

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

U.S. scientists David Julius and Ardem Patapoutian won the Nobel Medicine Prize for discoveries on receptors for temperature and touch. "The groundbreaking discoveries by this year's Nobel Prize laureates have allowed us to understand how heat, cold and mechanical force can initiate the nerve impulses that allow us to perceive and adapt to the world," the Nobel jury said. The pair's research is being used to develop treatments for a wide range of diseases and conditions, including chronic pain.

The Union Government has proposed absolving agencies involved in national security projects and border infrastructure projects from obtaining prior forest clearance from the Centre as part of amendments to the existing Forest Conservation Act (FCA). The FCA, which first came in 1980 and was amended in 1988, requires such permission. The proposed amendment is part of a larger rationalising of existing forest laws, the government has said. There is also a plan in the document that is now available on the Environment Ministry's website, to exempt land acquired before 1980 — before the FCA came into effect — by public sector bodies such as the Railways. Currently, the document notes, there was "strong resentment" among several Ministries on how the Act was being interpreted over the right of way of railways, highways.

India needs to double its infrastructure spending and the private sector must step up and partner with the government, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said, adding that the ministry was actively working on the Gati Shakti vision outlined by the Prime Minister. Mr. Seth said that work was apace on operationalising the ₹111 lakh crore National Infrastructure Pipeline supplemented by the National Monetisation Plan that aims to raise ₹6 lakh crore. The two programmes, he said, were being coupled with the Gati Shakti vision so that there could be 'seamless movement of goods, services and job opportunities'.

India underscored the need for early conclusion of bilateral projects in Sri Lanka, and the enhancement of connectivity by air and sea between the neighbouring countries, which are seeking to reset ties amid a strain in ties.

ECI's POWER ON PARTY SYMBOL

1. Election Commission of India (ECI) has frozen an election symbol of a party from Bihar, so that neither of the two factions of the party will be able to use it in the coming Assembly by-elections. Para 15 of the Symbols Order, 1968 talks about the powers of the ECI on the question of a split in a political party outside the legislature. The ECI can decide whether the rival groups or none of such groups of a recognised political party is eligible to get the party symbol.

2. This decision shall be binding on all such rival sections or groups. This applies to disputes in recognised national and state parties. For splits in registered but unrecognised parties, the ECI usually advises the warring factions to resolve their differences internally or to approach the court. The first case decided under Para 15 of the 1968 Order was the first split in the Indian National Congress in 1969. Before 1968, the EC issued notifications and executive orders under the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.

3. Testing - **In almost all disputes decided by the EC so far, a clear majority of party delegates/office bearers, MPs and MLAs have supported one of the factions.** Whenever the EC could not test the strength of rival groups based on support within the party, it fell back on testing the majority only among elected MPs and MLAs.

SPLINTER GROUP

1. **Splinter group of a party is the group other than the one that got the party symbol. Until 1997, the Splinter groups were not recognised either state or national parties by the ECI.** This is because the ECI has felt that merely having MPs and MLAs isn't enough, as the elected representatives had fought and won polls on tickets of their parent (undivided) parties.

2. The EC introduced a new rule under which, The splinter group of the party had to register itself as a separate party, and The splinter group could lay claim to national or state party status only on the basis of its performance in state or central elections after registration.

RISE IN GST REVENUE COLLECTION

1. Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue collections in September (for sales in August) rose 22.5% year-on-year to Rs 1,17,010 crore. Components - The latest data indicates a slowdown in collections from domestic transactions with central GST and state GST mop up rising under 1% in September, compared to the previous month. It was largely IGST, which saw a 10% rise compared to August, that drove up overall collections. Cess on imported goods saw a decline.

2. **Reasons - The GST collections have picked up pace in the 2nd quarter as the economy is recovering at a fast pace. Anti-evasion activities, especially action against fake billers have also contributed to the enhanced GST collections.** It is expected that the positive trend in the revenues will continue and the second half of the year will post higher revenues. Concern - Though GST revenues are picking up pace after the impact of the Covid-19, revenue buoyancy under GST is being seen as a concern.

3. **GST Collection** The GST has five key tax slabs: zero, 5%, 12%, 18% and 28%. A compensation cess, ranging between 1% and 290%, is levied on demerit and luxury goods over and above the topmost rate of 28%. A merger of 5% and 12% slabs or 12% and 18% slabs has been deliberated upon earlier as well but has not been taken up formally for a decision.

LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES REPORT 2021

1. The Least Developed Countries Report 2021 was released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). This annual report provides a comprehensive and authoritative source of socio-economic analysis and data on the world's most impoverished countries. It is intended for a broad

The Supreme Court lashed out at farmers' organisations for continuing the protests against the Centre's new farm laws, saying when the agitation snowballed into violence as in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri, where eight people were killed, "nobody takes responsibility". "When such incidents happen, causing deaths, loss to property and damage, nobody takes responsibility," Justice A.M. Khanwilkar observed.

The Union Government has promised an investigation into the revelations in the Pandora Papers, and assured appropriate action in such cases as per law, the Finance Ministry said in a statement. Stating that only "a few Indians" had been named in the papers so far, the Ministry said investigations in cases of the Pandora Papers leaks appearing in the media would be monitored through a multiagency group.

The Supreme Court said the State Governments should not deny the ex gratia of ₹50,000 each to the families of persons who died of COVID19 merely on the grounds that their death certificates did not show the virus as the cause of death.

Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya launched the ICMR's drone response and outreach in the northeast (iDrone) here on Monday. The delivery model is aimed at ensuring that lifesaving vaccines reach everyone. "This is for the first time that a 'Make in India' drone has been used in South Asia to transport COVID vaccine over an aerial distance of 15 km in 12-15 minutes from the Bishnupur district hospital to Loktak lake, Karang island in Manipur for administration at the primary health centre.

Most big scandals and corporate failures in India in recent years happened for 'want of matured compliance', Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday, adding that the government was committed to making compliance norms simpler for businesses.

Short term power prices are likely to remain elevated in the near term on account of a continued increase in imported coal prices, according to ratings agency Ind-Ra. It noted that a large part of the increased power generation would continue to be met through coalbased plants, although coal output is not increasing to the desired level. This is reflected in low inventory stocks at power plants, and therefore, a part of the increased energy demand will have to be met through imported coal.

As the world's thirdlargest oil

readership of governments, policy makers, researchers and all those involved with LDCs' development policies.

2.Findings - The 2021 report said that the growth performance of LDCs over the past 50 years has been characterized by an overall sluggish and uneven record. Real GDP for the LDC group increased 5-fold since the LDC category was created in 1971. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita for LDC group is less than 10% of the world average (2019). Major shortcomings of the development experience of the LDCs over the past 50 years have been laid bare by the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis.

3.Least Developed Countries There are 46 countries are designated by the United Nations as LDCs. The list of LDCs is reviewed every 3 years by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), a group of independent experts that report to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). After a triennial review of the list, the CDP recommends to ECOSOC, countries for addition to the list or graduation from LDC status. This report will be sent later to the UN General Assembly (UNGA).

4.Criteria for inclusion into the LDC category and for graduation from the LDC category - Per capita income, Human Assets Index, and Economic and Environmental Vulnerability Index. Income criterion is based on a 3-year average estimate of the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita in US dollars, using conversion factors based on the World Bank Atlas methodology. The threshold for inclusion and graduation is based on the thresholds of the World Bank's low-income category.

5.Human assets index (HAI), consisting of two sub-indices - Health sub-index and Education sub-index. Economic and environmental vulnerability index also has two sub-indices - Economic sub-index and Environmental sub-index. A country must achieve 2 of the 3 criteria at 2 consecutive triennial reviews to be considered for graduation.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR SUDDEN RAIN

1.Bountiful rain in September has ensured that the water levels in India's main reservoirs are back to their optimum levels. This has happened despite the fact that the rainfall during this monsoon season had only marginal impact on the reservoir levels.

2.Factors responsible for unexpectedly high rainfall in September are, Madden-Julian Oscillation, a moving equatorial wind-system, Weakening of the negative Indian Ocean Dipole, a phenomenon similar to the El Nino oscillations in the Pacific Ocean, and, Cyclone Gulab.

3.Regional variations - Water levels in the reservoirs vary from region to region. This water level pattern is similar to the rainfall pattern that was witnessed during the monsoon months this year.

WEDDELL SEA AS MARINE PROTECTED AREA

1.Ministry of Earth Sciences said that India is co-sponsoring a proposal of the European Union for designating East Antarctica & Weddell Sea as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Weddell Sea is an embayment of the Antarctic coastline that forms a southward extension of the Southern Ocean. It has the Weddell Gyre.

2.It is bounded on the west by the Antarctic Peninsula of West Antarctica, on the east by Coats Land of East Antarctica, and on the extreme south by ice frontal barriers of the Filchner and Ronne ice shelves.

3.Marine Protected Area A marine protected area provides protection for all or part of its natural resources. Certain activities within an MPA are limited or prohibited to meet specific conservation, habitat protection, ecosystem monitoring, or fisheries management objectives.

4.Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) It is an international treaty to manage Antarctic fisheries to preserve species diversity and stability of the entire Antarctic marine ecosystem. It came into force in April 1982. It is responsible for the formulation, adaptation and implementation mechanisms of the MPAs. Since 2009, CCAMLR members have developed proposals for MPAs for various regions of the Southern Ocean. CCAMLR's scientific committee examines these proposals.

5.After CCAMLR members agree upon them, elaborate conservation measures are set out by the commission. India has

importer and consumer, India is running out of options as the relentless surge in international oil prices make it imperative to pass them on to consumers, officials said Monday. India imports 85% of its crude oil needs and about half of its natural gas requirement. While the crude oil is turned into fuels such as petrol and diesel, gas is used as CNG in automobiles and fuel in factories.

been a permanent member of CCAMLR since 1986. Work pertaining to CCAMLR is coordinated in India by the Ministry of Earth Sciences through its attached office, the Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE) in Kochi, Kerala.