

KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

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NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

As the Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die on Wednesday, Speaker Om Birla expressed pain over the repeated disruptions that allowed only 21 hours of functioning and 22% productivity of the House in the monsoon session.

Debate on OBC Bill shows new avatar of Mandal politics. The debate on the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Seventh Amendment) Bill, 2021 in both Houses of Parliament during the monsoon session saw growing demands by political parties across the board, including National Democratic Alliance (NDA) allies, that a caste based census be undertaken. Such an exercise, revealing the true extent of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) population, will lead to raising the 50% cap on reservations currently in place.

In line with his campaign message on foreign policy, U.S. President Joe Biden will host a 'Summit for Democracy', virtually, on December 9-10, around three themes: defending against authoritarianism, fighting corruption, and promoting respect for human rights. The summit will gather together heads of state, civil society, philanthropy, and the private sector, the White House announced.

Sudan will hand longtime autocrat Omar Al-Bashir to the International Criminal Court along with other officials wanted over the Darfur conflict, Foreign Minister said.

The government is eyeing a sale of its residual stakes in erstwhile public sector firms like Paradeep Phosphates, Hindustan Zinc and Balco, which were privatised during the Atal Behari Vajpayee regime, a top finance ministry official said.

National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval and the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) exchanged messages with top Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) officials as part of a unique backchannel connection between the two countries that involved two foreign journalists, Adrian Levy and Cathy Scott-Clark, in 2018-19, even after the Pulwama attack, according to a new book by the journalists that quotes the NSA and other senior intelligence

SOUTH AFRICA GRANTS PATENT TO AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM

1. Recently, **South Africa, first time in the world, has granted a patent to an 'artificial intelligence system' relating to a "food container based on fractal geometry" innovation.** The innovation involves interlocking food containers that are easy for robots to grasp and stack.

2. What's the issue now? The patent has been given to an artificial intelligence (AI) system (called DABUS); not a human being. What is the DABUS? **DABUS stands for "device for the autonomous bootstrapping of unified sentience". It is an AI system created by Stephen Thaler, a pioneer in the field of AI and programming.** The system simulates human brainstorming and creates new inventions. DABUS is a particular type of AI, often referred to as "creativity machines" because they are capable of independent and complex functioning.

3. Creativity machines can process and critically analyse data, learning from it. This process is known as machine learning. Once the machine learning phase has occurred, the machine is able to "autonomously" create without human intervention.

4. Background: The patent application listing DABUS as the inventor was filed in patent offices around the world, including the U.S., Europe, Australia, and South Africa. The United States Patent and Trademark Office and the European Patent Office rejected these applications in the formal examination phase.

5. Some experts opposing this move. They gave three reasons. First, their respective patent laws only provide for human inventors — not AI — as indicated by the use of pronouns such as "him" and "her" in their text. Second, ideas, for the purposes of patents, require the element of "mental conception" — something of which only a human mind is capable. Finally, **inventorship comes with rights, which AI is not legally capable of possessing.**

SYSTEM OF HONG KONG ADMINISTRATION

1. Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam recently said she supports the implementation of a mainland Chinese law in Hong Kong to respond to foreign sanctions, the strongest signal yet that the city is set to adopt the legislation. The law is proposed to be introduced through Hong Kong legislation rather than Beijing legislation, by adding it to an annex of Hong Kong's mini-constitution, known as the Basic Law.

2. What's the law all about? **Beijing adopted a law in June under which individuals or entities involved in making or implementing discriminatory measures against Chinese citizens or entities could be put on a Chinese government anti-sanctions list.** Under China's law, such individuals could then be denied entry into China or be expelled. Their assets in China may be seized or frozen. They could also be restricted from doing business with entities or people in China.

3. How is Hong Kong ruled? **It is ruled under One Country Two Systems approach.** As per the policy, the Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions, both former colonies, can have different economic and political systems from that of mainland China, while being part of the People's Republic of China. Hong Kong returned to Chinese control on July 1, 1997, and Macau's sovereignty was transferred on December 20, 1999.

4. The regions would have their own currencies, economic and legal systems, but defence and diplomacy would be decided by Beijing. **Their mini-Constitutions would remain valid for 50 years — till 2047 for Hong Kong and 2049 for Macau.** It is unclear what will happen after this term.

MINORITY INSTITUTIONS AND RIGHT OF EDUCATION (RTE)

1. The National Commission for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (NCPCR) conducted a Nationwide Assessment of Minority Schools. The report was titled "Impact of Exemption under Article 15 (5) with regards to Article 21A of the Constitution of India on Education of Minority Communities".

officials.

Calling on India Inc to strengthen its partnership with the government to build "Brand India", Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked industry to increase its risk taking appetite and step up investments, especially in research and development. "A vehicle cannot run on one wheel... industry needs to increase its natural tendency to take risks,".

Kaziranga has become the first national park in India to have been equipped with satellite phones, officials said. The decision to provide satellite phones for boosting anti poaching measures was taken at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

A Manipur based rights group has appealed to Home Minister Amit Shah to save and secure the lives of four Right to Information (RTI) applicants who have been "repeatedly threatened and intimidated" by members of an extremist group. The Movement for People's Rights Forum, Manipur (MPRFM), said a local unit of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak Muivah) had been issuing death threats to the RTI users of Senapati district, forcing them to go into hiding since March 2020.

The Finance Ministry has blamed the recent uptick in inflation on adverse supply shocks due to the pandemic and elevated international commodity prices, and said it expects price pressures to abate in the coming months.

Microfinance lenders have urged the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to drop the distinction between urban and rural households in its proposed new definition of eligible borrowers and allow the use of ration cards to identify households. Currently, a microfinance borrower is identified by annual household income not exceeding ₹1.25 lakh for rural areas and ₹2 lakh for urban and semi-urban areas.

India and Sri Lanka should maintain open and regular communication across multiple channels and ensure there are "no surprises" to either side, according to Milinda Moragoda, shortly to assume duties as Sri Lanka's High Commissioner in New Delhi. A 'road map' to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, outlining proposals for strengthening Indo-Lanka ties, said that while the relationship is evidently "asymmetric", the focus must be on

2. The report highlights the disproportionate number of minority institutions or dominance of non-minority category in Minority institutions. Highlights of the Report: Minority Schools Catering to the Non-Minorities: **Overall, 62.5% of the students in these schools belonged to non-minority communities. Only 8.76% of the students in minority schools belong to socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.**

3. Many students develop an inferiority complex, being alienated from the rest of society and unable to adjust with the environment. It also says that madrasas do not have any teachers training programmes.

CENSUS

1. Owing to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, Census 2021 and other Census-related field activities have been postponed by the Union Home Ministry. The census provides information on size, distribution and socio-economic, demographic and other characteristics of the country's population. The Census was first started under British Viceroy Lord Mayo in 1872. It helped in framing new policies, government programs to uplift areas of improvement in the community. The first synchronous census in India was held in 1881. Since then, censuses have been undertaken uninterruptedly once every ten years. The responsibility of conducting the decennial Census rests with the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India under Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

2. The Census is one of the most credible sources of information on the following: Demography. Economic Activity. Literacy and Education. Housing & Household Amenities. Urbanization, Fertility, and Mortality. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Language.

3. Historical Significance: **'Rig-Veda' reveals that some kind of population count was maintained during 800-600 BC in India. Arthashastra by 'Kautilya' written in the 3rd Century BC prescribed the collection of population statistics as a measure of state policy for taxation. During the regime of the Mughal king Akbar, the administrative report 'Ain-e-Akbari' included comprehensive data pertaining to population, industry, wealth and many other characteristics.**

MID-DAY MEAL SCHEME

1. A national level meet was recently organised by the National Human Rights Commission to discuss the status of various policies to ensure Right to Food and nutrition. Following are the suggestions made by the experts at the end of the meet: **Extend the midday meal scheme up to Class XII. Start an urban employment guarantee scheme. Come up with a public distribution system (PDS) not exclusively linked to Aadhaar.**

2. About the Mid-Day meal scheme: The scheme guarantees one meal to all children in government and aided schools and madaras supported under Samagra Shiksha. Students up to Class VIII are guaranteed one nutritional cooked meal at least 200 days in a year. The Scheme comes under the Ministry of HRD. **It was launched in the year 1995 as the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP - NSPE), a centrally sponsored scheme.** In 2004, the scheme was relaunched as the Mid Day Meal Scheme. The Scheme is also covered by the National Food Security Act, 2013.

3. Objective: Address hunger and malnutrition, increase enrolment and attendance in school, improve socialisation among castes, provide employment at grassroot level especially to women. The MDM rules 2015, provide that: The place of serving meals to the children shall be school only. If the Mid-Day Meal is not provided in school on any school day due to non-availability of food grains or any other reason, the State Government shall pay food security allowance by 15th of the succeeding month. **The School Management Committee mandated under the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 shall also monitor implementation of the Mid-day meal Scheme.**

MARBURG VIRUS

1. West Africa's first case of the extremely contagious and deadly Marburg virus was confirmed in Guinea. Its first case was first identified just two months after the country was declared free of Ebola. Both the Marburg case and this year's Ebola cases were detected in Guinea's Gueckedou district.

2. Marburg virus disease is a highly virulent disease that causes haemorrhagic fever, it is carried by bats with a fatality ratio of up

elevating bilateral ties from the current “transactional” phase to one that is more “strategic”.

to 88%. It is in the same family as the virus that causes Ebola virus disease.

3.Human infection with Marburg virus disease initially results from prolonged exposure to mines or caves inhabited by Rousettus bat colonies. Rousettus is a genus of Old World fruit bats or megabats. They are sometimes referred to as dog-faced fruit bats, or flying foxes.