

### NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

India has maintained a studied silence in response to the comments from Taliban leader Sher Mohammed Stanekzai who on described India as “very important for the region”. Mr. Stanekzai’s comments were the first overt signal from the Taliban that it wishes to engage India which is currently the President of the UN Security Council and is set to preside over global deliberations on the current chaotic situation in Afghanistan. The overture from the Taliban for ties “like before” has come after months of speculation about India’s overt and covert diplomacy with various stakeholders about the Taliban.

In a move that could have ramifications for the free passage of both military and commercial vessels in the South China Sea, Chinese authorities said they will require a range of vessels “to report their information” when passing through what China sees as its “territorial waters”, starting from September 1. Over \$5 trillion trade passes through the South China Sea, and 55% of India’s trade pass through its waters and the Malacca Straits, according to estimates by India’s Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). China claims under a so-called “nine dash line” on its maps most of the South China Sea’s waters, which are disputed by several other countries, including the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the youth were breaking the mould and embracing the startup culture even in small towns and cities, a sign, he said, of India’s bright future. In his monthly radio broadcast programme, Mann ki Baat, Mr. Modi said space sector reforms had caught the people’s imagination, and expressed confidence that a large number of satellites in the coming days would be those on which youngsters from universities, labs and other sectors had worked upon.

To make the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) a success, the government should give Income Tax breaks to attract retail investors into instruments such as Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs), the NITI Aayog has recommended. The Centre’s think tank driving the NMP, estimated to raise almost ₹6 lakh crore for the exchequer over four years, has also

### BRITISH STAMPS BANNED FROM CHAGOS ISLANDS

1.The United Nations (UN) has banned British stamps from being used on the Chagos archipelago. Now the UPU (Universal Postal Union) will stop registering, distributing and transmitting stamps bearing the words British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), the name given by Britain to the archipelago. UPU is a United Nations specialized agency and the postal sector's primary forum for international cooperation. Chagos archipelago is an island group in the central Indian Ocean, located about 1,600 km south of the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent.

2.In the 19th century, Chagos were governed from Mauritius, which was a British Colony. Mauritius became independent in 1968, but the Chagos archipelago remained under British control. The U.K. government refers to it as BIOT. That Sparked protests by Chagossians, who accused London of carrying out an “illegal occupation” and barring them from their homeland.

3.In 2019, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that Britain should give up control of the islands. Later in 2019, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution recognising that “the Chagos Archipelago forms an integral part of the territory of Mauritius” and urged UN agencies “to support the decolonisation of Mauritius”.

4.**India has supported Mauritius’ stand on the Chagos Archipelago. India in its submission to ICJ has said that the Chagos Archipelago has been and continues to be with Mauritius and demanded sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago from Britain.**

### CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CROP INSURANCE

1.**Sustainability:** For Insurance markets to work they need- (a) Low risk; and (b) Low correlation in risk amongst those buying insurance. Since the programme is aimed at covering risks of drought and floods, both assumptions are likely to be false.

2.This is because when bad weather hits, all regional farmers are affected (high correlation) and incidence of bad-weather is high (once in 5-7 years ie. loss probability of 14% - 20%). The PMFBY states the premium rates to be 1.5-2% as the rest being subsidized by the government. This in the long term is bad and also encourages risk-taking especially for crops with low OMSPs.

3.**Claim Settlement Issues:** The role and power of Insurance companies is significant. In many cases, it didn't investigate losses due to a localised calamity and, therefore, did not pay the claims. The State governments failed to release funds on time leading to delays in releasing insurance compensation. This defeats the very purpose of the scheme which is to provide timely financial assistance to the farming community.

4.**Lack of Awareness and Grievance Redressal:** The farmers are not aware of the crop insurance schemes. There is a lack of a decent grievance redressal system and monitoring mechanism for speedy settlements of farmer complaints; at both the Centre and State Governments level.

5.**Identification Issues:** Currently the PMFBY scheme doesn't distinguish between large and small farmers and thus raises the issue of identification. Small farmers are the most vulnerable class.

### SAMRIDH PROGRAMME

1.The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) has launched the ‘Start-up Accelerators of MeitY for pProduct Innovation, Development and growth (SAMRIDH)’ programme.

2.To create a conducive platform to Indian Software Product start-ups to enhance their products and secure investments for scaling their business. Focuses on accelerating the 300 start-ups by providing customer connect, investor connect, and international immersion in the next three years.

3.To provide investment of up to Rs 40 lakh to the start-up based on current valuation and growth stage of the Start-Up through selected accelerators. Being implemented by MeitY Start-up Hub (MSH).MSH acts as a national coordination, facilitation and monitoring centre that will integrate all the incubation centres, start-ups and innovation related activities of

called for bringing such trusts within the ambit of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) to provide greater comfort to investors.

India and Russia are expecting to conclude the bilateral logistics agreement, Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement (RELOS), and a Navy to Navy cooperation memorandum of understanding (MoU) when Russian Defence Minister Gen. Sergei Shoigu visits India later this year. The two sides are also looking at expanding cooperation in Central Asia and the possibility of supplementing bilateral exercises with trilateral and multilateral ones.

Given the widespread destruction of rainforests and native biodiversity caused by oil palm plantations in Southeast Asia, environmental experts and politicians are warning that the Union government's move to promote their cultivation in the north eastern States and in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands can be disastrous. Other concerns include the impact on community ownership of tribal lands, as well as the fact that the oil palm is a water guzzling, monoculture crop with a long gestation period unsuitable for small farmers.

Changes to the Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) structure and regulations are among crucial modifications required to attract retail investors to the National Monetisation Pipeline, say financial experts. However, infrastructure regulators and SEBI would need to work in tandem for a successful insolvency resolution of an InvIT which may involve a change in the sponsor, investment manager and/or trustee or transfer of an infrastructure asset.

Alignment and realignment of global powers have added to the already changing security challenges and the changing equations in Afghanistan are a recent and important example of this, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday while stating that the Quadrilateral grouping has been constituted keeping these things in mind.

The Biden administration's moves to pull out troops from Afghanistan and Iraq mean there will be more American focus on dealing with China, and India could benefit from U.S. investment that is leaving China if the Modi government becomes more transparent in policymaking and "open for business", said Indo-U.S. trade body chief Mukesh Aghi. However, he said there is not as much interest in concluding an Indo-U.S. Free Trade

MeitY. To further the Indian start-up growth which has seen the emergence of 63 unicorns and is now the third largest unicorn hub globally with a total valuation of USD 168 billion.

**4."Unicorn" is a term used in the venture capital industry to describe a privately held startup company with a value of over \$1 billion.**

**5.Other Related Initiatives: Start Up India Fund Start-up Cells National Startup Advisory Council Atmanirbhar Bharat ARISE-Atal New India Challenge AIM-iCREST**

#### **KAZIND-21**

**1.**The 5th edition of India-Kazakhstan Joint Training Exercise, "KAZIND-21" will be conducted in Kazakhstan.

**2.**About KAZIND-21: The exercise is a joint training between both the Armies. The scope of Joint Exercise includes professional exchange, sharing experiences in Counter Insurgency/ Counter Terrorism operations, etc. Joint Military Exercise: Prabal dostyk.

**3.**Importance of Kazakhstan: **First, its geo-strategic location; second, its economic potential, especially in terms of energy resources; and third, its multi-ethnic and secular structure.**

Kazakhstan is the most resource-rich country in Central Asia and is also India's largest trade and investment partner.

**4.**India and Kazakhstan actively cooperate under the aegis of various multilateral fora including Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Shanghai Cooperation Operation (SCO) and the United Nations (UN) organisations.

#### **KEY INDICATORS FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC 2021:ADB**

**1.**Asian Development Bank (ADB) released a report titled as the Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2021. The report demonstrated that the region made substantial progress in the last two decades with respect to several development targets. It presents comprehensive economic, financial, social and environmental statistics for ADB's 49 regional members.

**2.Poverty:** The pandemic pushed 75-80 million people in the developing Asia-Pacific into extreme poverty in 2020. About 203 million people — 5.2% of developing Asia's population — lived in extreme poverty as of 2017. Without Covid-19, that number would have declined to an estimated 2.6% in 2020.

**3.Contribution to Global GDP:** Asia and the Pacific's economy has grown at a robust pace in recent years and contributed as much as 35% to global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in current US dollars in 2019.Unemployment: As unemployment rates increased by at least 20% in 2020 due to the pandemic across the globe, the Asia-Pacific region lost an estimated 8% of working hours.

**4.Labour Force Participation:** From 2019 to 2020, labour force participation rates among women, on average, declined by 1.4%, while labour force participation rates among men declined by 0.8%.

**5.Sustainable Development:** The pandemic is threatening Asia-Pacific's progress toward critical targets under the United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

#### **SWEAT EQUITY RULES:SEBI**

**1.**The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has brought into effect the SEBI (Share Based Employee Benefits and Sweat Equity) Regulations, 2021. The regulations have widened the scope of employees who can be offered stock (equity) options.

**2.Sweat equity is a non-monetary contribution that the individuals or founders of a company make towards the company.** Cash-strapped startups and business owners typically use sweat equity to fund their companies.It will be issued for providing the know-how or making available rights in the nature of intellectual property rights or value additions.

**3.**The maximum yearly limit of sweat equity shares that can be issued by a listed company has been prescribed at 15% of the existing paid-up equity share capital within the overall limit, not exceeding 25% of the paid-up capital at any time.

#### **MILKY SEA PHENOMENON**

**1.**The scientists are using new satellite technology Day/Night Band to find glow-in-the-dark milky seas.

**2.**About: Also called mareel, **it is a rare form of marine bioluminescence where the nocturnal ocean surface produces a widespread, uniform and steady whitish glow.** Bioluminescence is light produced by a chemical reaction within a living organism.

**3.**About two or three milky seas occur per year worldwide, mostly

**Agreement as there was during the Trump administration and India must also put aside its hopes of having its “GSP(General System of Preference) status” restored, which was cancelled in 2019. Both sides must work on more deliverable goals.**

in the waters of the northwest Indian Ocean and off the coast of Indonesia.

**4.Causes:** Arises from a saprophytic relationship between luminous bacteria and microalgae that expresses on the macroscale. A strain of luminous bacteria called *Vibrio harveyi* colonizing algae at the water's surface has been found.