

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

With the military confrontation with China in Ladakh putting extra pressure on mobilisation of men and machinery in the past two years, around 1,000 workers stayed put in snowbound Sonamarg in central Kashmir this winter to advance the deadline by 2024 for all weather connectivity with Ladakh through 18 kmlong multiple tunnels to cross the treacherous Zojila mountain pass. According to the official figures, India shares 3,488 km of border with China and 1,597 km of it runs through Ladakh. The tunnel will connect Baltal in Kashmir with Minamarg in Ladakh. "This will reduce travel time by two and a half hours.

More than 5,200 companies having credit exposure of ₹5 crore or above were categorised as nonperforming assets (NPAs) or bad loans on the banks' books as of December 31, 2021, Parliament was informed on Monday. The number of unique borrowers having aggregate credit exposure of ₹5 crore and above, identified as companies, and classified as nonperforming assets (NPA) stood at 5,231 as of December 31, 2021, MoS Finance Bhagwat Karad said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

The Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR) has deferred its decision on a recommendation to remove the 1921 Malabar Rebellion martyrs, including Variamkunnaathu Kunhahamad Haji and Ali Musliyar, from the list of India's freedom fighters. Though a report of the subcommittee, which reportedly recommended the removal of 382 martyrs from the list of freedom fighters in the fifth volume of the Dictionary of Martyrs of India's Freedom Struggle (1857-1947), was placed at the council meeting on Sunday, it was decided to forward the report to the Research Project Committee (RPC) of the council.

The Union Environment Ministry has constituted a "permanent" coordination committee that includes representatives of the Ministries of Railways and Environment to prevent elephant deaths on railway tracks, Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said in a written response to a question in the Lok Sabha on Monday. Mr. Yadav said that 19 elephants were killed across the country on railway tracks in 2018-19, 14 in 2019-20 and 12 in 2020-21.

KETTI VALLEY

1. Ketti stream, which flows through the Ketti valley, is getting choked with plastic waste and glass bottles being thrown into it. **One of the largest valleys in the world, the 7,000-ft-deep Ketti Valley extends from the plains of Coimbatore to the Mysore Plateau.**

2. Also known as Switzerland of Nilgiris, the Ketti Valley is the largest valley in the Nilgiris. From this valley, a breathtaking view of 14 neighbouring villages - mostly inhabited by the Toda and Badagas - can be seen. Ketti village is the gateway to the valley. Ketti stream flows through the Ketti valley into the Kattery Dam.

3. From Kattery dam, it flows through the Kattery falls and eventually drains into Bhavani River downstream. Apart from the copious amount of agricultural runoff that makes its way into the stream, plastic and glass bottles are also thrown into it from the villages and human settlements that are located along its course. The consequences of the build-up of plastic waste in the stream are felt in the Kattery Dam.

ARTEMIS-I PROGRAMME

1. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has rolled out its Artemis I moon mission to the launchpad for testing at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, United States. NASA's Artemis mission is named after the Greek Goddess of the moon, and she twin sister of Greek God Apollo. Artemis I is an uncrewed space mission. It is the first of NASA's deep space exploration systems.

2. **Purpose - With the Artemis programme, NASA aims to land humans on the moon by 2024, and also plans to land the first woman and first person of colour on the moon. NASA will establish an Artemis Base Camp on the surface and a gateway in the lunar orbit to aid exploration by robots and astronauts.** The gateway is a critical component of NASA's sustainable lunar operations and will serve as a multi-purpose outpost orbiting the moon. Space Launch System (SLS) - the world's most powerful rocket - will be used to launch the spacecraft.

3. It will travel 2,80,000 miles from the earth for over 4 to 6 weeks during the course of the mission. [The SLS rocket has been designed for space missions beyond the low-earth orbit and can carry crew or cargo to the moon and beyond.] The SLS will deploy the interim cryogenic propulsion stage (ICPS) that will give Orion the thrust needed to leave the earth's orbit and travel towards the moon. [ICPS is a liquid oxygen/liquid hydrogen-based propulsion system.]

4. It will fly around 100 km above the surface of the moon and use its gravitational pull to propel Orion into an opposite deep orbit around 70,000 km from the moon, where it will stay for approximately 6 days. Orion spacecraft is going to remain in space without docking to a space station, longer than any ship for astronauts has ever done before. The aim of the exercise is to collect data and to allow mission controllers to assess the performance of the spacecraft. The spacecraft will communicate with the control centre back on Earth through the deep-space network.

5. **To re-enter the earth's atmosphere, Orion will do a close flyby within less than 100 km of the moon's surface and use both the service module and the moon's gravity to accelerate back towards the earth.** The mission will end with the spacecraft's ability to return safely to the earth. Significance - Eventually, the learnings from the Artemis programme will be utilised to send the first astronauts to Mars. NASA plans on using the lunar orbit to gain the necessary experience to extend human exploration of space farther into the solar system.

C40 CITIES NETWORK

1. Maharashtra has launched the Mumbai Climate Action Plan (MCAP) in partnership with the C40 Cities Network. Mumbai Climate Action Plan is essentially designed to reduce emissions and meet the climate goals outlined in the Paris Agreement to

The Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill, 2022, that would allow the police and prison authorities to collect, store and analyse physical and biological samples, including retina and iris scans, was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Monday amid strong protests from Opposition members, who forced a vote on the issue and termed the Bill “unconstitutional”. The Bill also seeks to apply these provisions to persons held under any preventive detention law. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) will be the repository of physical and biological samples, signature and handwriting data that can be preserved for at least 75 years.

Trade unions across the country on Monday started a two day strike in protest against the Union government’s policies, affecting public sector banks and transport operations in several States. A joint platform of 10 Central trade unions had called the ‘Bharat Bandh’ against the government’s “antiworker” policies, privatisation and monetisation plans for public sector undertakings and assets.

The BJP and the Congress in Odisha said there was a complete breakdown in neutrality of the State bureaucracy, a day after senior IAS and IPS officers congratulated Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for the Biju Janata Dal’s victory in the rural and urban local body polls. The Opposition parties said bureaucrats have become “collaborators in political activities” in the State.

India is not considering buying oil from Russia or any other country using Indian rupees, the junior oil minister told Parliament on Monday, after Western nations imposed sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine. With Western sanctions hitting Russia’s dollar based trading, there is focus on Moscow’s efforts to switch to other currencies, including the possible use of the yuan and rupee in deals with China and India.

Indian airports could see total number of domestic and international passengers return to pre-pandemic levels by the end of financial year 2023, according to a forecast by the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

Microsoft has introduced a cybersecurity skills development campaign in 23 geographies, including India, to address the alarming shortage of Internet security professionals. By 2025 there will be 3.5 million cybersecurity jobs available globally, representing a 350% increase over

limit global warming to 1.5 °C. Found in 2005, the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group is an association of 97 cities from around the world C40.

2.It is a global network of mayors aimed at fighting climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, thus mitigating climate risks. The group represents one-twelfth of the world population and a quarter of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The goal of the C40’s initiative is to reduce the emissions of its member cities to half within a decade.

3.Membership to the group comes from performance-based requirements, not membership fees. C40’s Leadership Standards set the minimum requirements for all member cities and ensure the integrity of C40 as a network of climate leaders. Five Indian cities are currently a part of the C40 network. These are Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, and Mumbai.

CAUSES OF MATERNAL MORTALITY

1.According to the latest report of the Registrar General of India (RGI), the Maternal Mortality Ratio in India has reduced by 10 points - from 113 in 2016-18 to 103 in 2017-19. The World Health Organisation describes maternal death as a death from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management, excluding accidental or incidental causes, during pregnancy and childbirth or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy.

2.Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) is defined as the number of maternal deaths during a given time period per 100,000 live births during the same time period. With this steady decline, India is on track to achieve the UN’s Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target to reduce the maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030. Kerala, Maharashtra, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Jharkhand have already achieved the SDG target, with the number of deaths as low as 30 in some states. National Health Mission aims at reducing the MMR to 1/1000 live births.

3.Causes - Maternal mortality is a measure of the reproductive health of women in an area. According to the UNICEF, the major causes for maternal mortality are Haemorrhaging (severe bleeding), infections, high blood pressure during pregnancy, anaemia, complications from delivery, and unsafe abortions. A large number of these issues can be alleviated with proper medical support, which is sometimes not easy to access. These complications are a result of compounded social, cultural and medical factors.

4.Early pregnancy between 15 and 19 years of age, when the adolescent girls are themselves growing, can lead to numerous complications that often result in the death of the mother. Child marriage, even though declared illegal in India, aggravates cases of pregnancy-related complications in young girls. Other causes that result in maternal deaths are lack of necessary medical care during childbirth or financial constraints to access medical care.

5.Reducing MMR -Regular collection and review of data from Maternal Death Surveillance and Response (MDSR) has helped the government plan corrective measures to reduce maternal mortality over the years. The collection of data is a structured procedure starting at the block level and moving up to districts and states. States have been structured into three groups based on the frequency of maternal deaths: high MMR, moderately high MMR and low MMR. Improving and establishing healthcare infrastructure in rural and remote areas can significantly reduce MMR in India.

6.Creating awareness in society is also an important step to reduce maternal mortality since many women are unable to access adequate healthcare facilities due to cultural practices or societal taboos.

STEPS TAKEN TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT

1.Data on Employment and Unemployment is collected through Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted by National Statistical Office, Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation since 2017-18. As employment generation coupled with improving employability is the priority of the Government, the Government of India has taken various steps for generating employment in the country.

2.They are, Aatmanirbhar Bharat package provides stimulus to business and to mitigate the adverse impact of Covid 19. Under this package, the Government is providing fiscal stimulus of more than Rs. 27 lakh crore. This package

an eightyyear period, as per Cybersecurity Ventures. By that time, India alone is estimated to have almost 3.5 lakh cybersecurity job positions waiting to be filled.

The deepening alliance between Israel and several Arab states “intimidates and deters” Iran, Israel’s Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said on Monday as he hosted a meeting with four Arab Foreign Ministers.

China will host the third meeting of Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan’s neighbours, with Beijing giving its backing to a new dialogue mechanism that brings together Russia, Pakistan and Iran among other neighbours.

The Lok Sabha on Monday passed a Bill to include the Darlong community as a subtribe of the Kuki tribe on the list of Scheduled Tribes of Tripura even as Opposition members called for a more comprehensive law on including communities on the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe lists rather than in a piecemeal allocation.

The Assam government informed the State Assembly that it does not have the complete data regarding ‘doubtful (D) voters’ in the State. D-voters are those who could not provide evidence in favour of their Indian nationality.

comprises of various long term programs/ policies for making the country self-reliant and to create employment opportunities. Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY) has been launched in 2020 as part of Atmanirbhar Bharat package 3.0.

3.It aims to incentivize employers for creation of new employment along with social security benefits and restoration of loss of employment during Covid-19 pandemic. Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) is being implemented by the Government for facilitating self-employment. Under PMMY, collateral free loans upto Rs. 10 lakh, are extended to micro/small business enterprises and to individuals to enable them to setup or expand their business activities. had Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan (GKRA) of 125 days was launched by the Government in 2020.

4.It aims to boost employment and livelihood opportunities for returnee migrant workers and similarly affected persons including youth in rural areas, in 116 selected districts across 6 States (Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh). **The Government of India is encouraging various projects involving substantial investment and public expenditure on schemes like PM Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) of the Ministry of MSME, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) & Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) of the Ministry of Rural Development, Deen Dayal Antodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) of the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs etc.**

5.Other Schemes that indirectly leads to huge job and entrepreneurial opportunities are PM GatiShakti, Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, etc.