

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

The government should lower import tariffs on inputs and raw materials to stop importing inflation and help domestic manufacturers compete for global orders, Crisil said in a report, mooting policy actions in the upcoming Budget to support exports. While the recent buoyancy in global demand is likely to push India's merchandise exports past a record \$400 billion in 2021-22, 'the harder part will be to keep the momentum going once global growth moderates' as massive stimulus packages across the world wind down, the rating agency said. To attain the \$1trillion target set by the government for merchandise exports by 2029-30, Crisil emphasised the need to initiate specific measures in this Budget to boost infrastructure spending for trade, reduce tariff costs, and enhance credit risk cover to facilitate trade

The onset of the third COVID19 wave in the country has dragged down economic activity by about 20% in less than a month, as per a Nomura index tracking resumption of business operations since the pandemic started. The Nomura India Business Resumption Index fell to 100.5 for the week ended January 23, from 102.2 in the preceding week, only approximately 0.5% above pre-pandemic levels, the firm said in a note on Monday. A reading of 100 on the index indicates activity levels before the pandemic hit the economy in early 2020. This is the fourth successive week of moderation in the index, which had peaked at 120.2 in the week ended December 26, and signals a slowdown in the economy in tandem with the rise in COVID19 cases ahead of the Union Budget for 2022-23 to be presented next week.

India and Israel started a series of events to celebrate three decades of diplomatic relations, which began in 1992. The Monday event launched the logo for the 30th anniversary featuring the Star of David and the Ashoka Chakra — symbols that appear on the flags of the two countries.

Despite a complete standstill in trade and travel between India and Pakistan, a new proposal by the Pakistan Hindu Council to allow Hindu, Muslim and Sikh pilgrims to travel by air has been forwarded by the government in Islamabad to authorities in New Delhi. According to sources, the proposal was sent to

CONSENT OF AG TO INITIATE CONTEMPT PROCEEDINGS

1. Attorney General K K Venugopal has granted consent to initiate contempt proceedings against 'Dharam Sansad' leader Yati Narsinghanand over his alleged remarks against the Constitution and the Supreme Court. Need for consent: As per Section 15 of the Contempt of Courts Act, the nod of the Attorney General or the Solicitor General is a condition precedent to set the criminal contempt proceedings in motion before the apex court.

2. What is the law on contempt of courts? **The Contempt of Courts Act 1971 defines civil and criminal contempt, and lays down the powers and procedures by which courts can penalise contempt, as well as the penalties that can be given for the offence of contempt.** Contempt of court is the offense of being disobedient to or disrespectful toward a court of law and its officers in the form of behavior that opposes or defies the authority, justice and dignity of the court.

3. Why is the consent of the Attorney General required to initiate contempt proceedings? The objective behind requiring the consent of the Attorney General before taking cognizance of a complaint is to save the time of the court. This is necessary because judicial time is squandered if frivolous petitions are made and the court is the first forum for bringing them in. The AG's consent is meant to be a safeguard against frivolous petitions, as it is deemed that the AG, as an officer of the court, will independently ascertain whether the complaint is indeed valid.

4. If the AG denies consent **If the AG denies consent, the matter all but ends. The complainant can, however, separately bring the issue to the notice of the court and urge the court to take suo motu cognizance.** Article 129 of the Constitution gives the Supreme Court the power to initiate contempt cases on its own, independent of the motion brought before it by the AG or with the consent of the AG.

DISTRICT GOOD GOVERNANCE INDEX(DGGI)

1. Union home minister Amit Shah recently launched the District Good Governance Index (DGGI) in Jammu and Kashmir, which is the first Union Territory to have such an index. About the index: Launched for 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir. It has been prepared by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in partnership with the Union Territory's administration. Under the index, the policies, schemes and programs of the central as well as the state governments have been monitored at the district level.

2. Significance of the index: **The beginning of this index in Jammu and Kashmir will slowly expand to all other states and a good governance competition will start in every district of the country.** The index covered 10 sectors and 58 indicators. The index will benefit residents of Jammu and Kashmir in a big way as it will work towards improving the district machinery, make districts result-oriented and also improve their delivery mechanism.

3. Highlights of the index: **Jammu district topped the composite ranking, followed by Doda and Samba districts of the Jammu Division. This was followed by Pulwama district of the Srinagar Division at fourth spot and Srinagar district at the fifth.** The district of Rajouri finished at the last spot, while Poonch and Shopian districts also featured towards the end of the rankings. Srinagar district bagged the first rank in Public Infrastructure and Utilities sector. Srinagar also ranked in the top 5 districts in Composite GGI in Kashmir Division with a score of 5.313 points. Kishtwar topped in 'Agriculture and Allied Sector', Pulwama topped in 'Human Resource Development', Reasi topped in 'Public Health', Ramban topped in 'Social Welfare and Development', and Ganderbal topped in the 'Financial Inclusion' sector.

4. Performance of J&K in the National Good Governance Index: Previously, the Centre had released the National Good Governance Index on December 25 last year that indicated Jammu and Kashmir saw an increase of 3.7% in Good

the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) by the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi on behalf of the Pakistan Hindu Council (PHC) chief patron, Ramesh Vankwani, asking that two chartered flights of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) carrying pilgrims be allowed to fly from Lahore and Karachi to destinations in India this Saturday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with the winners of the National Child Award, 2022, and extolled the valour and sacrifice of the four martyred sons of Guru Gobind Singh. He also urged them to follow Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's motto of "nation first".

Advocate Prashant Bhushan told the Supreme Court on Monday that it was "totally unbecoming" of the Tripura government to indulge in "whataboutery" by asking why the same petitioners seeking an independent probe on violence in the State were silent about violence of a larger scale in West Bengal.

The Border Security Force (BSF) on Monday said more than 100 terrorists were present at launch pads across the border, waiting to infiltrate into Jammu and Kashmir. However, it added that the overall situation along the Line of Control has been peaceful since the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan in 2021. "Overall peaceful scenario was observed along the LoC in J&K post the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan in 2021.

Aimed at benefiting more than 40 lakh beneficiaries (both in service and retired personnel) with realtime information from the convenience of their homes, the Health Ministry has revamped the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) website (www.cghs.gov.in) and mobile app, "MyCGHS". Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya digitally launched the revamped website. With the new feature of tele-consultation, the CGHS beneficiaries can seek expert advice.

NATO allies have put forces on standby and sent ships and fighter jets to bolster Europe's eastern defences as tensions soar over Russia's military build up around Ukraine, the alliance said Monday. Tensions have soared over Russia's deployment of some 1,00,000 troops and heavy armour at its neighbour's borders, despite the Kremlin's insistence it is not planning a new incursion. The U.S., Britain and Australia ordered diplomats' families to leave Kiev, while France told its citizens to avoid nonessential travel to Ukraine.

Justice Ayesha Malik took oath as

Governance Indicators from 2019 to 2021. The strong performance of J-K was also noted in the fields of commerce and industry, agriculture, judiciary and public infrastructure among others.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF BRIDGE CHINA IS BUILDING ON PANGONG LAKE

1. Construction of a bridge by China on the Pangong Tso in eastern Ladakh is a latest addition to the ongoing standoff between India and China. Where is China building the bridge? It is being built on the north bank of the Pangong Tso and the Chushul sub-sector on the south bank. The site of the bridge is within India's claim line, although the area has been under Chinese control since 1958.

2. Significance of the bridge for India: It will help in quick mobilization of PLA troops between the two banks at one of the lake's narrowest points. The Kailash range is around 35 km west of the bridge site. Once this bridge gets completed, it will enable Chinese troops to simply cross over, slashing travel time to Kailash range from about 12 hours to about four hours. It will strengthen the idea of permanency being established by Beijing in the region.

3. About Pangong Tso: **Pangong Tso literally translates into a "conclave lake". Pangong means conclave in Ladakhi and Tso means lake in Tibetan language. Situated at over 14,000 feet, the Lake is about 135 km long.** It is formed from Tethys geosyncline. The Karakoram Mountain range, which crosses Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and India, with heights of over 6,000 meters including K2, the world's second highest peak, ends at the north bank of Pangong Tso. Its southern bank too has high broken mountains sloping towards Spangur Lake in the south. The lake's water, while crystal clear, is brackish, making it undrinkable.

4. Fingers-The lake has mountain spurs of the Chang Chenmo range jutting down, referred to as fingers. There are eight of them in contention here. India and China have different understanding of where the LAC passes through. India has maintained that the LAC passes through Finger 8, which has been the site of the final military post of China.

5. **Pangong Tso is strategically crucial as it is very close to Chusul Valley, which was one of the battlefronts between India and China during the 1962 war.** China appears to keep India constricted in the region by taking strategic advantage of looking over the Chusul Valley, which it can do if it advances along Pangong Tso.

4th ASIA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON TIGER CONSERVATION

1. 4th Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation was recently organised by the Government of Malaysia and Global Tiger Forum (GTF). The conference is an important event for reviewing progress towards the Global Tiger Recovery Programme and commitments to tiger conservation. Outcome: The Kuala Lumpur Joint Statement was adopted.

2. India's statement at the summit: **India will facilitate Tiger Range Countries towards finalisation of New Delhi declaration for the Global Tiger Summit to be held at Vladivostok, Russia later this year.** A "Pre-Tiger Summit" meeting was held at New Delhi in 2010, wherein the draft declaration on tiger conservation for Global Tiger Summit was finalised.

3. India's efforts in tiger conservation: India has achieved the remarkable feat of doubling the tiger population in 2018 itself, 4 years ahead of the targeted year 2022. The model of success of India's tiger governance is now being replicated for other wildlife like the Lion, Dolphin, Leopard, Snow Leopard and other small wild cats. The budgetary allocation for tiger conservation has increased from Rs 185 crore in 2014 to Rs 300 crore in 2022. 14 Tiger Reserves in India have already been awarded with international CA|TS accreditation and efforts are on to bring in more Tiger Reserves under CA|TS accreditation.

GHERKINS

1. India has emerged as the largest exporter of gherkins in the world. Also known as pickling cucumber.

2. Gherkin cultivation, processing and exports started in India during the early 1990s with a modest beginning in Karnataka and later extended to the neighbouring states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Nearly 15% production of the

the first woman judge of Pakistan Supreme Court, a landmark occasion in a nation where activists say the law is often wielded against women. Justice Malik attended a ceremony in the capital Islamabad where she now sits on the bench alongside 16 male colleagues at Pakistan's highest court.

world's gherkin requirement is grown in India.