

KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

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NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

- All the three clusters of actors who are crucial agents in the policy process — political leaders, policymakers and implementers, and the relevant stakeholders — need to have a shared vision. In 2021, the call for reforms leaves out the stakeholders, which might undermine the very purpose of reforms itself.
- An array of measures, including reduction in GST (Goods and Services Tax) rates, zero GST rate on critical raw materials, permitting GST free imports as well as direct cash incentives to producers, can be used by the Central government to make COVID19 vaccines and other critical supplies cheaper, say tax experts.
- Israel unleashed new air strikes on Gaza early, hitting a pair of highrise buildings believed to be housing militants, as Hamas and other armed groups bombarded southern Israel with hundreds of rockets. The escalation was sparked by weeks of tensions in contested Jerusalem.
- Moody's Investors Service on Tuesday sharply scaled down this year's growth projection for India to 9.3% from its earlier estimate of 13.7%, citing "the negative impact of the second wave" of the COVID19 pandemic. It warned that the spread of the coronavirus as well as the rate of vaccinations will have a direct impact on economic outcomes.
- China's once in a decade population census has recorded a slowing population growth rate that will likely see China's population peak — and be overtaken by India's — by as early as 2025, experts said, with the number of births falling for the fourth consecutive year.
- A German regulator slapped a three month ban on Facebook collecting user data from WhatsApp accounts and referred the case to an EU watchdog, citing concerns about election integrity.

NITI AAYOG'S REPORT FOR A DIGITALLY INCLUSIVE BHARAT

- 1.The NITI Aayog and Mastercard have released a report titled 'Connected Commerce: Creating a Roadmap for a Digitally Inclusive Bharat'.
- 2.The report identifies challenges in accelerating Digital Financial Inclusion (DFI) in India and provides recommendations for making digital services accessible to its 1.3 billion citizens.
- 3.Recommendations: For market players, it is critical to address the gap on the demand side by creating user-friendly digital products and services that encourage the behavioral transition from cash to digital.
- 4.Strengthening the payment infrastructure **to promote a level playing field for Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and banks.**

SUPER CYCLE OF COMMODITIES

- 1.There has been an **across-the-board rise in global commodity prices that is being billed as a new commodity super cycle.** A commodity is a basic good used in commerce that is interchangeable with other goods of the same type. Commodities are most often used as inputs in the production of other goods or services.
- 2.Reason: The new commodity super cycle is resulting from: **Recovery in global demand (led by recovery in China and the US). Supply-side constraints. Loose monetary policy of global central banks.**
- 3.Concerns: It is leading to input cost pressures and is a growing concern, as it is not only expected to have a bearing on cost of infrastructure development in India but also have an impact on the overall inflation, economic recovery and policy making.

100% TAP WATER CONNECTION IN RURAL AREAS IN PUDUCHERRY:JJM

- 1.The Union Territory of **Puducherry has become the fourth State/UT after Goa, Telangana and Andaman & Nicobar Islands** to provide assured tap water supply to every rural home under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).
- 2.JJM envisages supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024. It is under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- 3.JJM focuses on integrated demand and supply-side management of water at the local level.

PLACES IN NEWS

- 1.**Barren Island**-Indian Coast Guard has apprehended four Myanmar poachers fishing illegally in Indian waters off Barren Island. Barren Island is in the Andaman Sea. Barren Island is located on the junction of Indian and Burmese Tectonic plates. Also, the Barren Volcano is not just the only active volcano in India but is also the only active volcano in entire Southern Asia.
- 2.**Dahla Dam**- It is the primary source of irrigation for the Kandahar province, Afghanistan. It was built by the United States in 1952. Recently, Taliban captured Dahla dam.
- 3.**Atapaka Bird Sanctuary**- It is located in Kolleru lake on Krishna-West Godavari borders in Andhra Pradesh. Kolleru lake is one of the largest freshwater lakes in India.
- 4.**Al-Aqsa mosque**-More than 160 people were wounded when Israeli riot police clashed with Palestinians at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque. Al-Aqsa mosque is considered the third holiest site in Islam. The mosque compound, known as Haram al-Sharif in Islam, is also a major holy site for Jews, who refer to it as the Temple Mount.