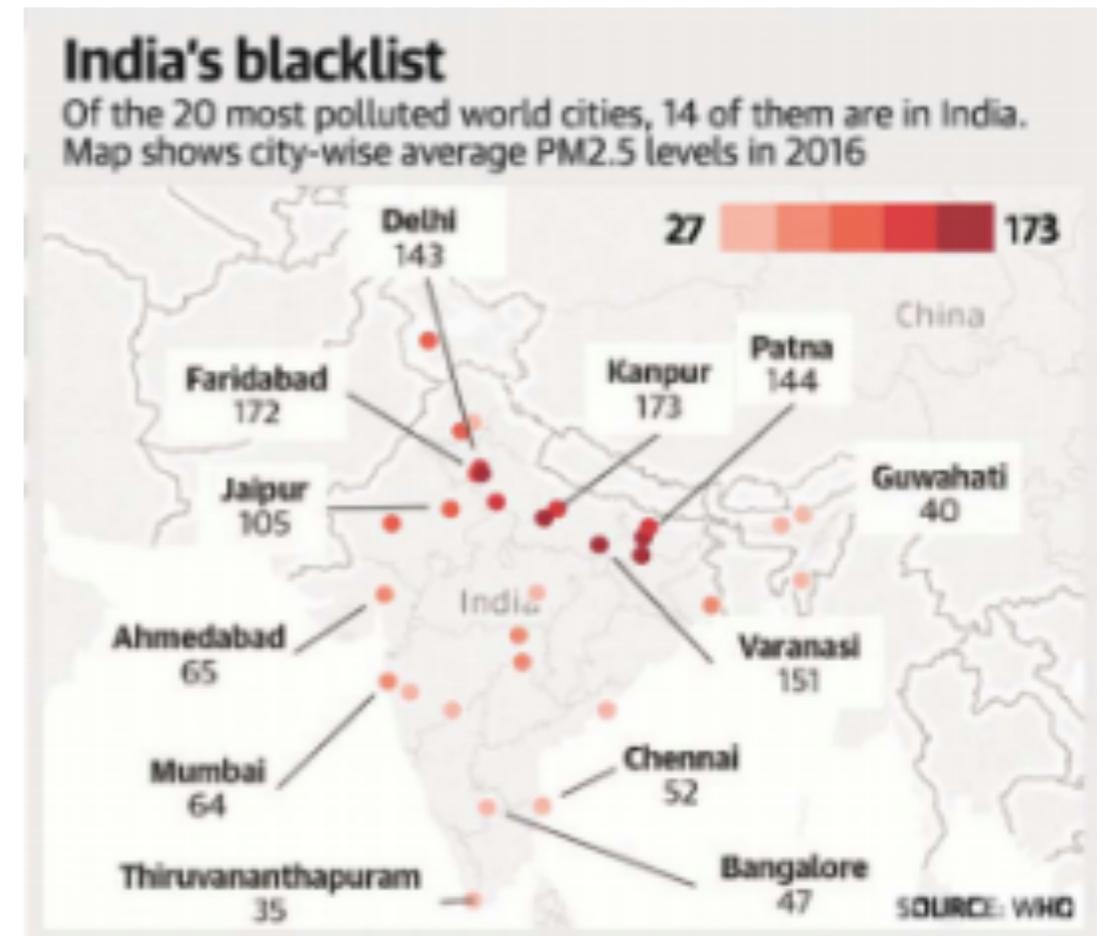
PROTEST AGAINST HERITAGE SITE ADOPTION SCHEME IN ASSAM

- **CONTEXT** : The Central government's 'Adopt a Heritage' scheme that saw the **Dalmia Bharat Group** adopt the **Red Fort** in New Delhi has triggered protests in Assam where four sites have been chosen to be handed over to the corporate sector as part of the plan.
- The scheme is a collaboration among the **Tourism and Culture Ministry**, the **Archaeological Survey of India** and the **State government**.
- The four sites chosen in Assam, all in **Sivasagar** district built during the 600-year reign of the **Ahom dynasty** before the British took control of the Northeast in **1826.**, include the
 1. **Kaziranga National Park**,
 2. **Rangghar** (Asia's oldest amphitheatre),
 3. **Kareng Ghar** (palace) and
 4. **Shiva Dol** (temple)

POLLUTION DIPPED IN 2017

- **CONTEXT** : Responding to the air pollution data released by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the government claimed that various measures have led to pollution levels actually falling in 2017.
- At 143 micrograms per cubic metre, Delhi's PM (2.5) levels in 2016 — as reported by the WHO — made it the sixth most polluted city in the world.
- The government, citing Central Pollution Control Board data, said it was 134 micrograms per cubic metre in 2016 and 125 micrograms per cubic metre in 2017.
- The CPCB data is based on **Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS)**, also noted that PM (10) figures were 289 micrograms per cubic metre in the year 2016 and 268 micrograms per cubic metre in the year 2017.

- The WHO had cited numbers from the CPCB, along with other peer-reviewed sources, to assess pollution levels in Delhi in 2016.
- Kanpur and Varanasi led the list of the world's most polluted cities, with Faridabad, Gaya, Patna, Lucknow, Agra, Muzaffarpur, Srinagar, Gurugram, Jaipur, Patiala and Jodhpur also figuring in the 20 most-polluted cities in the world.



WHO HIGHLIGHTS THE AIR POLLUTION CRISIS IN URBAN INDIA; THINGS ARE NO BETTER IN RURAL AREAS

- Kanpur, Faridabad and several other pollution-choked cities have only one PM 2.5 monitoring station each, while Delhi has several. WHO researchers get around this problem by using alternative data sources such as satellite remote sensing and chemical transport models, along with ground-monitoring stations. The outcome of this exercise makes it clear that air pollution is not a problem of large metropolises alone, even though they have traditionally been the focus of mitigation efforts.
- While Europe has the most extensive monitoring network, countries in Africa and the Western Pacific region perform poorly. This means data from these regions are of poor quality, and likely underestimates, resulting in an under-count of the disease burden as well.

- The report puts the global death toll from air pollution at seven million a year, attributable to illnesses such as **lung cancer, pneumonia and ischemic heart disease**. In 2016 alone, it says, around 4.2 million people died owing to outdoor air pollution, while 3.8 million people succumbed to **dirty cooking fuels such as wood and cow dung**. About a third of these deaths occurred in Southeast Asian countries, which include India.
- The report had words of praise for India's **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana** scheme, which has provided 37 million women living below the poverty line with LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) connections.
- Recently published draft **National Clean Air Programme** noted, there are currently no air pollution monitoring stations in rural India. This does not mean outdoor air pollution is not a problem here. Studies have shown that **ozone levels are higher in rural areas**, as is pollution from **insecticide use and crop-burning**. The WHO has asked Southeast Asian countries to take swift action to tackle the twin problems of indoor and outdoor pollution.

WHEN INDIA AND CHINA MEET

- The Wuhan summit signalled that the two countries are working on restoring a much-needed equilibrium in a deeply disturbed relationship.
- On the high Himalayan plateau of Doklam on the borders of Bhutan, India and China, overlooking the vital Siliguri Corridor connecting ‘mainland’ India to the Northeastern States, Indian and Chinese troops engaged in a tense stand-off lasting 73 days.
- The visit of the Dalai Lama, exiled in India for nearly six decades, to Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh engendered deep Chinese resentment. The voluble Indian opposition to China’s flagship Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), especially the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) being developed in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, was also a source of serious friction. China’s growing inroads in the form of high-profile projects and support for anti-Indian political interests in India’s South Asian neighbourhood fuelled Indian distrust.

- The outcome statement from Wuhan on the future direction of India-China relations “built upon mutual respect for each other’s developmental aspirations and prudent management of differences with mutual sensitivity”, has forged a common understanding between the two countries.
- Transgressions from both sides occur regularly and military establishments, Indian and Chinese, are trained not to yield an inch. Efforts to establish a clearly delineated Line of Actual Control have not succeeded, mainly due to Chinese reluctance. The summit at Wuhan coincided with news that India will build 96 more border outposts along the frontier with China.
- The summit has apparently not yielded any significant reduction of differences on the CPEC.
- The announcement that China and India will jointly work on a project in war-torn Afghanistan is a first and unlikely to give Pakistan comfort, although China will no doubt provide undercover assurances to the former that its interests will not be harmed.

- The potential for tension on the Himalayan piedmont is aggravated by the clash of Chinese and Indian ambition in the maritime environment of the Indo-Pacific. The growing alignment of interest among three democracies — India, the U.S and Japan — is a source for Chinese insecurity, just as China-Pakistan strategic cooperation and China's inroads in South Asia make India uneasy. Twenty-first century Asia is not a pacific place. It is multi-polar and multi-aligned and a testing ground for the security architectures of the future.
- As India and China re-emerge from the shadows of history, hopes for the so far elusive dream of an Asia united will be centred on the progress and development of these two nations.

MAINTAIN PEACE ALONG CHINA BORDER

- **CONTEXT** : The Army headquarters has issued fresh instructions to field formations along the China border to preserve peace while maintaining the sanctity of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between the two countries.
- Instructions, issued in the wake of the **Wuhan summit** between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping, have explicitly directed that there should not be any **“aggressive behaviour at young officer level”** and has also instructed the field formations that all their conduct should be within the protocol laid out in 2005.
- According to the protocol signed between the two sides on **“Modalities for the Implementation of Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field Along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas”** on April 11, 2005, there is a set conduct prescribed to ensure peace and tranquillity.

- The protocol says if border personnel come to a face-to-face situation because of differences over the alignment of LAC they shall “exercise self-restraint and take all necessary steps to avoid an escalation of the situation.”

Towards peace

The four steps to be followed by the Indian and Chinese sides under the 2005 protocol

- Both sides shall cease their activities in the area, won't advance any further and simultaneously return to their bases
- Both sides shall inform their respective headquarters and, if necessary, enter into consultations through border meetings or diplomatic channels
- Throughout the face-to-face situation, neither side shall use force or threaten to use force against the other
- Both sides shall treat each other with courtesy and refrain from any provocative action. Neither side shall put up marks or signs in the area



SC QUESTIONS PASSAGE OF AADHAR ACT AS MONEY BILL

- **CONTEXT** : The Supreme Court questioned the government's justification for passing the Aadhaar Act as a Money Bill.
- Countering the Centre's argument that the sole intent of the Aadhaar Act is to act as a weapon for delivering subsidies to targeted beneficiaries, the Constitution Bench led by Chief Justice Dipak Misra pointed to Section 57 of the Act.
- Section 57 says "nothing contained in this Act (Aadhaar Act) shall prevent the use of Aadhaar number for establishing the identity of an individual for any purpose, whether by the State or any body corporate or person..." Thus This provision contemplates the use of Aadhaar card as an identification document not only by the government but also by "any body corporate or person."

- Mr. Venugopal submitted that the Act's Preamble itself encapsulates its objective as a legislative "tool" to provide "good governance, efficient, transparent, and targeted delivery of subsidies, benefits and services" and it might have several "ancillary provisions," but taken in its entirety the Aadhaar Act comes within the ambit of the definition of Money Bill under Article 110 of the Constitution.

Senior advocate P. Chidambaram, had earlier argued that a Bill is declared as a Money Bill only in six specific circumstances or matters incidental to them as enumerated in Article 110. The Aadhaar law does not relate to any of these circumstances.

CRITERIA FOR BEING A MONEY BILL	
Article 110 of the Constitution defines the Money Bill	
Money Bills are those Bills which contain "only" provisions dealing with all or any of the matters specified in Article 110 sub-clauses :	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Imposition, abolition, remission, alteration, regulation of any tax 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Appropriation of moneys out of Consolidated Fund of India
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Regulation of borrowing of money or the giving of any guarantee by govt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Declaring of any expense to be expenditure charged on the Consolidated Fund of India or the increasing of the amount of any such expenditure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Custody of the Consolidated Fund or the Contingency Fund of India, the payment of moneys into or the withdrawal of moneys from any such fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Receipt of money on account of Consolidated Fund of India or Public Account of India or the custody or issue of such money or the audit of the accounts of the Union or of a State

A Bill which has any provision other than money provision (as mentioned in sub-clauses) is not a Money Bill
Constitution gives power to the Lok Sabha Speaker to take a final call if any question arises whether a Bill is a Money Bill or not
Speaker's decision is final and cannot be challenged in any court of law
RS has limited powers with respect to Money Bills
Lok Sabha has supreme power in terms of Money Bills

POLICY FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS READY

- **CONTEXT** : The draft national policy for domestic workers was likely to be announced in April 2018, Centre will leave it to States to set up boards to register workers, to bring them into the social security net and to notify minimum wages and work timings.
- Domestic worker unions and NGOs, who have been demanding a **Central legislation**, providing for inter-State registrations of domestic workers, with **Centrally-set norms for wages, working hours and social security benefits**, expressed disappointment at the draft.

GOVT. APPROVES SUGARCANE SUBSIDY OF RS 5.5 PER QUINTAL

- **CONTEXT** : The government has approved a subsidy of Rs. 5.5 per quintal of sugarcane crushed in the 2017-18 season to help sugar mills clear more than Rs. 19,000 crore in dues to cane farmers. The decision was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.
- Sugar production has hit record highs this year leading to a crash in prices. Wholesale sugar prices have fallen by Rs. 9 a kg over the past five months, and the mills are now incurring a loss of Rs. 8 a kg of sugar.
- The assistance will be paid directly to the farmers on behalf of the mills. It will be adjusted against the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of Rs. 255 per quintal set by government as the rate that mills must pay to cane farmers, as well as the arrears of payments pending from previous years.

TELECOM REVIVAL KEY TO \$100 BILLION GOAL

- **CONTEXT** : Restoring the financial health of the telecom sector will be crucial for attracting investments of \$100 billion as envisaged in the new national telecom policy draft.
- The draft **‘National Digital Communications Policy 2018**, envisions **attracting \$100 billion investments** into the country’s digital communications sector, providing **broadband access for all with 50 mbps speed** and creating **40 lakh new jobs** in the sector by the year 2022.
- The draft policy also stresses on the need for a **comprehensive data protection regime** for digital communications to safeguard **privacy, autonomy and choice for individuals**.
- It lists ensuring **“net neutrality principles are upheld”** as a key objective.

- The draft proposes to review the levies and fees — including License Fee, Universal Service Obligation Fund levy and spectrum usage charges — which is expected to help the debt-laden telecom sector.
- CRUCIAL CHALLENGES :
 - Improving financial health of the industry.
 - Providing robust nature and enhancing quality of the networks.
 - Changes in the current license regime will impact current players.
 - Reduction in levies will mean loss of revenue to the government, at least in the short term.
 - Private participation is necessary for fulfilling many objectives of the draft policy such as broadband access for all.

GLOW-IN-THE-DARK ALGAE MAY BE A SIGN OF GLOBAL WARMING

- **CONTEXT** : The phenomenon of Mumbai's beaches glowing in the dark maybe a consequence of global warming and not industrial pollution, according to a year-long investigation by Indian and American scientists.
- The Noctiluca algae, commonly known as sea tinkle, is a parasite and occurs in patches or 'blooms' in the northern Arabian Sea.
- Their bioluminescence has earned them the name 'sea sparkle'.
- However, these algae compete with fish for food and choke their supply. It devours one of the most important planktonic organisms at the base of the fish-food chain, namely diatoms, and also excretes large amounts of ammonia, which is linked with massive fish mortality.

- Earlier, the increase in algal patches was linked to coastal pollution from major Indian cities along the west coast. However, researchers from the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) - a Ministry of Earth Sciences body and the U.S.' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration say that "global warming conditions" may instead be responsible.
- A warming ocean means greater temperature differences among layers of the sea water. This slows the upward transport of nutrients like silicate from the ocean bottom, lowering its concentration at the surface. Diatoms growing in surface water need both sunlight and silicate to build their glass skeletons and thus, will fail to thrive when silicate is in short supply.
- On the other hand, Noctiluca remains unaffected by these changes and prey on the remaining diatoms.

GLOBE TROTTERS FLOCK TO PERU'S REMOTE 'RAINBOW MOUNTAIN'

- On a peak in the Peruvian Andes that stands 5,000 metres above sea level, stripes of turquoise, lavender and gold blanket which has become known as “Rainbow Mountain”, a ridge of multi-coloured sediments laid down millions of years ago and pushed up as tectonic plates clashed.



Machu Picchu--Peru

PROBLEM: EROSION

The ancient city of Machu Picchu sits atop a peak in Peru's Andes Mountains. To create space to grow food, the Incas carved terraces into the steep slopes. These steps prevented erosion by stopping soil from washing down the mountainsides.

But a different type of erosion now threatens the city: The pounding feet of tourists are damaging the city's fragile stones.

Thousands visit the city every day, says Michelle Berenfeld, a program Manager for the World Monuments Fund.

