

KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

10TH JANUARY, 2021

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS

- **Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said people would soon get good news regarding the Ken-Betwa river interlinking project as the governments of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh were close to an agreement on it.**
- **Arunachal Pradesh has sought a return to the British era system of using porters to transport foodgrains in remote administrative circles to save on air freight charges paid or payable to the Indian Air Force.**
- **The Finance Ministry has drafted a model tender document for public procurement by all central government departments, in a bid to standardise the language and clauses included, and avoid contractual disputes.**
- **A special crop assessment survey is being taken up in Rajasthan to check the extent of damage caused during the recent hailstorm, frost and cold wave.**
- **Kalaripayattu, considered the oldest surviving martial art of the country, with a legacy of more than 3,000 years, is set to see a surge in popularity with the establishment of an academy in the Kerala capital.**
- **Under considerable pressure to begin a vaccine rollout, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting the Indian government to “expedite” the export of two million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, ‘Covidshield.**
- **Twitter banned President Donald Trump’s account, citing “the risk of further incitement of violence” following the deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.**
- **The COVID19 vaccination drive in India will begin on January 16, with priority being given to an estimated three crore healthcare workers and frontline workers, the Health Ministry said.**

MERCHANT DISCOUNT RATES(MDR)

1. Digitally payment firms are demanding reimbursement of MDR on transactions on Unified Payment Interface(UPI) and RuPay network.
2. MDR is the **cost paid by merchants to banks and payment service providers, during a transaction, and is applicable on peer-to-merchant payments.**
3. From January 1, 2020, businesses with annual turnover of more than Rs 50 crore were to offer low cost digital payment options to customers, without levying and MDR on either customers or merchants.

DEMAND FOR AUTONOMY IN ASSAM

1. There has been a demand for implementation of Article 244A for the creation of an autonomous State within Assam.
2. Background: The appeal to the Centre has been for the creation of **an autonomous State for the Karbi Anglong region.** This has been a demand since 1986. The districts are currently governed by two autonomous councils Karbi Anglong and North Cachar hills.
3. There are **two schedules (5th and 6th) of the Indian Constitution** which entail the details about the control and management of the Scheduled and Tribal Areas.

INDIA-MONGOLIA RELATIONS

1. India and Mongolia have reviewed bilateral cooperation in hydrocarbons and steel sectors.
2. The greenfield Mongol Refinery Project is being built under a Line of Credit from the Government of India. It is expected to cut some of Mongolia’s fuel import dependence.
3. The Project came in the backdrop of Mongolia, **which has large uranium deposits signing an agreement for civil nuclear cooperation with India in 2009 and China unfolding its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).**
4. India welcomed the keenness of Mongolian companies in supplying coking coal to Indian steel industry.

SEVENTH TRADE POLICY REVIEW OF INDIA AT THE WTO

1. The final session of India’s seventh Trade Policy Review (TPR) concluded at the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva, Switzerland.
2. The **TPR is an important mechanism under the WTO’s monitoring function in which member countries’ trade and related policies are examined by the WTO with an aim to contribute towards improved adherence to WTO rules.**
3. Appreciation for India: Introduction of Goods & Services Tax in 2016. India’s efforts in the implementation of WTO’s Trade Facilitation Agreement. Role played by India in furthering “Ease of Doing Business” in the country.

WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

1. Recently, **a political party of Tamil Nadu has promised salaries to housewives as a part of its electoral campaign.**
2. A report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2018 shows that, globally, women perform 76.2% of total hours of unpaid care work, more than three times as much as men. In Asia and the Pacific, this figure rises to 80%.
3. Scenario in India: In 2012, the then minister for Women and Child development announced that the government was considering mandating a salary for housework to wives, from husbands. The purpose was to empower women financially and help them live with dignity. The proposal never materialised and with the change in the government in 2014, the idea was put to rest.