

1.CONTRACT FOR PRIVATE MISSION TO MOON CALLED OFF

A contract to fly India's first-ever private space mission to the moon on the PSLV rocket of the Indian Space Research Organisation, as part of the Google Lunar XPrize contest, has been cancelled, ISRO's commercial arm Antrix Corporation confirmed.

2.SMILEYS IN REPORT CARDS FOR CLASSES I AND II

- ② Students of Class I and II of government schools in Madhya Pradesh have a reason to smile: their next annual progress cards will carry smileys instead of grades.
- ② In a bid to promote learning and teaching in a "fear-free atmosphere", the Rajya Shiksha Kendra (RSK), or State Education Centre, has asked schools in MP to introduce the change this year.
- ② As a result, nearly 16 lakh Class I and II students across the state will get report cards with smileys: three for those who have achieved efficiency; two for those at learning stage; and one for those who require more effort.

3.MAKE REHAB POLICY FOR KASHMIRI YOUTHS: CENTRE

- ② The Centre directed the government in Jammu and Kashmir to formulate a surrender and rehabilitation policy, besides setting up a high-level committee to review all stone throwing cases against students in an effort to wean them away from militancy and radicalisation.
- ② The Home Ministry also said that stone-throwing cases of non-grievous nature against students and youths should be closed. The ministry said an opportunity should be provided to the Kashmiri youth who have joined militancy for an alternative path to peace and prosperity.
- ② The ministry has also advised the state government to constitute a high-level committee, headed by an officer of the rank of director-general or additional director-general of police, to review the remaining cases of stone throwing against students and youths.
- ② The initiative comes within two months of the state government announcing an **amnesty scheme** for youths who are first-time offenders in cases of stone throwing. Under the scheme about 3,685 students and youths have got relief.

4.HPV VACCINE GETS IMMUNISATION NOD

The National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI), an advisory body that recommends vaccines for India's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP), has given the green signal to the introduction of the Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine in the UIP.

5. CHINESE SCIENTISTS BREAK KEY BARRIER BY CLONING MONKEYS

- ☉ Chinese scientists have cloned monkeys using the same technique that produced Dolly the sheep two decades ago, breaking a technical barrier that could open the door to copying humans. **Zhong Zhong** and **Hua Hua**, two identical long-tailed macaques, were born eight and six weeks ago, making them the first primates -- the order of mammals that includes monkeys, apes and humans -- to be cloned from a non-embryonic cell.
- ☉ It was achieved through a process called **somatic cell nuclear transfer** (SCNT), which involves transferring the nucleus of a cell, which includes its DNA, into an egg which has had its nucleus removed.

6. SUBMIT TIME-BOUND ACTION PLAN ON BELLANDUR LAKE: NGT

- ☉ The National Green Tribunal (NGT) rapped the Karnataka government for not taking measures to prevent recurring fires at the severely polluted Bellandur lake, most recently on January 19, when it raged for over 24 hours.
- ☉ A Bench directed the government to submit a time-bound action plan by January 29. Slamming the government for not taking measures despite previous instances of the lake catching fire.

7. BIGGER, FASTER AVALANCHES, TRIGGERED BY CLIMATE CHANGE

When 247 million cubic feet of snow and ice collapsed off a glacier in the dry, mountainous region of western Tibet in 2016, the roiling mass took with it nine human lives and hundreds of animals, spreading more than five miles in three minutes at speeds of nearly 200 miles per hour. The event surprised scientists, who had seen a collapse that big and that fast only once before. And then it happened again, three months later, on a neighboring glacier, though without fatalities. Glaciologists hadn't quite believed that glaciers could behave this way, and suddenly they had witnessed two similar collapses in a year.

- ☉ An analysis of the events, published this week in the journal **Nature Geosciences**, found that **climate change was the culprit in both collapses**. The study suggests that in addition to the known risks posed by a warming climate, such as sea level rise, we may also be in line for some cataclysmic surprises.
- ☉ Generally there are two kinds of mountain glaciers: flat and steep. When a flat glacier collapses, it can move a lot of snow and ice, but in slow motion. These "surges" can last weeks and even years, but move no more than a few hundred feet a day.
- ☉ Steep glaciers appear perilously affixed to mountain walls, and when they do collapse they create avalanches with speeds up to 250 m.p.h. Those avalanches may imperil mountain climbers, but over all they don't move as much snow and ice.

- ☉ In Tibet, however, researchers saw a frightening hybrid of the two. “It was a flat glacier, but it produced speeds of up to 300 kilometers per hour,” or 186 m.p.h.
- ☉ Normally, the cold air in the Tibetan plateau can’t hold much moisture. But warmer air caused by climate change — the region has warmed 0.4 degrees Celsius per decade since the 1960s — holds more moisture, leading to more winter snowfall. While many glaciers around the world are in retreat because warmer temperatures are melting them, the Tibetan glaciers that collapsed are among those that are growing because of more snow.
- ☉ In the summer months, there has also been more rain. That water created crevices through the glacier and saturated the ground below, acting as a kind of lubricant. With more weight on top and less friction to hold the glacier in place on the bottom, it collapsed.

8.FRAUD, CYBER AND SECURITY RISK CASES ON THE RISE

- ☉ India witnessed a significant increase in fraud cases involving corporates with 89% of executives reporting that their companies fell victim to at least one instance of fraud in the past 12 months, up from 68% in 2016, according to **Kroll Annual Global Fraud & Risk Report 2017-18**.
- ☉ As per this report India witnessed the highest incidence of fraud globally across three categories: theft of physical asset or stock (40%), IP theft, piracy or counterfeiting (36%) and corruption and bribery (31%).

9.CENTRE TO INFUSE OVER RS 88,000 CR IN PSU BANKS THIS FISCAL

- ☉ The Centre announced that it would infuse over Rs 88,000 crore as capital in public sector banks this fiscal, including Rs 80,000 crore through recapitalisation bonds and Rs 8,139 crore as budgetary support.
- ☉ The recapitalisation bonds will be non SLR and non-tradeable. They will be issued in six tranches with a tenure of 10-15 years.

Practice Questions :

- 1.Every year, thousands of sea turtles are accidentally captured, injured or killed due to various reasons. Examine what conservation measures are needed to protect sea turtles in India.
- 2.Can recapitalization revive Banking sector in India – Critically comment