

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

The Railway Protection Force has launched a nationwide operation to curb human trafficking. As part of "Operation AAHT", special teams will be deployed on all long distance trains/routes with focus on rescuing victims, particularly women and children, from the clutches of traffickers. The Railways, which operate about 21,000 trains across the country daily, is the most reliable mode of transportation for the traffickers who often move their victims on long distance trains. Thousands of Indians and persons from neighbouring countries were trafficked every day to some destinations where they were forced to live like slaves. "They are also being trafficked for illegal adoptions, organ transplants, working in circus, begging and entertainment industry.

The Union government released the Central Media Accreditation Guidelines 2022, under which the accreditation will be withdrawn or suspended if a journalist acts in a manner prejudicial to the country's security, sovereignty and integrity, friendly relations with foreign States, public order or is charged with a serious cognisable offence.

The 8th round of the Vienna Talks between Iran P5+1 attended by China, France, Germany, Russia, United Kingdom, Iran and the United States resume tomorrow in Vienna.

Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit, a political science professor at Savitribai Phule Pune University, has been appointed as the first woman Vice-Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).

The Supreme Court orally accused the Tripura police of harassing people who take to social media on the communal violence that occurred in the State. A Bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and Surya Kant made it clear to the State that the court, if the "harassment" continued, would not hesitate to call for the presence of its Home Secretary in the hearing. The Bench noted that the police, through a Superintendent of Police, have continued to issue notices to people for their social media posts despite a protective order from the court on January 10. The court order was passed in the case of some lawyers and journalists who were booked under the UAPA (Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act) for their social media posts.

INDIAN GAUR

1. A six-years-old Indian gaur died after consuming plastic waste which was improperly disposed of near Ooty, Tamil Nadu. **Indian Gaur or Indian Bison (Bos gaurus) is a bovine species native to South and Southeast Asia.** It belongs to the family of wild oxen and is the tallest living and the second heaviest among oxen.

2. It is considered as the largest living bovine. Gaur's estimated population is around 13,000 to 30,000 in the world with approximately 85% of the population present in India.

3. In the southern part of India, they are found abundantly in the Wayanad-Mudumalai-Bandipur-Nagarhole range and the Nilgiris. Threats - Habitat Loss, Poaching for meat, Human-Animal Conflict and food Scarcity.

AVIATION TURBINE FUEL

1. The Union Finance Minister said that the government will take up the issue of inclusion of the Aviation Turbine Fuel in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) system before the next GST Council meeting. Jet fuel or Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) is a specialized by-product of crude or petroleum used to power aircraft.

2. **It is kerosene-based fuel used for powering jet and turboprop engine aircraft. It must meet performance guidelines for both the rich mixture condition required for take-off power settings and the cleaner mixtures used during cruise to reduce fuel consumption.** The primary functions of aviation turbine fuel are to power an aircraft, energy content and combustion quality.

3. Apart from being a source of energy, other significant performance properties of ATF are stability, lubricity, fluidity, volatility, non-corrosivity and cleanliness. It is also used as hydraulic fluid in engine control systems and as a coolant for certain fuel system components.

LEVERAGING

1. Leveraging means borrowing money to make an investment. Leverage refers to the use of debt (borrowed funds) to amplify returns from an investment or project. **The result is to multiply the potential returns from a project. At the same time, leverage will also multiply the potential downside risk in case the investment does not pan out.**

2. When one refers to a company, property, or investment as "highly leveraged," it means that item has more debt than equity. Uses - Investors use leverage to multiply their buying power in the market.

3. Companies use leverage to finance their assets—instead of issuing stock to raise capital, companies can use debt to invest in business operations in an attempt to increase shareholder value.

GHOST ARMY

1. The US President signed into law a bill titled, "Ghost Army Congressional Gold Medal Act", essentially providing recognition to the 'Ghost Army'. The 'Ghost Army' is a tactical deception unit deployed by the US during World War II. The Ghost Army refers to the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133rd Signal Company Special.

2. **The existence of the 'Ghost Army' was unknown for about 50 years after it was formed by the US War Department in January 1944. The unit had a "strange mission",** to keep enemy troops in the dark about the number and location of American troops. The units were assembled and members trained fairly quickly in Tennessee.

3. A year and a half later, the unit was on its way back home after having served with four US armies in France, Belgium, England, Luxembourg, Holland and Germany. Its existence was declassified in 1996, when the official history, first written in 1945 by Captain Fred Fox also became available.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND JUDICIAL REVIEW

China on Monday defended choosing a People's Liberation Army (PLA) regiment commander who fought in the Galwan clash as an Olympics torchbearer, a move that led India to carry out a diplomatic boycott of the games in Beijing.

India's support has made a "world of difference" to Sri Lanka's economic situation, said Sri Lankan Foreign Minister G.L. Peiris, on his first visit to India, making it clear that the flurry of agreements announced in recent weeks have allowed the neighbours to move on from the problems of the "immediate past".

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman urged industry to step up investments and expand capacities, asserting that worries about high public capital spending and borrowings crowding out private investments were misplaced.

India cancelled auctions of government securities to be held on February 11, a government statement said on Monday, following a sharp rise in bond yields after the announcement of the record borrowing plan of ₹14.95 trillion for FY23. The Centre had planned to auction ₹220 billion worth of bonds on the day.

Oil prices fell as concerns over tight supply were offset by signs of progress in nuclear talks between the United States and Iran, which could lead to the removal of U.S. sanctions on Iranian oil sales. Brent crude was down 61 cents, or 0.7%, at \$92.66 by 1445 GMT, having earlier touched its highest since October 2014 at \$94.

Automobile retail sales fell almost 11% last month, largely due to contraction in the passenger vehicle and two wheeler segments, on the back of the semiconductor shortage and rural distress along with increase in prices, according to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA).

French President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday he hoped to make a start towards a de-escalation of tensions over Ukraine, as he began talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow.

The PM CARES Fund collected ₹10,990 crore since its inception in March 2020 until March 2021. It spent ₹3,976 crore during the 2020-21 financial year, according to the audited financial statement posted on its website. As on March 31, 2021, the Fund had an unspent balance of ₹7,044 crore. The Fund was set up to deal with "any kind of emergency or distress situation, like

1.In the Kerala High Court, the Union government has cited national security reasons for cancelling telecast permission to the Malayalam news channel 'MediaOne TV'. In the MediaOne TV channel case, there is a question whether the state can use 'national security' as a ground to limit judicial scrutiny has come up for scrutiny again barely weeks.

2.Recently, in its Pegasus case order, the Supreme Court observed that it is a settled position of law that in matters pertaining to national security, the scope of judicial review is limited. However, this does not mean that the State gets a 'free pass' from the courts as soon as it raises the spectre of 'national security'.

3.The court concluded that the mere invocation of national security by the State does not render the court a mute spectator. One of the major concerns raised by citizens recently is the "chilling effect" such State actions endure to have on free speech, especially in the media. The principle of 'chilling effect' is based on comparative harm.

4.Chilling Effect-The Anuradha Bhasin case is concerned internet restrictions in Jammu and Kashmir in the backdrop of the abrogation of Article 370. In this case, the Supreme Court explained that one possible test of chilling effect is comparative harm. In this framework, the court is required to see whether the restrictions, due to their broad based nature, have had a restrictive effect on similarly placed individuals during the period.

5.In short, the test is whether action of the State on one entity freezes others in their footsteps or deters them from following the same course. Any order of the State which restricts the fundamental rights of speech or expression should be backed by reasons.

6.These reasons should be made transparent. The State is accountable. The courts should be convinced that the State acted in a responsible manner and did not take away rights in an "implied fashion or a casual or cavalier manner".

PRADHAN MANTRI MATRU VANDANA YOJANA

1.The Government has clarified that Aadhaar of Husbands is not mandatory under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, PMMVY, to facilitate the inclusion of single mothers and abandoned mothers.

2.PMMVY: It is a Maternity Benefit Programme that is implemented in all the districts of the country in accordance with the provision of the National Food Security Act, 2013. The direct benefit cash transfer is to help expectant mothers meet enhanced nutritional requirements as well as to partially compensate them for wage loss during their pregnancy. The scheme was announced on December 31, 2016. It is being implemented in all districts of the country with effect from 1st January, 2017.

3.Beneficiaries: All Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW&LM), excluding those who are in regular employment with the Central Government or the State Governments or PSUs or those who are in receipt of similar benefits under any law for the time being in force. All eligible Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers who have their pregnancy on or after 1st January 2017 for the first child in the family.

4.Benefits: Beneficiaries receive a cash benefit of Rs. 5,000 in three installments on fulfilling the following conditions: Early registration of pregnancy Ante-natal check-up Registration of the birth of the child Completion of the first cycle of vaccination for the first living child of the family. The eligible beneficiaries also receive cash incentive under Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY). Thus, on an average, a woman gets Rs. 6,000.

ARAVALLI BIODIVERSITY PARK

1.On World Wetlands Day, that is, on February 2, the Aravalli Biodiversity Park (Gurugram) was announced as the first Other Effective Area – based Conservation Measures site, OECM site. The OECM tag is provided by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN. According to IUCN, the OECM sites are not protected but are rich in biodiversity.

2.The OECM areas were defined at the Convention on Biological Diversity that was held in 2018. The OECM tag does not bring any legal, financial or management implications, but designates the area as a biodiversity hotspot on the international map. 'Other effective area-based conservation measures' (OECMS) is a conservation designation for areas that are achieving the effective in-situ conservation of

posed by the COVID19 pandemic.

The Union Home Ministry has asked the parliamentary committee for more time to frame the rules of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA), on the grounds that the consultation process is on.

The Supreme Court will soon decide the fate of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) in Maharashtra for the upcoming local body polls. The State government on Monday received the interim report submitted by the Maharashtra State Commission for Backward Classes (MSCBC) on the data regarding the OBCs.

biodiversity outside of protected areas.

3.The Aravalli Biodiversity Park is spread across 390 acres and has semi-arid vegetation, with around 300 native plants, 101,000 trees, 43,000 shrubs, and several species of birds. The Aravallis, one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world, are considered the green lungs of Delhi-NCR, a crucial water recharge zone for the region. They also support rich fauna, including leopards, sambhar, fox, jackals and palm civets among others.