

### NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Coming July next year, the manufacture of a range of plastic products will be banned. These include earbuds with plastic sticks, plastic flags, icecream sticks, thermocol for decoration, plates, cups, cutlery such as forks, spoons and knives, straws, trays, wrapping or packing films around sweet boxes, invitation cards, and cigarette packets, plastic or PVC banners less than 100 microns, and stirrers. The Environment Ministry on Friday notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, which prohibit specific single-use plastic items which have "low utility and high littering potential" by 2022.

There was some relief for the beleaguered poultry industry this week with the Union government deciding to allow the import of crushed genetically modified (GM) soybean, which is a major ingredient of poultry feed. However, environmental activists have raised concerns about the permission given for something derived from a genetically modified plant to enter the human food chain, given that India's regulatory system has yet to approve GM foods.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the National Automobile Scrapage Policy and said the initiative will promote a circular economy and make the process of economic development more sustainable and environment friendly. The policy, aimed at recycling old and unfit vehicles, will give a new identity to India's mobility and auto sector, Mr. Modi said in his address while virtually unveiling the initiative during an 'Investors Summit' organised in Gandhinagar.

To give kids and teens a safer experience online, Google has announced a host of changes in its policies and products to limit their exposure to explicit content, including blocking advertising targeted at the under18 age group. In the "coming weeks and months", the technology giant will roll out a new policy that will enable anyone under 18, or their parent or guardian, to request the removal of their images from Google Image results.

### BULK DRUG PARK

1.Karnataka has sought the Centre's approval for the development of the Bulk Drug Park in Yadgir district under the Centre's Promotion of Bulk Drug Parks Scheme. Bulk drugs or APIs? A bulk drug is also called an active pharmaceutical ingredient (API).

2.It is the key ingredient of a drug or medicine, which lends it the desired therapeutic effect or produces the intended pharmacological activity. Take for example- Paracetamol- It is a bulk drug, which acts against pain. It is mixed with binding agents or solvents to prepare the finished pharmaceutical product, ie a paracetamol tablet, capsule or syrup, which is consumed by the patient.

3.Method of APIs preparation? They are prepared from multiple reactions involving chemicals and solvents. The primary chemical or the basic raw material which undergoes reactions to form an API is called the **key starting material, or KSM**. Chemical compounds formed during the intermediate stages during these reactions are called drug intermediates or DIs.

4.Reason behind India is promoting bulk drug parks? India has one of the largest pharmaceutical industries in the world (third largest by volume). But this industry **largely depends on other countries, particularly China, for importing APIs, DIs and KSMs**. So, any disruptions in those countries would definitely affect the pharmaceutical industries here in India. For instance, this year, drug manufacturers in India suffered repeated setbacks due to disruption in imports due to Covid 19. The border conflict between India and China exacerbated the situation.

### FEATURES OF EOS3

1.The launch of earth observation satellite EOS-03 onboard GSLV-F10 was unsuccessful recently because of an anomaly in the rocket's cryogenic upper stage. GSLV-F10 was ISRO's eighth flight with indigenous cryo, 14th GSLV flight and 79th launch from Sriharikota.

2.Importance Feature of EOS-03- **EOS-3 was the first state-of-art agile Earth Observation Satellite which would have been placed in a geo-synchronous orbit around the Earth**. It was expected to provide near real-time imaging, which could be used for quick monitoring of natural disasters, episodic events and any short-term events. The mission life of the satellite was 10 years.

3.GSLV Rocket? The GSLV expands to geosynchronous satellite launch vehicle. The GSLV Mark II is the largest launch vehicle built by India. As its name suggests, it can launch satellites that will travel in orbits that are synchronous with the Earth's orbit. These satellites can weigh up to 2,500 kg and are first launched into transfer orbits that have a distance from Earth of 170 km at closest approach and about 35,975 km at furthest approach which is close to the height of the geosynchronous orbit.

### CHINA-TAIWAN DIVIDE

1.A meeting was held recently between Taiwan and US officials amid moves by the U.S. and others to defy Beijing's pressure campaign aimed at compelling Taiwan to accept its view that the island is part of China. The context of the issue? China has increased diplomatic, economic and military pressure on Taiwan, whose residents overwhelmingly reject Beijing's demand for political unification with the mainland. China has long blocked Taiwan from taking part in the UN and other international organizations and has stepped up such pressure since the election of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen in 2016.

2.China- Taiwan relations- Background: **China has claimed Taiwan through its "one China" policy since the Chinese civil war forced the defeated Kuomintang, or Nationalist, to flee to the island in 1949 and has vowed to bring it under Beijing's rule, by force if necessary**. While Taiwan is self-governed and de facto independent, it has never formally declared independence from the mainland. Under the "one country, two systems" formula, Taiwan would have the right to

**New museums on Jammu and Kashmir, Gautam Buddha, Indian armour and the freedom struggle are expected to be completed this year, according to the Culture Ministry.**

**Even by the most pessimistic prognoses of the situation, the fall of major Afghan cities and provinces to the Taliban has been swift, and the impact on India's interests is coming clearly into focus.**

**Sixty three endangered turtles rescued in Maharashtra reached their native habitat in Assam on Friday noon after an 18 hour flight. The turtles belong to five species, including the spotted pond turtle, The turtles were confiscated by the Pune Forest Division between 2019 and 2020.**

**China rejected the World Health Organization's calls for a renewed probe into the origins of COVID19, saying it supported "scientific" over "political" efforts to find out how the virus started. Pressure is once more mounting on Beijing to consider a fresh probe into the origins of a pandemic which has killed over four million people and paralysed economies worldwide since it first emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan.**

**The Ministry of Textiles has notified the continuation of the Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) scheme for export of garments and made ups and issued guidelines for its implementation.**

**A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged India's private sector to take more risks and make fresh investments, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal tore into industry leaders for failing to help smaller Indian firms, structuring deals to circumvent rules and demanding protection in trade negotiations.**

**The Taliban seized more major cities on Friday as they raced to take full control of Afghanistan and inched closer to Kabul, with the U.S. and Britain deploying thousands of troops to evacuate their citizens from the capital. The evacuation orders came as the Taliban took control of Kandahar — the nation's second biggest city — in the insurgency's heartland, leaving only Kabul, MazariSharif, Jalalabad and pockets of other territories in government hands.**

run its own affairs; a similar arrangement is used in Hong Kong. Presently, Taiwan is claimed by China, which refuses diplomatic relations with countries that recognise the region.

**3.Indo- Taiwan relations:** Although they do not have formal diplomatic ties, Taiwan and India have been cooperating in various fields. India has refused to endorse the "one-China" policy since 2010.

### **SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO TAXATION**

1.The Indian government recently decided to withdraw the retrospective taxation amendment in the I-T Act introduced in March 2012. Background: The Indian government had in 2012 retrospectively amended the Income-tax Act. This was in response to a Supreme Court verdict, which had held that Vodafone cannot be taxed for a 2007 transaction that involved its purchase of a 67 per cent stake in Hutchison Whampoa for \$11 billion.

2.What does 'sovereignty' mean? **An act of sovereign power is one which cannot be prevented or annulled by any other power recognised by the constitution of the state.** What is the 'sovereign right to taxation' in India? The Indian Constitution gives the government the right to levy taxes on individuals and organisations, but makes it clear that no one has the right to levy or charge taxes except by the authority of law. Any tax being charged has to be backed by a law passed by the legislature or Parliament.

3.How does scrapping retrospective feature help? With the removal of the retrospective feature a clear and predictable taxation law and intent has been presented to the companies which are expected to structure their assets accordingly while doing deals hereon. It also provides clarity for deals between companies of countries where these are not covered under any tax treaty benefits. The companies stand to gain by withdrawing the litigation with the arbitration (for cases before 2012) and then there will be a refund of any taxes that have been already paid or refunded in respect of any demands that have been adjusted.

### **TERMINATION OF A SESSION OF PARLIAMENT**

1.The Lok Sabha was adjourned Sine Die two days ahead of its scheduled date of August 13, as the Opposition protested over the Pegasus snooping controversy, farm laws and other issues.

2.Performance/outcomes of the latest session: Zero Hour — time allotted to individuals members to raise important issues — was most affected and Question Hour, too, witnessed disruptions on most of the days. The House managed to pass 20 Bills, mostly without debate or participation from the Opposition.

3.**Termination of Session:** A sitting of Parliament can be terminated by adjournment or adjournment sine die or prorogation or dissolution (in the case of the Lok Sabha).

**Adjournment:** It suspends the work in a sitting for a specified time, which may be hours, days or weeks. Adjournment sine die: It means terminating a sitting of Parliament for an indefinite period. In other words, when the House is adjourned without naming a day for reassembly. The power of adjournment as well as adjournment sine die lies with the presiding officer (Speaker or Chairman) of the House.

4.**Prorogation:** The President issues a notification for prorogation of the session after the business of a session is completed and the presiding officer declares the House adjourned sine die. The President can also prorogue the House while in session. **Dissolution:** Only the Lok Sabha is subject to dissolution. Rajya Sabha, being a permanent House, is not subject to dissolution.

5.A dissolution ends the life of the existing House, and a new House is constituted after general elections are held. The President is empowered to dissolve the Lok Sabha.

### **ANNUAL PUBLIC ENTERPRISES SURVEY**

1.The 60th Public Enterprises (PE) Survey 2019-20 was released by the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), Ministry of Finance.

2.**It is the single largest source of information on Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and acts as a basis for informed policy making.**

3.The government has reallocated the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) to the finance ministry from the ministry of heavy industries.

**India's 136 strong unicorn founders' club has only five women, and as of August 4, the country had 56 start-ups that had turned unicorns. A gender analysis brought out the skewed scenario as 131 of the 136 unicorn founders in the country are males and only five are women. On average, achieving the \$1 billion-plus valuation takes Indian start-ups around seven years, This is called Unicorn status in the Start-ups.**

### **SANCTIONS IMPOSED AGAINST BELARUS**

- 1.**The UK, the US and Canada have issued fresh trade, financial and aviation sanctions on Belarus, in a bid to increase pressure on the country's leader Alexander Lukashenko.
- 2.**Europe's longest-serving ruler, President of Belarus (Lukashenko) took office in 1994 amid the chaos caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Often described as Europe's "last dictator", he has tried to preserve elements of Soviet communism.
- 3.**Sanctions' Targets: **The idea is to focus on the regime and Lukashenko's associates as precisely as possible and discourage Western companies from doing business with Belarus.** The latest sanctions restrict exports of surveillance and military technology to Belarus.