

KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

16TH MARCH, 2021

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS

- **Bee fences' to ward off elephant attacks. Pitting the largest animal on land against a minute insect. That is how the authorities intend to mitigate human-elephant conflict that seems to continue unabated in Kodagu and other parts of the south Karnataka region.**
- **A report by a citizens' group flagged concerns about "significant exclusion" of vulnerable sections of society from the electoral rolls, the increasing criminalisation of politics and raised doubts over the autonomy of the Election Commission.**
- **Samyukt Kisan Morcha leader Darshan Pal raised the issue of India's contentious farm reform laws at the United Nations Human Rights Council, asking the UN to urge the Indian government to repeal the laws.**
- **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar told the Rajya Sabha that the government wanted to expand the "air bubble" arrangement with more countries, and the priority would be Saudi Arabia, Kuwait in the west and Japan, China and Singapore in the east.**
- **The Centre has informed a parliamentary panel that a "standalone project" to build a critical road along the border with China in Ladakh is going on.**
- **The Rajya Sabha passed the National Institutes of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019, that confers the status of national importance on two food technology institutes at Kundli in Haryana and Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu.**
- **More than half of the faculty positions reserved for the OBCs in Central institutions of higher education are vacant while about 40% of those reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes also remain unfilled, Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' told the Lok Sabha**

MARTIAN BLUEBERRIES

1. In 2004, NASA's Opportunity rover found several small spheres on Mars, informally named blueberries. Mineralogy study of these spheres found they were made of iron oxide compounds called haematites (suggesting presence of water on Mars).
2. A recent research on **Jhuran formation in Gujrat suggests that haematite concretions in this area resemble the ones on Mars.**
3. Jhuran formation is marked by first occurrence of ironstone band and last occurrence of calcareous sandstone.
4. Jhuran Formation is present in the offshore (GK-29A-1 well), Kutch mainland and Banni graben. Age-Upper Jurassic (Agrovian-Neocomian).

SEABUCKTHORN PLANTATION IN THE COLD DESERT

1. The Himachal Pradesh government has decided to start planting seabuckthorn in the cold desert areas of the state.
2. About Seabuckthorn: It's a shrub which produces an orange-yellow coloured edible berry. In India, it is found above the tree line in the Himalayan region, generally in dry areas such as the cold deserts of Ladakh and Spiti.
3. Ecological Benefits: **Seabuckthorn is a soil-binding plant which prevents soil-erosion, checks siltation in rivers and helps preserve floral biodiversity.**
4. Medicinal Benefits: As a folk medicine, seabuckthorn has been widely used for treating stomach, heart and skin problems. Its fruit and leaves are rich in vitamins, carotenoids and omega fatty acids and it can help troops in acclimatising to high-altitude.

NEW TECHNIQUE FOR MONITORING OF POWER TRANSMISSION CABLES

1. Recently, researchers at IIT Madras have demonstrated that **power transmission cable can be monitored by using Raman thermometry on the fibre optic cable.**
2. They achieved this by using the optical fibres that are already embedded in the power cables for establishing optical communication.
3. Raman Thermometry: It is a thermal characterization technique which makes use of **Raman scattering phenomena to determine the local temperature in microelectronics systems.**
4. Optical Fibre Technique: The temperature measurement of wires is performed in not just one location, but in a distributed manner using an optical fibre. To achieve this, a pulse of light is launched into the optical fibre and the backscattered radiation is observed.

GROWTH IN BANK CREDIT & DEPOSITS:RBI

1. Recent data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed that Bank credit and deposits grew and were higher in February 2021 than January 2021.
2. Bank Related Data by RBI: At the end of February 2021: Bank credit grew by 6.63% to Rs.107.75 lakh crore which in February 2020 stood at Rs.101.05 lakh crore. Bank deposits grew by 12.06% to Rs.149.34 lakh crore which in February 2020 stood at Rs.133.26 lakh crore.
3. Reason for Credit Growth: **The growth in bank credit is driven by an increase in retail loans.** Retail loans include a vast range of different loans. Personal loans such as car loans, mortgages, signature loans and credit cards all fall into the category of retail loans, but business loans can also fall into the category of retail loans.