

### NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Seven Indian Institutes of Technology and the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, are among the top 10 central institutions in promotion and support of innovation and entrepreneurship development, according to Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) announced on Wednesday. The top rank has been bagged by the IIT, Madras followed by the IITs in Bombay, Delhi, Kanpur and Roorkee. The ARIIA is an initiative of the Union Education Ministry to rank systematically all major higher education institutions in India on indicators related to innovation, start up and entrepreneurship development among students and faculty members.

The gross non performing asset (GNPA) of commercial banks may increase to 9.5% by September 2022 under a severe stress scenario, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in a report. "Macro stress tests for credit risk indicate that the GNPA ratio of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) may increase from 6.9% in September 2021 to 8.1% by September 2022 under the baseline scenario and to 9.5% under a severe stress scenario," the RBI said in its Financial Stability Report (FSR) of December 2021.

The Reserve Bank expressed doubt over the government's ability to contain fiscal deficit at the budgeted 6.8% this fiscal after it moved the second supplementary demand of grants worth ₹3.73 lakh crore which came in spite of a massive 83% jump in net tax revenue so far this year to ₹10.53 lakh crore. The government has budgeted for total expenditure of ₹34.83 lakh crore or 6.8% of GDP.

Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana said mixing news with views was a dangerous cocktail and, "nothing can be more lethal to democracy than the deadly combination of confrontational polity and competitive journalism". Delivering the keynote address at the RedInk Awards for excellence in journalism, the CJI said, "Journalists are like judges in one sense. Regardless of the ideology you profess and the beliefs you hold dear, you must do your duty without being influenced by them. You must report only the facts, with a view to give a complete and accurate picture."

The Union Home Ministry is likely to

### EXTREME COLD WEATHER CLOTHING SYSTEM

1. Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has handed over technology for indigenous Extreme Cold Weather Clothing System (ECWCS) to some Indian companies. The Extreme Cold Weather Clothing System is ergonomically-designed modular, three-layered technical clothing system that can be used at various climatic conditions in extreme altitude combat operations.

2. It is designed to provide thermal insulation over a temperature range of +15 to -50° Celsius with different combinations of the layers and intensity of physical work. It embodies physiological concepts related to reduction in respiratory heat and water loss, unhindered range of motions and rapid absorption of sweat. It provides water proof, wind proof features with adequate breathability.

3. The outer layer of the clothing is reversible for camouflage purposes in both snow bound terrain as well as areas without snow cover. ECWCS meets the insulation requirements (IREQ) for the widely fluctuating weather conditions in the Himalayan peaks.

4. **Significance - The Indian Army, till recently has been importing ECWCS and several Special Clothing and Mountaineering Equipment (SCME) items for the troops deployed in high altitude regions.** ECWCS is a viable import alternative for the Indian Army for its sustained operations in glacier and Himalayan peaks.

### GRAM UJALA PROGRAMME

1. The Government has achieved a remarkable milestone of distributing 50 lakhs LED bulbs under Project Crore of their Gram Ujala programme. Under the Gram Ujala scheme, high quality 7-Watt and 12-Watt LED bulbs with 3 years guarantee is provided at Rs. 10 per bulb in exchange of working 60-Watt and 100-Watt incandescent bulbs. [LED is a highly energy efficient lighting technology. Residential LED bulbs use at least 75% less energy than the conventional ones and last 25 times longer.]

2. Every household can exchange a maximum of 5 bulbs. The government will also install meters at these houses. Gram Ujala scheme is being implemented in rural households in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Telangana. It is implemented by the Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL). The programme is active till March 31, 2022. Gram Ujala Programme is based upon the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) protocols of the United Nations.

3. Convergence Energy Services Limited Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL). [EESL is a joint venture of public sector companies under the Ministry of Power.] **CESL is focused on delivering clean, affordable, and reliable energy. CESL focuses on energy solutions that lie at the confluence of renewable energy, electric mobility, and climate change.**

4. CESL is also working towards enabling battery-powered electric mobility and its infrastructure and design business models to increase the uptake of electric vehicles in India. By employing unique business models, Convergence is utilizing a blend of concessional and commercial capital, carbon finance and grants as appropriate to enable commercialization of these solutions at scale.

### RBI's RETAIL DIRECT SCHEME

1. RBI's Retail Direct platform allows individuals to open and maintain a no-charge Retail Direct Gilt (RDG) account directly with the RBI. NRIs eligible to invest in g-secs under FEMA can open this account too. **This platform helps in buying government debt securities (G-Secs), either during their initial issue or after they begin to trade in the secondary market.**

2. RBI's Retail Direct platform gives you access to primary auctions first. To get access to secondary market trades which happen on the Negotiated Dealing System - Order Matching (NDS-OM), you need to apply separately on Retail Direct to get a

extend the December 31 deadline for nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and associations registered under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) to apply for renewal. The registrations of thousands of NGOs and associations that were up for renewal in October 2020 are stuck. The registrations are renewed every five years.

The government in Goa approved a policy permitting mining companies to export low grade iron ore, paving the way for resumption of mining activity that has been stalled since 2018.

An Army team headed by an officer of the Major General rank visited the site of the botched ambush in Mon district of Nagaland as part of the Court of Inquiry (CoI) into the incident that occurred on December 4. A separate inquiry by a special investigation team, ordered by the State government, is also on.

Indian farmers will oppose the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) between India and Australia if it throws open the country's dairy sector for Australian dairy majors, the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) has said. India and Australia have been in discussion since October for concluding a "full" CECA by the end of 2022, but both sides have fast-tracked the process to secure an interim agreement before that.

Following the two indigenous manufacturing lists barring import of 209 major platforms and systems, the Defence Ministry on Wednesday notified a list of 2,500 subsystems and components that have been localised and another 351 imported items to be so substituted in the next three years. "This 'Aatmanirbhar' initiative will save foreign exchange approximately equivalent to ₹3,000 crore every year," a Ministry statement said.

Israel unveiled a package of "confidence building measures" for the occupied West Bank, after Defence Minister Benny Gantz hosted talks with Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas on his first visit in years. Mr. Abbas, on his first visit to Israel for an official meeting since 2010, held talks with Mr. Gantz at his home in the central town of Rosh HaAyin, according to Israeli sources and media.

The country's exports are expected to register a 'healthy' growth rate in the financial year 2022-23 and may touch \$530 billion as exporters are "flush" with orders, the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said. It added that additional exports would come from some of

user login and password.

3.RBI conducts periodic auctions of g-secs according to a schedule called the borrowing calendar that it puts out every half year for g-secs and quarter for treasury bills. Through this new platform, retail investors can invest a minimum of ₹10,000 going up to ₹2 crore in these auctions.

4.Auctions - In the Retail Direct Scheme, the four types of securities that can be auctioned are, **Dated government stock (Central government borrowings for 1 year to 40 years), Treasury bills or T-bills (Central government borrowings for 91, 182 and 364 days), State Development Loans (State government borrowings for 1 year to 30 years) and Sovereign Gold Bonds.**

5.RBI sets a maximum coupon rate or minimum price for each security in every auction and institutions bid based on this. The lowest coupon or highest price at which an auction gets fully subscribed becomes the 'cut-off' yield or price.

6.The retail investor needs to know how to bid and can simply choose at the final cut-off price or yield that will be discovered by institutions. Money is collected upfront from your bank account based on the reserve price set by the RBI.

### SOIL REPORT 2021

1.The State of India's Livelihoods (SOIL) Report is an annual Report released by the ACCESS Developmental Services. It is an authoritative commentary on Policy and programmes of the government, potential opportunities for the poor, and Role of the private sector and the civil society in livelihoods promotion.

2.**It tracks the trends and analyses the environment in the sector. Findings - The 2021 Report has analysed only Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs).** In the last 7 years, just 1-5 % of FPOs have received funding under central government schemes introduced to promote them.

3.Only 5% of total registered FPOs have been able to secure the grants under Equity Grant Scheme and Credit Guarantee Scheme. FPOs registered under Companies Act make up a large majority of the organisations while the FPOs registered as cooperatives /societies are less in number.

### EVOLUTION OF PREGNANCY

1.A recent study on the Eurasian common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) that exhibits the rare incidence of both oviparity and viviparity helps in understanding the genetic basis of the evolution of pregnancy. **Viviparity is the live-bearing behaviour to beget young ones. Oviparity is the egg-laying behaviour to beget young ones.**

2.Through the Convergent evolution, viviparity (as opposed to oviparity) has evolved independently in vertebrates at least 150 times. [Convergent evolution is a phenomenon where different species evolve similar characteristics though they come from very different lineages.] In squamates alone, viviparity has evolved independently 115 times. [Squamates are a group including lizards, snakes and worm lizards or amphisbaenians.]

3.**Different geographically separated populations of the same species Eurasian common lizard show both Viviparity and Oviparity. Two populations have diverged as recently as nearly 4 million years ago.** So, this may be seen as a transition stage in moving from one parity to another parity. By studying the genomic comparison between these two populations, the researchers have also seen hybrid members, in areas where the two populations overlap.

4.The development of viviparity is accompanied by changes in the mother and the development of the embryo. For instance, active physiological exchange of water, gas and calcium from mother to embryo and an adjusted immune response for maternal-foetal communication. In advanced stages of viviparity, more complex placentation is seen with enhanced nutrition transfer from mother to baby.

5.In the Eurasian common lizard, viviparity is at a relatively early stage. Significance - The study helps in understanding the genetic basis of the evolution of pregnancy, and the fact of seeing both parities in the same species makes this study unique and insightful.

### CENTRE DECLARES SOYA MEAL AS ESSENTIAL COMMODITY

1.In a bid to cool down the domestic prices of Soya Meal, Government has notified order under the Essential Commodities Act to declare 'Soya Meal' as Essential Commodities under the

**the sectors benefiting from production linked incentives in the next fiscal.**

**Hong Kong lost its second independent news outlet this year after the Stand News was forced to shut down after its offices were raided and several current and former senior staff placed under arrest.**

Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

**2.This step is expected to stop any unfair practises (like hoarding, black marketing etc) in the market having the potential to hike the prices of soya meal.** Soybean meal is the most important protein source used to feed farm animals.

**3.**It is also used for human consumption in some countries. Soybean meal is the by-product of the extraction of soybean oil.