

KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

19TH MARCH, 2021

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS

- With as many as nine million teachers in around 1.5 million schools in India, the quality of education imparted to aspiring teachers is equally important. For education in our schools to improve, teaching has to improve. This is the crux of the first volume on teachers and teacher education, comprising four papers on the subject, that was released by Azim Premji University.
- The Rajya Sabha passed the Insurance Amendment Bill, 2021 that increases the maximum foreign investment allowed in an insurance company from 49% to 74%, amid criticism from the Opposition parties on the clause enabling “control and ownership” by foreign investors.
- India has assured Sri Lanka of its support at the UN Human Rights Council, Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary Jayanath Colombage has said, just days before member countries vote on a new resolution on the island nation’s rights record.
- India will implement a GPS-based toll collection system and do away with all toll booths within a year, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari informed the Lok Sabha.
- Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde agreed with advocate Prashant Bhushan on Thursday to urgently hear a plea by NGO Association for Democratic Reforms to stay the sale of a new set of electoral bonds on April 1.
- Heated arguments were witnessed in the Haryana Assembly between Treasury benches and the Opposition as ‘Haryana Recovery of Damages to Property During Disturbance to Public Order Bill, 2021’ was passed.
- The Supreme Court stayed a Kerala High Court decision barring aided school teachers and non-teaching staff from contesting Assembly elections or engaging in political activities.

INDIA-BRAZIL-SOUTH AFRICA (IBSA) WOMEN’S FORUM MEETING

1. The Sixth India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women’s Forum meeting was held virtually. India is the current chair of IBSA Dialogue Forum.
2. The 25th anniversary of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDFA): **The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action flagged 12 key areas where urgent action was needed to ensure greater equality and opportunities for women** and men, girls and boys. It also laid out concrete ways for countries to bring about change.
3. **A Decade since UN WOMEN** was established: UN Women is the United Nations (UN) organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. It was established in 2010.
4. India's Effort for Women Empowerment: Equal rights for men and women are enshrined under Articles 14 to 16 in the Indian constitution. It signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1980. The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 and the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 have been enacted.

WORLD AIR QUALITY REPORT 2020

1. The World Air Quality Report, prepared by Swiss organisation IQAir, mentions that 22 of the top 30 most polluted cities globally are in India. The Report aggregated PM2.5 data from 106 countries.
2. **Delhi has been ranked as the world's most polluted capital city followed by Dhaka (Bangladesh), Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia), Kabul (Afghanistan), Doha (Qatar).**
3. Bangladesh has been ranked as the most polluted country followed by Pakistan and India. The least polluted country is Puerto Rico, followed by New Caledonia, US Virgin Islands respectively.
4. **Hotan in China is the most polluted city** with an average concentration of 110.2 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ followed by Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh at 106.

INDIA ACT’S EAST POLICY

1. The Union Minister of State Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) said that connectivity is an important element of Act East Policy.
2. **The ‘Act East Policy’ announced in November, 2014 is the upgrade of the “Look East Policy”. It is a diplomatic initiative to promote economic, strategic and cultural relations with the vast Asia-Pacific region at different levels.**
3. It involves intensive and continuous engagement with Southeast Asian countries in the field of connectivity, trade, culture, defence and people-to-people-contact at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

THE APPROPRIATION BILL

1. The Lok Sabha cleared the Appropriation Bill, allowing the Central government to draw funds from the Consolidated Fund of India.
2. **Appropriation Bill gives power to the government to withdraw funds from the Consolidated Fund of India** for meeting the expenditure during the financial year.
3. As per article 114 of the Constitution, the government can withdraw money from the Consolidated Fund only after receiving approval from Parliament.
4. The amount withdrawn is used to meet the current expenditure during the financial year.