

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

In a major discovery, footprints of three species of dinosaurs have been found in the Thar desert in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer district, proving the presence of the giant reptiles in the western part of the State, which formed the seashore to the Tethys Ocean during the Mesozoic era. The footprints, made in the sediment or silt of the seashore, later became permanently stonelike. They belong to three species of dinosaurs — *Eubrontes cf. giganteus*, *Eubrontes glenrosensis* and *Grallator tenuis*. The dinosaur species are considered to be of the theropod type, with the distinguishing features of hollow bones and feet with three digits. All the three species, belonging to the early Jurassic period, were carnivorous.

Environmentalists expressed concern over the massive diversion of fresh water from the Brahmani river basin, which could pose a grave threat to the famous mangrove vegetation in Odisha. Bhitarkanika — a notified Ramsar wetland — is spread over 195 sq. km and is home to 62 mangrove species. Besides, 1,600 salt water crocodiles crawl on the mudflats of the Bhitarkanika mangrove forest. Mangroves grow in brackish water. Proportionate fresh water flow from the Brahmani river basin and the Kharasrota river keep the salinity level of the water along the shore down. The brackish water becomes ideal for the mangroves to grow and stay healthy.

Taliban cofounder Mullah Baradar will lead a new Afghan government that could be announced soon, sources in the Islamist group said, as it battled rebel fighters and tried to ward off economic collapse. Mullah Baradar, who heads the Taliban's political office, will be joined by Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob, the son of late Taliban founder Mullah Omar, and Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai in senior positions in the government, three sources said. "All the top leaders have arrived in Kabul, where preparations are in the final stages to announce the new government," a Taliban official told Reuters.

The India-Russia friendship has "stood the test of time", Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Friday while virtually addressing the Far Eastern Economic Forum 2021, currently under way in the Russian

APPLE FACES ANTITRUST CASE IN INDIA OVER APP ISSUE

1. An anti-trust case filed against Apple Inc for allegedly abusing its market position in the Indian economy. More on this news: **Apple is instituting policies that forces developers to use its proprietary in-app purchase system.** This allegation is similar to what Apple faced in the EU where regulators last year started an investigation into Apple's imposition of an in-app fee of 30% for distribution of paid digital content and other restrictions. Such policies hurt the domestic companies by raising their cost of doing business.

2. Competition Commission of India (CCI) will review the case and could order its investigations arm to conduct a wider probe, or dismiss it altogether if it finds no merit in it. Note: Filings and details of cases reviewed by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) are not made public. Recently, South Korea's parliament this week approved a bill that bans major app store operators like Alphabet Inc's Google and Apple from forcing software developers to use their payment systems.

3. Justification given by the companies for their current policy: The fees levied by them covers the security and marketing benefits their app stores provide for companies. CCI is conducting an investigation into a similar payment system concerning Google.

4. Other significant charges brought against Apple: **Restriction on developers to use domestic payment systems which offer services at lower rates of 1-5% Restriction on developers on informing customers of alternative payment systems.** In recent times, such restrictions have been loosened. However, this behavior will not have an impact when CCI takes up the case for review.

COMPETITION COMMISSION OF INDIA(CCI)

1. It is a statutory body of the Government of India, responsible for enforcing the Competition Act, 2002 throughout India and to prevent activities that have an adverse effect on competition.

2. Objectives of the Commission: To prevent practices having adverse effect on competition. To promote and sustain competition in markets. To protect the interests of consumers. To ensure freedom of trade.

3. **Functions of the commission:** It is the duty of the Commission to eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition, promote and sustain competition, protect the interests of consumers and ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India. The Commission is also required to give opinion on competition issues on a reference received from a statutory authority established under any law and to undertake competition advocacy, create public awareness and impart training on competition issues.

4. **The Competition Act:** The Competition Act, 2002, as amended by the Competition (Amendment) Act, 2007, prohibits anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position by enterprises and regulates combinations (acquisition, acquiring of control and M&A), which causes or likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.

WINGED VISITORS OF PULICAT

1. Increase in numbers of migratory birds visiting the Pulicat Lake in India. More on this news: This positive development is largely due to increase in the storage levels in the reservoir in adjoining areas. Pulicat lake is the second largest brackish water lake in the country; next only to Chilika lake. Greater flamingos and pelicans are some of the famous migratory birds that visit this place.

2. The region in which Pulicat lake is situated receives rainfall from both South-West as well as North-East monsoon winds. Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary is a famous bird sanctuary located near this lake. The lake is also home for black-headed ibis, Asian openbill, black-crowned night heron, and little cormorant. Other migratory birds that visit the sanctuary include northern pintail, common teal, little grebe, northern shoveler, Eurasian coot, Indian spot-billed duck, grey heron, Oriental darter, black-

port city of Vladivostok. Mr. Modi's remarks came days after Russia abstained from a crucial Afghanistan and terrorism related resolution at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), where India served as the President for August. He mentioned a number of areas spanning connectivity, space research and ship building, which, he stated, were redefining the strategic bilateral partnership.

Soaring edible oil prices are likely to soften by December as international commodity futures show a declining trend and along with the arrival of domestic oilseed crops, Food Secretary said. However, he indicated that the government would be constrained from further import duty cuts to reduce oil prices as it needs to augment its own resources affected by COVID19.

The Calcutta High Court appointed former Chief Justice of the High Court Manjula Chellur to monitor the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the postpoll violence in West Bengal. The court, in its August 19 order, had directed that the SIT be headed by a retired Supreme Court judge.

The Army conducted an exercise with armoured elements in the super high altitude area (SHAA) of Ladakh under the aegis of the Leh based 14 Corps. This comes in the backdrop of the Army's renewed focus on beefing up armour in high altitude terrain following the deployment of tanks by India and China during last year's standoff in Eastern Ladakh.

India and the United States signed a project agreement (PA) for an AirLaunched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (ALUAV) under the ambit of the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI), the Defence Ministry said.

Myanmar ethnic rebels have killed at least 23 government soldiers in days of fighting near the Chinese border, a spokesman for the group said on Friday, in the latest clashes likely to worry powerful neighbour Beijing. The country has been in turmoil since a military coup in February, which sparked prodemocracy protests and renewed fighting in ethnic border areas

China has challenged the United States to fix relations with Beijing to make progress on climate change, the Foreign Ministry said, as Washington's climate envoy visits to press the world's top polluter to slash emissions. Tensions between

winged stilt, garganey and gadwall The presence of Barringtonia and Acacia nilotica species near the Pulicat lake region provides an ideal breeding site for spot-billed pelicans.

3.The region in which Pulicat lake is situated receives rainfall from both South-West as well as North-East monsoon winds Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary is a famous bird sanctuary located near this lake. The lake is also home for black-headed ibis, Asian openbill, black-crowned night heron, and little cormorant. Other migratory birds that visit the sanctuary include northern pintail, common teal, little grebe, northern shoveler, Eurasian coot, Indian spot-billed duck, grey heron, Oriental darter, black-winged stilt, garganey and gadwall. The presence of Barringtonia and Acacia nilotica species near the Pulicat lake region provides an ideal breeding site for spot-billed pelicans.

4.Pulicat Lake is the second largest brackish water lake or lagoon in India, after Chilika Lake. It straddles the border of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu states with over 96% of it in Andhra Pradesh. The lake encompasses the Pulicat Lake Bird Sanctuary. The barrier island of Sriharikota separates the lake from the Bay of Bengal and is home to the Satish Dhawan Space Centre. Two rivers which feed the lagoon are the Arani River at the southern tip and the Kalangi River from the northwest, in addition to some smaller streams. The Buckingham Canal, a navigation channel, is part of the lagoon on its western side. Flamingo Festival is held every year to promote tourism in Pulicat and Nelapattu.

INDIAN SARS-CoV-2 CONSORTIUM ON GENOMICS(INSACOG)

1.Novel Coronavirus Sequencing and analysis has declined sharply in India. The number of coronavirus samples sequenced and analysed in India has dropped. India formed the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Consortium on Genomics (INSACOG), a consortium of genome sequencing labs, in December 2020.

2.While announcing INSACOG, the central government aimed to analyse 5 per cent of all positive samples. This method is known as 'randomised surveillance'.Purpose of sequencing The main purpose of sequencing is surveillance. It helps to get the true picture of prevailing variants, emerging variants (like delta) and those causing reinfection. Currently there are four 'Variants of concern' (VoCs) — Alpha (emerged in the UK), Beta (emerged in Brazil), Gama (emerged in South Africa) and Delta (emerged in India).

3.About Indian SARS-CoV-2 Consortium on Genomics (INSACOG): The Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) is jointly initiated by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Department of Biotechnology (DBT) with Council for Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). It is a consortium of 28 National Laboratories to monitor the genomic variations in the SARS-CoV-2.

4.It carries out whole genome sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 virus across the nation, aiding in understanding the spread and evolution of the virus. INSACOG also aims to focus on sequencing of clinical samples to understand the disease dynamics and severity.

VEHICLE SCRAPPAGE POLICY

1.The Delhi Transport Department has iterated that not all provisions of the Centre's vehicle scrapping policy will be applicable in Delhi-NCR.

2.Centre's scrapping policy – It classifies vehicles as commercial and personal and not based on their fuel type. Commercial vehicles over 15 years old and personal vehicles over 20 years old will have to scrapped only if they fail an automated fitness test. It states that old vehicles clearing an automated fitness test are allowed to ply.

3.Delhi Transport Department Policy - It classifies vehicles based on type of fuel. It states diesel vehicles over 10 years old and petrol vehicles more than 15 years old "shall not ply" on the roads of Delhi-NCR. Those violate are liable to face penal action under Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

4.It clarified that though Registration Certificates are valid, renewal will not be allowed in Delhi-NCR once diesel vehicle crosses 10 years. But, no-objection certificates will be issued to diesel vehicles aged between 10-15 years old for re-registration in certain states.

DNA FINGERPRINTING:CONCERNS IN CONVICTION OF

China and the U.S. have soared in recent months with the two sides trading barbs on Beijing's human rights record and its initial handling of the coronavirus. Tackling climate change is among a handful of issues where the two sides had struck notes of harmony.

GST collections have crossed ₹1 lakh crore in 11 of the last 12 months, with the government attributing the trend to a rapid economic recovery and improved compliance levels, but economists are unable to analyse these tax numbers as critical data points are no longer shared by the government.

CRIMINALS

1.Issue-Though DNA fingerprinting technology has helped in solving many crimes, its efficiency is being suspected in the conviction of criminals.

2.What are the issues with DNA fingerprinting? Ecological impacts - Degradation of a sample with prolonged contact to sunlight, humidity, and heat. Unreliable results - Instrumental errors also lead to unreliable results. Privacy issues - Sensitive genetic information of a person is exposed to another individual and it is against human rights. Security concerns - DNA databases holding DNA profiles. Lack of expertise - Leads to mishandling of samples Intermixing of samples - Corruption, tampering with evidence, misconception during labeling sample is possible. Targeting of groups - If people from one ethnic group are more often convicted, they will be overrepresented and leads to targeting.