

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana said certain sections of the media communalised everything, and this would ultimately result in giving the country a bad name. The remark came while a three-judge Bench headed by him was hearing petitions highlighting how some media outlets aired communal content linking the spread of the novel coronavirus to a Tablighi Jamaat meeting in Delhi. "The problem is everything in this country is shown with a communal angle by a section of media... The country is going to get a bad name ultimately," the CJI observed. He upbraided social media platforms for a lack of accountability. They responded only to "powerful people", while complaints made by ordinary people, institutions and judges over content were ignored. "These Web channels, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube... They never respond. There is no accountability.

Indian biologist Shailendra Singh has been awarded the Behler Turtle Conservation Award for bringing three critically endangered turtle conservation species back from the brink of extinction. A press statement issued by the headquarters of the Turtle Survival Alliance earlier this week said: "For some species, such as the red-crowned roofed turtle (Batagur kachuga), northern river terrapin (Batagur baska), and black softshell turtle (Nilssonina nigricans), Dr. Singh and his team's efforts are the last hope for their wild survival in the country." The award has been bestowed by several global bodies involved in turtle conservation such as Turtle Survival Alliance, IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group, Turtle Conservancy, and the Turtle Conservation Fund.

India is closely watching the Taliban's stance towards Pakistan as it appears imminent that the outfit will form the next government based in Kabul or Kandahar in the next few days. Mr. Stanekzai had described India-Pakistan tension as "political and geographical", and urged both countries to not use Afghan territory to deal with that dispute. The Taliban's comments asserting an autonomous line is creating mixed opinions as it is well known that Pakistan's establishment has unparalleled leverage over the organisation which has operated out

ANALYSIS OF AMERICA'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN IN LAST 20 YEARS

1. USA under President Biden is contesting that it has significantly thwarted the Al-Qaeda terrorist network operating out of Afghanistan and also killed its leader Osama Bin Laden; thereby exacting justice for the 9/11 terror attacks. This was the primary goal of America to invade Afghanistan in 2001, and not nation-building, as per President Biden; thereby justifying the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan
2. However, such a view is contested by many on grounds that previous US Presidents saw the removal of Taliban from power as the key aspect on winning the war on terror. This was the primary reason why USA continued to pour its resources in America even after dismantling Al-Qaeda network and killing Osama Bin Laden. Importantly, the war on terror that USA vowed to fight in Afghanistan might not be successful since the terror networks of Al-Qaeda and Islamic state are quite active in Afghanistan and also in the surrounding regions.
3. The recent attack of IS militants on evacuation efforts conducted by USA forces is a stark reminder about this. Growing factions within the Taliban (Haqqani faction) might lead to a civil war kind of situation which will **further add to the instability in the region that could erode the modest gains that USA had achieved in last 20 years in its war on global terror by spending over \$2 trillion and losing over 2,300 soldiers.**

NO SC, ST, OBC QUOTA FOR NRIs APPEARING FOR NEET

1. Recent clarification by the Ministry of Health that aspiring candidates for NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) **can only opt for one quota category.**
2. NRI students belonging to SC, ST and OBC communities can no longer enjoy the reservation benefits provided to them in the upcoming NEET examinations. Aspiring NRI students have also pointed out how they are denied seats under NRI quota in central, state and deemed institutions if they opt for 'Indian' as their nationality. Such method of classification discriminates against NRI even though they hold an Indian citizenship
3. NEET is the qualifying test for MBBS and BDS programmes in Indian medical and dental colleges. It is conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA).

ASSAM WETLAND AT RISK TILL DUMPING STOPS: ACTIVISTS

1. Degradation of Assam's Deepor Beel due to anthropogenic forces. More on this: Human activities which have caused this destruction— dumping of garbage, construction of roads and railways, construction of warehouses, tourism activities **This degradation has caused death of elephants in railway accidents, fewer elephants visiting the wetland due to deteriorating quality of water due garbage dumping,** reduction in the number of fishes available for fishermen etc
2. About Deepor Beel: Deepor Beel is a Ramsar site and a part of it is also wildlife sanctuary (Rani Reserve forest) in Guwahati, Assam. Deepor Beel is a permanent freshwater lake, in an earlier channel of the Brahmaputra River, to the south of the main river. The site is an important destination for many migratory species of birds.
3. What is Ramsar convention? It is an international treaty for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, named after the Iranian city of Ramsar, on the Caspian Sea, where the treaty was signed on 2 February 1971.

IRRAWADDY DOLPHIN

1. Irrawaddy dolphin found dead in Chilika Lake. This is the 8th dolphin death in Odisha in 8 months. About Irrawaddy Dolphins. Irrawaddy dolphins fall under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and mentioned in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Endangered Species.
2. **Found in coastal areas in South and Southeast Asia, and in three rivers: the Irrawaddy (Myanmar), the Mahakam**

of Quetta.

With most Indians now evacuated from Afghanistan, the Government of India on said its “primary and immediate” concern was to curb any terrorism threat to India emanating from Afghanistan under the Talibanled regime. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) repeated that the meeting had been requested by the Taliban, and it would neither confirm nor deny whether India still considered the group a terrorist organisation.

India’s merchandise exports in August touched \$33.14 billion, 45.17% higher than a year ago and 27.5% over the pre-pandemic level of August 2019, but the trade deficit widened to a four month high, driven by a sharp uptick in gold imports, show preliminary estimates released.

With the Delhi High Court asking the Union government to explain its stand on a petition that said keeping the post of Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha vacant is a violation of Article 93 of the Constitution, the issue is once again in the spotlight. Petitioner pointed out that the position had been vacant for the past 830 days.

The Supreme Court has given the State governments and the Union Territories three months to take measures and ‘alleviate’ the violation of human rights suffered by women institutionalised in government run mental health establishments. A Bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud, Vikram Nath and Hima Kohli based its order on research conducted by NIMHANS, in 2016, and the National Commission of Women, as recently as in 2020, about the deprivations suffered by hundreds of mentally ill women in institutional care.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani jointly reviewed the preparations for DefExpo2022, to be held for the first time in Gujarat, at a meeting in Kevadia. The 12th edition of the biennial DefExpo, which is India’s flagship event showcasing the land, naval, air as well as homeland security systems, will be held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat between March 10 and 13, 2022, a Defence Ministry said.

The Taliban said they were close to forming a new government, as dozens of women held a rare protest for the right to work under a new regime that faces enormous economic hurdles and deep public mistrust. The Islamist militants, who have pledged a softer brand of rule than during their brutal reign of

(Indonesian Borneo) and the Mekong (China).

3.The concentrated lagoon populations are found in Chilika Lake in Odisha, and Songkhla Lake in southern Thailand.

4.About Chilika Lake: Chilika is Asia’s largest and world’s second largest lagoon. It is the largest wintering ground for migratory birds on the Indian sub-continent and is home to a number of threatened species of plants and animals. In 1981, Chilika Lake was designated the first Indian wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

5.Major attraction at Chilika is **Irrawaddy dolphins which are often spotted off Satpada Island. The large Nalabana Island (Forest of Reeds) covering about 16 sq km in the lagoon area was declared a bird sanctuary in 1987.** Kalijai Temple – Located on an island in the Chilika Lake.

RAPTOR SPECIES

1.160 species of birds of prey endangered worldwide Around 30 per cent of the 557 raptor species around the world are threatened by extinction to some degree, according to a new study. **The Philippine eagle, the hooded vulture and the Annobonscops-owl were among the 166 species facing some degree of threat, the study found.**

2.The new analysis by International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and BirdLife International, a global initiative to protect birds and wildlife by non-profits, was published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Threats to the Birds of Prey The threats to the birds of prey are a result of habitat loss, pollution, toxic substances, human-wildlife conflicts, collisions with aerial structures and electrocution by power lines and climate change. Migratory birds of prey are at risk to these threats due to long annual journeys from their breeding grounds to wintering areas and back.

3.**The population of Philippine eagles, the largest variety of eagles in the world, decreased rapidly in the last decades due to extensive deforestation.** Some vulture populations have declined by over 95 per cent in Asian countries such as India because of the widespread use of diclofenac, an anti-inflammatory drug.

4.Raptors MOU The CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU) aims to promote internationally coordinated actions to achieve the favourable conservation status of migratory birds of prey throughout their range in the African-Eurasian region, and to reverse their decline when and where appropriate. The Raptors MOU is one of several instruments operating under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).India signed Raptor MOU in 2016.

ZAPAD EXERCISE

1.One of the contingents of the Indian armed forces is participating in Exercise Zapad.

2.**ZAPAD 2021 is one of the theatre level exercises of Russian armed forces and will focus primarily on operations against terrorists.**

3.Multiple countries will be part of this exercise. Pakistan and china are part of this exercise as observer states.

HIGH HONOUR FOR NAVAL AVIATION

1.The President’s Colours/Standard/Guidon is one of the greatest honors bestowed upon in recognition of exceptional service rendered by military unit to the nation, both during war and peace.

2.Indian Navy was the first to be presented with the President’s Colours on 27 May 1951.

3.Naval aviation will now be provided with this award by President Ram Nath Kovind at a ceremonial parade to be held at **INS Hansa, Goa.**

VISCOSE

1.It is a semi-synthetic material or manufactured fiber used in clothes, upholstery and other bedding materials. It’s one of the three types of rayon - modal, lyocell, and viscose.

2.**It is made from natural materials like wood pulp, which is treated and spun into yarns to make fabric.** Viscose was manufactured as an affordable alternative to natural silk, hence known as artificial silk.

3.In India, it is largely used to make apparel for women and children. Viscose products are seen as easy to maintain too and viscose consumption in India has witnessed 11% CAGR for the

1996 2001, must now transform from insurgent group to governing power. last 5 to 6 years.