

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

The World Health Organisation (WHO), in its first ever update since 2005, has tightened global air pollution standards in recognition of the emerging science in the past decade that the impact of air pollution on health is much more serious than earlier envisaged. The upper limit of annual PM2.5 as per the 2005 standards, which is what countries now follow, is 10 microgram per cubic metre. That has now been revised to five microgram per cubic metre. The 24-hour ceiling used to be 25 microgram but has now dropped to 15. The upper limit of PM10, or particulate matter of size exceeding 10 microgram, is 20 microgram and has now been revised to 15, whereas the 24-hour value has been revised from 50 to 45 microgram. Every year, exposure to air pollution is estimated to cause 7 million premature deaths and result in the loss of millions more healthy years of life. The move does not have an immediate effect in India as the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) do not meet the WHO's existing standards. The government has a dedicated National Clean Air Programme that aims for a 20% to 30% reduction in particulate matter concentrations by 2024 in 122 cities, keeping 2017 as the base year for the comparison of concentration. These are cities that do not meet the NAAQS when calculated from 2011 to 2015.

About 90% of C-Suite professionals from industry are willing to explore solutions from Indian startups to address boardroom challenges, the CII Institute of Logistics said in a recent white paper. Based on primary research interviewing 50 Indian startups and 50 C-Suite professionals, the challenges from the boardroom were mapped with solutions being offered by the startups. "C-suite" refers to the executive-level managers within a company. Common C-suite executives include chief executive officer (CEO), chief financial officer (CFO), chief operating officer (COO), and chief information officer (CIO).

Foreign direct investments (FDI) into the country more than doubled to \$20.42 billion during the April-July period of the current fiscal, the commerce and industry ministry said on Wednesday. Total FDI inflow rose to \$27.37 billion during the first four months of 2021-22. In the year earlier period, this was at

FORTIFIED RICE KERNELS(FRK)

1. Centre government, for the first time issued uniform specifications for Fortified Rice Kernels (FRK) for grade A & Common Rice. The specifications have been issued by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. Background: The fortified rice is to be distributed under various government schemes, including the public distribution system (PDS) and midday meals in schools, by 2024.

2. Need for Rice fortification: **The country has high levels of malnutrition among women and children. According to the Food Ministry, every second woman in the country is anaemic and every third child is stunted. India ranks 94 out of 107 countries and is in the 'serious hunger' category on the Global Hunger Index (GHI).** Malnutrition and lack of essential nutrients in poor women and poor children poses major obstacles in their development.

3. What is food fortification? **Food fortification is defined as the practice of adding vitamins and minerals to commonly consumed foods during processing to increase their nutritional value. It is a proven, safe and cost-effective strategy for improving diets and for the prevention and control of micronutrient deficiencies.** The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), defines fortification as "deliberately increasing the content of essential micronutrients in a food so as to improve the nutritional quality of food and to provide public health benefit with minimal risk to health".

4. Fortified rice: According to the Food Ministry, fortification of rice is a cost-effective and complementary strategy to increase vitamin and mineral content in diets. According to FSSAI norms, 1 kg fortified rice will contain iron (28 mg-42.5 mg), folic acid (75-125 microgram) and Vitamin B-12 (0.75-1.25 microgram). In addition, rice may also be fortified with micronutrients, singly or in combination, with zinc (10 mg-15 mg), Vitamin A (500-750 microgram RE), Vitamin B1 (1 mg-1.5 mg), Vitamin B2 (1.25 mg-1.75 mg), Vitamin B3 (12.5 mg-20 mg) and Vitamin B6 (1.5 mg-2.5 mg) per kg.

5. What are the benefits of Fortification? Since the nutrients are added to staple foods that are widely consumed, this is an excellent method to improve the health of a large section of the population, all at once. Fortification is a safe method of improving nutrition among people. The addition of micronutrients to food does not pose a health risk to people. It does not require any changes in food habits and patterns of people. It is a socio-culturally acceptable way to deliver nutrients to people. It does not alter the characteristics of the food—the taste, the feel, the look.

RECOGNITION/DERECOGNITION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

1. The Delhi High Court has asked the Centre, Delhi government and Election Commission to respond to a petition seeking derecognition of the Aam Aadmi Party for organising a Ganesh Chaturthi event using public money. What's the issue-The petitioner has demanded derecognition of AAP as a party and remove CM Arvind Kejriwal and other ministers from the Constitutional office due to alleged deliberate breach of the Constitution and the Representation of People's Act in the interest of the public.

2. **Registration of political parties-Registration of Political parties is governed by the provisions of Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.** A party seeking registration under the said Section with the Election Commission has to submit an application to the Commission within a period of 30 days following the date of its formation as per guidelines prescribed by the Election Commission of India in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 324 of the Constitution of India and Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

3. To be eligible for a National Political Party of India: **It secures at least six percent of the valid votes polled in any four or more states, at a general election to the House of the People or, to the State Legislative Assembly.** In addition, it

\$16.92 billion. Automobile industry emerged top, accounting for 23% share of the total FDI equity inflows, followed by computer software and hardware (18%) and services sector (10%).

The Ministry of Home Affairs informed the Supreme Court that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has recommended the payment of ₹50,000 each as ex gratia assistance to the next of kin of those who died of COVID19, including those who succumbed to the virus while involved in relief operations and preparedness activities. The financial aid would be given, provided that the cause of death is certified as COVID19. The money would be provided by the States from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). The disbursement of the amounts would be carried out by the District Disaster Management Authority/district administration concerned to the families.

In an unexpected move, the United Kingdom added Indian made Covishield to its list of recognised vaccines, but refused to recognise vaccine certificates given to those administered the vaccine in India. The decision, which means Indian travellers to U.K. will still be subject to 10 day quarantine rules, is expected to further fuel the rift between both countries over what India has called a “discriminatory practice”, and had threatened reciprocal measures against, even as officials from both countries continued to discuss the issue.

The government and people of Mizoram have been encroaching upon land in Assam along the 164.6-km interstate boundary since 1980, an Assam Forest Department report has alleged. At the heart of the land conflict between the two northeastern States is the 1,318-sq.km Inner Line Reserve Forest along the boundary. The conflict most recently claimed the lives of six Assam police personnel in July, a fortnight after the report was prepared by the department’s Southern Assam Circle headquartered in Silchar.

A major challenge to inclusiveness post pandemic would come from the fillip to automation provided by the pandemic, Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das noted on Wednesday. “Greater automation would lead to overall productivity gain, but it may also lead to slack in the labour market. [This] calls for significant skilling of our workforce,” Mr. Das said. “We

wins at least four seats in the House of the People from any State or States. It wins at least two percent seats in the House of the People (i.e., 11 seats in the existing House having 543 members), and these members are elected from at least three different States.

4. To be eligible for a ‘State Political Party: It secures at least six percent of the valid votes polled in the State at a general election, either to the House of the People or to the Legislative Assembly of the State concerned. In addition, it wins at least two seats in the Legislative Assembly of the State concerned. It wins at least three percent (3%) of the total number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the State, or at least three seats in the Assembly, whichever is more.

5. Benefits: If a party is recognised as a State Party, it is entitled for exclusive allotment of its reserved symbol to the candidates set up by it in the State in which it is so recognised, and if a party is recognised as a ‘National Party’ it is entitled for exclusive allotment of its reserved symbol to the candidates set up by it throughout India. Recognised ‘State’ and ‘National’ parties need only one proposer for filing the nomination and are also entitled for two sets of electoral rolls free of cost at the time of revision of rolls and their candidates get one copy of electoral roll free of cost during General Elections. They also get broadcast/telecast facilities over Akashvani/Doordarshan during general elections.

INTERNATIONAL BLUE FLAG CERTIFICATION

1. Two more Indian Beaches (Kovalam in Tamil Nadu and Eden in Puducherry) get coveted International Blue Flag Certification. India now has 10 Blue Flag beaches. This is another recognition of India’s commitment to protect and conserve the pristine coastal and marine ecosystems through holistic management of the resources.

2. 8 nominated beaches in India were awarded the Blue Flag certificate last year. These are: Shivrajpur-Gujarat. Ghoghla-Diu. Kasarkod -Karnataka. Padubidri-Karnataka. Kappad-Kerala. Rushikonda- Andhra Pradesh. Golden-Odisha. Radhanagar-Andaman and Nicobar.

3. What is the Blue flag certification? **Blue Flag certification is a globally recognised eco-label accorded by “Foundation for Environment Education in Denmark” based on 33 stringent criteria.** The Blue Flag Programme for beaches and marinas is run by the international, non-governmental, non-profit organisation the ‘Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE)’. It was started in France in 1985 and has been implemented in Europe since 1987, and in areas outside Europe since 2001, when South Africa joined.

4. Neat and clean beaches are an indicator that the coastal environment is in good health and the Blue Flag certification is a global recognition of India’s conservation and sustainable development efforts. A waving “Blue Flag” is an indication of 100% compliance to these 33 stringent criteria and sound health of the beach.

5. What is the ‘Blue Flag Beach’? **The ‘Blue Flag’ beach is an ‘eco-tourism model’. It marks out beaches as providing tourists and beachgoers clean and hygienic bathing water, facilities/amenities, a safe and healthy environment, and sustainable development of the area.**

HAVANA SYNDROME

1. A US intelligence officer travelling with CIA director William Burns has reported symptoms of Havana Syndrome while the two were in India earlier this month. This is the first instance of the phenomenon being reported in India, at least on record, and could have diplomatic implications.

2. What is Havana Syndrome? **Havana Syndrome refers to a set of mental health symptoms that are said to be experienced by US intelligence and embassy officials in various countries.** It typically involves symptoms such as hearing certain sounds without any outside noise being present, nausea, vertigo and headaches, memory loss and issues with balance.

3. As the name suggests, **it traces its roots to Cuba. Back in 2016, reports first emerged of US diplomats and other employees of the government falling ill in Havana, the capital of Cuba.** The patients said they heard strange sounds and experienced odd physical sensations in their hotel rooms or homes, and had symptoms of nausea, severe headaches, fatigue,

also need to guard against any emergence of 'digital divide' as digitisation gains speed after the pandemic," he added. He pointed out that the need for professionals trained in science, technology, engineering and mathematics had been rising briskly. "In the short-term, the supply of such a workforce cannot be increased by the traditional educational system; there is a need for close involvement of corporates in the design and implementation of [suitable] courses," he said.

dizziness, sleep problems and hearing loss. This mysterious illness came to be called the "Havana Syndrome".

4.How the US has responded to Havana Syndrome? The US has come to believe there is a "very strong possibility" the syndrome is intentionally caused. Over the years, the FBI, CIA, US military, National Institutes of Health, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have investigated the incidents without coming out with anything conclusive. Some scientists even peddled theories like "psychological illness" due to the stressful environment of foreign missions.