

### NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Union Minister of State for Science & Technology Jitendra Singh inaugurated India's first open rock museum displaying different types of rocks gathered from different States of ages ranging from 3.3 billion years to around 55 million years on the campus of the CSIR National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) Hyderabad. About 46 rocks of different sizes have been displayed in a garden with descriptions giving the economic and scientific importance of some of them located as deep as 175 km from the surface of the earth. The rocks are from Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir and others.

Ahead of Assembly polls in five States, the expenditure limit for candidates for Lok Sabha constituencies was increased to ₹75 lakh from ₹54 lakh and ₹95 lakh from ₹70 lakh, depending on the State, while the spending limit for Assembly constituencies was hiked from ₹20 lakh to ₹28 lakh and ₹28 lakh to ₹40 lakh, the Election Commission said.

A Moscow led military alliance dispatched troops to help quell mounting unrest in Kazakhstan on Thursday as the police said dozens were killed trying to storm government buildings. Long seen as one of the most stable of the ex-Soviet republics of Central Asia, energy rich Kazakhstan is facing its biggest crisis in decades after days of protests over rising fuel prices escalated into widespread unrest. Under increasing pressure, President Kassym Jomart Tokayev appealed overnight to the Russia dominated Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), which includes five other ex-Soviet states, to combat. Within hours, the alliance said the first troops had been sent — including Russian paratroopers and military units from the other CSTO members — in its first major joint action since its founding in 1999.

In a conservation effort to monitor seasonal fluctuations in birds' movements, the ringing of oriental darters has been taken up in the world famous Bharatpur bird sanctuary (officially Keoladeo National Park) here after a gap of 22 years. The ringing of darters, or snakebirds, with colourful bands will help ascertain their habit of reporting back at the nests used earlier by them. Oriental darters

### AQUAMATION

**1.**The body of Nobel Peace Prize winning Anglican archbishop and anti-apartheid campaigner Desmond Tutu underwent aquamation. Also known as water cremation, green cremation or chemical cremation or alkaline hydrolysis, Aquamation is a "flameless cremation" process that involves cremation by water rather than fire. Aquamation is a process in which the body of the deceased is immersed for 3 to 4 hours in a mixture of water (95%) and a strong alkali (5%) in a pressurized metal cylinder and heated to around 150 degree centigrade.

**2.**The combination of gentle water flow, temperature and alkalinity in this process accentuate the breakdown of the organic materials. The decomposition that occurs in alkaline hydrolysis is the same as that which occurs during burial, just sped up dramatically by the chemicals. **3.**Resultant - The process liquifies everything, and leaves behind bones and a neutral liquid called effluent. Bones are then dried with the help of an oven and reduced to white dust. Effluent is sterile, and contains salts, sugars, amino acids and peptides. There is no tissue and no DNA left after the process completes. This effluent is discharged with all other wastewater, and is a welcome addition to the water systems.

**4.**History - The process of Aquamation was developed and patented in 1888 by Amos Herbert Hanson, a farmer who was trying to develop an ingenious way to make fertilizer from animal carcasses. The first commercial system was installed at Albany Medical College in 1993. Thereafter, the process continued to be in use by hospitals and universities with donated body programmes.

**5.**Benefits - The process of aquamation uses energy which is 5 times less than fire. It also reduces by about 35% the amount of greenhouse gases that are emitted during cremation. The process is a greener alternative to the traditional cremation methods as it uses significantly less fuel and has an overall lower carbon footprint than traditional methods. Legality - Aquamation was introduced in South Africa in 2019. It is authorized in only a few countries.

### UJALA PROGRAMME

**1.**Ministry of Power has successfully completed seven years of distributing and selling LED lights under its flagship UJALA programme. Launched in January 2015, the Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) programme has evolved to be world's largest zero-subsidy domestic lighting programme. It addresses concerns like high electrification cost and high emissions that result from inefficient lighting.

**2.**Purpose - **Efficient light bulbs like LEDs consumes only one-tenth of energy used by ordinary bulb to provide the same or better light output. So, under the scheme, 20W LED tube lights and BEE 5-star rated energy efficient fans are also distributed to the consumers.** The 20W LED tube lights are 50% more energy efficient than conventional 40W tube lights and are available for Rs. 220/- per tube, as against the market price of Rs. 400-600. The energy efficient fans are rated 30% more energy efficient than conventional fans and are priced at Rs. 1200/- per fan.

**3.**Implementation - The Electricity Distribution Company and Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) are implementing the programme. Leveraging increased industry competition and mass procurement, EESL has adopted an innovative procurement strategy, which resulted in well-known benefits, and EESL is now known as the USP of programme UJALA.

**4.**Achievements - UJALA succeeded in bringing down the retail price of LED bulbs from INR 300-350 per bulb to INR 70-80 per bulb. Apart from making affordable energy accessible to all, the programme also resulted in massive energy savings - around 47,778 Million kWh per annum energy has been saved.

### RESTRUCTURING OF SDF LOANS

**1.**The Department of Food and Public Distribution issued guidelines for restructuring of Sugar Development Fund (SDF) Loans under Rule 26 of the SDF Rules 1983. These guidelines

have been classified as “near-threatened” by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), the Ramakrishna Mission, and the Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust (SSST) in Shirdi are among the 6,000 NGOs that did not have their FCRA registration renewed by the Union Home Ministry recently. The Tirupati Venkateswara temple in Andhra Pradesh and the Ramakrishna Mission are registered as Hindu religious organisations, while the SSST falls under the “religious (others)” category of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA). Registered associations can receive foreign contributions for social, educational, religious, economic and cultural purposes.

The Jammu and Kashmir government has declared around 1,358 kanals (169.75 acres) as “strategic areas” in the tourist hotspots of Gulmarg and Sonamarg in north and central Kashmir. According to an order issued by the Tourism Department, 1,034 kanals and six marlas of land in Gulmarg and 354 kanals in Sonamarg have been notified as strategic areas by the authorities, while exercising powers under the Jammu and Kashmir Development Act. It said the Corps Commander must ensure strict adherence to the environment laws.

In a nationwide programme to take the third eye to the sky, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has called for more effective utilisation of drone applications and urged the Ministry of Home Affairs to deploy unmanned aerial vehicles for surveillance, situational analysis, crime control, VVIP security, disaster management, etc. In a note sent to at least a dozen Ministries, the Secretary, MoCA, Rajiv Bansal, said drones offered tremendous benefits to almost every sector of the economy, including but not limited to, national defence, agriculture, law enforcement, and mapping, among others. As part of the initiatives to make India a global hub for drones under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan and in the backdrop of the Union government rolling out the liberalised Drone Rules 2021, he suggested the heads of various Ministries promote effective use of the technology.

The asset quality of Indian lenders, especially the restructured loan book, is at risk from a potential third wave of COVID19, ICRA Ratings said in a report. “As banks restructured most of these loans

were issued to facilitate rehabilitation of financially weak but economically viable sugar mills which have availed loans under the Sugar Development Fund Act, 1982. These guidelines are uniformly applicable for SDF loans availed by all types of concerns, including Co-operative Societies, Private Limited Companies and Public Limited Companies. The Guidelines have provision for 2-years moratorium and then 5 years of repayment of the SDF loans.

2. Waiver of additional interest in full will be given to the eligible sugar factories. Eligibility - The following sugar factories are eligible to apply for re-structuring, A sugar factory that has been incurring cash losses continuously for the last 3 financial years or Sugar factory’s net worth is negative, and The sugar factory is not closed/has not ceased to crush cane for more than 2 sugar seasons, excluding the current sugar season.

3. **Sugar Development Fund Sugar Development Fund (SDF) was established in 1982, through the Sugar Development Fund Act 1982.** It provides financial assistance to the sugar factories at concessional interest rates in accordance with SDF Act, 1982 and SDF Rules, 1983.

4. It is being utilized presently to grant loans to the sugar mills for Facilitating the rehabilitation and modernization/ Cane Development/ Bagasse based co-generation power projects/ Production of anhydrous alcohol or ethanol from alcohol/ Conversion of existing ethanol plant into Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) plant and development of Sugar cane. The loans are provided at a concessional rate of 2% below the prevailing bank rate.

### CONSUMER PROTECTION RULES, 2021

1. In exercise of its powers under provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, the Central Government has notified the Consumer Protection (Jurisdiction of the District Commission, the State Commission and the National Commission) Rules, 2021. The new rules revised pecuniary jurisdiction for entertaining consumer complaints.

2. Overview of the new rules: Food and Public Distribution, district commissions will have jurisdiction **to entertain complaints where the value of the goods or services paid does not exceed ₹50 lakh.** The State commissions can look onto complaints in the range of ₹50 lakh- ₹two crores. The District Commissions will have jurisdiction to entertain complaints where value of the goods or services paid as consideration does not exceed 50 lakh rupees.

3. State Commissions shall have jurisdiction to entertain complaints where value of the goods or services paid as consideration exceeds 50 lakh rupees but does not exceed two crore rupees, it notified. National Commission will have jurisdiction to entertain complaints where value of the goods or services paid as consideration exceeds two crore rupees.

4. Mechanism for the protection of consumer rights: Currently, the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 promulgates a three-tier quasi-judicial mechanism for redressal of consumer disputes namely district commissions, state commissions and national commission. The Act also stipulates the pecuniary jurisdiction of each tier of consumer commission. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 provides consumers the option of filing complaint electronically. To facilitate consumers in filing their complaint online, the Central Government has set up the E-Daakhil Portal. To provide a faster and amicable mode of settling consumer disputes, the Act also includes reference of consumer disputes to Mediation, with the consent of both parties.

5. **Time period for disposal of complaints: The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 stipulates that “every complaint shall be disposed of as expeditiously as possible and endeavour shall be made to decide the complaint within a period of three months** from the date of receipt of notice by opposite party where the complaint does not require analysis or testing of commodities and within 5 months if it requires analysis or testing of commodities.”

### NEAT 3.0

1. Recently, the Union Education Minister launched National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) 3.0. The Ministry of Education had announced NEAT as a Public-Private partnership model between the Government (through its implementing agency AICTE) and the Education Technology companies across India.

2. **It is an initiative to provide the use of best-developed**

with a moratorium of up to 12 months, this book is likely to start exiting the moratorium from Q4 FY2022 and Q1 FY2023,” he noted. “Therefore, a third wave poses high risk to the performance of the borrowers that were impacted by the previous waves and hence poses a risk to the improving trend of asset quality, profitability, and solvency.

**technological solutions in the education sector to enhance the employability of the youth on a single platform for learners’ convenience.** 3. These solutions use artificial intelligence for a personalised and customised learning experience for better learning outcomes and skill development in niche areas.

