

KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

10TH MARCH, 2021

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS

- The Centre must increase the “meagre” pensions provided for poor senior citizens, widows and disabled people, said the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development in its report submitted to the Lok Sabha.
- There has been over 72% increase in the number of persons arrested under the UAPA (Unlawful Activities [Prevention] Act) in 2019 compared to year 2015, data provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in the Lok Sabha show.
- The Supreme Court asked the government to explain why it had not set up an “independent environment regulator” to oversee green clearances. A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, asked Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati to find out and report to the court.
- ISRO has completed development of a Synthetic Aperture Radar capable of producing high-resolution images for a joint earth observation satellite mission with the U.S. space agency NASA. The mission is targeted to be launched in 2022.
- For the second consecutive day, both Houses of Parliament failed to function on Tuesday, with relentless protests from Opposition members after their demand for a debate on the frequent hike in fuel prices was rejected.
- Discussion on the farm laws by the British Parliament amounts to “gross interference” in the domestic affairs of India, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla told British High Commissioner.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) informed the Lok Sabha that a “cyber volunteer” programme has been rolled out for “cyber hygiene promotion” and the services of volunteers would be utilised by the State police as per requirement.

PUSH FOR CHABAHAR PORT IN INSTC CORRIDOR

1. India expressed its intent to include Chabahar port in the 13-nation International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) that extends from India to Russia, and to expand INSTC membership by including Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, at a “Chabahar Day” event organised as part of Maritime India summit.
2. This Summit saw participation from several regional officials including infrastructure Ministers from Afghanistan, Armenia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan.
3. **Pitching for Chabahar in the INSTC which goes via Iran’s biggest port Bandar Abbas, India proposed that the land route via Kabul (Afghanistan) and Tashkent (Uzbekistan) would form the INSTC’s “Eastern corridor”.**
4. India’s push to include Chabahar in the INSTC could have been made with an eye on the new Biden administration’s push for restoring talks with Iran on the JCPOA nuclear agreement, and the possible easing of some sanctions.

INDIA IN AFGHAN PEACE PROCESS

1. USA President has envisaged a New Peace Initiative (Plan) to decide on the roadmap for peace in Afghanistan. Under the plan, the USA proposed a regional conference under the United Nations auspices with **foreign ministers of the USA, India, Russia, China, Pakistan and Iran** to discuss a “unified approach” on Afghanistan.
2. India’s Role in Peace Process Through “Unified Approach”: **India is an important player in the peace process – it has also been acknowledged by the USA.** India supports all efforts for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan which are inclusive and Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled.
3. India has invested heavily in infrastructure developments, training security forces and supplying them with necessary equipment. India has a major stake in the stability of Afghanistan since it has invested considerable resources in Afghanistan's development.

ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX, 2021

1. It was published by US conservative think-tank, The Heritage Foundation. The index 12 indicators from property rights to financial freedom under four categories: rule of law, size of governments, regulatory efficiency and open markets.
2. **India was ranked at 26th out of 40 countries among Asia-Pacific countries and 121st globally (out of 184).**
3. Improvements made in business freedom were offset by declines in judicial effectiveness and other scores. Singapore topped the index followed by New Zealand and Australia.

P172+18 QUASAR

1. Quasars are very luminous objects in faraway galaxies that emit jets at radio frequencies. **Quasars give off enormous amounts of energy- they can be a trillion times brighter than sun.**
2. Quasars are believed to produce their energy from massive black holes in the center of galaxies in which quasars are located.
3. Because **quasars are so bright, they drown out light from all other stars in same galaxy.**
4. Study of quasars can provide information about the early stages of the universe.