

KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

15TH JANUARY, 2021

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS

- Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey has defended his company's unprecedented decision to permanently suspend US President Donald Trump from the social media site, but warned it could set a "dangerous precedent", admitting it reflected the company's failure "to promote healthy conversation".
- Two days after the Supreme Court named him as one of the four members of an expert committee, tasked to listen to grievances of farmers opposed to the new agriculture laws and the views of the government, Bhupinder Singh Mann, president of BKU (Mann) and chairman of All India Kisan Coordination Committee, recused himself from the court-appointed panel.
- Both the Finance Ministry and NITI Aayog had put on record objections regarding the 2019 airport bidding process, which were over-ruled, clearing the way for a clean sweep of six airports by the Ahmedabad-based Adani Group.
- Amid the unprecedented concentration of power in at least seven core sectors in corporate India, from pharma and telecom to airports and ports, the Competition Commission of India has launched a set of detailed investigations on the market dynamics of each sector.
- The Haryana government has rejected a draft report by the National Institute of Hydrology (NIH) that recommended the state to release more water into the Yamuna to help its revival.
- Nepal's Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawal will meet External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar for their first face-to-face meeting since the border row led to a slide in ties.
- Donald Trump became the first American president to be impeached twice, as 10 members of his party joined with Democrats.

LUMPY SKIN DISEASE

1. A Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) has been infecting India's bovines. The disease is being reported for the first time in India.
2. **The LSD is caused by infection of cattle or water buffalo with the poxvirus Lumpy skin disease virus (LSDV).** The virus is one of three closely related species within the genus capripoxvirus, the other two species being Sheeppox virus and Goatpox virus.
3. It spreads through mosquitoes, flies and ticks and also through saliva and contaminated water and food.

USA REDESIGNATES CUBA AS STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM

1. The USA State Department has designated Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism for repeatedly providing support for acts of international terrorism in granting safe harbour to terrorists.
2. The State Department of the USA can place four categories to enlist any country as sanctioned: Restrictions on foreign assistance by the USA. A ban on defence exports and sales. Certain controls over exports of dual use items. Sanctions can also be placed on countries and persons that engage in certain trade with designated countries.
3. Four countries remain on the list: **Syria, Iran, North Korea and Cuba.** Cuba was delisted in 2015 and has been blacklisted again.

SPECIAL MARRIAGE ACT, 1954

1. The Allahabad High Court has struck down the provisions under Section 5 of the Special Marriage Act that required parties to give a 30-day mandatory public notice of their intention to marry.
2. The Special Marriage Act is a central legislation made to validate and register interreligious and inter-caste marriages in India. It allows two individuals to solemnise their marriage through a civil contract.
3. The court made it **optional for the parties to the intended marriage to make a request in writing to the Marriage Officer to publish or not to publish a notice under Section 5 and 6 of the Act of 1954.**

MAGHI MELA

1. For the first time in over several decades there will be no political conferences at the historic Maghi Mela. Maghi Mela is held in Muktsar, Punjab every year in January or in the month of Magh according to the Nanakshahi calendar.
2. The day of Maghi is observed **to honour the heroic fight of the Chali Mukte, or the Forty Liberated Ones,** who sacrificed their own lives defending an attack by the Mughal imperial army marching in pursuit of Guru Gobind Singh.

NANOBODIES

1. An international research team led by the University of Bonn (Germany) has **identified and further developed novel antibody fragments (nanobodies) against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19.**
2. Produced along with Antibodies: On injection of surface protein of the coronavirus into an alpaca and a llama, their immune system not only produced antibodies directed against the virus but also a simpler antibody variant that can serve as the basis of nanobodies.
3. Nanobodies are antibody fragments that are **so simple that they can be produced by bacteria or yeast, which is less expensive.**