

# KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

2<sup>ND</sup> MARCH, 2021

## NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS

- The U.S. tried to resolve “long-standing market access impediments affecting U.S. exporters” during 2020 with India, says the 2021 President’s Trade Agenda and 2020 Annual Report — an annual report submitted by the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to Congress, calling India’s policies “trade-restrictive” and saying the “Make in India” campaign epitomises the challenges to the trade relationship.
- “State-sponsored” Chinese hacker groups targeted various Indian power centres, the Union Power Ministry said, but added that these groups have been thwarted after government cyber agencies warned it about their activities.
- The National Human Rights Commission issued notices to the Chief Secretaries of Odisha and Chhattisgarh over the action taken to alleviate the sufferings of people displaced by the construction of the Hirakud dam over the Mahanadi river about six decades ago.
- Twenty-five lakh potential beneficiaries had registered on the Co-Win portal on Monday, the first day of the second phase of COVID-19 vaccination covering those over 60 and people with specified comorbidities over the age of 45, the Union Health Ministry said.
- A Chinese investigative journalist and blogger on Monday became the first person charged under a new criminal law banning the “defaming of martyrs”, for his comments questioning the government’s account of the clash with India in Galwan Valley last year.
- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday accused Iran of attacking an Israeli-owned ship in the Gulf of Oman last week, a mysterious explosion that spiked security concerns in the region.

## INDIA EMERGED OUT OF TECHNICAL RECESSION

- 1.The Indian economy has emerged out of technical recession as it **grew at 0.4% in the third (October-December) quarter** of 2020-21 with improvement in manufacturing, construction and agriculture.
- 2.A **technical recession is when a country faces a continuous decline for two consecutive quarters in the GDP.**
- 3.Reasons: New Investment: The positive **momentum seen in investment demand (Gross Fixed Capital Formation - GFCF)** as it grew by 2.6% in the third quarter.
- 4.Increase in Centre’s Capital Expenditure: The resurgence of Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GFCE) in Q3 and Centre’s capital expenditure increased year-on-year.

## PAKISTAN-SRI LANKA AND INDIA

- 1.Pakistan’s Prime Minister visited Sri Lanka. 2.Balancing Ties with India and Pakistan: It provided an opportunity to Sri Lanka to balance its ties with India and Pakistan. Sri Lanka cancelled Pakistan’s PM address to the Parliament over concerns that he would raise the Kashmir issue.
- 3.Concerns For India **Hamper Efforts of Isolating Pakistan:** As Sri Lanka’s closest neighbour with strong, all encompassing ties, India has not perceived Pakistan as a serious rival in Colombo so far.
- 4.Pakistan's PM visit soon after Sri Lanka’s **abrupt withdrawal from a tripartite agreement (along with Japan and India) for the development of the East Container Terminal at Colombo port**, and the award of a contract to a Chinese company to set up a hybrid renewable energy in an island off Jaffna is a reason for concern for India.

## TECHNICAL EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

- 1.Government is planning to replace the Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP) with a new programme MERITE Project.
- 2.About the Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme: It was started in 2002 by the Ministry of Human Resources and Development with the assistance of the World Bank and is being implemented in a phased manner.
- 3.The Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme III (TEQIP-III) was started in 2017 and will be completed by 2021.The **Objective is to improve quality and equity in engineering institutions in focus states such as in low income states.**
- 4.About MERITE Project: **The project has an objective to improve technical education like the TEQIP.**

## HOUTHIS ATTACKED RIYADH

- 1.A ballistic missile attack by the **Houthis on the Saudi capital Riyadh was destroyed by the Saudi-led coalition fighting Yemen's Iranian-aligned Houthi group.**
- 2.Taking Advantage: The Houthis are winning, they have made significant advances on the ground, especially in Jawf province along the Saudi border.
- 3.The Houthis, a group of Zaidi Shia Muslims who ruled a kingdom there for nearly 1,000 years. They are using widespread anger against President Hadi’s decision to postpone long-awaited elections and his stalled negotiations over a new constitution.