

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Neighbours of a golden langur habitat in western Assam's Bongaigaon district have opposed a move by the State government to upgrade it to a wildlife sanctuary. Kakoijana Reserve Forest is one of the better known homes of the golden langur (*Trachypithecus geei*) found only in Assam and Bhutan and a Schedule-I species under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. It is listed as among the world's 25 most endangered primates.

Ahead of the elections in Uttar Pradesh, a candidate's position on climate change and air pollution could influence voters, suggests a survey conducted by Climate Trends and YouGov. Climate Trends is an environmental advocacy group and YouGov is a market research firm. Uttar Pradesh goes to polls from February 14.

The government wants new domestic companies to set up their manufacturing units in India fast and hence the concessional tax rate of 15% has been extended till March 2024, Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj said on Friday. Stating that direct and indirect tax collections were rising and had good buoyancy, Mr. Bajaj said it meant that the corporate sector was also doing well, and that India's tax-to-GDP ratio could be the "highest ever" in the current year.

The Union Budget is growth-oriented and credit positive for many issuers, but budgetary provisions pose fiscal challenges, Moody's Investors Service said. "Focus [of the budget] on capital expenditure supports near term growth, [but] poses challenges to longer term fiscal consolidation," Moody's said. While conservative assumptions left room for the government to respond to prevailing macroeconomic and pandemic risks over the next year, the path toward the government's medium term deficit target was undefined, the credit rating agency said.

Oil and gas will continue to meet the 'base load' energy demand of India in the 'foreseeable future' even as the world's third biggest crude importer takes steps to move to cleaner sources to cut emissions, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said. India has set a goal to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2070. "As our economy grows to \$5 trillion by 2025, and towards \$10 trillion by

NATIONAL ADAPTATION FUND FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

- 1.The National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC) is a Central Sector Scheme which was set up in the year 2015-16. It was established to support adaptation activities in the States and UTs of India that are vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. The NAFCC is implemented in project mode and till date, 30 projects are sanctioned in 27 States and UTs.
- 2.National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is the National Implementing Entity (NIE) for NAFCC. The projects related to adaptation in sectors such as agriculture, animal husbandry, water, forestry, tourism etc. are eligible for funding under NAFCC.
- 3.The NAFCC projects implemented in the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh include activities relating to coastal areas. Adaptation Fund-The Adaptation Fund (AF) was established in 2001. The AF was established to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in developing country Parties to the Kyoto Protocol that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.
- 4.It is financed with a share of proceeds from the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) project activities and other sources of funding. The share of proceeds amounts to 2% of certified emission reductions (CERs) issued for a CDM project activity.
- 5.Management of the Fund - The Adaptation Fund is supervised and managed by the Adaptation Fund Board (AFB). The AFB is composed of 16 members and 16 alternates and meets at least twice a year.

HAR GHAR NAL SE JAL SCHEME

- 1.In the Union Budget 2022-23, the 'Har Ghar, Nal Se Jal' scheme was allocated INR 60,000 crores for providing tap water connection to 3.8 crore households during the financial year 2022-23.
- 2.The 'Har Ghar Nal Se Jal' Scheme comes under the Jal Jeevan Mission, which is implemented by the Jal Shakti Ministry. This scheme aims to provide every household with a functional household tap connection (FHTC) in its premises.
- 3.This will be done in order to reduce the burden of fetching water on women in the household. With the scheme, the government looks to provide all citizens of the country with sustainable water supply connectivity for the provision of clean drinking water by 2024.

PARAM PRAVEGA

- 1.The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has installed and commissioned Param Pravega, one of the most powerful supercomputers in India. **It is the largest supercomputer in an Indian academic institution. It was installed and commissioned under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).**
- 2.The system is expected to power diverse research and educational pursuits. It has a supercomputing capacity of 3.3 petaflops (1 petaflop equals a quadrillion, or 10¹⁵ operations per second). It has been designed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC).
- 3.National Supercomputing Mission NSM is steered jointly by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). It is implemented by the eCentre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc).
- 4.The Mission has supported the deployment of 10 supercomputer systems so far at IISc., in IITs, IISER Pune, JNCASR, NABI-Mohali and C-DAC, with a cumulative computing power of 17 petaflops. These systems have greatly helped faculty members and students carry out major R&D activities, and optimising telecom networks.

ETHNOCENTRISM

- 1.Ethnocentrism refers to ethnic self-centredness and self-importance. This attitude could lead an individual to believe that their own culture or way of life is the correct way of living. It

2030, our burgeoning energy needs will take shape and in turn, the global energy markets will be shaped by India's requirements," Mr. Puri told the World Energy Policy Summit.

Coal India Ltd. (CIL), the world's largest coal miner, plans to directly export output to neighbouring countries, according to sources and documents seen by Reuters, after decades of exclusively supplying domestic consumers. The state run firm plans to export to Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, according to a draft policy sent to the Secretary of India's Coal Ministry and reviewed by Reuters, as a part of India's 'neighbourhood first' policy which seeks to counter China's growing economic influence in South Asia.

The U.S. State Department has announced that Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel to Australia from February 9-12, for a minister level meeting of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad). External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne and Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs Hayashi Yoshimasa, are expected to attend.

Iceland, one of the only countries that still hunts whales commercially, said on Friday it will end the practice from 2024 as demand for whale meat dwindles. Demand for whale meat has decreased dramatically since Japan — Iceland's main market, especially for fin whale meat — returned to commercial whaling in 2019 after a three-decade hiatus. The extension of a no-fishing coastal zone has also made whale hunt more costly.

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg will take over as Norway's central bank Governor at the end of the year, officials said on Friday, a controversial choice that has already raised concerns about the bank's independence. The appointment comes amid escalating tensions between the West and Russia. Western nations fear Moscow has plans to invade Ukraine, which aspires to join the NATO alliance.

China and Russia outlined a sweeping vision for the future of their already close relations as their two leaders met in Beijing, while hitting out at the United States, accusing NATO of "expansionism" in Europe, and blaming Washington's Indo-Pacific strategy for fomenting regional tensions.

China and Pakistan on Friday signed a new agreement on industrial cooperation as part of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

could also result in hostility towards other cultures. Therefore, ethnocentrism is the tendency to view one's own group, the 'in-group', as the archetype and all the other groups, the 'out-groups', with reference to this ideal.

2. The in-group's boundaries are defined by one or more observable characteristics such as language, accent, physical features or religion, indicating common descent. Different opinions - Some argued that Ethnocentrism might simply be preference for in-groups over out-groups. While others argued that this feeling of superiority about the in-group curtailed an individual's ability to understand the practices and values of other groups and to trust them.

3. **This feeling could lead to prejudice, dislike, dominance, ethnic conflict, instability of democratic institutions, and even war. Ethnocentrism can also affect consumer choices and voting.**

HARYANA PRIVATE SECTOR QUOTA LAW STAYED

1. The Punjab and Haryana High Court has stayed a law that reserves 75 per cent of jobs for Haryanvis in private establishments across the state. Background: Haryana government has ordered that the law (the Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Bill) providing for 75% reservation for locals in private sector jobs came into force from January 15, 2022.

2. Highlights of the law: The law provides for 75% reservation in private sector jobs to those having a resident certificate (domicile). The law will be applicable for a period of 10 years. Jobs with a gross monthly salary of not more than ₹30,000 will be up for hiring from among local candidates.

3. Rationale behind the law: To create a harmonious environment for industry as well as the youth along with creating the right balance between the progress of industries and the economy. Concerns over the bill: **It could lead to multinational firms moving out of the state. Reservation affects productivity and industry competitiveness.**

4. Legal issues in such laws - The question of domicile reservation in jobs: While domicile quotas in education are fairly common, courts have been reluctant in expanding this to public employment. It raises questions relating to the fundamental right to equality of citizens. The issue of forcing the private sector to comply with reservations in employment. For mandating reservation in public employment, the state draws its power from Article 16(4) of the Constitution. But, the Constitution has no manifest provision for private employment from which the state draws the power to make laws mandating reservation. **It may not be able to withstand judicial scrutiny on the touchstone of Article 19(1)(g).**

LUNAR SOUTH POLE TARGETED FOR EXPLORATION AND CHANDRAYAAN 2

1. The Lunar South pole is especially interesting because the lunar surface area that remains in shadow is much larger than that at the North Pole. There could be a possibility of presence of water in permanently shadowed areas around it. In addition, the South Pole region has craters that are cold traps and contain a fossil record of the early Solar System.

2. What happened to Chandrayaan-2? The Chandrayaan-2 mission, which was lost after it hard-landed on the dark side of the Moon in 2019, remains active in the form of its orbiter hovering over the Moon. The lander and rover malfunctioned in the final moments and crash-landed, getting destroyed in the process.

3. The primary objective of Chandrayaan 2 was to demonstrate the ability to soft-land on the lunar surface and operate a robotic rover on the surface. However, the Orbiter and other instruments of Chandrayaan-2 mission have, in two years, gathered a wealth of new information that has added to our knowledge about the Moon and its environment.

NEW DRONE RULES

1. Digital sky platform shall be developed as a business-friendly single-window online system. No flight permission required upto 400 feet in green zones and upto 200 feet in the area between 8 and 12 km from the airport perimeter.

2. **No pilot licence required for micro drones (for non-commercial use), nano drones and for R&D organisations. No restriction on drone operations by foreign-owned companies registered in India. Import of drones and drone components**

plan during Prime Minister Imran Khan's ongoing visit to Beijing.

At least 80 Afghan cadets, who graduated from various Indian military institutes, have been offered a training module in English language communication under the ITEC (Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation) programme of the Government of India, the Embassy of Afghanistan here has announced.

The government is aware of concerns over data theft for existing passports, and the soon to be issued e-passports and has taken adequate precautions to ensure privacy and safety, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar told Parliament, amidst a lively exchange over both electronic chip safety for passports as well as whether their launch would "ignore" certain States or be rolled out uniformly across the country.

to be regulated by DGFT. No security clearance required before any registration or licence issuance.

3.No requirement of certificate of airworthiness, unique identification number, prior permission and remote pilot licence for R&D entities. Coverage of drones under Drone Rules, 2021 increased from 300 kg to 500 kg. This will cover drone taxis also. Issuance of Certificate of Airworthiness delegated to Quality Council of India and certification entities authorised by it. Manufacturer may generate their drone's unique identification number on the digital sky platform through the self-certification route.

4.Maximum penalty under Drone Rules, 2021 reduced to INR 1 lakh. This shall, however, not apply to penalties in respect of violation of other laws. Drone corridors will be developed for cargo deliveries. Drone promotion council to be set up to facilitate a business-friendly regulatory regime.

