

### NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed charting out a “coordinated” strategy in Afghanistan, while National Security Advisers (NSA) from the five BRICS countries met virtually to discuss developments there with a focus on combating terrorism. Officials said the Russian President called Mr. Modi to discuss developments in Afghanistan, with the two leaders agreeing to set up a “permanent bilateral channel” on the issues arising from the Taliban takeover.

There are no requests from the United Nations Security Council’s (UNSC) permanent members for the delisting of the Taliban’s top leadership from sanctions thus far, officials said here. They also refuted reports that the next meeting of the UN’s 1988 Sanctions Committee, due next month, would lift restrictions on designated terrorists like Sirajuddin Haqqani and Mullah Baradar.

Marking a first in ammunition supply by the private sector to the Army, Nagpur based Economic Explosives Limited (EEL) handed over the first batch of MultiMode Hand Grenades (MMHG).

The Supreme Court held that economic criterion should not be the sole basis to identify sections of backward communities as ‘creamy layer’. Social advancement, higher employment in government services, etc., played an equal role in deciding whether a person belonged to the creamy layer and could be denied quota benefits, it said.

People from Afghanistan continued their protest outside office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the second day. The protest slogans and cries for help got louder as they refused to budge from near the venue. They are also considering a hunger strike in case the UNHCR does not recognise those seeking refugee statuses, provide them with resettlement options and ensure their security.

A proposed Bill seeking equal rights to property for women in Arunachal Pradesh has refreshed the demand for a policy to safeguard the indigenous communities from

### SREE NARAYAN GURU

1.Sree Narayana Guru Jayanti.(167th birth anniversary of Sree Narayana Guru). Sree Narayana Guru was a catalyst and leader who reformed the oppressive caste system that prevailed in society at the time. He was born in 1856 in Chempazhanthy, a village near Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. Belong to the Ezhava caste, Narayan Guru had experienced discrimination from the upper caste of society. His philosophy always advocated social equality, education for all, and spiritual enlightenment.

2.Significant Contribution for Society: He gave the famous slogan “**One Caste, One Religion, One God for All**” (**Oru Jathi, Oru Matham, Oru Daivam, Manushyanu**). In 1888, Narayana Guru consecrated the first temple of Lord Shiva, where an idol was ordained by a non-brahmin in Aruvippuram village of Kerala. His step sparked off the anti-caste revolution against the upper-caste Brahmin communities.

3.In one temple he consecrated at Kalavancode, he kept mirrors instead of idols. This symbolised his message that the divine was within each individual. **In 1903, he established the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) as the founder and president.** He had set up more than 40 temples across the state as an act of protest to permit lower caste people to enter temples.

4.Contribution to National Movement: **He was in the forefront of the movement for universal temple entry and against the societal ills like the social discrimination of untouchables.** He provided the impetus for Vaikom agitation which was aimed at temple entry in Travancore for the lower castes. He captured the essence of Indianness in his poems which highlighted the unity that lies beneath the world’s apparent diversity.

5.Relevance of His Philosophy: **Sree Narayana Guru’s philosophy of Universal Oneness has special relevance in the contemporary global context** where in the social fabric of many countries and communities are being eroded by hatred, violence, bigotry, sectarianism and other divisive tendencies.

### NATIONAL MONETISATION PIPELINE(NMP)

1.The Centre launched the National Monetisation pipeline (NMP) in an effort to list out the government’s infrastructure assets to be sold over the next four-years. Key features: The four-year **National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) will unlock value in brownfield projects by engaging the private sector,** transferring to them the rights but not the ownership in projects.

2.Components: **Roads, railways and power sector assets will comprise over 66 per cent of the total estimated value of the assets to be monetised,** with the balance coming from sectors including telecom, mining, aviation, ports, natural gas and petroleum product pipelines, warehouses and stadiums.

3.Objective of the programme: To unlock the value of investments in brownfield public sector assets by tapping institutional and long-term capital, which can thereafter be leveraged for public investments. To enable ‘Infrastructure Creation through Monetisation’ wherein the public and private sector collaborate, each excelling in their core areas of competence, so as to deliver socio-economic growth.

4.Estimated Potential: Considering that infrastructure creation is inextricably linked to monetisation, the period for NMP is co-terminus with the balance period under National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) i.e for FY 2022-2025. NMP is indicatively valued at Rs 6.0 lakh crore for 4 years.

5.Challenges to NMP: **Lack of identifiable revenue streams in various assets. Level of capacity utilisation in gas and petroleum pipeline networks.** Dispute resolution mechanism. Regulated tariffs in power sector assets. Low interest among investors in national highways below four lanes. The lack of independent sectoral regulators.

### SMOG TOWER

1.The smog towers are being installed in Delhi on the lines of China, which has experimented with this technology in its capital Beijing and other cities. The Delhi government will study the

children of nonlocals “fraudulently availing rights” in the name of State’s Scheduled Tribes.

The entire section on Indian “culture and heritage” of a government run website was erased on Tuesday, a day after the description of the Mughal empire as “one of the greatest”, was removed from it following some protests on Twitter. The culture section, which had the information on Mughals, was no longer available.

In the last three years, since 2018, the defence trade between India and Russia was \$15 billion because of some big ticket defence deals, said Victor N. Kladov, Head of International Cooperation and Regional Policy of Rostec state corporation. The \$400 air defence systems deal, for which deliveries are scheduled to begin in a few months, was on schedule, while downplaying the threat of U.S. sanctions under CAATSA (Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act).

Vice President Kamala Harris accused China of intimidation in disputed Asian waters, seeking to rally regional allies as the United States’ superpower status takes a hit over Afghanistan. Her comments in Singapore came as Washington seeks to reset relations in Asia after the turbulent Donald Trump era and build a bulwark against the rising might of Beijing.

India hoped that the situation in Afghanistan did not pose a challenge to its neighbours and the Afghan territory was not used by terrorist groups such as the Lashkare Taiba (LeT) and the Jaishe-Mohammed (JeM) to threaten other countries, as it pitched for an inclusive and broad based dispensation in Kabul that represented all sections of Afghan society. In his address at a special session of the UN Human Rights Council on the situation in Afghanistan, Indian Ambassador to the UN in Geneva Indra Mani Pandey said a “grave” humanitarian crisis was unfolding in the country and everyone was concerned about the increasing violations of fundamental rights of the Afghan people.

The Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) on Tuesday urged the Centre to set up a framework to help protect the rights of auto dealers in cases of sudden exits of manufacturers from the market.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled an ambitious

impact of smog towers on pollution and could add more such structures across the national capital.

2. Smog towers are structures designed to work as large-scale air purifiers. **They are fitted with multiple layers of air filters and fans at the base to suck the air. After the polluted air enters the smog tower,** it is purified by the multiple layers before being re-circulated into the atmosphere.

3. **Delhi was the most polluted capital city in the world in 2020 for the third consecutive year,** according to a report by a Swiss group (released in March this year) that ranked cities based on their air quality measured in terms of the levels of ultrafine particulate matter (PM 2.5) that can enter the organs and cause lasting damage.

4. Background: Following high pollution levels in the national capital, the Supreme Court had in November 2019 asked the Centre and the Delhi government to come up with a road map on installing smog towers in the national capital region (NCR) to combat air pollution.

5. Measures taken to control pollution: **Persuading farmers in Punjab and Haryana to use mechanical alternatives to stubble-burning. Closure of thermal power stations in Delhi. Making industries use piped natural gas.** Control measures taken under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) when pollution levels spike.

#### PANJSHIR VALLEY

1. It is a valley in north-central Afghanistan, near the Hindu Kush mountain range. It is divided by the Panjshir River.

2. **The valley is home to Afghanistan’s largest concentration of ethnic Tajiks. The valley is also known for its emeralds,** which were used in the past to finance the resistance movements against those in power.

3. Panjshir means “Five lions”. There is a legend that in 10th century 5 brothers built a dam for king Mahmood Ghazni in the valley to prevent floods from damaging people’s homes. Hence it was named valley of 5 lions (after those 5 brothers).

#### 4-TIER STRUCTURE FOR URBAN COOPERATIVE BANKS

1. A Reserve Bank of India (RBI)-appointed committee has suggested a four-tier structure for the Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs).

2. Tier 1 with all unit UCBs and salary earner’s UCBs (irrespective of deposit size) and all other UCBs having deposits up to Rs 100 crore.

3. Tier 2 with UCBs of deposits between Rs 100 crore and Rs 1,000 crore.

4. Tier 3 with UCBs of deposits between Rs 1,000 crore and Rs 10,000 crore.

5. Tier 4 with UCBs of deposits more than Rs 10,000 crore.

6. **Co-operative Banks, which are distinct from commercial banks, were born out of the concept of co-operative credit societies where members from a community group together to extend loans to each other, at favourable terms.** They are registered under the Co-operative Societies Act of the State concerned or under the Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, 2002.

#### ADOPTION REGULATIONS, 2021

1. According to a new clause in the adoption regulations, Indian diplomatic missions abroad will now be in charge of **safeguarding adopted children whose parents move overseas with the child within two years of adoption.**

2. So far, Indian missions have had a role in inter-country adoption of Indian children limited to kids adopted by Non Resident Indians (NRIs), Overseas Citizens of India or foreign parents.

3. Some cases came to the attention of the authorities recently when Indian children were adopted by parents in India and who ended up moving abroad later, hence going out of the purview of Indian authorities and also not falling under purview of Indian Missions abroad.

#### EARTHQUAKE OBSERVATORIES

1. The government has announced that India is going to have 35 more earthquake observatories by the end of the 2021 and aims to add 100 more earthquake observatories by 2026. The announcement came at the inaugural function of the Joint Scientific Assembly of the International Association of Geomagnetism and Aeronomy (IAGA) – International Association

**₹ 6 lakh crore National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) that included unlocking value by involving private firms across infrastructure sectors — from passenger trains and railway stations to airports. Under the plan, private firms can invest in projects for a fixed return using the InvIT route as well as operate and develop the assets for a certain period before transferring them back to the government agency.**

of Seismology and Physics of the Earth Interior (IASPEI).

**2. National Center for Seismology (under the Ministry of Earth Sciences) is the nodal agency of the Government of India for monitoring of earthquake activity in the country.**

Currently, India has only 115 earthquake observatories. The most important aspect of the Earthquake Observatory is to be able to accurately predict the time of the earthquake.

**3.** The Indian subcontinent is considered as one of the world's most disaster-prone areas in terms of earthquakes, landslides, floods, cyclones, and tsunamis.