

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

The world famous Sambhar Salt Lake in Rajasthan, which is constantly shrinking with the degradation of soil and water quality and a decline in the population of migratory birds, needs a faster restoration for conservation of its wetland and salt brine worth \$300 million, an expert study on the lake's ecology has said. The lake, situated 80 km southwest of Jaipur, is the country's largest inland saline water body which attracts thousands of migratory birds every year.

The contract for the largest ever infrastructure project in the Maldives was signed in Male on Thursday. The Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP) will consist of a 6.74km long bridge and causeway link between Male and the nearby islands of Villingli, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi.

The Supreme Court has decided to hear "at length" a plea that convicted parliamentarians and State legislators, former and sitting, should be disqualified and banned for life from contesting elections to Parliament or Assemblies. A Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana said the plea raised a "vexed question" with "far reaching ramifications and consequences". "We deem it necessary to hear the matter at length on an appropriate date, after giving opportunity to all the stakeholders.

The Civil Aviation Ministry has notified the Drone Rules, 2021, under which the weight of a fully loaded unmanned aircraft system has been increased from 300 kg to 500 kg to include heavy payload-carrying craft for use in the logistics and transportation sectors. The rules will also cover drone taxis. The key features of these rules include the development of drone corridors for cargo deliveries. An unmanned aircraft systems promotion council will be set up to facilitate a business friendly regulatory regime.

Minister for External Affairs S. Jaishankar described the situation in Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover as critical, adding that India, like the rest of the world, was following a "wait and watch" policy. At an allparty meeting on the situation in Afghanistan held at Parliament House, Mr. Jaishankar

ELECTRONIC-VISA(e-visa)

1.India has decided to "invalidate" or cancel all visas issued to Afghan nationals, including about 2,000 issued in the last few months, as the Taliban began to make advances across the country. Now, all Afghans must enter India now only on special e-visas applied online.

2.What is an e- visa? The e-visa system is an innovation introduced by the government in 2014. The facility was expanded in 2017-2018. The process has its roots in the 2010 Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVOA) scheme for Japan, Singapore, Finland, Luxembourg and New Zealand. **The government merged the TVOA with Electronic Travel Authorisation, thereby creating the e-visa. The Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal ministry that issues visas to foreigners.**

3.Eligibility: An e-visa also called Electronic Visa is provided in five categories—tourist, business, conference, medical, and medical attendant. Exceptions: The facility is not available for the citizens of Pakistan and they are expected to apply for regular visas from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. E-visas are not valid for foreign diplomats which are dealt separately.

HAVANA SYNDROME

1.Nearly four years ago a mysterious neurological illness, referred to as "Havana syndrome", started to afflict American diplomats and intelligence operatives in Cuba, China, and other countries. Now, a report by the National Academies of Sciences (NAS) has found **"directed" microwave radiation to be its "plausible" cause.**

2.In late 2016, US diplomats and other employees stationed in Havana reported feeling ill after hearing strange sounds and experiencing odd physical sensations in their hotel rooms or homes. The symptoms included nausea, severe headaches, fatigue, dizziness, sleep problems, and hearing loss, which have since come to be known as "Havana Syndrome".

3.Causes of Havanan syndrome-Directed pulsed RF energy appears to be the most plausible mechanism in explaining these cases among those that the committee considered. The immediate symptoms that patients reported including **sensations of pain and buzzing sound apparently emanated from a particular direction, or occurred in a specific spot in a room.**

SUGAR AND FAIR AND REMUNERATIVE PRICES(FRP)

1.The Union government has increased the minimum price that sugar mills must pay to sugar cane farmers by ₹5 a quintal, setting the fair and remunerative price (FRP) at ₹290 a quintal for the 2021-22 sugar season, which runs from October to September. Despite demands from sugar mills, however, the Centre refused to hike the minimum price at which they can sell the processed sugar, citing consumer interests.

2.Significance of the decision: **The decision will benefit five crore sugar cane farmers and their dependents as well as five lakh workers employed by sugar mills and related industries.**

3.Sugar Pricing Policy-Prices of sugar are market driven & depend on demand & supply of sugar. However, with a view to protect the interests of farmers, **the concept of Minimum Selling Price (MSP) of sugar was introduced in 2018 so that industry may get at least the minimum cost of production of sugar,** so as to enable them to clear cane price dues of farmers. In exercise of the powers conferred under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, Government has notified Sugar Price (Control) Order, 2018. Under the provisions of said order, the Government will fix the Minimum Selling Price (MSP).

4.MSP of sugar has been fixed taking into account the components of Fair & Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane and minimum conversion cost of the most efficient mills. Also, please note that the State Advised Prices (SAP) are announced by key sugarcane producing states which are generally higher than FRP.

5.FRP: Fair and remunerative price (FRP) is the **minimum price at which rate sugarcane is to be purchased by sugar mills from farmers.** Background: The Federal/Central Government

said the priority of the Government of India at this point was the evacuation of Indian nationals and Afghan partners from the wartorn country.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said Delhi was on top of a list of cities across the world in terms of the number of CCTVs installed per square mile. The Capital has 1,826 CCTVs installed per square mile, surpassing cities like London, Shanghai, New York and Singapore.

The IT systems of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) have been down over the past week, sending Aadhaar holders into a tizzy as deadlines loom to link their UIDAI identity details with their Employees' Provident Fund accounts and the Income Tax Department's Permanent Account Number (PAN).

The Supreme Court asked the Union government if it can immediately release money from the PM Cares Fund for the education of children who have been orphaned or have lost legal guardians or either of their parents during the COVID19 pandemic. A Bench of Justices L. Nageswara Rao and Aniruddha Bose highlighted that education was a fundamental right of children. Children needed to stay in school. The Bench was especially anxious about the future of children who studied in private schools where the fee may be on the higher side and had lost their parents after the COVID19 virus began disrupting lives since March 2020.

In an effort to check stubble burning menace during the paddy season, the Punjab government has decided to permit certain categories of industries to install paddy straw-fired boilers to claim fiscal incentives.

Seeing a heightened need to strengthen Internet safety post the pandemic, Google on Wednesday announced ramping up of resources in India to respond to online threats, including the launch of an updated Google Safety Centre, and introducing the global kids safety program in the country. The company has launched the global 'Be Internet Awesome' program for kids in India, wherein it will partner with Indian comic book publisher Amar Chitra Katha to offer Internet safety lessons through popular comic book characters across eight Indian languages.

Vice President Kamala Harris began a visit to Vietnam to stress U.S. commitment to Asia, a trip critics

announces Fair and Remunerative Prices which are determined on the recommendation of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and are announced by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, which is chaired by the Prime Minister.

SUJALAM CAMPAIGN

1. The Ministry of Jal Shakti has begun (From 25th August) 'SUJALAM', a '100 days campaign' as part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'. About the campaign: The objective is to create more and more ODF Plus villages by undertaking waste water management at village level. This is done particularly through creation of 1 million Soak-pits and also other Grey water management activities.

2. Key activities that will be organised in the villages under this campaign include- Organizing **Community consultations, Khuli Baithaks and Gram Sabha meetings to analyze the current situation. Pass resolution to maintain ODF sustainability** and achieve needed number of soak pits to manage the grey water. Develop a 100 days' plan to undertake sustainability and soak pit construction related activities. Construct requisite number of soak pits. Retrofit toilets where needed through IEC and community mobilization. Ensure all newly emerging Households in the village have access to toilets.

3. Significance- The campaign will not only build desired infrastructure i.e. **soak pit for management of greywater in villages but will also aid in sustainable management of waterbodies**. The campaign would boost the momentum of Swachh Bharat Mission- Grameen phase II activities through community participation.

4. Need for- The disposal of waste water and clogging of waterbodies in the villages or on the outskirts of the villages remain one of the major problems. The Campaign would help in **management of the wastewater and in turn would help to revive the waterbodies**.

ARANMULA BOAT RACE

1. It is the **oldest river boat festival in Kerala, held during Onam**.

2. It takes place at Aranmula (situated on the banks of the river Pampa), near a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Krishna and Arjuna. Palliyodams (snakeboats) are used in race.

3. Only men of the village are allowed to be in the boat.

TOKENISATION

1. Tokenisation refers to replacement of actual card details with an alternate code called the "token", which shall be unique for a combination of card, token requestor (i.e. the entity which accepts request from the customer for tokenisation of a card and passes it on to the card network to issue a corresponding token) and device (referred hereafter as "identified device").

2. **A tokenised card transaction is considered safer as the actual card details are not shared with the merchant during transaction processing.**

3. The Reserve Bank has extended the scope of 'tokenisation' to several consumer devices, including laptops, desktops, wearables such as wristwatches and bands, as well as Internet of Things devices, beyond the original permission for mobiles and tablets.

EASE 4.0

1. The Union Finance Minister undertook the annual performance review of the public sector banks (PSBs) and launched the EASE 4.0 or Enhanced Access and Service Excellence Reform Agenda. EASE 4.0 is a common reform agenda for PSBs aimed at institutionalising clean and smart banking.

2. **EASE 4.0 commits PSBs to tech-enabled, simplified and collaborative banking to further the agenda of customer-centric digital transformation.**

3. It was launched in January 2018 jointly by the government and PSBs. It was commissioned through Indian Banks' Association and authored by Boston Consulting Group.

YUKTDHARA

1. **It is a Geospatial Planning Portal for facilitating Gram Panchayat level planning of MGNREGA.** It is a new portal under 'Bhuvan'. Launched by the Ministry of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.

2. The platform will serve as a repository of assets (Geotags) created under various national rural development programmes i.e. MGNREGA, Integrated Watershed Management Programme,

have slammed as tone deaf given the parallels with the superpower's evacuations from Saigon and Kabul. Ms. Harris will meet the communist state's President and Prime Minister in Hanoi, a day after accusing regional giant Beijing of intimidation in the disputed South China Sea.

Per Drop More Crop and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, etc.

INS CHILKA

1.INS Chilka is the only ab-initio training establishment of the Indian Navy, **which trains more than 6600 raw recruits annually to make them able-bodied sailors.**

2.INS Chilka was commissioned in 1980 and is located in Odisha in the vicinity of Chilika Lake.