

KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

7TH FEBRUARY, 2021

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS

- **Microbiome** refers to microorganisms living inside humans and animals. There is a balance of useful and harmful components, which if disturbed results in ill-health. A recent study published in Journal of Experimental Biology.
- For the first time, astronomers have come across a huge planet with about half the mass of Jupiter which is cloudless and unblocked by haze. Named WASP-62b.
- The NITI Aayog — the government's apex think tank — has commissioned a study that seeks to examine the "unintended economic consequences" of judicial decisions that have hindered and stalled big ticket projects on environmental grounds.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded the judiciary for safeguarding people's rights and personal liberty even during the most challenging times and prioritising national interests whenever the occasion demanded.
- The three hour *chakka jam*, or road blockade protest, called by the protesting farm unions went off smoothly, though close to 60 people were detained.
- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has amended its rules to cap trans fatty acids (TFAs) in food products, just weeks after it tightened the norms for oils and fats.
- The Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) settled a \$400 million currency swap facility from the RBI of India last week, meeting the terms that the two countries had agreed upon.
- The U.S. has moved to delist Yemen's Houthi rebels as a terrorist organisation, removing a block that humanitarian groups said jeopardised crucial aid as the country's warring sides cautiously welcomed a push for peace by President Joe Biden.

DEMOCRACY INDEX

1. Index is released by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) giving insight into the current state of democracy.
2. India **slipped two places to 53rd position in 2020** Democracy Index while Norway topped the index. Out of 167 countries, Index classifies 23 countries as full democracies, 52 as flawed democracies, 35 as hybrid regimes and 57 as authoritarian regimes.
3. India has been classified as a flawed democracy along with countries US, France, Brazil etc.

SAMAGRA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (SSA)

1. Ministry of Education has decided to name residential schools/hostels funded under SSA as Netaji Subhas Chandra residential schools/hostels.
2. SSA is an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class 12, with the broader goal of improving school effectiveness measured in terms of equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes.
3. It **subsumed the three schemes**: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and Teacher education.

PROGRESS REPORT OF COMMISSION FOR SUB-CATEGORIZATION OF OBCs

1. The Centre has extended the tenure of the Rohini Commission until 31st July, 2021 to submit its report on Sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs).
2. The Rohini Commission was constituted in October 2017 **under Article 340 of the Constitution**. At that time, it was given 12 weeks to submit its report, but has been given several extensions since, the latest one being the 10th.
3. Need for Committee for Sub-categorisation of OBCs: It had been constituted to complete the task of sub-categorising 5000-odd castes in the central OBC. The **need for sub-categorisation arises out of the perception that only a few affluent communities among the over 2,600 included in the Central List of OBCs** have secured a major part of this 27% reservation.

RIGHT TO PRIVACY & LEGITIMATE STATE INTEREST

1. Recently, the Central government has stated that though the right to privacy is held to be a sacred fundamental right, the veil of privacy can be lifted for legitimate State interest.
2. Petitioner's Arguments: The government's **surveillance projects enable government authorities to intercept, store, analyse** and retain telephone and internet communications data in bulk in violation of the fundamental right to privacy.
3. Government's Arguments: Lawful interception, monitoring or decryption of any messages or information stored in any computer resources is done by authorised agencies **after due approval in each case by the competent authority**.
4. The government was responding to a petition **seeking permanent halting of the Centre's surveillance projects**- Centralized Monitoring System (CMS), Network Traffic Analysis (NETRA) and National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID).

ARTIFICIAL ISLAND IN NORTH SEA

1. Denmark approved a plan to build an **artificial energy island** in the North Sea as part of its effort to switch to green energy.
2. An energy island is based on a platform that serves **as hub for electricity generation from offshore wind farms**.
3. North Sea, a part of Atlantic Ocean, is bordered by Norway, Denmark, Scotland, England, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium and France.