

### NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Large chunks of forests and the Aravalis in Gurugram and Faridabad could lose protection from construction under the National Conservation Zone as defined in the Regional Plan 2021, if the provisions in the Draft Regional Plan 2041 are implemented, fear environmentalists, urban planners and analysts. According to the DRP 2041, the 'Natural Zone' (NZ) "is a zone comprising any natural features such as mountains, hills, rivers, waterbodies created by the action of nature." In the previous Plan, this was defined as the Natural Conservation Zone (NCZ). In the new draft, the definition of the natural features has been tweaked and restricted to only those that are notified under certain acts and recognised in land records.

The population of the vulnerable eastern swamp deer, extinct elsewhere in South Asia, has dipped in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve. Officials attributed the decrease from 907 individuals in 2018 to 868 during the Eastern Swamp Deer Estimation on January 10 and 11 to two high floods in 2019 and 2020. On the brighter side, they said the animal is now distributed to areas beyond the park known as the world's best address of the one-horned rhinoceros. "The eastern swamp deer is endemic to Kaziranga and is not the primary prey of the park's carnivores, primarily the tiger. But its population is crucial for the ecological health of the tiger reserve and the encouraging sign is the animal has now moved to other areas such as Orang National Park and Laokhowa Burachapori wildlife sanctuaries.

A section of aquarists and ornamental fish breeders are surprised that the Denison barb (Miss Kerala), a native freshwater fish species commonly found in parts of Karnataka and Kerala, has been included in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021.

The Union government is planning to acquire for itself overriding powers to transfer IAS and IPS officers through Central deputation, doing away with the requirement of taking the approval of the State governments. The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) wrote to the States on January 12 that the Union government proposes to amend Rule 6 (deputation of cadre

### LA NINA EFFECT ON INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

1. Various parts of India, especially North India, have been experiencing a severe cold wave. Warnings for the severe cold waves have been issued in several northern states. Cold Wave-A cold wave is different for the plains and the mountains. According to the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) if the temperature goes below 10 degree and minimum temperature is at 4.5 degree, it is a cold wave for the plains. The criteria for hills is 0 degree. If the temperature is 6.4 degree below normal or down to 2 degree, it is a severe cold wave in the plains. The IMD calls it "a condition of air temperature which becomes fatal to the human body when exposed."

2. But Why is it So Cold? Short Answer: **Strong streams of western disturbances running through the northern belt are causing this.** Complex Answer: La Nina. What brings cold to the region, **is the unabated north-westerly winds which bring chilly winds from higher latitude to Indo-Gangetic plains.** However, passage of back-to-back western disturbances tend to change the wind direction from cold north-westerlies to warm and humid easterlies. However, with La Niña in place, what is expected is less amount of winter rains and thus, icy cold winds would continue to blow over Northwest India uninterruptedly, bringing down the temperatures."

3. Background: El Nino and La Nina are part of the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) cycle. In 2020, La Nina developed during the month of August and then dissipated in April 2021 as ENSO-neutral conditions returned. For the upcoming winter season, which extends from December 2021 through February 2022, there is an 87% chance of La Nina.

4. Niño and La Niña-They are two natural climate phenomena occurring across the tropical Pacific Ocean and influence the weather conditions all over the world. While the El Niño period is characterised by warming or increased sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, a La Niña event causes the water in the eastern Pacific Ocean to be colder than usual. Together, they are called ENSO or El Niño-Southern Oscillation.

5. Weather changes because of La Nina: The Horn of Africa and central Asia will see below average rainfall due to La Niña. East Africa is forecast to see drier-than-usual conditions, which together with the existing impacts of the desert locust invasion, may add to regional food insecurity. It could also lead to increased rainfall in southern Africa. It could also affect the South West Indian Ocean Tropical Cyclone season, reducing the intensity. Southeast Asia, some Pacific Islands and the northern region of South America are expected to receive above-average rainfall. In India, La Niña means the country will receive more rainfall than normal, leading to floods.

### GURU RAVIDAS

1. The postponement of the Assembly elections in Punjab to February 20 underlines the importance of the Ravidassia community in the state. What's the issue? Several political parties had urged the Election Commission for a postponement as the earlier date of February 14 would have clashed with Guru Ravidas Jayanti, an annual occasion during which Ravidassias travel to Varanasi in large numbers. Many of them take a special train organised by the Dera Sachkhand Ballan in Jalandhar, the largest dera of the Ravidassias.

2. Ravidassias-The Ravidassias are a Dalit community of whom the bulk — nearly 12 lakh — live in the Doaba region. The Dera Sachkhand Ballan, their largest dera with 20 lakh followers worldwide, was founded in the early 20th century by Baba Sant Pipal Das. Once closely connected with Sikhism, the dera severed these decades-old ties in 2010, and announced they would follow the Ravidassia religion. The dera made the announcement on Guru Ravidas Jayanti in Varanasi. From 2010, the Dera Sachkhand Ballan started replacing the Guru Granth Sahib with its own Granth, Amritbani, carrying 200 hymns of Guru Ravidas, in Ravidassia temples and gurdwaras.

3. About Guru Ravidas: Guru Ravidas was a North Indian mystic poet of the bhakti movement. While the exact year of his

officers) of the Indian Administrative Service (Cadre) Rules 1954. The Centre's move is set to put it in a collision course with the States, particularly those ruled by the Opposition.

With the law guaranteeing 75% reservation to locals in private sector jobs in Haryana coming into force earlier this month, the reigning sentiment among various stakeholders is one of "disruption". Industrialists, migrant workers and contractors remain wary of its repercussions on businesses and employment prospects.

To ensure safety of children, new measures have been added to the 'Desh Ke Mentor' programme by the Delhi government. The changes, including police verification of all mentors, were made after the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) raised concerns that the programme may expose children to probable safety risks.

The South Asian University (SAU), the only educational institution for higher studies created by all the eight members of the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation), has been without its topmost official for more than two years. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had advertised twice for the post but the SAU continues to be led by an "acting president". Sources in the SAU said the absence of a permanent president, which is equivalent to a Vice-Chancellor, has contributed to a sense of instability in the prestigious varsity.

The Supreme Court directed the Maharashtra government to submit its data collected on the Other Backward Classes (OBC) to the State Backward Classes Commission (SBCC) and directed the commission to submit an interim report to the State on the same within two weeks.

The Supreme Court agreed to consider listing a public interest litigation (PIL) petition challenging the constitutional validity of a provision of the Representation of the People Act which had led to the introduction of electronic voting machines (EVM) in elections.

Union Labour and Employment Minister Bhupender Yadav said special camps would be organised to register brick kiln, plantation, forestry and other unorganised sector workers on the Centre's eShram portal. While interacting with representatives of unorganised sector unions' and associations

birth is not known, it is believed that the saint was born in 1377 C.E. Guru Ravidas Jayanti is celebrated on Magh Purnima, which is the full moon day in the Hindu calendar month of Magha. The Adi Granth of Sikhs, in addition to the Panchvani are the two of the oldest documented sources of the literary works of Guru Ravidas. Notably, he belonged to an untouchable caste and suffered a lot of atrocities as a result. However, the saint chose to focus on spiritual pursuits and also penned several devotional songs which made a huge impact in the Bhakti movement during the 14th to 16th century CE.

**4. Guru Ravidas Teachings: Guru Ravidas spoke against the caste divisions and spoke of removing them to promote unity. His teachings resonated with the people, leading to a religion being born called the Ravidassia religion, or Ravidassia Dharam based on his teachings.** He taught about the omnipresence of God and said that a human soul is a particle of God and hence Ravidas rejected the idea that people considered lower caste cannot meet God. He said in his teachings that the only way to meet God was to free the mind from the duality.

#### **INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA) ELECTRICITY MARKET REPORT**

**1.** The early 2022 edition of the Agency's bi-annual Electricity Market Report has been published. Highlights of the report: Nations are largely turning to fossil fuels to meet the increase in electricity demand as Covid-19 lockdown restrictions are lifting. The global electricity demand rose 6% year-on-year in 2021 – the steepest year-on-year increase recorded by the IEA since the financial crash of 2008 onwards. Global energy intensity fell 1.9% year-on-year – a drop only half as steep as the level needed to lay the foundation for net-zero by 2050.

**2.** While electricity generation from renewables was up 6% year-on-year in 2021, generation from coal was up by 9%, led by markets including China and India, with coal serving more than half of the increase in demand. This, coupled with a 2% increase in gas-fired generation, caused a 7% year-on-year increase in emissions from the power sector. After two years of decline, this means that emissions from the power sector are now at a record high.

**3.** Concerns: The IEA is voicing concerns that, despite the growing net-zero movement, nations are still failing to decouple increased electricity demands from increased emissions. It is forecasting that power sector emissions will likely remain "around the same level" for the next three years. In contrast, the IEA's net-zero by 2050 scenario entails a 55% decrease in sectoral emissions by 2030, against a 2019 baseline. The report also charts increases in wholesale gas and electricity prices, globally, to "unprecedented" levels, as well as "volatile" coal prices.

**4.** Background: In March 2017, India became an associate member of IEA. About IEA: Established in 1974 as per the framework of the OECD, IEA is an autonomous intergovernmental organisation. Its mission is guided by four main areas of focus: energy security, economic development, environmental awareness and engagement worldwide. Headquarters (Secretariat): Paris, France.

**5.** Reports: **Global Energy & CO2 Status Report. World Energy Outlook. World Energy Statistics. World Energy Balances. Energy Technology Perspectives.**

#### **PANDIT BIRJU MAHARAJ AND KATHAK**

**1.** Recently, the famous Kathak dancer Birju Maharaj, who took the traditional Indian dance form 'Kathak' to the world stage passed away. He was one of India's most famous and favorite artists, belonged to the Kalka-Bindadin gharana of Lucknow, a classical Kathak dance form. He was born on February 4, 1938 in Lucknow.

**2.** Awards: Padma Vibhushan in 1983, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and Kalidas Samman. About Kathak: Kathak is the only form of classical dance wedded to Hindustani or the North Indian music. Both of them have had a parallel growth, each feeding and sustaining the other. (Odissi dance uses Odissi music which is blend of Hindustani and Carnatic).

**3.** Kathak is one of the main genres of ancient Indian classical dance and is traditionally regarded to have originated from the travelling bards of North India referred as Kathakars or storytellers.

virtually, Mr. Yadav acknowledged “the problems faced by workers employed in brick kiln, forestry, plantations etc.

**The Taliban’s Prime Minister called upon Muslim nations to be the first to officially recognise their government, as aid dependent Afghanistan faces economic collapse. No country has yet recognised the Taliban, with most watching to see how the hardline Islamists — notorious for human rights abuses during their first stint in power — restrict freedoms. Although the group has promised a softer rule in line with their interpretation of Islamic Sharia law, women are largely excluded from government employment and secondary schools for girls are mostly shuttered.**

## **PM GATISHAKTI**

**1.Launched in 2020, it is a digital platform that connects 16 ministries — including Roads and Highways, Railways, Shipping, Petroleum and Gas, Power, Telecom, Shipping, and Aviation.** It aims to ensure holistic planning and execution of infrastructure projects.

**2.**It aims to boost multimodal connectivity and drive down logistics costs. PM Gati Shakti will cover the infrastructure projects worth over Rs 500 crore of various Ministries of the Union and State Governments like Bharatmala, Sagarmala, inland waterways, dry/land ports, UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagarik – subsidies for facilitating air travel), etc.