

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

The 60 member Nagaland Assembly now has no MLA in the Opposition. The Naga People's Front (NPF) — the State's only Opposition party — was inducted into the State government, headed by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, to "work collectively towards achieving a peaceful and amicable solution" to the protracted Naga political issue. The issue pertains to the peace process with several extremist groups, primarily the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, which has been hanging fire for more than 24 years.

The antidrug law enforcement agencies are suspecting a steep surge in crossborder trafficking of heroin and crystal methamphetamine with the rapid Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. "Drugs have been a major source of revenue for the Taliban. With the collapse of Afghanistan's economy, the Taliban will rely heavily on drug money to maintain control over their cadres.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) held its second meeting on Afghanistan in 10 days, as the country witnessed chaotic scenes over the weekend, with the Taliban taking over Kabul. Addressing the meeting, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres asked the insurgents to protect the rights of Afghans. "The world is following events there with a heavy heart and deep disquiet about what lies ahead," he said.

The Supreme Court challenged the government to produce material showing its reasons for introducing the Tribunal Reforms Bill, 2021, which abolishes nine appellate tribunals and revives provisions of an ordinance struck down by the Supreme Court, in Parliament.

Zambian business tycoon and opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema scored a landslide victory in bitterly contested presidential elections.

Victorious Taliban militants patrolled Kabul on Monday after a stunningly swift end to Afghanistan's 20 year war, as

DEALING WITH AFGHANISTAN

1. Taliban seized Kabul and more major cities and raced to take full control of Afghanistan with the U.S. and Britain deploying troops to evacuate their citizens.

2. Significance of Afghan stability : Can have spill over to Neighbouring central Asian countries like Tajikistan, Uzbekistan etc Taliban resurgence will revive extremism in the region and the region can become a safe sanctuary for Let, ISIS etc. Civil war in Afghanistan will lead to a refugee crisis in Central Asia and beyond. Afghanistan's stability will help the Central Asian countries with the shortest access to the seaports of the Indian ocean. Afghanistan has been an important link in the regional trade, cultural, playing the role of a connecting bridge for Central and the rest of the world.

3. Why it is imperative now for India to engage with Taliban? Taliban is now having a significant presence in Afghanistan. India is already having huge investments in Afghanistan. **To secure assets worth \$3 billion, India should engage with all parties in Afghanistan. Taliban engaging with Pak deep state will not be in India's best interest.** If India does not engage now Russia, Iran, Pakistan and China will emerge as the shapers of Afghanistan's political and geopolitical destiny, which for sure will be detrimental to Indian interests. The U.S. has announced a new, surprise formation of a "Quad" on regional connectivity — U.S.-Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan that does not include India. India's effort to trade with Afghanistan via Chabahar port in order to increase the economy on scale.

4. Present need- **Urgent need to collectively act for the safety of Afghan civilians by checking violence by Taliban Afghanistan should be given enough space in Central Asian architectures like SCO (Shanghai cooperation organisation)** The USA, Iran, China, and Russia should actively involve India to maintain stability in Afghanistan. Unified action for the refugee crisis if it arises. Indian engagement with Taliban to maintain peace with immediate neighbours.

GATI SHAKTI INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

1. Announced by PM Modi on the eve of Independence day. Highlights the scheme: Gati Shakti will be a National Infrastructure Master Plan for our country which will lay the foundation of holistic Infrastructure. This scheme of more than 100 lakh crores rupees will result in new employment opportunities for lakhs of youth. The plan will help raise the global profile of local manufacturers and help them compete with their counterparts worldwide. It also raises possibilities of new future economic zones. Note: A similar plan, called the National Infrastructure Pipeline was previously announced.

2. About the National Infrastructure Pipeline: In the budget speech of 2019-2020, Finance Minister announced an outlay of Rs 100 lakh Crore for infrastructure projects over the next 5 years. What is it? **NIP is a first-of-its-kind initiative to provide world-class infrastructure across the country and improve the quality of life for all citizens. It will improve project preparation, attract investments (both domestic & foreign) into infrastructure,** and will be crucial for attaining the target of becoming a \$5 trillion economy by FY 2025. Covers both economic and social infrastructure projects.

3. Report by Task force: The task force headed by Atanu Chakraborty on National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), in May 2020, submitted its final report to the Finance Minister. Important recommendations and observations made: **Investment needed: ₹111 lakh crore over the next five years (2020-2025) to build infrastructure projects and drive economic growth.** Energy, roads, railways and urban projects are estimated to account for the bulk of projects (around 70%). The centre (39 percent) and state (40 percent) are expected to have an almost equal share in implementing the projects, while the private sector has 21 percent share.

4. Aggressive push towards asset sales. Monetisation of infrastructure assets. Setting up of development finance institutions. Strengthening the municipal bond market.

thousands of people mobbed the city's airport trying to flee the group's feared hardline brand of Islamist rule.

The government in the Supreme Court dismissed allegations of snooping using Pegasus spyware as mere "conjectures and surmises" based on "unsubstantiated media reports or incomplete or uncorroborated material".

After reviewing over 8,000 suggestions from the public, the Uttar Pradesh State Law Commission on Monday submitted a report and draft Bill of a new population control law proposing two child policy to the State government.

The Delhi High Court directed the Centre not to take any coercive step against an NGO for not being able to file its annual return as mandated under the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act (FCRA) due to purported technical difficulties in filing the form on the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) portal.

Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday took on the Opposition for its obstructionist approach in Parliament on legislations aimed at boosting the economy's revival and dismissed criticism of rushing through the passage of Bills.

The Central government's hasty move to pass the Bill giving rights to States to identify OBCs without lifting the 50% reservation limit is to deceive the OBC community, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar said.

China's factory output and retail sales growth slowed sharply and missed expectations in July, as new COVID19 outbreaks and floods disrupted business operations, adding to signs the economic recovery is losing momentum. Industrial production in the world's second largest economy increased 6.4% year on year in July, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

The Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA) urged the government to allow duty free import of natural rubber as shortage of the commodity in India has become a major deterrent for the tyre industry to support domestic

RICE FORTIFICATION PLAN TO TACKLE MALNUTRITION

1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced the fortification of rice distributed under various government schemes, including the Public Distribution System (PDS) and mid-day meals in schools, by 2024. Significance of the announcement: The announcement is significant as the country has high levels of malnutrition among women and children. According to the Food Ministry, **every second woman in the country is anaemic and every third child is stunted. India ranks 94 out of 107 countries and is in the 'serious hunger' category on the Global Hunger Index (GHI).** Malnutrition and lack of essential nutrients in poor women and poor children poses major obstacles in their development.

2. **The government distributes over 300 lakh tonnes of rice under various schemes covered under the National Food Security Act, 2013.** For 2021-22, the Centre has allocated 328 lakh tonnes of rice under NFSA for schemes such as the Targeted PDS, MDM and Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). What is food fortification? The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), that sets standards for food items in the country, defines fortification as "deliberately increasing the content of essential micronutrients in a food so as to improve the nutritional quality of food and to provide public health benefit with minimal risk to health".

3. Fortified rice: According to the Food Ministry, fortification of rice is a cost-effective and complementary strategy to increase vitamin and mineral content in diets. According to FSSAI norms, **1 kg fortified rice will contain iron (28 mg-42.5 mg), folic acid (75-125 microgram) and Vitamin B-12 (0.75-1.25 microgram).** In addition, rice may also be fortified with micronutrients, singly or in combination, with zinc (10 mg-15 mg), Vitamin A (500-750 microgram RE), Vitamin B1 (1 mg-1.5 mg), Vitamin B2 (1.25 mg-1.75 mg), Vitamin B3 (12.5 mg-20 mg) and Vitamin B6 (1.5 mg-2.5 mg) per kg.

NATIONAL HYDROGEN MISSION

1. The launch of the National Hydrogen Mission was announced by PM Modi. The aim is to make India a global hub for the production and export of green hydrogen. Background: The proposal for the National Hydrogen Mission was made in the Budget 2021 to launch NHM that would enable the generation of hydrogen "from green power sources".

2. What is Hydrogen fuel? Hydrogen is the lightest and first element on the periodic table. Since the weight of hydrogen is less than air, it rises in the atmosphere and is therefore rarely found in its pure form, H₂. At standard temperature and pressure, hydrogen is a nontoxic, nonmetallic, odorless, tasteless, colorless, and highly combustible diatomic gas. Hydrogen fuel is a zero-emission fuel burned with oxygen. It can be used in fuel cells or internal combustion engines. It is also used as a fuel for spacecraft propulsion.

3. Occurrence of Hydrogen: **It is the most abundant element in the universe. The sun and other stars are composed largely of hydrogen. Astronomers estimate that 90% of the atoms in the universe are hydrogen atoms.** Hydrogen is a component of more compounds than any other element. Water is the most abundant compound of hydrogen found on earth.

HYDRO-METEOROLOGICAL CALAMITIES

1. The Union Home Ministry has released data on fatalities caused due to hydro-meteorological calamities. (Note: **Hydro-meteorological calamities and hazards include flash floods, cloudburst and landslides.**) Highlights: Nearly 6,800 people lost their lives in the country over the past three years due to hydro-meteorological calamities. West Bengal has recorded the highest deaths among all States. The causes for these calamities include extreme rainfall events or cloudbursts.

2. These types of fatal landslip events are common almost every year, mainly in the Himalayan States, in the Western Ghats, and Konkan areas. In terms of funds released by the Centre under State Disaster Response Funds, highest funds were allocated to Maharashtra. Over the past three years, West Bengal had braved four tropical cyclones — Fani (May 2019), Bulbul (November 2019), Amphan (May 2020) and Yaas (May 2021).

3. States' roles and responsibilities: Under the Disaster Management Act, States were empowered to take action to prevent deaths due to natural calamities.

manufacturing.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said she is awaiting an approval from the Cabinet on the Bill on cryptocurrency as the proposed legislation is before it. An interministerial panel on cryptocurrency under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Economic Affairs) to study issues related to virtual currencies has recommended that all private cryptocurrencies, except any virtual currencies issued by State, will be prohibited in India.

THREE NEW SPECIES OF WILD BALSAM IDENTIFIED IN KERALA

- 1.The species belong to the genus Impatiens (family Balsaminaceae).
- 2.Plants of this genus are popular as 'Kashithumba' in Malayalam.
- 3.They were spotted in the Western Ghats region of southern Kerala and the Idukki district.
- 4.Of the three species, two have been named after Communist veteran and former Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan and the former Health Minister, K.K. Shailaja.