

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

The Environment Ministry must constitute an advisory body of experts to tackle growing instances of human-animal conflict, according to a report by the Standing Committee on Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change headed by Rajya Sabha member Jairam Ramesh. The report analyses the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021 tabled in the Lok Sabha in December 2021. The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 provides a legal framework for the protection of various species of wild animals and plants. While it has been amended several times, the latest set of proposed amendments by the Environment Ministry were to make it more compliant with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), to which India is a signatory. One of the clauses proposed by the Ministry was to have a Standing Committee of the State Board for Wildlife (SBWL) to make the functioning of the body more purposive.

The NITI Aayog released a draft battery swapping policy targeted at electric two and three wheelers as the government think tank aims to expedite largescale adoption of Electric Vehicles(EVs). The policy proposals include incentives for EVs with swappable batteries, subsidies to firms manufacturing swappable batteries, technical and testing requirements, and reduction of GST among other things. Battery swapping involves exchanging discharged batteries for charged ones, delinking the vehicle and fuel and hence, reducing the upfront cost of the vehicles.

India's fertilizer subsidy bill could hit a record high this year, in the range of ₹1.65 lakh crore to ₹1.9 lakh crore, necessitating a reworking of the Centre's fiscal math outlined in the Union Budget, credit rating agency Crisil said on Thursday. The government has budgeted for a fertilizer subsidy bill of ₹1.05 lakh crore for 2022-23, but that was prior to the unprecedented rise in raw material costs and global fertilizer prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Three of India's most industrialised States plan to import 10.5 million tonnes of coal in the coming months as officials scramble to arrest widespread power cuts, a move that

CHENNAKESHAVA TEMPLE

1.The recital of the Quran marks the beginning of the rathotsava (chariot festival) at the historic Chennakeshava temple in Belur, Karnataka. The 900-year-old Chennakeshava temple was consecrated by Hoysala King Vishnuvardhana in the Vijayanagar style.

2.He built the temple to mark his victories in 1116 AD against the Cholas in the Battle of Talakkad and called it the Vijaya Narayana Temple. This 12th-century temple was built using soft soapstone as they were found suitable for intricate carvings.

3.The temple was built by master craftsmen - Dasoja and Chavana, a father and son duo, hailing from Balliganve, a centre of Kalyana Chalukya art. Shantaladevi, the queen of King Vishnuvardhana is the model for a sculpture in the Vavaranga - Darpana Sundari (lady with the mirror).The temples of Kappe Chennigaraya, Soumyanayaki, Andal and other Vaishnava manifestations surround this main temple.

4.Belur-Beluru (also known as Velapuri, Velur and Belapur in olden times) is situated on the banks of Yagachi River. Belur was the first capital city of the Hoysalas. The city was so revered by the Hoysalas that it is referred to as "earthly Vaikuntha" (Vishnu's abode) and "Dakshina Varanasi" (southern holy city) in later inscriptions.

SEAWEED

1.A Union Minister has said that the work on the seaweed park proposed in Tamil Nadu will commence as soon as the State government allots the land for a special economic zone for seaweed farming. "Seaweed" is the common name for countless species of marine plants and algae that grow in the ocean as well as in rivers, lakes, and other water bodies. Seaweeds are generally anchored to the sea bottom or other solid structures by rootlike "holdfasts".

2.The holdfasts perform the sole function of attachment and do not extract nutrients as do the roots of higher plants. Size - Some seaweeds are microscopic, such as the phytoplankton that live suspended in the water column and provide the base for most marine food chains. Some are enormous, like the giant kelp that grow in abundant "forests" and tower like underwater redwoods from their roots at the bottom of the sea.

3.Most are medium-sized, come in colors of red, green, brown, and black, and randomly wash up on beaches and shorelines just about everywhere. Benefits - These fixed and free-floating "weeds" of the sea utterly essential to innumerable marine creatures, both as food and as habitat. A number of seaweed species are edible, and many are also of commercial importance to humans. Some are used as fertilizers or as sources of polysaccharides.

4.Seaweed is chock-full of vitamins, minerals, and fiber, and can be tasty. Many types of seaweed contain anti-inflammatory and anti-microbial agents. The ancient Romans used them to treat wounds, burns, and rashes. Certain seaweeds do possess powerful cancer-fighting agents that will eventually prove effective in the treatment of malignant tumors and leukemia in people.

5.The ancient Egyptians may have used them to treat breast cancer. Among their many uses in manufacturing, they are Effective binding agents (emulsifiers) in such commercial goods as toothpaste and fruit jelly, and Popular softeners (emollients) in organic cosmetics and skin-care products.

INDIA ELECTED TO FOUR UN ECOSOC BODIES

1.India got elected to four key United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) Bodies. The four UN ECOSOC bodies include Commission for Social Development, Committee on NGOs, Commission on Science & Technology for Development and Ambassador Preeti Saran gets re-elected to Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

2.Earlier in 2021, India got elected to three UN ECOSOC bodies which include, Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal

could push global coal prices to new highs. Maharashtra plans to import 8 million tonnes for 'blending' purposes while Gujarat will place orders for one million tonnes next week. The chairman of the Tamil Nadu government run utility said the State planned to import 20% of its coal requirements.

Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih issued a decree banning the 'India Out' campaign, now led by former President Abdulla Yameen, terming it a "threat to national security". Stating that the government's policy was to provide freedom of expression and freedom of assembly guaranteed under the Constitution "to its fullest extent", and to "uphold democratic values", the Presidential order said the campaign against India "exploited" the freedoms and "intends to disrupt" the longstanding bilateral relations between the Maldives and India as well as efforts to maintain peace and security in the region. The move follows a recent decision by the Maldives's National Security Council that the campaign "to incite hatred against India" is a "threat" to national security.

Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed that the Ukrainian port of Mariupol was "liberated", despite leaving hundreds of defenders still holed up inside a giant steel plant. Mr. Putin ordered troops not to storm the Azovstal plant, but to block it off "so that not even a fly can get through".

After Okinawa and Pure EV voluntarily recalled some of their electric scooters batches following a recent series of battery explosions, Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari urged other EV makers who have faced similar incidents to follow suit, failing which there could be heavy penalties and mandatory recall orders. "Companies may take advance action to recall all defective batches of vehicles immediately."

President Joe Biden announced an additional \$800 million in military aid to help Ukraine fight back in its strong but increasingly difficult battle against the Russian invasion, but he also warned that Congress will need to approve additional assistance if the U.S. is to keep up its support.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday released a commemorative coin and postage stamp to mark the 400th birth anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur, and recalled the sacrifice of the ninth Sikh guru in protecting culture.

Justice, Executive Board of UN Women, and Executive Board of the World Food Programme.

3.Also, India handed over contribution of US\$ 200,000 to support critical areas of investigations of the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes by Da'esh/ ISIL (UNITAD) i.e., Development and use of chemical and biological weapons by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and ISIL crimes against cultural heritage in Iraq.

4.United Nations Economic and Social Council-The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is one of the six principal organs of the UN System. It was established by the UN Charter in 1945. It consists of 54 members of the UN elected by the General Assembly.

5.It serves as the central platform for fostering debate and creative thinking, forging consensus on ways forward, and coordinating efforts to achieve internationally agreed goals. It is also responsible for the follow-up to major UN conferences and summits.

COMMISSION OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

1.It is the key body of the UN which is in charge of the follow-up and the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration & Programme for Action.

2.It advises the ECOSOC on social policies of a general character, and in particular on all the matters in the social field that are not covered by specialized inter governmental agencies.

COMMITTEE ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

1.It is a standing Committee of the Economic and Social Council which was established in 1946.

2.Its main tasks are the consideration of applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification submitted by the NGOs.

UN COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

1.It is a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council which holds an annual intergovernmental forum for the discussion on timely and pertinent issues affecting technology, science, and development.

2.Outcomes of this Commission include providing the UNGA and ECOSOC with high-level advice on the relevant science and technology issues.

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

1.The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) is a body of 18 independent experts. It monitors the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights by its State Parties.

2.CESCR enshrines the rights to adequate food, adequate education, health, housing, water and sanitation, and work.

INTEGRATED COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTRES

1.The government has announced that 80 of the 100 planned Integrated Command and Control Centres have been set up, with the rest to be completed by August 15.

2.The Smart Cities Mission (SCM) includes setting up ICCCs for each city as a vital step. They are designed to enable authorities to monitor the status of various amenities in real time. They are aimed at controlling and monitoring water and power supply, sanitation, traffic movement, integrated building management, city connectivity and Internet infrastructure. These centres will now also monitor various other parameters and are also linked to the CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking Networks and Systems) network under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

3.Significance: **The ICCC acts of a smart city acts as a "nerve centre" for operations management. It processes a complex and large pool of data sets at an aggregated level.** For example, it is now the go-to source for integrated traffic management monitoring.

DIGITAL BANKING UNITS

1.Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has reiterated her Budget announcement on setting up 75 digital banking units in 75 districts of the country this year. This is to take forward the government's agenda of digital financial inclusion.

2.Simply put, digital banking involves taking all traditional banking activity online — doing away with paperwork like

India condemned the visit of United States Congresswoman Ilhan Omar to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), saying her travel to the region violated the country's sovereignty and it reflected her "narrowminded" politics.

Amnesty India termed United Kingdom Prime Minister Boris Johnson's inauguration of a JCB factory in Gujarat a day after JCB bulldozers were used in demolitions in Delhi's Jahangirpuri as "ignorant" and called on the U.K. government not to remain silent.

80% of Luhansk now under the control of Russia, according to Luhansk Governor Serhiy Haidai. Luhansk is one of two regions that make up the Donbas in eastern Ukraine.

cheques, pay-in slips, demand drafts and so on. **A digital banking unit is a specialised fixed point business unit or hub housing certain minimum digital infrastructure for delivering digital banking products and services as well as servicing existing financial products and services digitally in self-service mode at any time.**

3.Commercial banks (other than regional rural banks, payment banks and local area banks) with past digital banking experience are permitted to open DBUs in tier 1 to tier 6 centres, unless otherwise specifically restricted, without having the need to take permission from the RBI in each case.

4.As per the RBI, each DBU must offer certain minimum digital banking products and services. Such products should be on both liabilities and assets side of the balance sheet of the digital banking segment. The services include savings bank accounts under various schemes, current accounts, fixed deposits and recurring deposit accounts, digital kit for customers, mobile banking, Internet banking, debit cards, credit cards, and mass transit system cards etc.