

KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

27TH MARCH, 2021

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS

- The Supreme Court refused to stay the sale of electoral bonds prior to the Assembly elections in crucial States such as West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. A three-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, said the scheme began in 2018 and continued in 2019 and 2020 without “any impediments”.
- The Centre has only rejected 4.3% of all Right to Information (RTI) requests in 2019-20, the lowest ever rate, according to the Central Information Commission’s annual report. However, almost 40% of these rejections did not include any valid reason, as they did not invoke one of the permissible exemption clauses in the RTI Act, according to an analysis of report data by RTI activist.
- The Supreme Court ruled completely in favour of multi-billion salt-to-software conglomerate Tata Sons Private Ltd. by setting aside a National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) decision to reinstate minority shareholder Shapoorji Pallonji group’s scion, Cyrus Mistry, as its executive chairman.
- India and the United States have agreed to work constructively to resolve key outstanding bilateral trade issues and to take a comprehensive look at ways to expand the trade relationship, the Biden administration has said.
- Eritrea will pull its troops out of Ethiopia’s northern Tigray region, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said on Friday, a potential breakthrough in a drawn-out conflict that has seen atrocities carried out against civilians.
- Health should be shifted to the Concurrent list under the Constitution, and a developmental finance institution (DFI) dedicated to healthcare investments set up, Fifteenth Finance Commission Chairman N.K. Singh said.

NOVEL BACTERIAL STRAINS DISCOVERED AT INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION(ISS)

1. **Bacterial strains belonging to the family Methylobacteriaceae was isolated from different locations aboard the ISS.**

2. New bacteria contains genes that fix nitrogen, dissolve phosphate and assimilate potassium—three nutrients important for plants to grow both on earth and space. New bacterial species has been found to bust stress that plants undergo in zero gravity in space.

3. Discovery could help in space agriculture to meet the long-term needs of astronauts and space tourists to the moon or Mars.

BUSINESS RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY REPORT(BRSR)

1. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has decided to introduce new requirements for business sustainability reporting by listed entities.

2. SEBI, in 2012, mandated the top 100 listed entities by market capitalisation to file Business Responsibility Reports (BRR) as per the disclosure requirement emanating from the 'National Voluntary Guidelines on Social, Environmental and Economic Responsibilities of Business' (NVGs).

3. **BRSR, which is from an Environmental, Social and Governance (“ESG”) perspective**, is intended to enable businesses to engage more meaningfully with their stakeholders.

4. Sustainability Reporting: It is the **disclosure and communication of environmental, social, and governance (ESG)** goals—as well as a company’s progress towards them.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO AMEND THE CONSUMER PROTECTION(E-COMMERCE) RULES,2020

1. A parliamentary panel on the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 has recommended that the government should amend the rules to provide better protection to consumers rights and stop unfair practices.

2. **Issues: Predatory Pricing:** It is a short-term strategy, adopted by some of the market giants, may lead to wiping out competition from the market and could be detrimental to the consumers in the long run.

3. While e-commerce enterprises offer many benefits, the development of the segmentation has rendered consumers vulnerable to new forms of unfair trade practices, violation of privacy and issues of unattended grievances.

4. **There should be a more clear-cut definition of what constitutes Unfair Trade Practice and practical legal remedy** to tackle such circumventing practices by e-commerce entities.

INDIA:TRANSFORMING TO A NET-ZERO EMISSIONS ENERGY SYSTEM

1. The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and Shell have released a report titled “India: Transforming to a Net-Zero Emissions Energy System”.

2. It illustrates a pathway to steer the domestic energy system towards net-zero emissions by 2050, while achieving India’s sustainable economic development ambitions.

3. **Increase Renewables: The share of renewables in the power mix needs to increase to 90% for India** to meet its net-zero goal. This is around 11% in 2019-2020.

4. **Technology Access: The availability, or absence, of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)** would define the shape of India’s energy systems.