

### NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

A document released by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on “Inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons in the world of work” recommended member countries, employers’ organisations and representatives of workers to launch social protection programmes to remove barriers that LGBTIQ+ persons face in society. Citing data from various sources, the ILO document said discrimination has an economic cost not just to LGBTIQ+ persons and their families but also to enterprises and national economies.

1.1 million Afghan children under the age of five who will likely face the most severe form of malnutrition this year, according to the UN, as increasing numbers of wasting away children are brought into hospital wards. Poverty is spiralling, making more Afghans in need of aid as global food prices are mounting from the war in Ukraine. Promises of international funding are not coming through, according to an assessment report issued this month. The nation has also been hit by one of its worst droughts in decades.

The World Health Organization Country Office for India has sought the assistance of India’s — ICMR-National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, — to test suspected cases of monkeypox for the southeast Asia region (SEAR) member states. The SEAR accounts for one quarter of the world’s population, 40% of the global poor and already bears approximately 30% of the overall global disease burden. The request comes at a time when more than 10 countries, where monkeypox is not endemic, have reported outbreaks of the viral disease, with over 100 confirmed or suspected infections, mostly in Europe.

Nearly 80% students found learning at home during the pandemic “burdensome” and felt that they learnt better in school with help from peers, according to the government’s survey of more than one lakh schools across the country.

A special court sentenced Kashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik to life imprisonment in a terror funding case, triggering a spontaneous shutdown of the main markets in

### GUIDELINES FOR SAFETY ASSESSMENT OF GENOME EDITED PLANTS 2022

1.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. Genome editing involves the use of technologies that allow genetic material to be added, removed, or altered at particular locations in the genome. Several approaches to genome editing have been developed.

2.The ‘Guidelines for the Safety Assessment of Genome Edited Plants, 2022’ shall be applicable for all public and private organizations involved in research, development and handling of the Genome Edited Plants. These guidelines provide a road map for Development and sustainable use of Genome Editing Technologies for plants in India, Specifying the biosafety and/or environmental safety concerns, and Describing the regulatory pathways to be adopted while undertaking Genome Editing of Plants.

3.These Guidelines exempt researchers who use gene-editing technology to modify the genome of the plant from seeking approvals from the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC). The guidelines say that all requirements that researchers must adhere to to develop transgenic seeds will apply to gene-edited seeds except clauses that require permission from the GEAC. 4.GEAC - The GEAC is an expert body of the Environment Ministry. It 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.

### MONEY SPIDER AND ANT-MIMICKING SPIDERS

1.A study by the Department of Science & Technology (DST) and the University Grants Commission (UGC) has found money spiders and ant-mimicking spiders for the first time in India from the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary. Money Spider Commonly, the money spiders (*Prosoponoides biflectogynus*) are found in European meadows.

2.The species is called ‘Money spiders’ as it is “believed to bring luck” to the person who comes in contact with it. **This spider belongs to the family of dwarf spiders (Linyphiidae) under the genus Prosoponoides. Only six species of spiders belonging to this genus have been identified from across the world so far.**

3.It is the first report of this genus from India and this is the first species reported from the Western Ghats. Both the male and the female money spiders are dark brown and have irregular silver patches and black spots on elliptical abdomen. There are numerous fine black spines on their olive green legs.

4.Eight dark eyes are arranged in two rows. Females build triangular webs in between dry tree twigs and feed on small insects, while males prefer to hide beneath dry leaves. Ant-mimicking Spiders The ant-mimicking spider has been named *Toxeus alboclavus*. These spiders belong to the group of jumping spiders. They belong to the family of Salticidae.

5.**They perfectly mimic ants by lifting their front pair of legs while walking as a mechanism to escape from potential predators.** Only three species of this genus have been reported from India, and this is the first species reported from the Western Ghats. The forward-projecting fangs have a characteristic shape of an antler. Long spines are present on the base of each leg.

### COP15 OF THE UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

1.The 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was concluded in Abidjan with a global pledge to boost drought resilience and invest in land restoration for future prosperity. The COP15 adopted 38 decisions that highlight the role of land in addressing multiple

Srinagar and a strong political reaction in Jammu & Kashmir. Mobile Internet was suspended in parts of the Kashmir Valley “as a precautionary measure”. The People’s Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), an amalgam of regional parties in J&K that includes the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), said the life imprisonment to Malik was “unfortunate and a setback to the efforts for peace”.

The government has tasked a panel led by Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba to examine an array of measures to ease cement prices amid supply constraints in parts of the country, including reviewing the possibility of using the sea route to transport cement from units in south India that have idle capacities. While reigning in cement prices is part of the Centre’s push to tame high inflation, which includes the recent fuel tax cuts and recalibration of import and export duties on steel and plastic, the government is also keen to ensure there are no shortages of the key building material at a time when public infrastructure is being pushed to stoke growth, a senior government official said.

Ferdinand Marcos Jr. was proclaimed the next President of the Philippines by a joint session of Congress on Wednesday following a landslide election triumph 36 years after his dictator father was ousted in a prodemocracy uprising.

China wants 10 small Pacific nations to endorse a sweeping agreement covering everything from security to fisheries in what one leader warns is a “gamechanging” bid by Beijing to wrest control of the region. A draft of the agreement shows that China wants to train Pacific police officers, team up on “traditional and non-traditional security” and expand law enforcement cooperation. China also wants to jointly develop a marine plan for fisheries — which would include the Pacific’s lucrative tuna catch — increase cooperation on running the region’s Internet networks, and set up cultural Confucius Institutes and classrooms. China also mentions the possibility of setting up a free trade area with the Pacific nations.

Lamenting a uniquely American tragedy, an anguished and angry President Joe Biden delivered an urgent call for new restrictions on firearms after a gunman shot and killed at least 19 children at a Texas elementary school.

In a significant order recognising sex work as a “profession” whose practitioners are entitled to dignity

crises.

2.The COP15 aims to drive progress in the future sustainable management of one of our most precious commodities: land. It The UN members agreed to establish an Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought for 2022-2024 to look into possible options to support a shift from reactive to proactive drought management.

3.They will focus on improving data gathering and monitoring to track progress against the achievement of land restoration commitments. They are committed to establishing a new partnership model for large-scale integrated landscape investment programmes. The “Drought in Numbers, 2022” had called upon the world to prioritise drought preparedness and resilience. Another global consensus emerged on boosting drought resilience by identifying the expansion of drylands, improving national policies and early warning. So, mobilising drought finance will be critical.

4.The leaders came on board and also committed to prioritise and ensure women’s involvement in land management for effective land restoration. According to the recent UN estimates, up to 40% of Earth’s land is degraded. This will directly affect half of humanity and is a threat to about 50% of global GDP or around \$44 trillion. But the world has is slow on restoration of one billion hectares of degraded land by 2030.

5.The UN members also agreed and committed to accelerate the restoration of one billion hectares of degraded land by 2030. Other significant outcomes of the COP 15 included three key declarations: **Abidjan Call issued by the Heads of State and Government to boost long-term environmental sustainability, Abidjan Declaration on achieving gender equality for successful land restoration and The COP15 “Land, Life and Legacy” Declaration**, which responds to the findings of the UNCCD’s report, Global Land Outlook 2.

#### **BIODIVERSITY REGISTER**

1.Kolkata became the first major metropolitan city in India to prepare a detailed register of biodiversity. This biodiversity register includes 138 trees, 126 Chinese vegetables, 33 medicinal plants, 47 fish, 84 birds, 22 mammals, 70 butterflies, and nearly 100 other plants.

2.The People’s Biodiversity Register (PBR) has been prepared by and will be maintained by the Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC). [The People’s Biodiversity Register details flora and fauna forms within the city as well as its land uses and human activities.]

3.It was supervised by West Bengal’s biodiversity board with the help of non-profits. The National Biodiversity Authority Chairman stressed on ‘C4’ - cooperation, coordination, convergence and connect - promote biodiversity in the country.

#### **BHASHINI**

1.Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology has organized a brainstorming session on Mission Digital India BHASHINI - the National Language Translation Mission (NLTM). Mission Digital India BHASHINI (BHASHa INterface for India) Platform will make A.I. and Natural Language Processing (NLP) resources available to MSMEs, Startups and Individual Innovators. **2.Bhashini acts as an orchestrator to unify and align a large diverse network across government, industry, academia, research groups and start-ups to bring all their contributions into an open repository.**

3.This mission aims to empower Indian citizens by connecting them to the Digital Initiatives of the country in their own language thereby leading to digital inclusion. It is interoperable and will catalyze the entire Digital Ecosystem. This Mission will create and nurture an ecosystem involving Central/ State government agencies and start-ups, working together to develop and deploy innovative products and services in Indian languages.

4.BHASHINI also aims to increase the content in Indian languages on the Internet substantially in the domains of public interest, particularly, governance-and-policy, science & technology, etc. , Thus, it will encourage citizens to use the Internet in their own language.

#### **LAUNCH OF e-BUSES TRIGGERS BATTLE FOR CREDIT**

1.Delhi Chief Minister flags off 150 electric buses. Electric Vehicles (EVs) An EV operates on an electric motor instead of an internal combustion engine and has a battery instead of a fuel

**and equal protection under law, the Supreme Court has directed that police should neither interfere nor take criminal action against adult and consenting sex workers. "It need not be gainsaid that notwithstanding the profession, every individual in this country has a right to a dignified life under Article 21 of the Constitution," the court observed.**

**The Election Commission of India (ECI) has decided to initiate graded action against more than 2,100 Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs) for noncompliance of statutory requirements under the Representation of the People (RP) Act. On Wednesday, the ECI said that during a verification exercise, 87 such parties were found to be non-existent. They would be deleted from the list and their benefits under the Symbols Order (1968) withdrawn.**

tank.

**2.**EVs have low running costs as they have fewer moving parts and are also environmentally friendly. In India, the fuel cost for an EV is approximately 80 paisa per kilometer. Contrast this with the cost of petrol which is today more than Rs 100 per litre in Indian cities, or Rs 7-8 per kilometer to operate a petrol-based vehicle.

**3.**FAME India Scheme: It is a part of the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan. The Department of Heavy Industries, the Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises is the monitoring authority. It encourages electric vehicles by providing subsidies.

**4.**It covers Hybrid & Electric technologies like Mild Hybrid, Strong Hybrid, Plug in Hybrid & Battery Electric Vehicles.