

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Russia's membership to the Human Rights Council (HRC), to which it was elected in 2020, was suspended after the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) voted, 93 to 24, with 58 abstentions, including India, to adopt a resolution suspending Russia from the United Nations body. The resolution, 'Suspension of the rights of membership of the Russian Federation in the Human Rights Council', was proposed by a group of countries that included Ukraine, the U.S., the EU, several Latin American countries and required a two thirds majority of those present and voting for adoption. Abstentions do not count in the tally of those 'present and voting'. India abstained for reasons of "substance and process", its Permanent Representative to the UN (UNPR), T.S. Tirumurti, said.

The Senate confirmed Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court on Thursday, shattering a historic barrier by securing her place as the first Black woman Judge and giving President Joe Biden a bipartisan endorsement for his effort to diversify the court.

The Union government plans to partner with the private sector and volunteer groups for its scheme for protection of vulnerable children such as those abandoned or missing. The Ministry of Women and Child Development on Wednesday sent its draft guidelines for Mission Vatsalya Scheme to States and Union Territories and sought suggestions by April 18, 2022. Mission Vatsalya is essentially renaming of a pre-existing scheme called Child Protection Services, and also includes child welfare services.

GatiShakti and the production - linked incentive (PLI) schemes will offset global headwinds and drive investment, resulting in high post recovery growth for the Indian economy, the Finance Ministry said in a report.

The Union Labour and Employment Ministry's donate a pension initiative, launched on March 7, had received contributions from "around 100" individuals or employers on behalf of unorganised workers till March 31, the Ministry said in a reply to the Rajya Sabha.

Pakistan's Supreme Court on

GEOMAGNETIC STORM

1.The earth is likely to hit by a geomagnetic storm on 7th April, according to the Space Weather Prediction Center (SWPC) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

2.Geomagnetic Storms-Geomagnetic storms are caused when events such as solar flares can send higher than normal levels of radiation towards Earth. This radiation interacts with the Earth's magnetic field causing a geomagnetic storm. Causes: The disturbance that drives the magnetic storm may be a solar coronal mass ejection (CME) or (much less severely) a co-rotating interaction region (CIR), a high-speed stream of solar wind originating from a coronal hole.

3.Effects of Geomagnetic storms: **Effects from the geomagnetic storm can range from the appearance of auroras or the northern and southern lights to disruptions in communications systems due to high radiation.** This would make it difficult to communicate with others on Earth.

4.Classification of Geomagnetic storms: Geomagnetic storms are classified according to a scale that measures the effect that storms will have. At its safest level, a G1 storm affects power grids by causing weak fluctuations, minor impacts on satellite operations, and causes the northern and southern lights to occur. At its most extreme, G5, there would be voltage control problems with some grid system collapses or blackouts, radio waves wouldn't be able to travel for one to two days, low-frequency radio would be out for hours, and the auroras would be able to be seen at lower latitudes than usual.

PRAKRITI

1.In another step toward eliminating single-use plastic, the Union Environment Ministry has launched "Prakriti", a mascot to spread greater awareness about small changes that can be sustainably adopted in the lifestyle for a better environment.

2.During the event, following green initiatives were launched for plastic waste management: **1 - National Dashboard on Elimination of Single Use Plastic and Plastic Waste Management (MoEFCC):** This aims to connect all stakeholders including Central Ministries/ Departments, State/UT Governments, etc. through one platform and track status and progress made for elimination of single use plastic & effective management of plastic waste. **2 - Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Portal for Plastic Packaging (CPCB):** This portal will look after tasks that will help in overall operational functions like improving accountability, traceability, transparency and facilitating ease of reporting compliance to EPR Obligations by Producers, Importers and Brand-owners.

3.Mobile App for Single Use Plastics Grievance Redressal (CPCB): This app will allow citizens to check sale/usage/manufacturing of single use plastic in their region and tackle the plastic menace. **4 - Monitoring module for single use plastic (CPCB):** This will be for local bodies, State pollution control board/PCCs and CPCB, etc. to invent details of single use plastic production, its sale & usage, etc. in commercial establishments at district level, and on-ground enforcement of ban on single use plastics. **5 - Industrial production of Graphene from Waste Plastic (G B Pant NIHE & NRDC)** will promote more industries to come forward to upcycle plastic waste.

4.Efforts by Government in this regard: To tackle the challenge of plastic pollution, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced India's pledge to phase out Single-Use Plastics (SUPs) by 2022. India's plastic waste management rules 2016 were amended banning the import of plastic waste SUVs with effect from July 2022 onward.

SINGLE USE PLASTIC

1.Single-use plastics refer to disposable items like grocery bags, food packaging, bottles and straws that are used only once before they are thrown away, or sometimes recycled.

2.Why plastics? As plastic is cheap, lightweight and easy to produce, it has led to a production boom over the last century,

Thursday struck down National Assembly Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri's move to dismiss a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan, in a major blow to the cricketer turned politician, and ordered that Parliament be restored.

The process to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Indian Penal Code, and the Indian Evidence Act for the purpose of creating a people-centric, affordable and speedy justice system has been initiated, Law Minister Kiren Rijiju told the Rajya Sabha.

The Supreme Court said any "half-baked" arrangement will "destroy the dam" and refused to overhaul the court formed Mullaperiyar dam supervisory committee, which will continue to oversee the safety and maintenance aspects of the 126 yearold dam until the new authority under the Dam Safety Act, 2021 becomes fully operational in a year.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will visit the United States for the "2+2" dialogue with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin in Washington DC on April 11, the Ministry of External Affairs announced.

The Budget session of Parliament concluded on Thursday, a day ahead of schedule, with both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha registering impressive productivity numbers and fewer disruptions.

Opposition parties accused the government of adjourning the Budget session of Parliament ahead of schedule to duck the debate on escalating prices of fuel and other essential commodities. Countering the charge, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said that Opposition leaders in the Rajya Sabha's Business Advisory Committee (BAC) had requested the session's adjournment a day early in view of Ram Navami.

As the emotive issue surrounding the territorial claim over Chandigarh remains on the boil between Punjab and Haryana, the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation on Thursday passed a resolution stating that the city should remain a Union Territory.

Yemen's President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi said he is handing his powers to a new leadership council, in a major shakeup in the coalition battling Houthi rebels as a fragile ceasefire takes hold.

Self reliance did not mean working

and the trend is expected to continue in the coming decades, according to the United Nations. But countries are now struggling with managing the amount of plastic waste they have generated. About 60% of plastic waste in India is collected — that means the remaining 40% or 10,376 tons remain uncollected.

3. Government's strategy: A government committee has identified the single use plastic (SUP) items to be banned based on an index of their utility and environmental impact.

It has proposed a three-stage ban: The first category of SUP items proposed to be phased out are plastic sticks used in balloons, flags, candy, ice-cream and ear buds, and thermocol that is used in decorations.

4. The second category, proposed to be banned from July 1, 2022, includes items such as plates, cups, glasses and cutlery such as forks, spoons, knives, straws, trays; wrapping and packing films used in sweet boxes; invitation cards; cigarette packets; stirrers and plastic banners that are less than 100 microns in thickness. A third category of prohibition is for non-woven bags below 240 microns in thickness. This is proposed to start from September next year.

5. Needs to be done—The government has to do a thorough economic and environmental cost-benefit analysis. The plan has to take into account social and economic impacts for the ban to be successful. We need better recycling policies because resources are poor and there needs to be a much broader strategy.

TOUR OF DUTY RECRUITMENT MODEL

1. The Department of Military Affairs has finalised a radical proposal for future recruitment to the armed forces. The Army will be the first to try out the concept—the 'Tour of Duty' model, which involves recruiting some soldiers for a fixed period of three years. The 'Tour of Duty' (ToD) concept, first unveiled in 2020.

2. This model of recruitment would let young individuals voluntarily serve for a temporary period of three years. It will be a voluntary engagement. It is for youths who "do not want to make defence services their permanent vocation, but still want to experience the thrill and adventure of military professionalism".

3. The proposal is a shift from the concept of permanent service/job in the Armed Forces, towards 'internship'/temporary experience for three years. While the original proposal in 2020 would have extended the ToD to officers as well, it's now being restricted to jawans, as officers already have the Short Service Commission (SSC) route.

4. Benefits for citizens and the country: **It will help to channelise the youth energy into positive utilisation of their potential". Rigorous military training and habits inculcated will lead to healthy citizenry.** The entire nation will benefit from "trained, disciplined, confident, diligent and committed" young men or women who have done the three-year service. An "initial survey" has indicated that the corporate sector will prefer to hire such youths rather than fresh graduates.

5. Need for: The Army's pay and pension bill has been increasing steeply over the years, accounting for 60% of its budget allocation. According to a report of the Standing Committee of Defence, 2019, the deficiency in officer cadre of the Indian Army stood at approximately 14 per cent. Advocates of this scheme also cite "resurgence of nationalism and patriotism", and the fact that "unemployment in our country is a reality".

SUTLEJ YAMUNA LINK(SYL) CANAL

1. The Haryana Assembly has passed a resolution seeking completion of the SYL Canal. The canal, once completed, will enable sharing of the waters of the rivers Ravi and Beas between the two states.

2. Punjab's demands: As per a state government study, many areas in Punjab may go dry after 2029. The state has already over-exploited its groundwater for irrigation purposes as it fills granaries of the Centre by growing wheat and paddy worth Rs 70,000 crore every year. As per reports, water in about 79% of the state's area is over-exploited. In such a situation, the government says sharing water with any other state is impossible.

3. Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal, and the controversy over it—Historical background: **The creation of Haryana from the old (undivided) Punjab in 1966 threw up the problem of giving Haryana its share of river waters. Punjab was opposed to sharing waters of the Ravi and Beas with Haryana, citing**

in isolation from the rest of the world, but working in the country itself with their active participation and support, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Thursday after formally releasing the third positive indigenisation list of 101 pieces of equipment and platforms, which the Services can procure only from the domestic industry. The list includes naval utility helicopters, light tanks, small unmanned aerial vehicles and antiship missiles.

The Pentagon opposing to removing the elite Quds Force of Iran's Revolutionary Guards from the U.S. terror group list, one of Tehran's conditions for restoring the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said he expected NATO members to send Kyiv the weapons it needs but insisted they had to act quickly before Russia launches another major offensive.

riparian principles, and arguing that it had no water to spare. However, Centre, in 1976, issued a notification allocating to Haryana 3.5 million acre feet (MAF) out of undivided Punjab's 7.2 MAF.

4.In a reassessment in 1981, the water flowing down Beas and Ravi was estimated at 17.17 MAF, of which 4.22 MAF was allocated to Punjab, 3.5 MAF to Haryana, and 8.6 MAF to Rajasthan. The Eradi Tribunal headed by Supreme Court Judge V Balakrishna Eradi was set up to reassess availability and sharing of water. The Tribunal, in 1987, recommended an increase in the shares of Punjab and Haryana to 5 MAF and 3.83 MAF, respectively.

5.Haryana's demand-Haryana has been seeking the completion of the SYL canal to get its share of 3.5 million acre-feet of river waters. It has maintained that Punjab should comply with the 2002 and 2004 Supreme Court orders in this regard. Haryana is getting 1.62 million acre-feet of the Ravi-Beas waters.