

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

The government has informed the Supreme Court that it proposes to have the 'mechanism' to induct women cadets into the National Defence Academy (NDA) for entry into the armed forces to be ready in May 2022. The Ministry of Defence told the court in an affidavit that the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) would include women in its NDA exam notification expected to be published in May 2022.

The summer kharif season is likely to produce a record paddy harvest this year, pushing the country's foodgrain production for the season to an all time high of 15 crore tonnes, according to first advance estimates from the Agriculture Ministry. However, oilseed production may be marginally lower than last year's, particularly groundnut and soyabean harvests, which could be bad news for soaring edible oil prices. On the other hand, the increase in pulses production, especially the toor dal crop, could come as a relief. Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar attributed the record foodgrain production to the "hard work of farmers, proficiency of scientists and farmer friendly policies of the government". Going into the winter rabi season, the Centre has taken steps to incentivise the production of both oilseeds and pulses.

The religious composition of India's population since Partition has remained largely stable, with both Hindus and Muslims, the two largest religious groups, showing not only a marked decline but also a convergence in fertility rates, according to a new study by the Pew Research Center, a non-profit based in Washington DC. The study, based on data sourced from India's decennial census and the National Family Health Survey (NHFS), looked at the three main factors that are known to cause changes in religious composition of populations — fertility rate, migration, and conversions.

The Delhi government will bring together food business operators (FBOs) such as restaurants and hotels and NGOs that are currently distributing food to the needy, on one platform to reduce food wastage in the city, officials said. The government will also make sure that food donated to the needy is of the

AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

1. One year after its launch, the Central government's Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) has given a major boost to the strengthening of Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS) – the lifelines of village-level credit systems. The Ministry of Agriculture data provided to Rajya Sabha last month reveal that a total of 6,524 projects, at cost of ₹4,503, have been sanctioned under AIF. Out of this, 76 per cent (4,963) of the projects have gone to PACS. This means that 65 per cent of the funds under the scheme have gone to PACS projects.

2. Latest modifications—Recently, The Union Cabinet has approved the various modifications in the Central Sector Scheme of Financing Facility under 'Agriculture Infrastructure Fund'. Eligibility has now been extended to State Agencies/APMCs, National & State Federations of Cooperatives, Federations of Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs) and Federations of Self Help Groups (SHGs). **For APMCs, interest subvention for a loan upto Rs. 2 crore will be provided for each project of different infrastructure types e.g. cold storage, sorting, grading and assaying units, silos, et within the same market yard.** The power has been delegated to the Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare to make necessary changes with regard to addition or deletion of beneficiaries.

3. About the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund: It is a medium – long term debt financing facility for investment in viable projects for post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets through interest subvention and credit guarantee. Under the scheme, Rs. 1 Lakh Crore will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans with interest subvention of 3% per annum and credit guarantee coverage under CGTMSE for loans up to Rs. 2 Crores.

4. Credit guarantee: **Credit guarantee coverage will be available for eligible borrowers from this financing facility under Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) scheme for a loan up to Rs. 2 crore.** The fee for this coverage will be paid by the Government. In case of FPOs the credit guarantee may be availed from the facility created under FPO promotion scheme of Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DACFW).

NATIONAL SNAKEBITE AWARENESS SUMMIT

1. National Snakebite Awareness Summit was recently organised in virtual mode by the Integrated Health and Wellbeing Council, New Delhi. The summit was held on the eve of the International Snakebite Awareness Day, observed on 19 September every year.

2. What's the issue? India is registering an alarming number of deaths due to snakebite. Most of the deaths are preventable with greater awareness and accessible healthcare. There is no mechanism of management in the peripheral system to treat snakebites – doctors and paramedical staff need to learn snakebite management but there are no modules.

3. What needs to be done? **Establishment of a dialysis centre attached to the PHCs to offer immediate treatment to those with renal failure due to snakebite.** Region-specific treatment protocols to treat snakebite victims and to administer the anti-venom injection, when required. Besides, we need to include tribal healers who have the knowledge of traditional medicine and medicinal plants. Snakebite should be a notifiable disease and industry can bring in easy solutions but we need help from policymakers in doing that. Need more localized surveys as preventing snakebite will bring equity – most affected people include children working with parents on fields, villagers and tribals.

4. Snakebite cases in India: **In the 20-year period from 2000 to 2019, the country recorded 1.2 million snakebite deaths with an average of 58,000 deaths every year.** As much as 97 per cent of these deaths happened in villages and more than half of the dead were men in their most productive years.

IPO GREY MARKET

same quality of fresh food and both NGOs and FBOs stick to a protocol prepared by the government.

India could impose “reciprocal measures” on the United Kingdom if London maintained the current quarantine policy that subjected Indian travellers “irrespective of vaccination status” to a quarantine period lasting 10 days, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said. There was an option of mutual recognition of vaccination certificates.

Guns remain silent along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir with the ceasefire between India and Pakistan holding. Officials estimate that the peace will prevail till winter sets in. However, local recruitment of militants remains a cause for concern as shown by data and acknowledged by officials.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meet U.S. President Joe Biden and attend the Quadrilateral (Quad) summit along with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, but there is “no link” between his meetings and the newly announced Australia-U.K.-U.S. (AUKUS) alliance, the government said. In the first such comments indicating that New Delhi is distancing itself from the new partnership, Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla said the Quad meeting would deal with issues such as the pandemic, new and emerging technologies, climate change, infrastructure, maritime security, education, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, while AUKUS was a “security alliance”.

The R value, which reflects how rapidly the COVID19 pandemic is spreading, dropped to 0.92 by mid-September after going over one in August, according to experts. However, the R values in a few major cities — Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Bengaluru — still remain over one. The R value in Delhi and Pune is below one. The reproduction number, or R, refers to how many persons an infected person infects on an average. In other words, it shows how ‘efficiently’ a virus is spreading.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) unveiled a letter and voter’s guide in Braille to be sent to newly enrolled visually challenged voters, about a month after announcing that all those newly registered would get a personalised letter from the ECI. The Braille language version of the letter to new voters and the guide were released by the ECI during a virtual national conference

1. There were few articles recently mentioning about Grey Market. Traders are interested in grey market stocks because it can be a way of taking advantage of movements in the company’s share price before it has actually listed. Also, any activity is usually taken as an indicator for the direction the stock price will take once it has listed. The pre-market price can be used to gauge the demand for the shares.

2. What is an IPO grey market? **Generally, when companies wish to raise funds to fuel their growth, they sell a part of their stock on the stock market.** This process is called an initial public offering, or IPO. But, an IPO grey market is an unofficial market where IPO shares or applications are bought and sold before they become available for trading on the stock market. It is also termed a parallel market or an over-the-counter market.

3. Is it legal? How is it governed? **Since it’s unofficial, inevitably, there are no regulations that govern it. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), stock exchanges, and brokers have no part to play in it.** These transactions are undertaken in cash on a one-on-one basis.

4. Why do investors trade in the Grey Market? It’s an excellent opportunity for investors to purchase a company’s shares even before they are listed, especially if they feel that the company’s stock will increase in value. If an investor has missed the deadline for the IPO application or wishes to buy more shares than they can approach the IPO grey market.

5. Concerns: The IPO grey market is an unofficial market that performs outside SEBI’s purview. Thus, there are no guarantees. All transactions are undertaken on the basis of trust and carry counterparty risk. Therefore, there’s little legal recourse available to parties if the stock tanks.

5G TECHNOLOGY

1. Vodafone Idea (Vi) claimed to have achieved a peak 5G data speed of 3.7Gbps on the mmWave spectrum band in a recent test conducted in Pune, Maharashtra. Peak download speeds of up to 1.5Gbps in the 3.5Ghz band 5G trial network in Gandhinagar and Pune. What is 5G? 5G is the next generation of mobile broadband that will eventually replace, or at least augment 4G LTE connection.

2. Features and benefits of the 5G technology: Operate in the millimeter wave spectrum (30-300 GHz) which have the advantage of sending large amounts of data at very high speeds. Operate in 3 bands, namely low, mid and high frequency spectrum. Reduced latency will support new applications that leverage the power of 5G, the Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence. Increased capacity on 5G networks can minimize the impact of load spikes, like those that take place during sporting events and news events.

3. Significance of the technology: **India’s National Digital Communications Policy 2018 highlights the importance of 5G when it states that the convergence of a cluster of revolutionary technologies including 5G, the cloud, Internet of Things (IoT) and data analytics, along with a growing start-up community, promise to accelerate and deepen its digital engagement, opening up a new horizon of opportunities.**

4. What are the potential health risks from 5G? To date, and after much research performed, no adverse health effect has been causally linked with exposure to wireless technologies. **Tissue heating is the main mechanism of interaction between radiofrequency fields and the human body. Radiofrequency exposure levels from current technologies result in negligible temperature rise in the human body.** As the frequency increases, there is less penetration into the body tissues and absorption of the energy becomes more confined to the surface of the body (skin and eye). Provided that the overall exposure remains below international guidelines, no consequences for public health are anticipated.

SEA CUCUMBER

1. Sea cucumber in India is treated as an endangered species listed under schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. They are marine invertebrates that live on the seafloor found generally in tropical regions.

2. They’re named for their unusual oblong shape that resembles a fat cucumber. They are an integral part of the coral ecosystem as one of the main by-products of the sea cucumbers digestion of

on accessible elections. In August, the ECI had said it would be sending a welcome kit of sorts to newly registered electors, including a personalised letter, a pledge for ethical voting and a guide along with their voter's ID card.

sand is calcium carbonate and this is essential for the survival of the coral reefs. **3.They act like garbage collectors of the ocean world, and they recycle nutrients, thus playing an important role in keeping coral reefs in good condition. Sea cucumbers are in high demand in China and Southeast Asia.**

4.It is primarily smuggled from Tamil Nadu to Sri Lanka in fishing vessels from Ramanathapuram and Tuticorin districts.