KSG:Newspaper Crux

13ᵀᴴ MARCH, 2021

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS

- The Rajasthan State Information Commission has adopted a tough stance against government officials showing negligence in providing information under the Right to Information (RTI) Act. The Commission has imposed fines on five officials of different departments and passed adverse remarks about their conduct.

- The Supreme Court held that independent persons and not bureaucrats should be appointed State Election Commissioners. The top court directed that the States should appoint independent persons as Election Commissioners all along the length and breadth of the country.

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has written to the Chief Secretaries of Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh to "take appropriate action as per law to check illegal influx from Myanmar into India."

- India and China will hold another round of talks between military commanders "as soon as possible" to continue the disengagement process in friction areas along the Line of Actual Control.

- A joint committee appointed by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to study air pollution in Kerala has recommended the installation of vapour recovery system at fuelling stations and retrofitting of diesel vehicles with particulate filters to improve air quality.

- Quad leaders for 'open, free' Indo-Pacific Focus on vaccines, climate change, emerging tech makes group a force for global good, says PM Modi.

- In a statement just hours before the first summit of the four leaders of the Quad framework, China has said cooperation between nations should not "target or damage interests of a third party" and countries should not "pursue exclusive blocs".

BIHAR GOVERNMENT BANS SAND MINING NEAR RIVER BRIDGES

1. This was done **to check illegal sand mining that threatens bridges in the rivers.** Mining not only diverted the water flow, it also threatened the foundation of bridges.

2. Sand is a minor mineral under Mines and Minerals(Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act, 1957, therefore sand mining is regulated by respective state governments.

3. Causes of illegal sand mining-**Supply Demand Mismatch, Ineffective policies and lackadaisical approach** of the administration, Nexus between mining companies, bureaucracy and law enforcement agencies.

CHALLENGES FACED BY NOMADIC TRIBES

1. In a written reply in Rajya Sabha, the Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment stated that a Development and Welfare Board for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities **(DWBDNCs)** was constituted for development and welfare of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities in 2019.

2. Challenges Faced by Nomadic Tribes: There are **nearly 1,500 nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes and 198 denotified tribes, comprising 15 crore Indians, according to the Renke Commission, 2008.**These tribes remain socially and economically marginalised even now, depriving many of them of basic human rights.

3. DWBDNCs Responsibilities: To formulate and implement Welfare and Development programmes,To identify the locations/areas where these communities are densely populated,To monitor and evaluate the progress of the schemes.

LICENSING CONDITIONS FOR TELECOM COMPANIES AMENDED

1. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has amended licensing conditions for telecom companies.In March 2021, the Union Cabinet approved the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the telecom sector **to reduce imports and move towards self-reliance.**

2. New Licensing Conditions: Aim: **To include defence and national security as parameters when purchasing 'trusted telecom products'** and sourcing equipment from 'trusted telecom equipment sources'.

3. Provisions: Telecom companies can use telecom products only from trusted sources in its network and must take permission from the designated authority (National Cyber Security Coordinator) if they plan to upgrade their existing network using telecom equipment that has not been designated as a trusted product.

PROJECT INFORMATION SYSTEM & MANAGEMENT:SERB

1. The Science and Engineering Board (SERB) has set up a portal called PRoject Information System & Management (PRISM) that offers **real time information on the various research projects supported by it.**

2. About PRoject Information System & Management (PRISM): It is called 'SERB – PRoject Information System & Management (SERB – PRISM)'.

3. The e-platform will provide a whole range of information regarding all projects sanctioned by SERB from 2011 onwards, including funding details, status, research summary and project output details such as publications and patents.

4. Significance of PRISM: The portal is expected to work as a comprehensive tool to help forge stronger scientist-scientist, and science-society connections.