

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

A Dornier 228 aircraft manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) took off on its maiden commercial flight from Dibrugarh in eastern Assam to Pasighat in central Arunachal Pradesh on Tuesday. HAL has been manufacturing the Dornier aircraft after transfer of technology from the German firm that owned it, but the made in India aircraft had not been used for civil aviation until now. "Alliance Air is the first airline to embark upon the journey of operating the made in India aircraft and contributing towards 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative."

The southwest monsoon is likely to be "normal" in 2022, though rainfall in August, the second rainiest month, will likely be subdued, the private weather company Skymet said. The El Nino, characterised by a warming of temperatures in the Central Pacific and associated with poor rainfall over India, is not expected to surface this year. Its converse, or La Nina, had helped with two years of above normal rainfall in 2019 and 2020 and "normal" rainfall in 2021.

India is likely to miss its 2022 target of installing 100 gigawatts (GW) of solar power capacity, largely due to inadequate uptake of rooftop solar, according to a report by JMK Research and the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA). As of December 2021, India's cumulative installed solar capacity was 55 GW, with grid-connected utility scale projects making up 77% of the total and the rest from grid connected rooftop solar (20%) and mini or micro off grid projects (3%).

The government has completed transactions worth ₹96,000 crore under the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) in 2021, surpassing the year's target of ₹88,000 crore, according to a top government official. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had in August last year announced NMP, under which the government expects to garner about ₹6 lakh crore by leasing public assets in sectors such as airports and roads to the private sector.

Sri Lanka announced a preemptive default on all its foreign debt totalling \$51 billion as a "last resort", while the island nation struggles to cope with a grave

TELANGANA DALIT BANDHU SCHEME

1. Dalit activists from across India have appreciated Dalit Bandhu scheme. It is a scheme to uplift Dalits on all fronts and therefore activists have demanded the scheme be extended at the national level.

2. **Dalit Bandhu enables entrepreneurship among Dalits through a direct benefit transfer of Rs 10 lakh per family. This is going to be the biggest cash transfer scheme in the country.** To promote Dalit entrepreneurship, the government has decided to start a system of reservation for Dalits in sectors where the government issues licences. This includes wine shops, medical shops, fertiliser shops, rice mills, etc.

3. **Dalit Security Fund:** Apart from monetary assistance, the government plans to create a corpus called the Dalit Security Fund permanently to support the beneficiary in the event of any adversities. This fund will be managed by the district collector concerned, along with a committee of beneficiaries.

4. **Criticism-**The intentions and rationale behind the scheme are being questioned. The government has also faced criticisms for failing to uphold existing legislation and schemes for the protection and empowerment of Dalits.

GILGIT-BALTISTAN

1. Valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan are resonating with loud protests by local communities against Pakistan for forcibly usurping village lands and plundering their natural wealth. Recently, a large number of people came out into the streets protesting against the Pakistan government's decision to issue licenses to private contractors for mining gems.

2. **Current Status of Gilgit-Baltistan:** It is an autonomous region now and with this elevation, it will become the 5th province of the country. Currently, Pakistan has four provinces namely Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh.

3. **India's position: India has clearly conveyed to Pakistan that the entire Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the areas of Gilgit and Baltistan, are an integral part of the country by virtue of its fully legal and irrevocable accession.**

4. **Gilgit Baltistan location-**It borders China in the North, Afghanistan in the west and Kashmir in the south east. It shares a geographical boundary with Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The region was a part of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, but has been under Pakistan's control since 4th November, 1947, following the invasion of Kashmir by tribal militias and the Pakistan army. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor passes through this region.

5. **Its present status:** The area is currently under the occupation of Pakistan, in violation of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) resolution of 28 April 1949. The occupation took place without the consent of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan and, despite the UNCIP's calls for Pakistan to withdraw its forces from the disputed area, the occupation remains to this day. For over 60 years now, the area of Gilgit-Baltistan has lacked a proper constitutional status, a working legal system and political autonomy.

NAGA PEACE PROCESS

1. The chief of the Khaplang faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, or NSCN (K), has said a solution to the "Indo-Naga political issue" would be possible if all the Naga political groups come together with a common draft.

2. **Background:** The process has been ongoing since mid-1997 when the NSCN (I-M) declared a ceasefire with the armed forces. Other groups began opting for talks in 2001. However, it has been put in a cold storage since the Framework Agreement was signed on August 3, 2015.

3. **Pre-independence:** The British annexed Assam in 1826, and in 1881, the Naga Hills too became part of British India. The first sign of Naga resistance was seen in the formation of the Naga Club in 1918, which told the Simon Commission in 1929 "to leave us alone to determine for ourselves as in ancient times". In

economic crisis. The government is taking the “emergency measures”, pending full discussions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) from which it has sought help, only to prevent a further deterioration of the country’s financial position, the Finance Ministry said.

Pakistan’s newly appointed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has drawn attention to Pakistan’s “sacrifices” in fighting terrorism at home. “Pakistan desires peaceful and cooperative ties with India. Peaceful settlement of outstanding disputes, including J&K, is indispensable.

A shipment of 11,000 tonnes of rice from India arrived in Colombo on Tuesday. The shipment reached Colombo, ahead of the Tamil and Sinhala New Year celebrations on April 13 and 14, said a statement from the Indian High Commission. “16,000 MT rice supplied under India’s multipronged support to Sri Lanka in the past week alone,” it said, adding that supplies will continue.

Union Cooperation Minister Amit Shah said that elections in cooperatives should be held in a democratic and transparent manner, and suggested that a body on the lines of the Election Commission of India be formed to conduct the polls. Mr. Shah said many agriculture cooperative societies were not registered for political reasons, and there should be transparency in administration. The Union government is all set to bring in model by laws to govern around 63,000 primary agricultural credit societies (PACS) across the country and was formulating a national level policy for cooperatives.

Inflation soared over the past year at its fastest pace in more than 40 years, with costs for food, gasoline, housing and other necessities squeezing American consumers and wiping out the pay raises that many people have received. The Labor Department said Tuesday that its consumer price index jumped 8.5% in March from 12 months earlier, the sharpest year over year increase since 1981.

India is likely to face more power cuts this year as utilities’ coal inventories are at the lowest pre-summer levels in at least 9 years and electricity demand is expected to rise at the fastest pace in at least 38 years, officials and analysts said.

Taiwan’s military published a handbook advising civilians on how to prepare for a potential Chinese invasion, including where to find

1946 came the Naga National Council (NNC), which declared Nagaland an independent state on August 14, 1947. The NNC resolved to establish a “sovereign Naga state” and conducted a “referendum” in 1951, in which “99 percent” supported an “independent” Nagaland.

4. Post-independence: On March 22, 1952, the Naga Federal Government (NFG) and the Naga Federal Army (NFA) were formed. The Government of India sent in the Army to crush the insurgency and, in 1958, enacted the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act.

5. Agreement in this regard: The NSCN (IM) entered into a ceasefire agreement with the Centre in 1997 and the two have been holding talks since then, while a conglomerate of seven different Naga national political groups (NNPGs) also got into separate talks with the Centre in 2017. The Centre signed a “framework agreement” with NSCN (IM) in 2015, and an “agreed position” with the NNPGs in 2017. However, the NSCN (IM)’s demand for a separate Naga flag and constitution has been a delaying factor in signing a final deal on the protracted Naga political issue.

6. 2015 Framework Agreement (FA): On August 3, 2015, the Centre signed a framework agreement with the NSCN (I-M) to resolve the Naga issue. Broad points included: The government could go for devolution of more powers to Nagaland under provisions of Article 371 (A) of the Constitution of India. The army of NSCN-IM will be absorbed in a new force to be raised on the lines of Home Guards. It would involve more autonomy to Naga tribes living in Manipur. The agreement, however, does not include physical integration of all Naga Areas in terms of a boundary.

e-BCAS PROJECT

1. Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, BCAS has undertaken e-BCAS, an initiative under e-Governance for automation of internal processes. This will be an online platform for facilitation of stakeholders. It will leverage the strength of existing processes and organizational structure, with the objective to make entire activities transparent, user-friendly, and efficient.

2. It will digitize the office processes, facilitate fast approvals, and ensure ease of doing business, by technological integration across various divisions and processes.

HELINA

1. Indigenously developed helicopter launched Anti-Tank Guided Missile ‘HELINA’ was successfully flight tested recently.

2. The flight-test was jointly conducted by the teams of scientists from Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Indian Army and Indian Air Force (IAF). Helina has a maximum range of seven kilometers.

ENHANCED PINAKA MK-I ROCKET SYSTEM (EPRS)

1. The Enhanced Pinaka Mk-I Rocket System (EPRS) was successfully test fired in the Pokhran range in Rajasthan. The EPRS is the upgraded version of the Pinaka variant that has been in service with the Indian Army for the last decade.

2. The design and development has been carried out by Pune-based DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) laboratories – Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) and High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL).

3. The upgrades include advanced technologies enhancing the range to meet the emerging requirements of the battlefield. While the Mark-1 has a range of 38 km, the enhanced version of Mark-1 tested in the last fortnight has a range of 45 km with some key additional features.

4. The Pinaka rocket system is a multi-barrel rocket system, which is named after Lord Shiva’s bow.

MPLAD SCHEME

1. With the Covid-19 pandemic leading to the suspension of the release of funds under MPLADS and impacting projects, the Parliamentary Committee on Estimates has asked the government to release Rs five crore meant for 2023-24 in this fiscal itself so as to complete unfinished projects.

2. Background: Though the Member of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) scheme was suspended for two years (2020-21 and 2021-22), it was restored for the remaining part of 2021-22 with the release of Rs 2 crore for each MP in one instalment.

bomb shelters and how to stockpile emergency supplies.

Seeking to ensure a more efficient and “whole of government” approach towards crises in the South Asian neighbourhood including Pakistan, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla convened the first meeting of an “Inter Ministerial Coordination Group (IMCG)”. Secretaries of about 10 Ministries as well as senior officials from the Cabinet Secretariat and the National Security Council Secretariat participated.

The Supreme Court directed the Pune based Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) to allow colourblind candidates to pursue film making and editing courses, saying “art is nonconformist” and a “liberal thought process should not be put in a conformist box”.

3.Need for: There were certain sanctioned projects which have been completed or are at the stage of completion but due to the non-release of previous instalments, projects are “unfortunately” being “abandoned mid-way”. To overcome this, the government should make appropriate arrangements to release pending installments of previous years in order to clear the committed liabilities under MPLAD scheme and to help people derive benefits from erstwhile dead/abandoned projects under MPLADS.

4.About MPLAD scheme: Launched in December, 1993. Seeks to provide a mechanism for the Members of Parliament to recommend works of developmental nature for creation of durable community assets and for provision of basic facilities including community infrastructure, based on locally felt needs.