

KSG: NEWSPAPER CRUX

6TH NOVEMBER 2022

The world's longest running high-altitude research facility, sitting at 5,050 metre above sea level near the Mount Everest base camp in Nepal, is falling apart. Funding for the facility was cut short in 2014, and maintenance for existing lab equipment is now in the hands of its only lab manager. Researchers say even the limited data the observatory still collects are important for studying the effects of climate change in the region, and some hope that it could get a new influx of funds.

Snakebite (a neglected tropical disease) is a public health problem in India and many other low and middle income countries has been long known. But a global estimate of deaths due to snakebite was not known till recently. A study that our group, along with researchers from 21 other countries, published in Nature Communications recently estimated that a vast majority of snakebite deaths globally — up to 64,100 of the 78,600 deaths — occur in India. The study also suggests that the global target of halving the number of deaths and injuries from snakebite by 2030 is unlikely to be met. 80% of global deaths occurred in India due to snakebite.

A study in Nature finds a near-complete skeleton of an early reptile from the Middle Jurassic period of Scotland. The fossil may improve our understanding of the anatomical transformations that led to the establishment of the body plan of reptiles such as modern lizards. The skeleton is of *Bellairsia gracilis*, a primitive squamate. Squamates are a group of reptiles that includes more than 10,000 living species descended from a shared common ancestor that lived 240 MYA.

A group of animal biologists and chemists at the Institute of Transformative Bio-Molecules (ITbM) at Nagoya University in central Japan, in collaboration with other institutes, have identified the pheromone involved in the mechanism that triggers puffer fish to spawn on beaches using moonlight (Current Biology). Along coastlines around the world, at the time of the spring tide, thousands of puffer fish gather at the water's edge and perform a writhing motion as they spawn. The researchers identified 125 genes involved in their spawning behaviour, including genes crucial for reproduction. During the spring tide, the researchers noticed receptors for a

'THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE 2022: LEVERAGING AUTOMATION TO TRANSFORM AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS' REPORT RELEASED

1. The report was released by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. It looked at how automation in our agrifood systems can contribute to achieving sustainable development goals.

2. Benefits of Agriculture Automation (AA) Increase labour productivity and profitability in agriculture. Improve working conditions and income for agricultural workers. Generate new entrepreneurship opportunities in rural areas. Reduce food losses and improve product quality and safety.

3. Challenges—Inaccessibility of automation deepens inequalities thereby affecting small-scale producers and marginalized groups such as youth and women. Certain technologies – large motorized machinery – can also have negative environmental impacts due to monoculture and soil erosion. It can lead to unemployment where rural labour is abundant and wages are low agricultural automation. Wide disparities in adoption of automation between and within countries, with adoption being particularly limited in most of sub-Saharan Africa.

4. Recommendation—In labour-abundant contexts, policymakers should avoid subsidizing automation, but rather focus on creating an enabling environment for its adoption. Social protection should be provided to the least skilled workers, who are more likely to lose their jobs during the transition.

5. Definition—Agricultural automation is the use of machinery and equipment in agricultural operations to improve their diagnosis, decision-making or performing, reducing the drudgery of agricultural work and/or improving the timeliness, and potentially the precision, of agricultural operations. Agrifood systems encompasses the entire range of actors, and their interlinked value-adding activities, engaged in the primary production of food and non-food agricultural products.

HOW A GOVERNOR IS REMOVED

1. A regional party leader urged like-minded MPs to read and sign in a memorandum addressed to the Hon'ble President, pertaining to the immediate withdrawal of Tamil Nadu Governor. Governor's appointment and removal Under Article 155 and 156, Governor is appointed by President and holds office during pleasure of President. If this pleasure is withdrawn before completion of five-year term, Governor has to step down.

2. There are no provisions laid down in the Constitution for the manner in which the Governor and the state must engage publicly when there is a difference of opinion. Various recommendations and judgement related to Governor In BP Singhal vs Union of India (2010), the Supreme Court held that no limitations or restrictions are placed on pleasure doctrine but power to remove can't be exercised in an arbitrary, capricious or unreasonable manner.

3. Sarkaria Commission, 1988: Governors are not sacked before completing their five-year tenure, except in rare and compelling circumstances, and made provision to impeach Governor by Assembly. Punchhi Commission, 2010: Phrase "during pleasure of President" should be deleted from Constitution because Governor should be removed only by a resolution of state legislature.

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION (UGC) RELEASES DRAFT REGULATIONS ON 'DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITIES'

1. UGC (Institutions Deemed to be Universities) Regulations, 2022, which will replace 2019 guidelines, have been modified in line with National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. These regulations were notified to regulate the process of declaration of institutions of academic excellence as Deemed to be Universities, and maintain quality of higher education.

2. Draft regulations proposed to do away with the condition that an institute needs to be in existence for at least 20

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particular pheromone, PGE2. When they applied PGE2 to a tank of puffer fish, both males and females demonstrated writhing behaviour when spawning.

A third of the glaciers on the UNESCO World Heritage list are under threat, regardless of efforts to limit temperature increases, a study conducted by the UN body has found. However, the study said it was still possible to save the other two-thirds if the rise in global temperature did not exceed 1.5°C compared to the preindustrial era. The UNESCO said that this would be a major challenge for the delegates at the upcoming COP27. The 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference will be held from November 6-18 this year in Egypt.

As the sun sets over Srinagar, islands of late evening life have started popping up, emerging for the first time in over 30 years. Parts of the volatile old city that would once fall silent at sundown, leaving no place for youngsters to go, have acquired a rare buzz this year as youth are hooked to a new passion — playing football and cricket tournaments in floodlit stadiums till midnight.

Some residents of Shanghai, China, are inhaling their COVID19 boosters. The vaccine, produced by biotechnology firm CanSino Biologics, is a mist that is sucked through the mouthpiece of a sealed cup — in what might be the first roll-out of a needle free COVID19 vaccine. Inhaled vaccines prime immune cells in the mucous membranes that live in the nose and mouth, where SARS-CoV2 enters the body, will quickly stop the virus from spreading, preventing even mild cases and blocking transmission.

India is encountering global shocks from a position of strength backed by far better household, corporate and financial sector balance sheets and its medium term growth outlook is good, said Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran. "Overall, all things considered, including the risk of oil price, I do believe that the external situation will be manageable, of course with some anxious moments to come," he said while speaking at an event.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards tested a new satellite carrying rocket on Saturday, state media reported, a

years before it can apply for tag. Currently, there are around 170 deemed institutions in the country. Institutions that are 'deemed-to-be-university' enjoy academic status and privileges of a university.

3. Eligibility Criteria for an Institution to be Declared as Institution Deemed to be University Multi-disciplinary institution (minimum five departments offering undergraduate, postgraduate and research courses) or cluster of institutions offering five programmes located in the same city/town. Institutions shall have secured accreditation of 3.1 CGPA by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) three years in a row for two-thirds of their eligible programmes.

ALL EMPLOYEES CAN OPT FOR EPFO PENSION SCHEME: SUPREME COURT

1. The Supreme Court upheld the validity of the 2014 Employees' Pension (Amendment) Scheme (EPS) and set aside a judgment of the Kerala High Court which had quashed the scheme. The 2014 amendments to the EPS raised the cap from ₹6,500 to ₹15,000. It also allowed employees to enhance their pensionable salary beyond ₹15,000. However, it was made available to employees only if they exercised their choice by September 1, 2014 and made an additional contribution of 1.16% on their salary.

2. Key Highlight of the judgement - The court removed the cut-off date in the 2014 amendments. SC granted four months for employees who had so far not exercised the option of joining the pension scheme to join it if they wished so.

3. The bench held as invalid the condition that required employees to make an additional contribution of 1.16% on salary exceeding ₹15,000. The court held that employees who retired prior to September 1, 2014 without exercising any option would not be entitled to benefit of this judgment.

INDIA INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT FUND SCHEME (IIPDF SCHEME) NOTIFIED

1. IIPDF scheme or Scheme for Financial Support for Project Development Expenses of PPP Projects has been notified by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance. As a Central Sector Scheme, it will aid development of quality PPP projects by providing necessary funding support to the project sponsoring authorities, both in the Central and State Governments.

2. It will create a shelf of bankable viable PPP projects for achieving the vision of modern infrastructure for the country. Funding under IIPDF Scheme is in addition to the already operational Scheme for Financial Support to PPPs in Infrastructure (VGF Scheme).

3. VGF supports PPP projects that are economically justified but commercially unviable due to Large capital requirements, Long gestation periods and Inability to increase user charges to commercial levels.

4. According to World Bank data on private participation in infrastructure, India is ranked second among developing countries both by the number of PPP Projects as well as the associated investments.

5. Benefits: Access to private sector finance. Efficiency advantages from using private sector skills and from transferring risk to the private sector.

NATIONAL SC-ST HUB SCHEME

1. 5th meeting of High Powered Monitoring Committee (HPMC) under National SC-ST Hub scheme was chaired by Union Minister of MSME. About National SC-ST Hub: Objective: To develop a supportive ecosystem for SC/ST entrepreneurs to achieve mandated 4% procurement by the CPSEs from the SC/ST entrepreneurs.

2. Being implemented by National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC), a public sector undertaking under the administrative control of Ministry of MSME.

3. Various components/interventions introduced like Special Credit Linked Capital Subsidy for technology enablement, Capacity building of SC/ST entrepreneurs, Special Marketing Assistance Scheme (SMAS) etc.

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development likely to anger the United States. Washington fears the same long range ballistic technology used to put satellites into orbit could also be used to launch nuclear warheads. Tehran has regularly denied having any such intention.

North Korea fired four ballistic missiles on Saturday, the South Korean military said, the latest in Pyongyang's testing blitz this week as Washington and Seoul concluded their biggest ever air force drills. The flurry of North Korean launches included an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) and one that landed near the South's territorial waters. South Korean President Yoon Sukyeol said it was "effectively a territorial invasion".

SHYAMA PRASAD MUKHERJI RURBAN MISSION(SPMRM)

1. Aibawk cluster in the Aizwal district of Mizoram has become the first cluster to be completed under the SPMRM. SPMRM was launched in 2016 to develop rural areas by provisioning of economic, social and physical infrastructure facilities.

2. A 'Rurban cluster' is a cluster of geographically contiguous villages with a population of about 25000 to 50000 in plain and coastal areas and with a population of 5000 to 15000 in desert, hilly or tribal areas. The Mission aims at development of 300 Rurban clusters.