

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

According to the Language Census, India is home to 19,500 languages or dialects, of which 121 languages are spoken by 10,000 or more people in our country. Collective responsibility needed to revive and revitalise the 196 Indian languages which fall under the “endangered” category.

A 10 member Indian delegation will visit Pakistan for the annual meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission from March 1 to 3, a senior Jal Shakti Ministry official said. In a first since the signing of the Indus Water Treaty between the two countries, three woman officers will also be part of the Indian delegation, the official said.

The Centre is working on a national policy on synthetic biology, an emerging science that deals with engineering life forms for a wide range of applications from making designer medicines to foods. The 70-page ‘compilation’ document, as it is called, lays out the state of synthetic biology internationally with respect to research and development and the involvement of the private sector, globally, in dealing with synthetic biology.

The Editors Guild of India (EGI) on Sunday sought withdrawal of the newly released Central Media Accreditation Guidelines. Expressing concern over the new guidelines issued by the Press Information Bureau (PIB), the Guild said: “It is clear that these vague, arbitrary and draconian clauses have been included with an intent to restrict any critical and investigative reporting of government affairs.

Iranian lawmakers have laid out six conditions for the revival of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal with global powers in a letter to President Ebrahim Raisi published, the country’s official IRNA news agency reported. The letter, signed by 250 out of 290 parliamentarians, stated that U.S. and European parties should guarantee that they would not exit a restored agreement, nor trigger the “snapback mechanism” under which sanctions on Iran would be immediately reinstated if it violates nuclear compliance.

French President Emmanuel Macron and Russian leader Vladimir Putin on Sunday agreed to work for a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine, Mr.

CASTE CENSUS

1.The Supreme Court upheld the 27% quota for Other Backward Classes (OBC) in the All-India Quota seats for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test and reiterated that reservations for backward classes were not an exception but an extension of the principle of equality under Article 15(1) of the Constitution. This is seen as a positive discrimination in the Indian Context.

2.Issue now-**Despite the underlying good intentions, positive discrimination has been a controversial topic. Many oppose affirmative actions like reservation; they believe that such provisions only perpetuate caste differences and they call for a “casteless society”.** But, as Justice D.Y. Chandrachud pointed out, “castelessness” is a privilege that only the upper caste can afford because their caste privilege has already translated into social, political and economic capital. On the other hand, individuals who belong to the lower castes must retain their caste identity in order to claim the benefits of measures such as reservation, which recognise historic harm.

3.Need for a caste- based census? The Union government had told the Supreme Court that the caste-based data enumerated in the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) of 2011 was “unusable”, but in 2016, the Registrar-General and Census Commissioner of India had informed the Standing Committee on Rural Development that 98.87% of the data on individual caste and religion was “error free”.

4.Why is the data “unusable” according to the government? The government had said that the total number of castes surveyed in 1931 was 4,147, while the SECC figures show that there are more than 46 lakh different castes. Assuming that some castes may bifurcate into sub-castes, the total number can not be exponentially high to this extent. The entire exercise was corrupted because the enumerators had used different spellings for the same castes. In many cases the respondents, the government said, had refused to divulge their castes.

5.How have caste details been collected so far? While SC/ST details are collected as part of the census, details of other castes are not collected by the enumerators. The main method is by self-declaration to the enumerator. So far, backward classes commissions in various States have been conducting their own counts to ascertain the population of backward castes.

6.Pros of caste census: The precise number of the population of each caste would help tailor the reservation policy to ensure equitable representation of all of them. Concerns associated: **There is a possibility that it will lead to heartburn among some sections and spawn demands for larger or separate quotas.** It has been alleged that the mere act of labelling persons as belonging to a caste tends to perpetuate the system.

WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

1.21st edition of the event was inaugurated recently. It is being held in virtual format. Theme: Towards a Resilient Planet: Ensuring a Sustainable and Equitable Future.

2.About the World Sustainable Development Summit: It is the annual flagship event of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). It is the sole Summit on global issues taking place in the developing world. It provides a platform for global leaders and practitioners to discuss and deliberate over climatic issues of universal importance. It strives to provide long-term solutions for the benefit of the global community by assembling the world’s most enlightened leaders and thinkers on a single platform. It is continuing the legacy of Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS) which was initiated in 2001 with the aim of making ‘sustainable development’ a globally shared goal.

3.Sustainable development-Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. This most widely accepted definition of Sustainable Development was given by the Brundtland Commission in its report Our Common Future (1987). Sustainable development (SD) calls for concerted efforts

Macron's office said. In a phone conversation lasting 105 minutes, they also agreed on "the need to favour a diplomatic solution to the crisis and do everything to achieve one". Mr. Putin and Mr. Macron said they would work "intensely" to allow the Trilateral Contact Group — Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE — to meet "to get all interested parties to commit to a ceasefire at the contact line" where government troops and pro-Russian separatists are facing each other.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump's new social media venture, Truth Social, will launch on Apple's App Store this week, Trump Media & Technology Group (TMTG) Chief Executive Devin Nunes said.

Russia will extend military drills in Belarus that were due to end on Sunday, the Belarusian Defence Ministry announced, in a step U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said made him more worried about an imminent Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation is planning to introduce a new pension product for organised sector workers who get basic wages of more than ₹15,000 a month and are not mandatorily covered under its Employees' Pension Scheme 1995 (EPS95).

The COVID19 pandemic leading to social distancing and lockdowns caused a fall of 62.5% in the detection of active leprosy cases between April and September 2020 when compared with the cases identified during the corresponding period in 2021 in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, says a study.

Countries seeking loans should worry about unsustainable infrastructure projects such as airports and ports that are empty, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said in a sharp riposte to Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, who asked about whether the Quad countries can offer the same kind of financial assistance that China does.

Scientific publications have established the correlation between antimicrobial resistance (AMR), and poor hygiene, lax administrative governance and poor ratio of public-private expenditure. While the scientific community looks for solutions in its ken, governments must raise the standard of living for citizens, provide them accessible and affordable quality health care, besides regulating the sale and use of antibiotics. Not doing so in studied haste will only land up

towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet.

INDIA AND THE GREEN HYDROGEN POTENTIAL

1. India, being a tropical country, has a significant edge in green hydrogen production due to its favourable geographic conditions and abundant natural resources. Producing hydrogen from renewables in India is likely to be cheaper than producing it from natural gas.

2. Need for: **The vast majority of industrial hydrogen, about 70 metric tonnes (MT), is currently produced from natural gas through a conventional process known as steam methane reforming (SMR) with large quantities of by product CO2.** The dependence on natural gas and coal means that hydrogen production today generates significant CO2 emissions.

3. Significance: With the world seeking ways to accelerate the pace of transformation in the energy sector, India with the right policy support is in a unique position to not only become self-sufficient in green hydrogen but also produce green hydrogen for export markets. The focus on producing clean energy through green hydrogen is in line with the government's goal of producing 450 GW of renewable energy by 2030 and, in the process, achieve emission goals under the Paris Agreement and reduce import dependency on fossil fuels.

4. Efforts by the government in this regard: The Centre is planning to use the green hydrogen fuel from wastewater by using solar energy. It is possible by using electrolyzers. How can this be achieved? By segregation of solid waste management using the rooftop solar, we can make green hydrogen with the help of electrolyzers. The power and water cost of producing it would be negligible. We can use this fuel even in railway engines along with cement and chemical companies instead of coal.

5. **Green hydrogen-Hydrogen when produced by electrolysis using renewable energy is known as Green Hydrogen which has no carbon footprint. Applications of green hydrogen: Green Chemicals like ammonia and methanol can directly be utilized in existing applications like fertilizers,** mobility, power, chemicals, shipping etc. Green Hydrogen blending up to 10% may be adopted in CGD networks to gain widespread acceptance.

MEDARAM JATHARA 2022

1. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has sanctioned ₹2.26 Crores for various activities pertaining to Medaram Jathara 2022. Medaram Jathara is the second-largest fair of India, after the Kumbh Mela, celebrated by the second-largest Tribal Community of Telangana—the Koya tribe for four days.

2. Considering the footfall of the festival and its auspicious significance, the Jathara was declared a State Festival in 1996.

3. The Jathara is also known as Sammakka Saralamma Jathara. It is a tribal festival honoring the fight of a mother and daughter, Sammakka and Saralamma, with the reigning rulers against an unjust law. **Medaram is a remote place in the Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary, a part of Dandakaranya, the largest surviving forest belt in the region.**

DOXXING

1. Doxxing is publishing and analysing others' personal information on the internet with a malicious intent that can reveal the person's real identity making them victims of harassments and cyber-attacks.

2. Meta's oversight board has suggested Facebook and Instagram to make strict doxxing rules.

PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

1. Pacific Islands Forum, formerly (1971–2000) South Pacific Forum, organization established in 1971 to provide a setting for heads of government to discuss common issues and problems facing the independent and self-governing states of the South Pacific.

2. It comprises 18 members: **Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.** 3. In 2000 Forum leaders adopted the Biketawa Declaration, which was a response to regional political instability and which put forward a set of principles and actions for members to take to promote open, democratic, and clean government, as well as equal rights for citizens regardless

eroding the significant healthcare gains India has proactively, and painfully at times, secured over the years.

of gender, race, colour, creed, or political belief.