

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

The COVID19 pandemic had been a “black swan” event that overwhelmed national capacities, disrupted supply chains and brought people back to the drawing board, Chief of the Army Staff □ General Manoj Mukund Naravane said at the inaugural event of PANEX21, a disaster management exercise of the multilateral grouping Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). “PANEX 21, therefore, is unique as it is for the first time that an exercise of this magnitude involving multiple agencies from multiple countries is being undertaken to review our Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief mechanism and streamline our response strategy in the backdrop of a pandemic.

Amid vociferous protests by Opposition members, the Lok Sabha on Monday passed a Bill to link electoral roll data with the Aadhaar ecosystem without any substantial discussion. Union Law Minister Kiren Rijju, while moving the Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021, told the House that the linking of the electoral roll with a person’s Aadhaar was “voluntary”, but went on to quote a report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law and Justice to assert that the process would “purify” the rolls. The manner of passing the Bill, barely two hours after it was introduced in the Lok Sabha and in the midst of an uproar, led Opposition members to accuse the Narendra Modi government of “compromising” the authority of Parliament.

The Jammu and Kashmir Delimitation Commission proposed to increase six seats for the Jammu division and one for the Kashmir division, besides reserving 16 seats for the Scheduled Castes (SC) and the Scheduled Tribes in the Union Territory, triggering sharp reactions from the regional parties. The Kashmir division currently has 46 seats and Jammu 37. The commission, headed by Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai (retd.), met the five associate members — two MPs from the BJP and three from the National Conference — in New Delhi. The National Conference had earlier boycotted the commission. The commission has not specified the districts where the SC and ST seats would be reserved. It told the associate members that the 2011 census was the basis for carving out

ZERO BUDGET NATURAL FARMING

1.Zero budget natural farming is back on top of the Government’s agenda with Prime Minister all set to highlight it at a national conclave. Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) is a method of chemical-free zero-till agriculture drawing from traditional Indian practices. It was developed by Padma Shri Subhash Palekar in the mid-1990s as an alternative to the Green Revolution’s methods driven by chemical fertilizers, pesticides and intensive irrigation.

2.Inputs - Instead of commercially produced chemical inputs, ZBNF promotes the application of jivamrita - a mixture of fresh cow dung and aged cow urine, jaggery, pulse flour, water and soil - on farmland. This fermented microbial culture adds nutrients to the soil and acts as a catalytic agent to promote the activity of microorganisms and earthworms in the soil. About 200 litres of jivamrita should be sprayed twice a month per acre of land; after 3 years, the system is supposed to become self-sustaining. Only one cow is needed for 30 acres of land, with the caveat that it must be a local Indian breed - not an imported Jersey or Holstein. A similar mixture, called bijamrita, is used to treat seeds.

3.Concoctions using neem leaves and pulp, tobacco and green chillis are prepared for insect and pest management. Benefits - ZBNF method is meant to reduce input costs by eliminating the need for expensive fertilizers and pesticides, and also protect soil health and conserve water resources. This method also promotes soil aeration, minimal watering, intercropping, bunds and topsoil mulching. This method discourages intensive irrigation and deep ploughing. But this method is against vermicomposting, which is the mainstay of typical organic farming, as it introduces the most common composting worm, the European red wiggler (*Eisenia fetida*) to Indian soils.

4.These worms may absorb toxic metals and poison groundwater and soil. The Centre will support the States to improve ZBNF under the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana. But, the agricultural scientists had expressed concern about a wholesale shift to unproven methods.

COLD WAVE IN NORTH INDIA

1.Recently, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted a cold wave in parts of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh over the next few days. Cause - According to IMD, the above region could witness a cold wave due to the western disturbance move as a cyclonic circulation over north Pakistan and adjoining Jammu and Kashmir. [Western disturbances are storms that originate in the Mediterranean region and bring winter rainfall to northwest India.] After this western disturbance moves, the IMD expects strong north-westerly and westerly cold winds over north India.

2.New pattern - This wind pattern is new. Earlier, winds were calm and light all through November. This much fall in temperature needs consistent winds. Cold Wave The IMD defines a cold wave qualitatively as a condition of air temperature which becomes fatal to the human body when exposed. Cold waves usually occur from mid-December to the end of February. Sometimes, a cold wave may set in before mid-December.

3.The cold waves depend on weather systems and wind patterns from the middle latitudes, that is from Europe or West Asia, since the winds from these regions bring cold weather. Factors that bring cold waves to India include the movement of cold air masses brought about by upper-level winds. They can be triggered by strong westerly winds approaching northwest India and transporting cold air towards the southeast direction. Build up of an extended area of relatively high pressure over northwest Asia can also bring cold waves.

4.IMD’s Conditions - In ‘cold wave’ conditions, the minimum temperature is less than or equal to 4 degree Celsius at a weather station in the plains, and departs from the normal temperature 4.5 to 6.4 degrees below for that period. For hilly regions, a cold wave is declared when the minimum

the new seats.

Market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Monday issued an order suspending futures trading in paddy (non basmati), wheat, Bengal gram (chana dal), mustard seeds and its derivatives, soyabean and its derivatives, crude palm oil and green gram (moong dal) for a year, in a move believed to stem rising prices. SEBI directed stock exchanges in commodity derivatives segment not to undertake any trading in derivative contracts in these key farm commodities with immediate effect.

The Nagaland Assembly has demanded the repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act from the State and elsewhere in the Northeast and an apology from the "appropriate authority" for the botched Army operation that led to the death of 14 civilians.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday informed the Lok Sabha that banks have recovered ₹13,109.17 crore by selling the assets of fugitives like Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a telephone conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The conversation came days after a high level official of Kremlin announced that a trilateral meeting of Mr. Putin, Mr. Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping was expected soon.

Hundreds of girls and young women have written an open letter to parliamentarians urging them to vote against the government's proposal to raise the age of marriage for women to 21 and have demanded that their agency to take decisions about their lives is not taken away. The girls also want the elected representatives to pursue policies that ensure gender equality. "It is of course true that many girls among us and our sisters from across the country desire to get married at the age of 21 years or even after that. There are also sisters who desire to get married around 18 years; it is informed by their lived realities and contexts. What is critical for all of us is the right to take this decision ourselves.

The Tamil Nadu government, which is keen on resolving the long-standing conflict in the Palk Bay, has been asked by the External Affairs Ministry to submit a list of probable participants from the fishing community in the State and tentative dates for the proposed talks between its fisherfolk and that of the Northern Province in Sri

temperature is less than or equal to 0 degree Celsius and the minimum temperature is 4.5 degrees to 6.4 degrees below the normal.

5..In 'severe' cold wave conditions, the minimum temperature is less than or equal to 10 degree Celsius, and departs from the normal by 6.5 degrees or more, or if cold wave conditions persist for four days or more. The 'normal' temperature is calculated for every 5 days by taking the average temperature for these days over the past 30 years.

XENOBOTS

1.Scientists have witnessed a never-before-seen type of self-replication in world's first living robots (xenobots) created in the lab using frog cells. Xenobots are synthetic life forms that are designed by computers to perform some desired function and built by combining together different biological tissues. Xenobots are named after the African clawed frog (Xenopus laevis). The world's first Xenobots were developed in 2020 by assembling African clawed frog cells. 2.These frog cells aren't genetically modified at all, but simply combined in different arrangements to produce the xenobots. The C-shaped Xenobots propel themselves by using tiny hair-like structures called cilia. These "parent" Xenobots move around their environment, they collect loose stem cells in their "mouths", over time, aggregate to create "offspring" 3.Xenobots that develop to look like their creators. This reproduction happens at the molecular level, and there is no other organism that reproduces or replicates in this way. But, the idea of kinematic self-replication is not entirely new - it was first suggested in the late 1940s by mathematician John von Neumann.

4.Benefits - One day these xenobots could be programmed to perform useful functions such as finding cancer cells in the human body or trapping harmful microplastics in the ocean.

OPERATION VIJAY

1.Portuguese were the first ones to colonize parts of India and were the last to leave. The Portuguese invaded Goa in the year 1510. Operation Vijay began on December 17, 1961, when the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru ordered the invasion.

2.With a force of almost 30,000, the Indian attack overpowered the ill-prepared Portuguese 3,000 member army.

3.With minimal blood shed, the attack was successful and was carried forward to retrieve the other Portuguese-controlled areas, Daman and Diu. At this point on December 18, the Portuguese Governor General Vassalo da Silva gave up control of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu.

GOA OPINION POLL

1.The Goa Opinion Poll was a referendum held in the state of Goa, India, on 16 January 1967, to decide the future of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu within the Indian Union. Although popularly called an opinion poll, it was in fact, a referendum, as the results of the poll were binding on the government of India.

2.The referendum offered the people of Goa a choice between continuing as a union territory or merging with the state of Maharashtra. It is the only referendum to have been held in independent India.

3.The people of Goa voted against the merger and Goa continued to be a union territory. Subsequently, in 1987, Goa became a full-fledged state within the Indian Union.

PARVOVIRUS

1.Nearly 2,000 pet and stray dogs in Amravati city were affected by canine parvovirus virus last month with veterinarians cautioning pet owners against a severe outbreak.

2.Parvovirus-It is a highly contagious viral disease affecting puppies and dogs. It affects the intestinal tract of canines with puppies being more susceptible. Bloody diarrhoea, vomiting, drastic weight loss, dehydration and lethargy are some of the symptoms. The virus has reported a 90 per cent mortality rate. This virus was discovered in 1967 and has rapidly become a serious threat to canine health. This is primarily due to the fact that the virus is hard to kill, can live for a long time in the environment, and is shed in large quantities by infected dogs.

3.Through direct contact with an infected dog or by indirect contact with a contaminated object, including the hands and clothing of people who handle infected dogs.

4.The recent rise in cases of Parvovirus in pets is due to the

Lanka.

The streets of Santiago erupted in celebration after leftist millennial Gabriel Boric became Chile's youngest ever President elect with an unexpectedly large victory over his far right rival in a polarising election.

Covid-19 pandemic that compelled many pet owners to avoid timely vaccination of their dogs. **Also, due to the non-implementation of the animal birth control programme, dog vaccination and rabies in the last three years has led to rising parvovirus cases in street dogs in the city.**