

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

The water quality of the Ganga was clean enough for bathing and capable of supporting the river ecosystem for almost the entire stretch of the river, Bishweswar Tudu, Minister of State for Water Resources, said in the Rajya Sabha. Dissolved oxygen (DO), which is an indicator of river health was within "acceptable limits" of "bathing water quality criteria". A report by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in 2018, pointed out four polluted stretches on the main stem of river Ganga. There are five categories ranked 1 to 5, with 1 the most polluted and 5 the least. An updated 2021 report noted that none of the stretches of the Ganga were now in Priority Category I to IV and only two stretches are in Priority Category V with biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), a parameter different from DO, ranging between 36 microgram/litre as per CPCB categorisation of polluted stretch.

About 27.3 million workers, representing 7% of the country's workforce, will require digital skills training for their jobs over the next year, as demand for such skills, especially cloud related skills, became more acute during the pandemic, according to a new report. The report - Building Digital Skills for the changing workforce, has been prepared by AlphaBeta and commissioned by AWS.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for raw jute for the 2022-23 season. According to an official release, the MSP of raw jute (TDN3 equivalent to TD5 grade) has been fixed at ₹4,750 a quintal for 2022-2023 season, which is ₹250 higher than the previous season. "This would ensure a return of 60.5% over All India weighted average cost of production," the government said.

The Union Cabinet cleared a Bill that proposes to unify the three civic bodies in Delhi. The Delhi Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2022, is expected to be tabled in Parliament this week. The amendment proposes a unified Municipal Corporation of Delhi by subsuming the South Delhi Municipal Corporation, the North Delhi Municipal Corporation and the East Delhi Municipal Corporation. The corporation was trifurcated in 2012. "The division of the corporation was uneven in terms of

FINLANDIZATION

1. Recently, as the Russia invoked the threat of Ukraine joining NATO as a pretext for the invasion, the term "Finlandization" of Ukraine has become popular. 'Finlandization' is the process whereby a country is induced to favour, or refrain from opposing, the interests of a more powerful country, despite not being politically allied to it. This term was originally used with reference to the influence of the former Soviet Union on its neighbour Finland.

2. It refers to the policy of strict neutrality between Moscow and the West that Finland followed during the decades of the Cold War. The principle of neutrality was rooted in the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance (or YYA Treaty) that Finland signed with the USSR in 1948.

3. Among other things, Moscow guaranteed it wouldn't invade Finland. Later, the term was formally coined by the German political scientist Richard Lowenthal in 1961 in the wake of the Berlin crisis. He used it to warn about the Soviet Union's efforts to gain influence in Europe by the same oppressive methods they used on Finland.

OL CHIKI

1. For first time, the Indian Constitution has been translated in Santali, written in the Ol Chiki script. Also known as Ol Cemet', Ol script and Ol ciki Script, the Ol Chiki script is used for writing Santali. Pandit Raghunath Murmu (Guru Gomke) is the inventor of Ol Chiki script.

2. In the novel Bidu Chandan, he described how god Bidu, and goddess Chandan who appear on Earth as humans had naturally invented the Ol Chiki script to communicate with each other using written Santali. One of the interesting feature of the Ol Chiki script is that it makes use of signs and symbols long familiar to the Santals.

3. Santali is a language with its own special characteristics, and has a literature which dates back to the beginning of the 15th century. Santali belongs to the Munda group languages of the Austro-Asiatic family. According to the 2011 Census of India, Santali is spoken by over 70 lakh people across the country. In 2003, the 92nd Constitutional Amendment Act added Santali (along with the Bodo, Dogri and Maithili languages) to Schedule VIII (Official Languages of India) to the Constitution of India.

4. This addition meant that the Indian government was obligated to undertake the development of the Santali language and to allow students appearing for school-level examinations and entrance examinations for public service jobs to use the language. In 2005, India's Sahitya Akademi started handing out awards every year for outstanding literary works in Santali, a move that helped preserve and give more visibility to the community's literature.

GI TAG FOR NARASINGHAPETTAI NAGASWARM

1. Narasinghapettai Nagaswaram has got the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag under 'musical instruments of class 15'. Narasinghapettai Nagaswaram is Tamil Nadu's traditional wind instrument, made by traditional village artisans of Kumbakonam. The artisans based in Narasinganpetti village are making them through specialised processing skills.

2. The technique and skill of making these instruments were inherited from their forefathers. The nagaswaram now used by artists throughout is called pari naggeswaram and is longer than Thimiri. Making - A major portion of Narasinghapettai Nagaswaram is made from the traditional wood 'acha' (Hardwickia binata), a type of ebony.

3. Artisans of the nagaswaram choose the wood wisely, ensuring it is 200 years old, and which does not absorb moisture. The top portion has a metal staple into which a small metallic cylinder is inserted to hold the mouthpiece made of reed.

4. The reeds are made from the leaves of a locally grown plant called 'naanai' (a variety of bamboo). Artisans use drilling machines, besides carpentry tools, to make the nagaswarams

territorial divisions and revenue generation. As a result, there is a huge gap in the resources available to the three corporations, vis à vis their obligation,” a government source said.

Fitch Ratings on Tuesday lowered its 2022-23 growth forecast for India to 8.5%, from 10.3%, citing sharply higher energy prices that would spur inflation beyond 7% as the country's oil companies passed on the higher prices to retail consumers. “Global inflation is back with a vengeance after an absence of at least two decades,” said Brian Coulton, Chief Economist, Fitch Ratings.

Power distribution utilities outstanding dues stood at ₹1 lakh crore at the end of February this year, Parliament was informed on Tuesday.

The government will aim to release employment data within five months of conducting the relevant surveys and strive to align these releases with GDP data in the long run, the Statistics Ministry told a Parliamentary panel that questioned the significant delay in the release of ‘one of the most important socio-economic indicators’ for policymaking. Urging the Statistics Ministry to reduce the time lags in releasing the reports based on the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS).

Employers in India continue to report bullish hiring outlook for the April-June quarter, with 38% of companies planning to add more staff in the next three months, a survey showed. As per the 60th annual edition of the ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey of 3,090 employers, hiring sentiments across sectors and regions are much stronger compared with the same period last year.

China on Tuesday said it has the right to develop South China Sea islands as it sees fit in the wake of U.S. accusations that it has fully militarised at least three of several islands it built in the disputed waterway in violation of a previous commitment.

Ukrainian authorities announced a new bid on Tuesday to rescue civilians from besieged port city Mariupol which has been under heavy bombardments since Russia's invasion began almost a month ago, as capital Kyiv hunkered down in a curfew. More than 2,00,000 people are trapped in the city described by those who managed to escape as a “freezing hellscape riddled with dead bodies and destroyed buildings”, Human Rights Watch said, quoting

that are played widely in functions like weddings and temple festivals.

BIOLOGICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS CONVENTION

1. India calls on nations to abide by Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention at the UNSC meet. Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) was the first multi-lateral treaty categorically banning biological and toxin weapons.

2. It is a disarmament treaty that effectively bans the development, stockpile, production, or transfer of biological agents and toxins of “types and quantities” that are not protective or peaceful. BTWC has 183 members (including India).

REASONABLE ACCOMODATION

1. In its recent verdict on Hijab case, the Karnataka High Court rejected an argument in support of permitting Muslim girls wearing head-scarves that was based on the principle of ‘reasonable accommodation’. This meant that the court did not favour making any change or adjustment to the rule that could have enabled the students to maintain their belief or practice even while adhering to the uniform rule.

2. It is a principle that promotes equality, enables the grant of positive rights and prevents discrimination based on disability, health condition or personal belief. It captures the positive obligation of the State and private parties to provide additional support to persons with disabilities to facilitate their full and effective participation in society.

3. The general principle is that reasonable accommodation should be provided, unless some undue hardship is caused by such accommodation. In 2016, the ILO came out with a practical guide on promoting diversity and inclusion through workplace adjustments. Four categories of workers were chosen for the guide: Workers with disabilities. Workers living with HIV and AIDS. Pregnant workers and those with family responsibilities. Workers who hold a particular religion or belief.

4. A modified working environment, shortened or staggered working hours, additional support from supervisory staff and reduced work commitments are ways in which accommodation can be made. Suitable changes in recruitment processes — allowing scribes during written tests or sign language interpreters during interviews — will also be a form of accommodation.

5. Significance: The provision of reasonable accommodation plays a major role in addressing these barriers and thus contributes to greater workplace equality, diversity and inclusion.

EXOMARS

1. The European Space Agency's ExoMars 2022 mission has been delayed after the agency suspended all cooperation with Russia's space program Roscosmos. About ExoMars: It was a joint endeavour between ESA and the Russian space agency, Roscosmos. The primary goal of the ExoMars programme is to address the question of whether life has ever existed on Mars.

2. Components of the mission: The programme comprises two missions. The first launched in March 2016 and consists of the Trace Gas Orbiter (TGO) and Schiaparelli, an entry, descent and landing demonstrator module. TGO's main objectives are to search for evidence of methane and other trace atmospheric gases that could be signatures of active biological or geological processes. The Schiaparelli probe crashed during its attempt to land on Mars. The second, comprising a rover and surface platform, is planned for 2022. Together they will address the question of whether life has ever existed on Mars.

3. Objective: The primary aim of the mission is to check if there has ever been life on Mars and also understand the history of water on the planet. The main goal is to land ESA's rover at a site which has high-potential for finding well-preserved organic material, particularly from the history of the planet.

BOMA TECHNIQUE

1. Africa's Boma technique was undertaken at Keoladeo National Park in Rajasthan's Bharatpur district recently for capturing and translocating spotted deer. The aim is to improve the prey base in Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve, situated 450 km away.

2. The move will lead to herbivores populating the forests ahead of the proposed shifting of two tigers to Mukundara. What is Boma Technique? **The Boma capturing technique, which is popular in Africa, involves luring of animals into an**

data provided by a local official.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced new visa restrictions on Chinese officials on Monday for their actions to repress ethnic and religious minorities both inside and outside the country.

Till date, the Ministry of Ayush has supported 59,350 farmers in the cultivation 84 medicinal plants species out of the 140 prioritised medicinal plants, and covered 56,305 hectare area throughout the country from the financial year 2015 16 to 202021, according to information submitted by Ayush Minister Sarbananda Sonowal in Rajya Sabha in the ongoing Parliament session.

enclosure by chasing them through a funnel-like fencing.

3.The funnel tapers into an animal selection-cum-loading chute, supported with grass mats and green net to make it opaque for animals, which are herded into a large vehicle for their transport to another location.