

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Peru declared an environmental emergency Saturday to battle an oil spill caused by freak waves from a volcanic eruption in the South Pacific. The stunningly powerful eruption on last Saturday of an undersea volcano near Tonga unleashed tsunami waves around the Pacific and as far away as the United States. In Peru, the oil spill near Lima has fouled beaches, killed birds and harmed the fishing and tourism industries.

R. Nagaswamy, the first Director of the Department of Archaeology, died of age related complications. An authority in archaeology, architecture, epigraphy, numismatics, iconography, south Indian bronzes and temple rituals, Nagaswamy favoured the idea of closing temples in Tamil Nadu during the COVID19 pandemic.

Billed as an innovative solution to the perennial problem of river pollution in Gujarat, the State government's ambitious ₹2,300 crore subsea effluent disposal pipeline project remains a non-starter even as the pollution in the rivers has gone beyond critical level due to increasing industrialisation. The State government, after floating the tender in 2020, has not moved on the project and is now apparently considering reworking it.

The fragmented and patchy forests of south Bengal have emerged as one of the hotspots of human-elephant conflict in the country, resulting in loss of lives of both humans and pachyderms. At times, the conflict results in law and order problems. In November 2021, a herd of 50 elephants came within 5 km of east Burdwan town, prompting the district administration to impose prohibitory orders in several gram panchayats in the region.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has recently issued a show-cause notice to the Telangana government seeking explanation on the execution of the Dindi lift irrigation project without environmental clearance from it. The issue came to light after the Ministry filed an affidavit with the National Green Tribunal (NGT) when the latter sought a clarification on a complaint lodged Andhra Pradesh that the project did not have

SRI RAMANUJACHARYA

1.PM Narendra Modi is all set to unveil the world's second-largest statue (Statue of Equality) in Hyderabad on February 5. The 216-foot-tall statue of 11th-century social reformer and saint, Ramanujacharya will be in a sitting position.

2.What is the Statue of Equality? The world's second tallest statue in a sitting position is made up of 'panchaloha', meaning a combination of five metals i.e. gold, copper, silver, brass and zinc. The inner sanctum deity of Sri Ramanujacharya is built of 120 kilos of gold. This commemorates the 120 years the saint spent on earth.

3.About Sri Ramanujacharya: Born in 1017 CE in Tamil Nadu. He is the most respected Acharya in the philosophy of Sri Vaishnavism. He was also referred to as Ilaya Perumal which means the radiant one. His philosophical foundations for devotionalism were influential to the Bhakti movement. He is famous as the chief proponent of Vishishtadvaita subschool of Vedānta. He wrote influential texts, such as bhāṣya on the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita, all in Sanskrit.

4.Vishishtadvaita-It is a non-dualistic school of Vedanta philosophy. It is non-dualism of the qualified whole, in which Brahman alone exists, but is characterized by multiplicity. It can be described as qualified monism or qualified non-dualism or attributive monism. It is a school of Vedanta philosophy which believes in all diversity subsuming to an underlying unity.

50% RESERVATION LIMIT

1.A UPSC aspirant has approached the Supreme Court seeking to quash the final result dated September 24, 2021 declared by UPSC for Civil Services Examination 2020 to the extent it violates the 50% reservation ceiling.

2.Issue-It has been argued in the petition that UPSC has recommended 34.55% candidates for appointment against the general category and 65.44% against the reserved category, completely sabotaging the merit of the general category candidates. In this regard it has further been contended that only 40% of seats have been marked for appointment against the general unreserved quota, which is in violation of the 50% ceiling of reservation (as held by in Indra Sawhney vs UOI reported in (1992) Supp. (3) SCC 217).

3.Indra Sawhney & Others vs Union of India, 1992: A nine-judge bench in the Indra Sawhney case (famously known as the Mandal Commission case) imposed the ceiling of 50% on total reservation. The Supreme Court while upholding the 27% quota for backward classes, struck down the government notification reserving 10% government jobs for economically backward classes among the higher castes. SC in the same case also upheld the principle that the combined reservation beneficiaries should not exceed 50% of India's population. The concept of 'creamy layer' also gained currency through this judgment and provision that reservation for backward classes should be confined to initial appointments only and not extend to promotions.

4.Why 50%- The Other Backward Classes, as identified by the Mandal Commission, make up about 52% of India's population according to the 1931 Census. The court, however, did not deal with the question of population while ruling that although reservation was fine, it must be capped.

5.Tamilnadu's case: The state's Assembly passed the Tamil Nadu Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions and Appointments or Posts in the Services under the State) Act, 1993 to keep its reservation limit intact at 69%. The law was subsequently included into the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution through the 76th Constitution Amendment passed by Parliament in 1994.

CHANDRAYAAN-3

1.New ISRO Chief had said that design changes on Chandrayaan-3 have been incorporated and testing has seen

environmental clearance.

Tokyo's Renkoji temple gave permission to Indian authorities to conduct DNA tests on ashes said to be those of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, according to fresh translation of a letter which refutes claims that the temple was "reticent", placing doubts on a commission of enquiry's ruling that the ashes were not Netaji's', Madhuri Bose, his grand-niece, says.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China has told the Indian Army that it has found a "missing" boy believed to be from Arunachal Pradesh. A senior Army officer said on Sunday that the PLA personnel did not specify where its soldiers found the boy. But it has been presumed that he is 17-year-old Miram Taron who was allegedly abducted on January 18 by PLA soldiers from near the Line of Actual Control in Upper Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

Following an unprecedented controversy in Germany and a diplomatic incident with Ukraine, German Navy chief Vice Admiral Kay-Achim Schönbach handed in his resignation over his comments in New Delhi that Ukraine can never get back Crimea and Russian President Vladimir Putin "probably" deserved respect.

Responding to criticism over the dropping of the hymn Abide with me from the Beating Retreat event this year, government sources said this year being the 75th year of Independence, playing of Indian tunes is considered more appropriate. "This year, only Indian origin or indigenous tunes are on the list," a government source said on Sunday. Abide with me will not be played so as to include the maximum number of Indian tunes, the source said. 'Ae mere watan ke logon' is an Indian tune and pays respect to all who laid down their lives for the safety and integrity of the nation, the source added.

A petition questioning a law that forces a woman to return to her husband and denies her sexual autonomy has been pending in the Supreme Court for months without a hearing. Restitution of conjugal rights, considered a medieval ecclesiastical law from England codified in several statutes, including the Hindu Marriage Act and Special Marriage Act, owes its survival largely to the fact that marital rape is not recognised as crime.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) is in touch with its German

huge progress. The mission could be launched by the middle of next year. About Chandrayaan 3-**Chandrayaan-3 will be a mission repeat of Chandrayaan-2 but will only include a lander and rover similar to that of Chandrayaan-2. It will not have an orbiter.**

2. Findings of Chandrayaan-2: 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. 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. Scientists used the Solar X-ray Monitor (XSM) onboard Chandrayaan-2 in September 2019 to study the Sun. 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. The mission consisted of an Orbiter of the Moon, Vikram (after Vikram Sarabhai) – the lander and Pragyan (wisdom) – the rover, all equipped with scientific instruments to study the moon.

3. Why is this mission still relevant? **Despite the failure, the mission's orbiter and other parts have been functioning normally, gathering information. Recently, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) released the information gathered by the scientific payloads till now, some of which were still to be analysed and assessed.**

4. Information gathered-Presence of water molecules on moon: The mission has given the most precise information about the presence of H₂O molecules on the Moon till date. Presence of Minor elements: Chromium, manganese and Sodium have been detected for the first time through remote sensing. The finding can lay the path for understanding magmatic evolution on the Moon and deeper insights into the nebular conditions as well as planetary differentiation. Information about solar flares: A large number of microflares outside the active region have been observed for the first time, and according to ISRO, this "has great implications on the understanding of the mechanism behind heating of the solar corona", which has been an open problem for many decades.

QUAD CAN HELP CLIMATE ACTION

1. The Quad, which was born in response to a natural calamity, the tsunami of 2004, are unified in saving the planet from environmental degradation. Efforts by Quad in this regard: In the first-ever in-person leaders' summit of the Quad (held in the US in 2021), the nations pledged to fight the climate crisis and partner on emerging technologies. **Focus on increasing the Indo-Pacific region's resilience to climate change by improving critical climate information-sharing and disaster-resilient infrastructure.** Building a new technical facility through the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure to provide technical assistance in small island developing states and setting up a Climate and Information Services Task Force.

2. What needs to be done? The Quad can drive inclusive energy transition in technology, manufacturing, and finance. They can provide much-needed technology expertise required to achieve the energy transition goals set under frameworks such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and OSOWOG (One Sun One World One Grid).

3. India is well-placed to provide manufacturing infrastructure to build these technologies. To take over from China as the "world's factory", it will have to mirror its advantages of large-scale production at low costs. Funding: Quad has a role and an opportunity to drive capital investments towards helping developing nations to move towards sustainable forms of energy.

4. Significance and the need for Quad's presence and involvement: Through concerted efforts and tangible strategies, the Quad nations are strategically placed to make an impact not only on their own problems, but also those of the entire planet. The time has come for them to lead the path to a truly sustainable future.

ROOFTOP SOLAR SCHEME

1. The Ministry of New & Renewable Energy has allowed households to get rooftop solar panels installed by themselves or by any vendor of their choice and a photograph of the installed system for distribution utility is sufficient to avail benefits or subsidy under the Rooftop solar scheme. Earlier under the rooftop solar scheme, the households were required to get that from the listed vendors only to avail the benefits and subsidy

counterparts for assistance in the probe against Jaswinder Singh Multani of the Sikhs for Justice (SFJ). He has been booked along with his associates from other pro-Khalistani banned outfits on the charge of attempting to spread terror activities in Punjab.

Britain on Saturday alleged that it had information that Moscow was “looking to install a pro-Russian leader in Kiev” as fears of a Russian invasion of Ukraine grow. Tensions have soared in recent weeks as tens of thousands of Russian troops mass on Ukraine’s border, along with an arsenal of tanks, fighting vehicles, artillery and missiles.

The first Taliban delegation to visit Europe since returning to power in Afghanistan began talks on Sunday in Oslo with Afghan civil society members focused on human rights, ahead of highly anticipated meetings with Western officials. Headed by Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, the delegation is to dedicate the first day of their three-day visit to talks with women activists and journalists, among others.

under the scheme.

2.About the scheme: Implemented by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy. Presently under implementation is the Grid-Connected Rooftop Solar Scheme (Phase II): **It aims to achieve a cumulative capacity of 40,000 MW from Rooftop Solar Projects by the year 2022.**

3.This scheme is being implemented in the state by distribution companies (DISCOMs). Under this scheme the Ministry is providing a 40% subsidy for the first 3 kW and 20% subsidy beyond 3 kW and upto 10 kW of solar panel capacity. The residential consumer has to pay the cost of rooftop solar plant by reducing the subsidy amount given by the Ministry as per the prescribed rate to the vendor.

