

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in U.S. President Joseph Biden's unveiling of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) in Tokyo on Monday, a U.S. initiative for trade partnerships in the region, sources confirmed. Mr. Modi's attendance at the event is a significant step towards building economic ties among Quad countries (India, the U.S., Australia and Japan) in the Indo-Pacific, though officials were hesitant to bill the IPEF as a counter to the 15nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the 17nation Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) that China is a member of.

4.83 ₹lakh crore, the cost overruns of 425 infrastructure projects, each entailing an investment of ₹150 crore or more. According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, out of 1,579 projects, 425 projects reported cost overruns and 664 projects were delayed. Out of the 664 delayed projects, 94 have overall delays in the range of 112 months, 124 have been delayed for 1324 months, 331 projects for 2560 months and 115 projects for 61 months and above.

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) has issued guidelines easing norms for research into genetically modified (GM) crops and circumventing challenges of using foreign genes to change crops profile. The 'Guidelines for Safety Assessment of Genome Edited Plants, 2022' exempt researchers who use gene editing technology to modify the genome of the plant from seeking approvals from the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), an expert body of the Environment Ministry. The GEAC evaluates research into GM plants and recommends, or disapproves, their release into farmer fields. The final call, however, is taken by the Environment Minister as well as States where such plants could be cultivated. The Environment Ministry too has sanctioned this exemption.

Russia will cut off natural gas to Finland after the Nordic country that applied for NATO membership this week refused President Vladimir Putin's demand to pay in roubles, the Finnish state owned energy company said on Friday, the latest escalation over European energy amid the war in Ukraine.

HYPERLOOP CENTRE

1.Hyperloop is the 5th mode of transportation. Hyperloop works on a technology that would use magnetic levitation in low-pressure tubes to transport people and goods at airplane-like speeds. A Hyperloop model has been proposed by Team Avishkar of IIT Madras It can achieve a top speed of over 1,200 km per hour.

2.The team is spearheading Hyperloop Tube research in India and has already patented a novel and cost-effective tube design. Now the Ministry of Railways has accorded its approval for funding of Rs 8.34 crore to IIT Madras to participate in a collaborative project on Hyperloop technology.

3.The low energy requirement and its contribution towards Carbon neutrality makes Hyperloop an attractive proposition for Indian Railways. The team is aiming to build the world's largest student-developed Hyperloop testing facility at IIT Madras.

4.It is hoping to complete the construction of this 500-metre long facility by this year at Discovery Campus. Under the project a centre of excellence for Hyperloop technology will be set up at IIT Madras. Overall aim is to indigenously develop and validate Hyperloop technology based transportation system and its subsystems.

NAVAL ANTI-SHIP MISSILE

1.The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Navy jointly conducted the successful maiden flight-test of indigenously-developed Naval anti-ship missile. It is the first indigenous air launched anti-ship missile system developed for the Indian Navy. 2.The missile was launched from a Seaking 42B Naval helicopter The test was conducted at the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur off the coast of Odisha. The missile employed many new technologies, including an indigenously developed launcher for the helicopter.

3.The missile guidance system includes state-of-the-art navigation system and integrated avionics This is significant step towards achieving self-reliance in niche missile technology and reaffirms the Indian Navy's commitment to indigenisation.

MOZAMBIQUE CONFIRMS FIRST WILD POLIOVIRUS CASE IN 30 YEARS

1.Mozambique has identified its first case of wild poliovirus Type 1 this week after a child contracted the disease. It is the country's first such case since 1992 and the second imported case of wild poliovirus in Southern Africa this year. An outbreak was reported in Malawi earlier this year.As of today, wild poliovirus is endemic only in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

2.The World Health Organization (WHO) defines polio or poliomyelitis as "a highly infectious viral disease, which mainly affects young children." Transmission: The virus is transmitted by person-to-person, spread mainly through the faecal-oral route or, less frequently, by a common vehicle (e.g. contaminated water or food) and multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and can cause paralysis.

3.When is a country declared polio free-There are three variants of the poliovirus, numbered 1 to 3. For a country to be declared polio-free, the wild transmission of all three kinds has to be stopped. For eradication, cases of both wild and vaccine-derived polio infection have to be reduced to zero. India was declared polio-free in January 2014, after three years of zero cases, an achievement that is widely believed to have been spurred by the successful Pulse Polio campaign.

4.Efforts by India in this regard: **Under the Pulse Polio programme, all states and Union Territories have developed Rapid Response Teams (RRT) to respond to any polio outbreak in the country.** In 2014, the government made the Oral Polio Vaccination (OPV) mandatory for those travelling between India and polio-affected countries, such as Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Syria and Cameroon.

The newly redrawn boundaries, names and the number of Assembly constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), as ordered by the Delimitation Commission, will come into effect from May 20, the Law Ministry said on Friday. The panel's two orders — one issued on March 14 that dealt with the number of constituencies reserved for various categories and the second one, of May 5, dealing with the size of each constituency — will come into effect together from May 20.

All logistics and connectivity infrastructure projects, entailing investment of over ₹500 crore, would now route through the network planning group (NPG) constituted under the PM Gati Shakti initiative with the Finance Ministry issuing the necessary instructions and creation of the national master plan digital platform, an official said.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, said the entire duty reduction in petrol and diesel announced on Saturday had been done out of the road and infrastructure cess (RIC) component of the taxes levied on petroleum products, and the entire burden of the tax cuts was hence being borne by the Centre. Allaying concerns that the duty cut will lower the devolution of taxes to the States, Ms. Sitharaman said the basic excise duty on petroleum products, which is shared with the States, had not been touched.

An Indian ship carrying urgent relief supplies like rice, lifesaving medicines and milk powder for the people of crisis hit Sri Lanka arrived in Colombo on Sunday and the consignment was handed over to the government in the island nation.

Russia pressed its offensive in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region on Sunday as Poland's President travelled to Kyiv to support the country's Western aspirations and became the first foreign leader to address the Ukrainian parliament since the start of the war.

Ahead of Tuesday's meeting of the India, U.S., Australia and Japan Quad grouping in Tokyo, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi has hit out at the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy and accused Washington of trying to sow discord in the region.

The Indian government is considering spending an additional ₹2 trillion (\$26 billion) in the 2022-23 fiscal year to cushion consumers from rising prices and fight multi-year high inflation.

GLOBAL REPORT ON ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

1.The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF have released the first Global Report on Assistive Technology (GReAT). Assistive technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, software programme, or product system that is used to help people with disabilities increase, maintain, or improve their functional abilities. Examples: Prosthetics, braces, walkers, customised switches, special-purpose computers, screen readers, and specialist curricular software.

2.Key findings of the report: Over 2.5 billion individuals require one or more assistive items. A billion people are denied access, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. The number of persons in need of assistive devices are predicted to reach 3.5 billion by 2050.

3.This is because of the aging population and the rising incidence of noncommunicable diseases around the world. In the areas of cognition, communication, and self-care, there are significant shortages in service provision and qualified personnel for assistive technology.

4.**Key recommendations: Improve access within education, health and social care systems. Ensure availability, safety, effectiveness and affordability of assistive products. Enlarge, diversify and improve workforce capacity.** Actively involve users of assistive technology and their families. Increase public awareness and combat stigma.

WORLD GOVERNANCE INDICATORS

1.According to a presentation presented in 2020 by Sanjeev Sanyal, then-Principal Economic Advisor in the Ministry of Finance, the World Bank's World Governance Indicators (WGI) inputs are arbitrary. The presentation was prepared by the Ministry of Finance for internal circulation within the government to counter the negative commentary on India.

2.Governance consists of the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.

3.What are World Governance Indicators-**Released by the World Bank. WGI provide a ranking of 215 countries based on six dimensions of governance: 'Voice and Accountability'. 'Political Stability and Absence of Violence'. 'Government Effectiveness'. 'Regulatory Quality'. 'Rule of Law'. 'Control of Corruption.'** Sources: These aggregate indicators are based on over 30 individual data sources produced by a variety of survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, and private sector firms such as Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project and Freedom House, etc. Significance: WGI plays a key role in deciding the sovereign credit rating of any country.

4.Concern of the Indian government: World Governance Indicators (WGI), according to the government, are based on impressions from the Western press or tiny polls of NGOs and a handful of academics, many of whom lack an India specialist. There would be a decline in WGI results as a result of these institutes' critical comments towards India. This could result in India's sovereign rating being downgraded.

5.India's score in the latest WGI: India's WGI score is much below the BBB Median on all six indicators. While BBB is an investment-grade rating issued by global rating agencies such as S&P and Fitch. A WGI score below BBB Median would suggest that India falls below the middle when the scores of countries are arranged in a descending order.

6.**Major Incidents Which Hugely Affected India's WGI Rank: Kashmir issue. Harassment of Activists. Sedition laws. Cancellation of NGO licences.**

THE STATE OF INEQUALITY IN INDIA REPORT

1.Recently, the 'State of Inequality in India' Report was released by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM). Highlights of the Report: The share of the top 1% accounts for 6-7% of the total incomes earned while the top 10% accounts for one-third of all incomes earned.

2.In 2019-20, among different employment categories, the highest percentage was self-employed workers followed by regular salaried workers and casual workers. The country's unemployment rate is 4.8% (2019-20), and the worker

The United States doesn't "single India out" on issues of human rights and ensuring fundamental freedoms, said American National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, speaking ahead of the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Joseph Biden to be held in Tokyo on the sidelines of the Quad summit.

population ratio is 46.8%.

3.In the area of health infrastructure, there has been a considerable improvement in increasing the infrastructural capacity with a targeted focus on rural areas.