

KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

25TH FEBRUARY, 2021

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that the embargo on private banks handling government business had been lifted, paving the way for such lenders to handle tax payments, pension payments and even small savings schemes.
- The levels of PM 2.5, the most threatening of particulate matter, worsened in 43 of 99 cities whose winter air in 2020 and 2019 was compared by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a non-governmental research organisation.
- China called the Japan-U.S. mutual security pact a product of the Cold War following U.S. criticism of the presence of Chinese coast guard vessels in Japanese-claimed territorial waters over the weekend.
- People above 60 years of age and those above 45 with comorbidities would be given COVID-19 vaccines from March 1, the Union government announced.
- The Union Cabinet approved a proposal by the Home Ministry to dissolve the Puducherry Assembly and impose President's Rule in the Union Territory.
- India hit out at Pakistan at the high-level segment of the 46th Session of the Human Rights Council and said the recent release of Al-Qaeda terrorist Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh is a "clear example" of the connection between the Pakistani state and terrorists.
- The U.S. will seek re-election to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced, as he "humbly" asked for the support of UN member states.
- The Union Cabinet approved the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for the pharmaceuticals and IT hardware sectors, entailing an outlay of ₹15,000 crore and ₹7,350 crore, respectively.

CADMIUM(CD) DOPED SILVER ANTIMONY TELLURIDE(AgSbTe2)

- 1.It is a new **Lead-free material which can efficiently convert waste heat to power small home equipment an automobiles.**
- 2.It is based on **thermoelectric energy conversion that allows generation of electrical voltage** when one end of a material is heated while keeping the other side cold.
- 3.Most efficient thermoelectric materials developed by scientists so far use Lead(Pb) as a major constituent element, restricting their use for mass-market applications.
- 4.It was developed by scientists from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research(JNCASR), Bengaluru, an autonomous institution of the Department of Science & Technology.

6 YEARS OF UJALA AND SLNP

- 1.The UJALA (Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All) and SLNP (Street Lighting National Programme) completed six years of successful implementation. The two programmes revamped household and public lighting systems across the country.
- 2.These programmes have bagged global awards like the **South Asia Procurement Innovation Award (SAPIA) 2017, Global Solid State Lighting (SSL) award of excellence** for the transformational contribution to the LED sector, etc.
- 3.Under UJALA, EESL has distributed over **36.69 crore LED bulbs** across India. **This has resulted in estimated energy savings of 47.65 billion kWh per year.**
- 4.The SLNP(Street Lighting National Programme) scheme is expected to enable peak demand reduction of 500 MW, annual energy savings of 190 crore kWh, and reduction in 15 lakh tons of CO2.

CHINA:INDIA'S TOP TRADING PARTNER IN 2020

- 1.According to provisional data from India's commerce ministry, China regained its position as India's top trade partner in 2020 despite high border tensions between the two countries.
- 2.Replaced USA: Now, **China is the largest commercial partner displacing the US bilateral trade at USD 75.9 billion amid reduced demand for goods in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic.**
- 3.Emergence of China as the **top trading partner is due to increased import of Chinese medical supplies.** Online shoppers seem to prefer Chinese mobile phones and electronic gadgets despite the environment of anti-China sentiments in the nation.
- 4.Measures Taken to Reduce Import Dependence on China-The ban on more than 100 Chinese apps,Increased Scrutiny,Curb on Opportunistic Takeovers,Focus on Self-Sufficiency and to cut on import dependency on China for APIs (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients).

SOLAR GIGAWATT CLUB

- 1.Nine African nations are on track to join solar 'gigawatt club'.
- 2.Gigawatt club is an unofficial tag of Nations with installed capacity to produce 1 GW of solar power.
- 3.Currently, **37 countries that are part of the solar 'gigawatt club'**(Including India).

DUTCH INDIAN WATER ALLIANCE FOR LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE(DIWALI) PLATFORM

- 1.This platform has been developed to enable India and Netherlands to participate for designing solution for water related challenges together.