

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

The number of indebted households have risen sharply in rural India, with the average debt shooting up by 84% between 2012 and 2018, and COVID19 has likely further doubled all households' borrowings by 2021. Rural households' average debt grew from ₹32,522 in 2012 to ₹59,748 by June 2018, according to the All India Debt & Investment Survey conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO) over 2019, while urban households' average debt increased by 42% in the same period to little more than ₹1.20 lakh.

Nearly 21 months after the Personal Data Protection Bill was referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee, sources said that work on the report will have to start afresh under the new chairman and MP P.P. Chaudhary. In a meeting held on Wednesday, after a gap of more than nine months, many members argued that the committee should not waste any more time and should finalise the draft report it had agreed on after a year long deliberation.

India and China avoided an open clash at the BRICS summit last week over views on the origins of the COVID19 virus, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a strong intervention in favour of a "transparent investigation" into the origins of the pandemic, a subject China has been sensitive about. Mr. Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping will meet virtually again this week, as part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit hosted by Tajikistan.

There was a 28% increase in the registration of cases in 2020 in the country compared to 2019, primarily owing to the violation of COVID19 norms. An almost 21 fold jump was recorded in cases of disobedience to the order duly promulgated by public servant, and over four times in cases involving violations of other State local laws, according to a National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report. Crimes against Scheduled Castes, with a total of 50,291 cases, showed an increase of 9.4%. Simple hurt with 32.9% (16,543) formed the largest chunk, followed by cases under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act with 8.5% (4,273) and cases under criminal intimidation with 7.5% (3,788), the report said.

CONSENT OF AG ON CONTEMPT PROCEEDINGS

1.The Attorney General(AG) for India, K.K.Venugopal, has granted his consent to a lawyer for initiating contempt proceedings against the author of a YouTube video for allegedly making derogatory remarks against the judiciary in general, and the Supreme Court in particular. Consent has been given under Section 15 of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 read with Rule 3(c) of the Rules to Regulate Proceedings for Contempt of the Supreme Court, 1975.

2.Background: The allegations made by Bharti against the Supreme Court are, among other things, of bribery, favouritism, nepotism and abuse of power.What is the law on contempt of courts-**The Contempt of Courts Act 1971 defines civil and criminal contempt, and lays down the powers and procedures by which courts can penalise contempt, as well as the penalties that can be given for the offence of contempt.** Contempt of court is the offense of being disobedient to or disrespectful toward a court of law and its officers in the form of behavior that opposes or defies the authority, justice and dignity of the court.

3.Why is the consent of the Attorney General required to initiate contempt proceedings-The objective behind requiring the consent of the Attorney General before taking cognizance of a complaint is to save the time of the court. This is necessary because judicial time is squandered if frivolous petitions are made and the court is the first forum for bringing them in. The AG's consent is meant to be a safeguard against frivolous petitions, as it is deemed that the AG, as an officer of the court, will independently ascertain whether the complaint is indeed valid.

4.Under what circumstances is the AG's consent not needed-**The AG's consent is mandatory when a private citizen wants to initiate a case of contempt of court against a person.** However, when the court itself initiates a contempt of court case the AG's consent is not required. This is because the court is exercising its inherent powers under the Constitution to punish for contempt and such Constitutional powers cannot be restricted because the AG declined to grant consent.

5.What happens if the AG denies consent-If the AG denies consent, the matter all but ends. The complainant can, however, separately bring the issue to the notice of the court and urge the court to take suo motu cognizance. Article 129 of the Constitution gives the Supreme Court the power to initiate contempt cases on its own, independent of the motion brought before it by the AG or with the consent of the AG.

RAJA MAHENDRA PRATAP SINGH

1.Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently laid the foundation stone for Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh State University in Aligarh. It will provide affiliation to 395 colleges of the Aligarh division.

2.Who was Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh? Born in a royal family on December 1, 1886 in Hathras, Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh was a freedom fighter, social reformer and a figure representing the Jat community, predominant in Western Uttar Pradesh.

3.His legacy: **In 1914, during World War I, Mahendra Pratap left India and led the German-backed first Provisional Government of India in Kabul, Afghanistan and declared himself its President while waging a war against colonial rule.** It was around this time (1917) that Mahendra Pratap was received by Lenin and Leon Trotsky in Petrograd, in Russia. The British announced a bounty on his head and he fled to Japan to continue his movement.

4.In 1911-12, he went off to fight in the looming Balkan War in Turkey, on the side of the Ottoman empire, along with fellow students from the Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College (MAO) In 1932, he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

5.His Contributions in the field of education: Established Prem Maha Vidyalaya, a polytechnic college, in Vrindavan, which offered various courses, including carpentry, pottery and textiles under one roof. He gave his own residence to establish the first technical school of the country. He founded the world

Villagers living near Deepar Beel, a Ramsar Site wetland and Important Bird Area under stress, have opposed the proposed realignment of a railway track skirting its southern edge. The project would be catastrophic for the ecology of the RaniGarbhanga Reserve Forest, affect a prime elephant corridor and uproot the indigenous people, they say.

The Cabinet approved several measures to extend a lifeline to the cash strapped telecom sector, including a redefinition of the much litigated concept of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) to exclude non telecom revenue and a four year moratorium on players' dues to the government. Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the government was keen on ensuring that there were more players in the sector and consumers retained choices when asked about the fears of a duopoly emerging with just two major telecom players — Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio.

The Supreme Court accused the Central government of "cherry-picking" names for appointments to tribunals groaning under backlogs and left almost defunct by long pending vacancies. A Special Bench of Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana and Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and L. Nageswara Rao "held its hand" on initiating contempt proceedings against the government, and allowed the latter two weeks to make appointments to "all the tribunals".

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a ₹26,058 crore production linked incentive (PLI) scheme to spur manufacture of advanced technology and green vehicles, auto parts and drones.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) on Tuesday announced a project to link their respective fast payment systems — Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and PayNow — to facilitate instant, low-cost, crossborder fund transfers. The linkage is targeted to be operationalised by July 2022.

India's exports rose by 45.7% to \$33.28 billion in August, according to Commerce Ministry data. Imports increased by 51.7% to \$47.09 billion, the data showed. The trade deficit widened to \$13.81 billion in August, as against \$8.2 billion in the same month last year. Cumulative value of exports for the period April-August 2021 expanded by

federation.

QUAD

1.US President Joe Biden will be hosting the first in-person meeting of the Quad countries on September 24. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Australian PM Scott Morrison and Japanese PM Yoshihide Suga will be present at the meeting. At the meeting, the Quad leaders will focus on issues related to the Covid-19 crisis, climate change, cyberspace and security in the Indo-Pacific.

2.What is Quad grouping-The quadrilateral security dialogue includes Japan, India, United States and Australia. All four nations find a common ground of being the democratic nations and common interests of unhindered maritime trade and security.

3.Genesis-The grouping traces its genesis to 2004 when the four countries came together to coordinate relief operations in the aftermath of the tsunami. It then met for the first time in 2007 on the sidelines of the Association of SouthEast Asian Nations (ASEAN) The intention was to enhance maritime cooperation between the four nations.

4.Significance of the grouping: Quad is an opportunity for like-minded countries to share notes and collaborate on projects of mutual interest. Members share a vision of an open and free Indo-Pacific. Each is involved in development and economic projects as well as in promoting maritime domain awareness and maritime security. It is one of the many avenues for interaction among India, Australia, Japan and the US and should not be seen in an exclusive context.

5.What are China's views on the Quad-**There is a general understanding that the Quad would not take on a military dimension against any country. The strategic community in China, nevertheless, had branded it an emerging "Asian NATO".** Notably, Japanese PM Shinzo Abe's "Confluence of Two Seas" address to the Indian Parliament gave a fresh impetus to the Quad concept. This recognised the economic rise of India.

GREEN HYDROGEN

1.Power and New and Renewable Energy Minister RK Singh has urged US companies to participate in the bids for green hydrogen and electrolyzers in the upcoming months.Challenges-The path for green hydrogen in the country is not clear and at the moment, production of green hydrogen is slightly more expensive than grey hydrogen.

2.What is green hydrogen-**Hydrogen when produced by electrolysis using renewable energy is known as Green Hydrogen which has no carbon footprint. Significance of Green Hydrogen- Green hydrogen energy is vital for India to meet its Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) Targets and ensure regional and national energy security, access and availability.** Green Hydrogen can act as an energy storage option, which would be essential to meet intermittencies (of renewable energy) in the future.

3.Applications of green hydrogen-Green Chemicals like ammonia and methanol can directly be utilized in existing applications like fertilizers, mobility, power, chemicals, shipping etc. Green Hydrogen blending up to 10% may be adopted in CGD networks to gain widespread acceptance.

4.Benefits: It is a clean-burning molecule, which can decarbonize a range of sectors including iron and steel, chemicals, and transportation. Renewable energy that cannot be stored or used by the grid can be channelled to produce hydrogen.

NORTH KOREA'S 1st STRATEGIC CRUISE MISSILE TEST

1.North Korea's 1st long-range Cruise Missile Test is nothing unusual, but it is of strategic relevance for a particular region. North Korea already had cruise missiles, but they are a shorter range anti-ship system. Hence, this is not its 1st cruise missile test. But, it is "North Korea's 1st long-range (1,000 km+) cruise missile and 1st claimed nuclear-capable cruise missile. These cruise missiles don't come under UNSC sanctions that were placed on North Korea to curb its nuclear development programme.

2.Cruise Missiles-**Cruise missiles are unmanned self-propelled, fast-moving, guided bombs that soar at a very low trajectory, parallel to the ground.** They sustain flight through aerodynamic lift for most of its flight path and whose primary mission is to place an ordnance or special payload on a target.

3.Most cruise missiles use a small, solid-propellant rocket

67.3% to \$164.10 billion compared with \$98.06 billion in the year earlier period.

booster, which allows them to gain enough altitude and speed for the onboard sustainer engine to take over. Cruise missiles are classified based on the speed as, Subsonic (around 0.8 Mach), Supersonic (2-3 Mach) and Hypersonic cruise missiles (more than 5 Mach).