

India gives \$1,00,000 to UN Tax Fund; 1st country to contribute

UNITED NATIONS: India has contributed \$100,000 to a UN fund to help developing countries actively participate in the discussion of tax issues, becoming the first country to make the contribution.

The UN Trust Fund for International Cooperation in Tax Matters (the [UN Tax Fund](#)) received its first financial voluntary contribution from India, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Office for [Financing for Development](#) Office announced.

The [UN Tax Trust Fund](#) aims to support the work of the [Committee of Experts on International Cooperation](#) in Tax Matters (the [UN Tax Committee](#)).

Voluntary contributions for the fund have been called for by the UN and the committee since its establishment in 2006.

The call for contributions was also emphasised in the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#) adopted at the third International Conference on Financing for Development in 2015, the UN department said.

India became the first country to respond to the call with an initial contribution of \$100,000 that will be dedicated towards ensuring greater support for developing countries' participation in the sub-committee meetings of the UN Tax Committee, which are currently unfunded.

Handing over a cheque to the Financing for Development Office, India expressed hope that other countries will similarly contribute to the UN Tax Trust Fund to advance developing countries' participation on taxation issues.

Through the fund, the UN expects that more developing countries will draw upon the best practice of other bodies, ensuring that global tax cooperation norms and rules will work more effectively and efficiently for all countries and all stakeholders.

The UN Tax Committee, a subsidiary body of the [UN Economic and Social Council](#) (ESOSOC), has provided guidance on current issues such as double taxation treaties, transfer pricing (profit shifting) taxation of the extractive industries and taxation of services.

The committee also provides a framework for dialogues with a view to enhance and promote international tax cooperation among national tax authorities, while making recommendations on capacity-building and the provision of technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

The Addis Agenda provides a global framework to ensure the effective mobilisation of resources at the national and international level for sustainable development.

Implementation of the Addis Agenda supports the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the historic and transformational agenda that countries unanimously adopted in 2015.

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Launch of National Biopharma Mission

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Industry-Academia Collaborative for Accelerating Discovery Research to

Early Development for Biopharmaceuticals

Curtain Raiser

Innovate in India (i3)

The first ever Industry-Academia mission to accelerate biopharmaceutical development in India will be formally launched by the Cabinet Minister for Science and Technology, Earth Sciences, Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan in New Delhi on 30th June 2017. The program named *Innovate in India (i3)* will witness an investment of USD 250 million with USD 125 million as a loan from world Bank and is anticipated to be a game changer for the Indian Biopharmaceutical industry. It aspires to create an enabling ecosystem to promote entrepreneurship and indigenous manufacturing in the sector.

India has been an active player in the pharmaceutical industry and has contributed globally towards making life saving drugs and low cost pharmaceutical products accessible and affordable for those in need. Be it the Rotavirus vaccine, heart valve prosthesis or affordable insulin, India has been a forerunner in these and many more. Despite, these advances Indian biopharmaceutical industry is still 10-15 years behind their counterparts in the developed countries and faces stiff competition from China, Korea and others. The lacuna primarily exists due to disconnected centers of excellence, less focus on translational research and staggered funding. There was an immediate need felt to focus on consolidated efforts to promote product discovery, translational research and early stage manufacturing in the country to ensure inclusive innovation.

i3 is committed to addressing these gaps with a Mission to make India a hub for design and development of novel, affordable and effective biopharmaceutical products and solutions. The aim of the Mission is to *“Enable and nurture an ecosystem for preparing India’s technological and product development capabilities in biopharmaceuticals to a level that will be globally competitive over the next decade, and transform the health standards of India’s population through affordable product development”*

As a flagship program of the Government of India in collaboration with World Bank, it promises to boost the growth curve for domestic biopharma in India by accelerating the translation of research concepts into viable products, supporting clinical validation, enabling sustainable networks for collaboration between industry and academia, and supporting entrepreneurial ecosystem amongst many others. Currently India has only 2.8% share in the global biopharmaceutical market, the program would elevate this to 5% resulting in an additional business opportunity of 16 Billion USD.

The Mission will provide a holistic and integrated approach to strengthen and support the entire product development value chain for accelerating the research leads to product development. This will help not only in immediate product development addressing public health needs, but will also help to create an ecosystem which will facilitate development of a continuous pipeline of products.

The Mission to be implemented by Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a Public Sector Undertaking of Department of Biotechnology will bring together expertise from national and international corridors to provide strategic guidance and direction to move promising solutions through the product development value chain. The program thereby stands unique in its approach as it becomes a cradle to innovate, co-create and co-facilitate scientific discoveries and offers young entrepreneurs an avenue to engage with the best in the industry.

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Why Bhutan is special to India

The present [standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in Doka La \(Doklam\)](#) is a rare insight into New Delhi's very special relationship with Bhutan, which includes military responsibilities towards it.

In India's only official statement on the standoff, the Ministry of External Affairs on Friday said that on June 16, a "PLA (People's Liberation Army) construction party entered the Doklam area and attempted to construct a road. It is our understanding that a Royal Bhutan Army patrol attempted to dissuade them from this unilateral activity."

The lowdown on the border standoff with China

The MEA statement went on to say that the Foreign Ministry of Bhutan "has also issued a statement underlining that the construction of the road inside Bhutanese territory is a direct violation of the 1988 and 1998 agreements between Bhutan and China and affects the process of demarcating the boundary between these two countries."

Giving a view of India's role in Bhutan's security, the MEA statement said, "In keeping with their tradition of maintaining close consultation on matters of mutual interest, RGOB (Royal Government of Bhutan) and the Government of India have been in continuous contact through the unfolding of these developments."

It further said that "in coordination" with the Bhutanese government, "Indian personnel, who were present at general area Doka La, approached the Chinese construction party and urged them to desist from changing the status quo. These efforts continue."

In a rebuff, Bhutan refutes China's claims on Doko La road construction

Under the 2007 India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty, the two sides have agreed to "cooperate closely with each other on issues relating to their national interests. Neither Government shall allow the use of its territory for activities harmful to the national security and interest of the other."

Under the previous treaty, India was to "guide" Bhutan on foreign and defence policies. The language of the 2007 treaty, is meant to respect the sensitivities of Bhutan regarding its sovereignty. But the reality is that the Indian military is virtually responsible for protecting Bhutan from the kind of external threat that the Chinese military poses.

The Eastern Army Command and the Eastern Air Command both have integrated protection of Bhutan into their role. The Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT), headed by a Major General, plays a critical role in training Bhutanese security personnel.

Says BJP will campaign against corruption, law and order problems and lack of development work in Himachal Pradesh

The process of holding the requisite Board Meetings and Shareholder Meetings has been completed in phases in September 2017.

Ruben George is staying at Ram Nath Kovind's house at Kalyanpur, near Kanpur

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ADB, Centre ink pact for road revamp

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley with Takehiko Nakao, President, Asian Development Bank in a meeting at North Block in New Delhi. File Photo. PTI

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India on Monday signed a \$220 million loan agreement meant to improve connectivity, transport efficiency, and safety on the State highways of Rajasthan.

“The loan is the first tranche of the \$500 million Rajasthan State Highways Investment Program, approved by ADB Board in May this year, that will upgrade about 2,000 km of State highways and major district roads to two-lane or intermediate-lane standards to meet road safety requirements,” the government said in a release.

“The first tranche loan will improve about 1,000 km of State highways and major district roads,” the release added.

“But for the medium term, we see a very solid track ahead for the Indian economy,” Lagarde said to a question on India.

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US rolls out expedited entry for low-risk Indian travellers through Global Entry programme

The United States of America has started rolling out for Indian citizens its Global Entry programme which allows for expedited clearance of pre-approved, low-risk travellers. Navtej Sarna, Indian Ambassador to the US, on Monday became the first Indian national to enroll in the programme. With this initiative, India has become the 11th country whose citizens are eligible to enroll in the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) initiative.

As per the initiative, once a traveller lands at one of the select airports, the programme members enter US through automatic kiosks, rather than queueing up to clear the immigration check by meeting an immigration officer. At these select airports, the specified members proceed to the Global Entry kiosks, present their machine-readable passport, place their fingerprints on the scanner for verification and complete a customs declaration. The Global Entry kiosk then issues the traveller a transaction receipt and directs him or her to the baggage claim and the exit.

According to the Global Entry programme, travellers must be pre-approved for the initiative. As per the CBP website, all applicants undergo a rigorous background check and in-person interview before enrolment. Kevin McAleenan, Acting Commissioner of US Customs and Border Protection, said: "CBP is excited to offer our flagship Trusted Traveller programme to Indian citizens." The official further said that CBP is essentially transforming the international arrivals process, thereby making it easier, secure and efficient for millions of Indian citizens visiting the United States each year, as reported by PTI.

Presently, Global Entry programme is available at 53 US airports and 15 pre-clearance locations. It is now available to US citizens, Green Card holders and nationals from Argentina, Colombia, Germany, Mexico, the Netherlands, Panama, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, besides India. Canadian citizens and residents enrolled in NEXUS may also use the Global Entry kiosks. The NEXUS programme allows pre-screened travellers expedited processing when entering the United States and Canada.

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Rukmini: 'Rukmini' keeps eye on dancing 'dragon' at sea

NEW DELHI: With China increasing its naval presence in the [Indian Ocean Region](#) amid the ongoing Sikkim stand-off, the Indian Navy is keeping an eye on the 'dragon' with the help of its 'eye in the sky', Gsat-7, the Navy's own dedicated military satellite that was launched on September 29, 2013.

The 2,625-kg satellite, named 'Rukmini', has helped the Navy monitor the [Indian Ocean Region](#) (IOR) as it has a nearly 2,000 nautical mile 'footprint'. The multi-band communication-cum surveillance satellite, which is operating from the geo-stationary orbit (at 36,000km altitude), provides real-time inputs to naval warships, submarines and maritime aircraft and networking capabilities to its naval assets on the high seas.

With the help of the shore-based operational centres, 'Rukmini' (also called INSAT-4F) has not only helped the Navy keep an eye on both Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal but also helped the force increase its communication and surveillance capabilities from Persian Gulf to Malacca Strait, which together is equivalent to almost 70% of the IOR.

[Read this story in Gujarati](#)

[Rukmini](#), which provides wide range of service spectrum from low bit rate voice to high bit rate data communication, has given the Navy an integrated platform and helped it overcome the limitation of 'line of sight' (the straight path of signal when unobstructed by the horizon). With the help of this 'eye in the sky', the Army, too, gets vital inputs about over-the-land movements.

Due to the absence of the advanced [GSLV](#) rocket with carrying capacity of 4-tonne class satellite in 2013, Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) had to use the commercial services of Arianespace in French Guiana, Kourou, to launch Rs 185-crore Gsat-7. "The satellite, which operates in UHF, S, C and Ku bands, has an advanced Helix antenna," an [Isro](#) source said. The satellite, which has a payload power of 2000W, has a mission life of nine years.

Before Gsat-7 was launched, the navy, for warship communication, had to depend on Inmarsat, a major provider of global mobile satellite communications services. The desi satellite has reduced the Navy's dependence on foreign services for warship communication.

A second satellite of this kind, Gsat-7A, meant exclusively for the IAF, is currently being developed. "This satellite is due to be launched by year-end," the source said. Gsat-7A will enable the air force interlink different ground radar stations, ground airbase and airborne early warning and control (AWACS) aircraft such as Beriev A-50 Phalcon and DRDO AEW&CS. The satellite will also enhance network-centric warfare capabilities of the IAF and, therefore, enhance its global operations.

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China: Beijing's Bhutan gambit: Here's how to contain China

By Abhijit Iyer-Mitra

The recent skirmishes with [China](#) near the [Bhutan](#) border bring home one thing loud and clear: the danger is clear and present. The question is: how do we defuse this, and what options does India have on the table?

The recent spate of deliberate incursions — and let us be clear about it that these are planned in [Beijing](#) — seems to have had multiple triggers and multiple desirables. All Chinese actions invariably are multi-causal.

In conjunction with ongoing provocations by China in the [South China Sea](#), the first message is clearly aimed at the United States to show that China can activate multiple fronts to make Washington's life miserable and bog it down in many theatres of action. More importantly, this also demonstrates that the US's regional allies are security lightweights, and that the benefits they bring are outweighed by the security baggage they lug along.

The second is aimed at India — the message that any closer proximity with the US comes with consequences, and should those consequences escalate militarily, there is very little that the US can realistically do to help India. The third message is also to India — and it has to do with India's furious rejection of the 'One Belt One Road' ([Obor](#)) initiative — something President Xi has associated his personal prestige with and the rejection of which he seems to have taken quite personally as well. The final message is to Bhutan. To Bhutanese policymakers, it is to demonstrate the limits of Indian help.

After all, will India risk Gangtok, Itanagar or, for that matter, Delhi, for Thimpu, if push comes to shove? Clearly then, one of the desired tangibles of the latest Chinese action is to co-opt Bhutan into joining Obor and pave the way for formal bilateral relations between the two, reducing, if not jettisoning, India's vice-regency. So what can India do? The response has to be divided in two: the tactical talking down of China, and the strategic containment of China. The tactical involves appeasing China to some degree and assuaging Xi by pursuing the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Forum for Regional Cooperation vigorously.

This enables Xi to portray this initiative as a subset of Obor for the purposes of the 19th Congress of Communist Party of China later this year, and in so doing 'save face'. India, too, saves face by not joining Obor, while ignoring the domestic messaging in China of BCIM being 'Obor-minus'. The strategic containment borrows from a US Cold War template. The closest point between the US and the Soviet Union was in the Bering Straits, where the two were separated by a mere 90 km. Yet, the US kept the Soviet Union bogged down in Europe, seldom — if at all — paying attention to the straits.

In the Indian iteration, India needs to turn the South China Sea into the Fulda Gap and the Himalayas into the Bering Straits. India's fear has always been 'What if China does the same in the Indian Ocean'? This is where our policymakers have a clear decision to make and cannot afford to dither.

Do we continue to invest in an obsolete Army facing what is literally an uphill battle, and indulge the Navy's power projection fantasies? Or do we focus on the problem at hand, cut the Army, focus on the Air Force, and force our Navy into a sea denial posture in a domain where we enjoy an overwhelming advantage? The path ahead seems quite clear. The question is will Delhi choose it.

(The writer is Senior fellow at the Institute of Peace & Conflict Studies)

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Beijing Declaratoin on Education

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Following is the text of BEIJING DECLARATION ON EDUCATION adopted in the 5th Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Education in Beijing, China, on July 5th, 2017.

We, the BRICS Ministers of Education and assigned representatives of the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation the Republic of India, the People's Republic of China, and the Republic of South Africa.

Having met in Beijing, the People's Republic of China on July 4th and 5th, 2017 to discuss education reforms, approaches to promoting equity in education and fostering quality education, strengthening BRICS collaboration in the field of education, and exchange of students and scholars and teaching faculty among BRICS Member States;

Recalling *Brasilia Declaration* on March 2nd, 2015, *Moscow Declaration* on November 18th, 2015 and *New Delhi Declaration* on September 30th, 2016;

Committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4)-Education 2030 which aims to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all" that was set within *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

Recognizing the significance of collaboration in the field of education for enhancing the overall partnership among BRICS Member States and enhancing people to people exchanges to a higher level;

Realizing that the scale of education development in BRICS Member States is expanding rapidly, and that all Member States face common challenges in promoting educational equity, accessibility and in improving the quality of education;

Considering that higher education contributes to the development of high-level human resources and intellectual support for the economic and social development, studies of BRICS Member States will enhance the mutual understanding between each Member State, and

Recognizing that the mobility of faculty and students, and sharing of information among the

Member States is of great importance for the implementation of the consensus arrived at the Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Education.

For ensuring coordinated and deeper cooperation among the Member States, hereby declare to;

1. Reiterate support for the BRICS Network University (NU) to collaborate in the fields of education, research and innovation. Encourage universities to participate in the BRICS University League.
2. Increase cultural cooperation through language education and multilingualism to promote mutual understanding of the history and culture of BRICS Member States.
3. Undertake initiatives to promote professionalization of academics in higher education through the BRICS Network University as a focus of future education development.
4. Encourage more teachers and educational administrators to learn from experience of other countries in improving teacher quality and performance, and promoting the development of education through international exchanges.
5. Strengthen cooperation in the field of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), share ideas and experiences in the development of vocational educators, and develop projects that are of common interests to BRICS Member States.
6. Recognize the importance of BRICS Think Tanks Council (BTTC), BRICS Network University as well as other BRICS initiatives, and encourage the streamlining of mechanisms for their closer cooperation to ensure the alignment of their work.
7. Emphasize the importance of streamlining the cooperation among educational think tanks and education researchers, and welcome China's invitation to host a conference to explore possible cooperation among the various entities in BRICS Member States.
8. Encourage the organization of "youth winter/summer camps" to reinforce communication and cultural exchanges among the young generation from BRICS Member States.
9. Encourage Member States to expand the number of scholarship opportunities to students across BRICS Member States.
10. Share the experience and practices in achieving the SDG4-Education 2030 targets in order to foster a more favorable policy environment, adopt effective practices, and advocate for global educational policies that take into account the common concern and priorities of the BRICS Member States.
11. Encourage the participation in the 3rd BRICS NU Annual Conference to be held in 2018, in Cape Town, South Africa and in the BRICS Global Business and Innovation Conference to be held in September 2017, in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India, and the Republic

of South Africa extend their appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of China for hosting the 5th Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Education.

GG/AK/RK/ BRICS-2017

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Double Taxation Avoidance Treaty: Mauritius keeps tax treaty with India outside purview of MLI

NEW DELHI: [Mauritius](#) has kept its [double taxation avoidance treaty](#) with India out of the purview of the global agreement that seeks to prevent companies from avoiding taxes.

Mauritius has notified 23 of its tax treaties for modification by OECD's Multilateral Instrument ([MLI](#)) to implement tax treaty-related measures to prevent Base Erosion and Profit Shifting ([BEPS](#)).

The island nation has opted for Principal Purpose Test (PPT) for the purpose of combating treaty abuse. Under this rule treaty benefit is denied where principal purpose of investment is to gain tax benefit.

The island nation has conveyed to the [OECD](#) that Mauritius will have a bilateral discussions with countries not covered to adopt a limitation of benefits provision.

This means that investors using the nation to route their investments into India will have to wait for clarity on what all standards it adopts. But, if it does apply similar standards as prescribed under the global treaty, it could impact existing investments, say tax experts.

"The PPT rule (if adopted by both countries) could have an impact on grandfathering of investments made before March 2017 which are still protected from source taxation on capital gains under the India-Mauritius treaty as amended in 2016," said Jayesh Sanghvi, National Leader – International Tax Services, EY India.

On June 7, 2017, 68 jurisdictions, including India, signed the multilateral convention to implement tax treaty-related measures to prevent BEPS, simply attempts to shift tax base and profits to lower tax jurisdictions.

In an official statement, Mauritius expressed its commitment to the BEPS project and stated that the tax treaties which are not covered by the MLI will be subject to a bilateral discussion with the respective treaty partners.

One will have to wait and watch how the minimum standards (especially the PPT rule) will be achieved in the India-Mauritius treaty and its impact on existing and future holding structures, Sanghvi said.

India and Mauritius would have to discuss and negotiate the changes to the [tax treaty](#) bilaterally, which may turn out to be a time consuming process.

"Owing to this exclusion, the terms of MLI shall not apply to any transaction entered between tax residents of India and Mauritius," said Rakesh Nangia, managing partner, Nangia & Co LLP.

"On the backdrop of the India-Mauritius tax treaty not being included by Mauritius for the MLI, it needs to be seen to what extent the BEPS recommendations would be bilaterally agreed between the two countries," said a PwC note.

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NSG organises first International Aviation Security seminar**NSG organises first International Aviation Security seminar****India's 26th highest monumental flag installed at NSG campus**

The Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (I/C) Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy attended the second day of the first International Aviation Security Seminar in Manesar today. National Security Guard (NSG) has organised the seminar, with the aim of bringing all major stakeholders under one roof and facilitate them sharing views/opinion, discussions, brain storming with the matters concerning Aviation Security.

Prominent personalities/speakers from various organizations/aviation sector delivered lectures and shared valuable views on the matter of aviation security. Weapons and equipment were also displayed showcasing the current weapons and systems used by the forces and cutting edge systems considered for future planning.

Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Shri Rajiv Nayan Choubey and DG, NSG Shri Sudhir Pratap Singh also attended the seminar. The Minister of State for Civil Aviation Shri Jayant Sinha addressed the seminar yesterday.

About 300 delegates/officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Airports Authority of India, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security of India, Central Industrial Security Force, State Police Forces, Airports, Airlines, Foreign Security /Aviation of USA, France, Germany and Sri Lanka participated in the Seminar.

Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy also hoisted the National Flag at NSG Campus, during the National Flag Foundation programme, being organised by NSG today. The Force has got a 30X45 National Flag (Tiranga) on a 100 feet monumental flagpole installed in its Campus. It is the India's 67th Flagpole and 26th highest Monumental Flagpole.

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What is the G20 and how does it work?

The [Group of Twenty](#) (G20) is an international forum that brings together the world's 20 leading industrialised and emerging economies. The group accounts for 85 per cent of world GDP and two-thirds of its population.

Much of the important business takes place on the sidelines and in informal meetings.

Initially attendance at G20 summits was limited to the finance ministers and central bank governors of members when it was established 17 years ago.

But since an inaugural meeting between G20 leaders in Washington DC following the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008, summits between G20 leaders themselves have become an annual event.

The first G20 summit occurred in Berlin, in December 1999, and was hosted by the German and Canadian finance ministers.

Since then there have been 20 G20 meetings between finance ministers and central bank governors, and 11 summits between heads of state or government of G20 economies.

The next summit of G20 leaders is scheduled for [Hamburg, Germany](#), on July 7-8 2017.

After the last summit in China, Germany assumed the G20 presidency in December 2016. Although Berlin hosted ministerial-level G20 meetings in 1999 and 2004, the Hamburg event will be the first time Germany has hosted G20 heads of government.

It's expected to be dominated by [climate change discussions](#) and it will also be Donald Trump's first meeting with Russian president Vladimir Putin since his election as US president.

Theresa May, France's Emmanuel Macron and Canada's Justin Trudeau will also be in attendance.

The G20 is made up of:

The final member is the European Union, represented by the European Commission, rotating Council presidency and the European Central Bank (ECB). Spain as a permanent non-member invitee also attends leader summits.

Other countries also attend summits at the invitation of the host country, while it has become customary for the Chair of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and representatives of the African Union and NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) to be present at leader summits.

Meetings tend to occur on an annual basis; however leaders met twice a year in 2009 and 2010, when the global economy was in crisis.

Next year, Buenos Aires will host the gathering as Argentina becomes the first South American nation to host a G20.

Fearing deadlock in a larger decision-making body, not all countries are invited to the G20.

The Group of Eight (G8), established as the G7 in 1976 but renamed after the admission of Russia in 1998, is an international forum for the eight major industrial economies. It comprises: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

However, since 2014 Russian membership has been suspended following the country's annexation of Crimea.

The G8 seeks cooperation on economic issues facing the major industrial economies, while the G20 reflects the wider interests of both developed and emerging economies.

The G20 has no permanent staff of its own and its chairmanship rotates annually between nations divided into regional groupings.

Germany currently holds the presidency, with Argentina to take over in 2018. Hosting the summit is an opportunity to set the agenda and lead discussions.

In 2009, when the UK held a special spring summit, then prime minister Gordon Brown orchestrated a deal in which world leaders agreed on a \$1.1 trillion injection of financial aid into the global economy. The "historic" deal was widely viewed as a success.

There are no formal votes or resolutions on the basis of fixed voting shares or economic criteria. However, the lines of informal influence in the organisation trace those of major power politics.

Former US President Barack Obama dominated the 2014 Brisbane summit, placing climate change at the top of the agenda, despite the reluctance of host nation Australia's prime minister Tony Abbott to allow the issue such pride of place.

The G20 is made up of:

The final member is the European Union, represented by the European Commission, rotating Council presidency and the European Central Bank (ECB). Spain as a permanent non-member invitee also attends leader summits.

Other countries also attend summits at the invitation of the host country, while it has become customary for the Chair of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and representatives of the African Union and NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) to be present at leader summits.

Meetings tend to occur on an annual basis; however leaders met twice a year in 2009 and 2010, when the global economy was in crisis. The last meeting between finance ministers and central bank governors was held in [Chengdu, China](#), in July 2016.

But since an inaugural meeting between G20 leaders in Washington DC following the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008, summits between G20 leaders themselves have become an annual event.

The first G20 summit occurred in Berlin, in December 1999 and was hosted by the German and Canadian finance ministers.

Since then there have been 18 G20 meetings between finance ministers and central bank

governors, and 10 summits between heads of state or government of G20 economies.

The next summit of [G20 leaders is scheduled for Hangzhou, China](#), from 4-5 September 2016. It is the first to be hosted by China, only the second in Asia, and has been hailed as a “milestone” in the country’s development and symbolic of its growing importance as a major power.

The [Group of Twenty](#) (G20) is an international forum that brings together the world's leading industrialised and emerging economies. The group accounts for 85 per cent of world GDP and two-thirds of its population.

Much of the important business takes place on the sidelines and in informal meetings.

Initially attendance at G20 summits was limited to the finance ministers and central bank governors of members, when it was established 17 years ago.

The G20 has no permanent staff of its own and its chairmanship rotates annually between nations divided into regional groupings.

China holds the chairmanship in 2016, with Germany to take over in 2017, and India the year after. Hosting the summit is an opportunity to set the agenda and lead discussions.

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22nd WPC 2017 - About

Turkey has won the bid to host the 22nd World Petroleum Congress (WPC) in 2017, widely recognized as the `Olympics` of the oil and gas industry.

"This time – Istanbul!" was the motto for the Turkish delegation as they faced the USA with Houston, Kazakhstan with Astana and Denmark with Copenhagen in the election to host the 22nd World Petroleum Congress in 2017. In a tightly run competition, Istanbul won the right to host the prestigious Congress with 55% of the votes in the third round against its strongest rival Houston with 45%. Turkey participated the Council meeting in Calgary, where the elections were held, with students, experts, Turkish National Committee and the government delegation, including the Deputy Energy Minister of Turkey.

All candidates had been conducting an extensive lobbying campaign from January 2013. They visited many of the 70 WPC member countries in person to promote their bids to host the prestigious event. As the "Olympics" of the oil and gas sector, the Congress attracts large attendances with over 6000 delegates, 500 CEOs, 50 Ministers and around 25,000 visitors for the World Petroleum Exhibition, one of the largest strategic oil and gas expos in the world.

In accordance with the World Petroleum Council regulations and the Memorandum of Understanding, establishing the right of Turkey to host the 22nd World Petroleum Congress and assigning responsibilities for preparation and hosting of the Congress between the World Petroleum Council and the Turkish National Committee, was signed on April, 9th, 2014 in Ankara, Turkey.

Minister of Energy and Natural Resources of Turkey, Mr. Taner Yldz, President of World Petroleum Council, Mr. Renato Bertani and Chairman of WPC Turkish National Committee, Mr. Besim iman, WPC Director General, Mr. Pierce Riemer, together with participants from Turkish Petroleum (TP) attended the signature ceremony.

They all presented their pleasure of Turkey's success being selected as the next host country.

Turkey kicked off its promotion for the 2017 Congress at the 21stWPC in Moscow, Russia, 15-19 June 2014; with its stand activities, interviews, speeches and closing ceremony presentations. The Turkish delegation at the 21st WPC consisted of more than 100 delegates, from TP, government, national companies and universities.

At the closing ceremony, the WPC Symbol was handed over from Russia to Turkey after fantastic shows from Russia. The Congress Symbol inauguration by Russia Minister of Energy Alexander Novak to Minister of Energy of Turkey, Mr. Taner Yldz was followed by colorful performances of Turkish folk dance ensemble.

The 22nd World Petroleum Congress will be held in Istanbul (Turkey) on 9-13 July, 2017.

During the 3 years period, WPC Turkish National Committee and the Organizing Team will be communicating all National Committees about the progress and the preparations.

Turkey welcomes all industry stakeholders to Istanbul in 2017 to the 22ndWPC!

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New class of antibiotic raises hopes for urgently-needed gonorrhoea drug

With the sexually transmitted disease fast becoming drug resistant, successful lab tests of closthioamide show potential as an effective new treatment

With the sexually transmitted disease fast becoming drug resistant, successful lab tests of closthioamide show potential as an effective new treatment

[Sarah Boseley](#) and [Nicola Davis](#)

18.00 BST 19.01 BST

A new class of antibiotic has been found to work in the lab against the sexually transmitted infection gonorrhoea, which can cause infertility and damage to babies and is fast becoming resistant to all existing drugs.

Although it is early days, because the antibiotic has yet to be tried in animals or humans, researchers say they are excited by its potential. The World Health Organisation has listed [gonorrhoea as a high priority infection](#) that poses a great threat to human health, estimating that there about about 78m gonorrhoea infections worldwide each year. In the UK, gonorrhoea is the second most common bacterial STI after [chlamydia](#), with 35,000 cases in England in 2014 alone. New drugs are urgently needed.

Closthioamide, which was discovered in 2010, has been tested in the lab against samples of the *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* bacterium causing the disease by researchers from Imperial College London and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM).

They tested 149 samples of bacteria from hospital patients with infections in the throat, urethra, cervix and rectum. Very small amounts of the antibiotic were effective against 146 of the 149 samples. The drug was also effective against samples of the drug-resistant bacteria provided to the researchers by the World Health Organisation. [Their results are published in the journal Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy.](#)

[Drug resistance](#) is an escalating problem. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has estimated that 700,000 people around the world die annually from drug resistant infections. Scientists have found it difficult to discover new antibiotics and many pharmaceutical companies have left the field, because it is hard and there are no reliable long-term markets. New antibiotics are used as little as possible to conserve their potency. When they are widely used, resistance begins to set in and they cease to be effective.

Victoria Miari, lead author from LSHTM, said: "Antibiotic resistance, combined with the reduction of drug development, is one of the biggest health issues facing the world today. The problem threatens to render many human and animal infections untreatable, including gonorrhoea. With no effective vaccine available, new antibiotics are urgently needed to tackle this infection which, left untreated, can have very serious consequences.

"The results of our initial laboratory studies show that closthioamide has the potential to combat *N. gonorrhoeae*. Further research is needed, but its potential to successfully tackle this infection, as well as other bacteria, cannot be underestimated."

Dr John Heap, lead author from Imperial's department of life sciences, described the new findings as exciting, but stressed the antibiotic will not be in use any time soon. "There is a long way to go

from where we are right now before we have a medicine ready to give to anyone in the clinic,” he said.

But, Heap added, the antibiotic is promising, not least because it has a very unusual structure. “Often you might come across an antibiotic and it looks just like all the other antibiotics – it is a very close relative of an existing one or it turns out it does just the same thing,” he said.

“[Closthioamide] is exciting, partly because it has such a weird structure we might expect it to have different properties to other antibiotics.”

And there is another advantage. “Fortunately, in the case of this [antibiotic], there is a method to make it synthetically so we don’t have to grow massive, massive vats of the bacteria and squeeze tiny amounts out,” said Heap.

Claudia Estcourt, professor of sexual health and HIV at Glasgow Caledonian University and a member of the British Association for Sexual [Health](#) and HIV, said she was cautiously optimistic about the development, pointing out there are many steps before the drugs can be used in clinic.

“Because of the biology of gonorrhoea itself and, I think, the lack of success in work gone into producing a vaccine, antibiotics are absolutely essential because currently they are the only treatment for an important sexually transmitted infection which has both public health and individual health impact.

“To have something at this stage that is showing very early promise in the laboratory is very exciting – but there are many compounds that may produce early, exciting results across the spectrum of infectious disease but never reach usability in humans.”

Estcourt also stressed the need for greater awareness of safe sex and for individuals to have check-ups, pointing out that gonorrhoea infections do not always come with symptoms.

“Prevention is better than cure and services need to be available to support this,” she said.

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G-20 leaders propose Hamburg Action Plan at summit conclusion

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Hamburg [Germany], Jul 8 (ANI): The two-day G-20 summit that took place in Germany's Hamburg city ended with the leaders proposing the Hamburg Action Plan to address major global challenges, including climate change, harnessing digitalisation, and to contribute to prosperity and well-being.

"Mastering the challenges of our age and shaping an interconnected world is the common goal of the G-20 as our premier forum for international economic cooperation. We can achieve more together than by acting alone," an official statement read.

The leaders pledged to progress towards their joint objective in the G20, which is strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth.

"We are resolved to tackle common challenges to the global community, including terrorism, displacement, poverty, hunger and health threats, job creation, climate change, energy security, and inequality including gender inequality, as a basis for sustainable development and stability," the statement read.

In order to improving sustainable livelihoods, the G-20 leaders collectively committed to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions through, among others, increased innovation on sustainable and clean energies and energy efficiency, and work towards low greenhouse-gas emission energy systems.

"In facilitating well-balanced and economically viable long-term strategies in order to transform and enhance our economies and energy systems consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, G-20 members will collaborate closely," the statement read.

Taking note of its withdrawal from the Paris Peace Climate Accord, the United States of America announced that it would immediately cease the implementation of its current nationally-determined contribution and affirm its strong commitment to an approach that lowers emissions while supporting economic growth and improving energy security needs.

"The United States of America will endeavour to work closely with other countries to help them access and use fossil fuels more cleanly and efficiently and help deploy renewable and other clean energy sources, given the importance of energy access and security in their nationally-determined contributions," it said.

The Leaders of the other G-20 members also agreed that the Paris Agreement is irreversible reiterated the importance of fulfilling the UNFCCC commitment by developed countries in providing means of implementation including financial resources to assist developing countries with respect to both mitigation and adaptation actions in line with Paris outcomes.

The leaders also stressed on the importance of harnessing the benefits of globalisation, reaffirm the importance of transparency for predictable and mutually beneficial trade relations, harness digitalisation to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Besides this, the G-20 leaders also underlined to boost employment by improving sustainable global supply chains, which have been recognised as an important source of job creation and

balanced economic growth.

The leaders also resolved to make a resilient global financial system in agreed international standards, to support sustainable growth.

"We remain committed to the finalisation and timely, full and consistent implementation of the agreed G-20 financial sector reform agenda. We will work to finalise the Basel III framework without further significantly increasing overall capital requirements across the banking sector, while promoting a level playing field," the statement said.

The G-20 leaders also called for safeguarding against health crises and strengthening health systems.

"The G-20 has a crucial role in advancing preparedness and responsiveness against global health challenges. With reference to the results of the G-20 health emergency simulation exercise, we emphasise the value of our ongoing, trust-building, cross-sectoral cooperation. We recall universal health coverage is a goal adopted in the 2030 Agenda and recognise that strong health systems are important to effectively address health crises," the statement said.

The leaders called on the United Nations to keep global health high on the political agenda and strive for cooperative action to strengthen health systems worldwide, including through developing the health workforce.

"We recognise that implementation of and compliance with the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) is critical for efficient prevention, preparedness and response efforts. We strive to fully eradicate polio. We also acknowledge that mass movement of people can pose significant health challenges and encourage countries and International Organisations to strengthen cooperation on the topic," the statement added.

Under this, the leaders also stressed on combatting Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR), which is a growing threat to public health and economic growth.

"To tackle the spread of AMR in humans, animals and the environment, we aim to have implementation of our National Action Plans, based on a One-Health approach, well under way by the end of 2018. We will promote the prudent use of antibiotics¹ in all sectors and strive to restrict their use in veterinary medicine to therapeutic uses alone," the leaders noted.

The leader in the G-20 Summit also remained committed to fighting corruption, including through practical international cooperation and technical assistance, and will continue to fully implement the G-20 Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2017-18.

"We endorse four sets of High Level Principles aimed at fostering integrity in the public and private sector," it said. (ANI)

This story has not been edited. It has been published as provided by ANI

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122 countries adopt global treaty banning nuclear weapons

A global treaty banning nuclear weapons was adopted at the United Nations on Friday despite opposition from the United States, Britain, France and other nuclear powers that boycotted negotiations.

The treaty was adopted by a vote of 122 in favour with one country — NATO member The Netherlands voting against —while Singapore abstained.

Loud applause and cheers broke out in the UN conference hall following the vote that capped three weeks of negotiations on the text providing for a total ban on developing, stockpiling or threatening to use nuclear weapons.

Nuclear-armed states have dismissed the ban as unrealistic, arguing it will have no impact on reducing the global stockpile of 15,000 atomic weapons.

“Is there anyone that believes that North Korea would agree to a ban on nuclear weapons?” asked US Ambassador Nikki Haley when negotiations began in March. “There is nothing I want more for my family than a world with no nuclear weapons, but we have to be realistic.”

But supporters hailed a historic achievement.

“We have managed to sow the first seeds of a world free of nuclear weapons,” said Costa Rica’s ambassador, Elayne Whyte Gomez, the president of the UN conference that negotiated the treaty.

Led by Austria, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa and New Zealand, 141 countries joined in drafting the treaty that they hope will increase pressure on nuclear states to take disarmament more seriously.

None of the nine countries that possess nuclear weapons — the United States, Russia, Britain, China, France, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel — took part in the negotiations or the vote.

Even Japan — the only country to have suffered atomic attacks, in 1945 — boycotted the talks as did most NATO countries.

Nuclear powers argue their arsenals serve as a deterrent against a nuclear attack and say they remain committed to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The decades-old NPT seeks to prevent the spread of atomic weapons but also puts the onus on nuclear states to reduce their stockpiles.

Impatience however is growing among many non-nuclear states over the slow pace of disarmament as are worries that weapons of mass destruction will fall into the wrong hands.

Disarmament campaigners say the treaty will go a long way in increasing the stigma associated with nuclear weapons and will have an impact on public opinion.

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cybersecurity strategy: India ranks 23rd among 165 nations in cybersecurity index

UNITED NATIONS: India is ranked a high 23rd out of 165 nations in a global index that measures the commitment of nations across the world to cybersecurity.

The second [Global Cybersecurity Index](#) (GCI), released by the [UN telecommunications](#) agency International Telecommunication Union (ITU), said only about half of all countries have a [cybersecurity strategy](#) or are in the process of developing one and urged more countries to consider national policies to protect against cybercrime.

India is ranked 23rd on the index with a score of 0.683 and has been listed in the "maturing" category, which refers to 77 countries that have developed complex commitments to cybersecurity and engage in cybersecurity programmes and initiatives.

The index has been topped by [Singapore](#) with a 0.925 score.

The report said about 38 per cent of countries have a published cybersecurity strategy and an additional 12 per cent of governments are in the process of developing one.

The agency said more effort is needed in this critical area, particularly since it conveys that governments consider digital risks high priority.

"Cybersecurity is an ecosystem where laws, organisations, skills, cooperation and technical implementation need to be in harmony to be most effective," stated the report, adding that cybersecurity is "becoming more and more relevant in the minds of countries' decision makers."

The top 10 most committed countries to cybersecurity are Singapore, [United States](#), [Malaysia](#), [Oman](#), [Estonia](#), [Mauritius](#), [Australia](#), [Georgia](#), [France](#) and Canada. Russia is ranked 11th.

In addition to showing the overall cybersecurity commitment of ITU's 193 member-states, the Index also shows the improvement and strengthening of the five pillars of the ITU Global Cybersecurity Agenda: legal, technical, organisational, capacity building and international cooperation.

The threat is particularly worrying as in 2016, according to ITU, nearly one per cent of all emails sent were essentially malicious attacks, the highest rate in recent years.

Last month, a cyberattack crippled tens of thousands of machines around the world. It is unclear who was behind the attack. "While the impact generated by cyberattacks, such as those carried out as recently as 27 June 2017, may not be eliminated completely, prevention and mitigation measures to reduce the risks posed by cyber-related threats can and should always be put in place," said ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao.

The findings show that there is "space for further improvement in cooperation" at all levels, according to the report, which advocates for encouraging governments to consider national policies that take into account cybersecurity and encourage private citizens to make smart decisions online.

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India to join new global foreign exchange committee

GFXC is a newly-constituted forum of central bankers and experts working towards promotion of a robust and transparent forex market.

India will soon get a seat on the Global Foreign Exchange Committee (GFXC), a newly-constituted forum of central bankers and experts working towards promotion of a robust and transparent forex market. The committee has been set up under the guidance of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), an international financial organisation owned by 60 member central banks, representing countries from around the world.

In a progress report on 'reducing misconduct risks in the financial sector', the Financial Stability Board (FSB) informed the G20 Summit, attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, here that actions to enhance conduct standards and adherence in markets include a 'Global Code of Conduct for the Foreign Exchange Markets'.

FSB is an international body for global financial system. This Code will be maintained and updated by the new GFXC, comprising public and private sector representatives from the foreign exchange committees of 16 international forex trading centres.

The newly expanded and formalised GFXC, which will meet regularly, replaces a similar but more informal organisation of eight foreign exchange committees — namely those from Australia, Canada, Euro area, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, UK and the US.

The GFXC will also now include representatives from existing, or soon to be established, foreign exchange committees or similar structures in Brazil, China, India, Korea, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden and Switzerland. It will seek to promote collaboration and communication among local foreign exchange committees and other jurisdictions with significant forex markets. It will also provide a forum for the exchange of views on market trends and developments.

The committee was set up in London during a meeting in May of public and private sector representatives from the foreign exchange committees of 16 international forex trading centres.

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All you need to know about Sri Lanka's bottom trawling ban and India's deep-sea fishing plan

A screen grab of a video released by Tamil Nadu fisheries department, promoting deep sea fishing.

The [Sri Lankan Parliament unanimously passed an Amendment](#) to the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act on July 6 that declared the method of fishing by bottom trawling an offence. It is aimed at curbing local trawlers as well as deterring trawlers from Tamil Nadu. Here's an explainer on bottom trawling and deep-sea fishing, and the impact of the ban on fishermen from Tamil Nadu.

Bottom trawling, an ecologically destructive practice, involves trawlers dragging weighted nets along the sea-floor, causing great depletion of aquatic resources. The net is spread along the sea-floor to catch shrimp and fish like halibut and sole; however, bottom trawling also captures juvenile fish, thus exhausting the ocean's resources and affecting marine conservation efforts.

According to the amended Act, a violation will now attract a possible two-year prison term and a fine of Rs. 50,000 (Sri Lankan).

This practice was started by Tamil Nadu fishermen and actively pursued at the peak of the civil war in Sri Lanka. But after the decimation of the LTTE and its Sea Tigers in 2009, a small section of the northern Sri Lankan fisher folk too began using trawlers to maximise profits. Hence, it would be right to say that Tamil fishermen from both sides are engaged in this practice.

Tamil Nadu fishermen have termed the amendment ["draconian and aimed at crushing the livelihood of the fishers once for all"](#). They have urged the Union government to prevail upon the Sri Lankan government to withdraw the Bill. But N.V. Subramanian, secretary of the Association for Northern Province Fisher People's Unity, says "A complete ban on bottom trawling is an important and very positive step. It will not only deter Indian fishermen but also prevent local trawlers from engaging in the practice."

[The Joint Working Group on Fisheries, formed by the two countries in November 2016](#), stated that it would meet every three months while the Ministers of Fisheries on both sides would meet every six months (from Jan. 2017) along with the Coast Guard and naval representatives to discuss the protracted issue.

Fishermen of both countries have been in talks for a long time to resolve the conflict. While the Sri Lankan fishermen want an immediate end to incursions by Indian trawlers, those from Tamil Nadu insist on a three-year phase-out period. The proposal to ban bottom trawling is two years old.

The solution lies in transition from trawling to deep-sea fishing. The Central and Tamil Nadu governments plan to provide 500 deep-sea fishing boats with long lines and gill nets this year as part of a plan to replace 2,000 trawlers in three years.

The activity of catching fish that live in the deep parts of the sea/ocean is called deep-sea fishing. The boats are designed in such a way that fishermen get access to the deeper parts of the ocean and fish species. It is practiced worldwide, especially in the coastal areas with no ecological damage.

Yes, last week Prime Minister Narendra Modi formally launched the project to promote deep-sea fishing among Ramanathapuram fishermen by handing over work orders to five fishermen for the construction of tuna long-liners with gill nets. As per the project, 2,000 deep-sea fishing boats, costing Rs. 1, 600 crore, will replace trawlers in three years.

Nearly 14,000 fishers from the Palk Bay will be benefitted by the transtion. So far, more than 1,000 fishermen from Kanniyakumari and Nagapattinam districts have registered with the authorities for deep-sea fishing.

A boat costs Rs. 80 lakhs. The Centre's contribution will be 50% and the State government will pitch in with 20% share. Of the remaining 30%, 20% will comprise institutional finance and 10% will be the beneficiary's contribution. The duration of the deep-sea voyage would be between 15 days to four weeks and the yield from each voyage is expected to be 8-10 tonnes of high value catch. This will work out to a profit of Rs. 7-8 lakh a voyage.

Rameswaram fishermen say the beneficiary contribution of Rs. 8 lakhs (10% of the cost of a tuna long-liner) is very high. They want that to be reduced considerably, if not waived. However, the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Department said the beneficiary contribution was finalised after holding discussions with the fishing community. The department also clarified that fishermen have to pay their contribution only at a later stage. It promised to "fine-tune" the project if there are any hurdles in its implementation.

Film-maker traces British engineer's roots in the country

Rain, though intense, is not enough to fill tanks; Chembarambakkam is only 10% full

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Japan's men-only island gets UNESCO heritage tag

A men-only island in Japan where women are banned and male visitors must bathe naked in the sea before visiting its shrine, has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The tiny landmass of Okinoshima is permanently manned by a Shinto priest who prays to the island's goddess, in a tradition that has been kept up for centuries.

Limited numbers are permitted to land on the island in the Sea of Japan (East Sea) — this year it was 200 — for a yearly festival that lasts just two hours, but they must adhere to strict rules.

Most importantly, they must be men, but they must also strip off and take a purifying dip in the ocean before they are allowed to set foot on the sacred ground of the shrine.

Despite its inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage list — often the prelude to a leap in tourist numbers — shrine officials say they are now considering banning future travel for anyone apart from priests, partly out of fears the island could be "destroyed" by too many visitors.

"The island has sometimes been said to ban women, but in principle anyone but the priests who pray there for 365 days a year is barred from entering," said a spokesman.

The ban on women visitors specifically "has nothing to do with discrimination against women," the official said over phone.

It is considered dangerous for women to travel by sea to get to the island and the shrine will not change the centuries-old rule, he said. "It is meant to protect women, the birth-giving gender," he added.

The island, which sits off the north-west coast of Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands, was an important window for foreign trade in Japan since ancient times, forming part of a trade route that linked the archipelago to the Korean peninsula and China.

Thousands of gold rings and other valuable items have been found there. "These treasures are believed to have been offered to the gods in order to pray for national prosperity and the safety of marine traffic," says the website of Munakata Taisha, the shrine which owns Okinoshima.

UNESCO's heritage committee considered 33 sites for the prestigious status at its annual gathering in Poland.

On Sunday it also accepted Taputapuatea, a portion of the "Polynesian Triangle" in the South Pacific thought to be the last part of the globe settled by humans, to the list.

It also added Britain's Lake District — muse for artists from William Wordsworth to Beatrix Potter — and the Valongo wharf in Rio de Janeiro where slaves from Africa first arrived in Brazil.

UNESCO's World Heritage list includes over 1,000 sites, monuments and natural phenomena that are of "outstanding universal value" to humankind.

It includes treasures such as Australia's Great Barrier Reef, the Taj Mahal in India, and the rock-carved city of Petra in modern-day Jordan.

A Bangladeshi auto-rickshaw driver is suing for damages after his phone number was used in a

movie, leading to a barrage of calls from female fans

Nuclear disarmament campaign group ICAN won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday for its efforts to consign the atomic bomb to history, firing off a

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U.S. may tighten rules for foreign students

Foreign students in the United States may be required to reapply every year for permission to stay in the country, if a proposal under consideration by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is implemented. The move will require regulatory changes that could take up to 18 months, the *Washington Post* reported.

Indians are the fastest growing group among the international student population in the U.S. There are 1,66,000 students from India pursuing higher education in the U.S. now, up from about 1,00,000 two years earlier. A large majority of them pursue science, technology, engineering and math courses. Around 1.4 million international students are currently present in the U.S.

Under current regulations, international students can stay in the U.S. as long as they are enrolled for a programme. Students who enter the U.S on F-1 visas are issued an entry document with an end date that states “duration of stay”, which is theoretically open-ended. They can stay as long as they have a valid I-20 document, which is issued by the university, with all details regarding the student’s programme of study, financing, etc. They can also move from one programme to another and from one institution to another, by a notification to the DHS, based on a new I-20 document that the institution issues.

But the new proposal, if implemented, will make their visa status time-bound, the report said. The proposed measures could increase costs and paper work for students and universities. A DHS spokesperson told the *Post* that the proposal is part of an ongoing review of the immigration policy to ensure that it “promotes the national interest, enhances national security and public safety and ensures the integrity of our immigration system.”

Aparna Dave, an immigration attorney, said the proposal could make the U.S. a less attractive destination for students from India. “There are other countries that offer opportunities with much less administrative requirement. The new proposal will put a burden of \$200 on the students each time they reapply, as service charge, which is now a one-time fees,” she said.

Negative impact

Ms. Dave said the measures appear to be aimed at tracking the students closely, but the real impact of it will be in diminishing U.S. ability to attract the best talent from across the world.

Rahul Choudaha, CEO, DrEducation, a U.S.-based research firm specialising in international students, said increased immigration scrutiny of international students is misinformed. “International students are already highly tracked. They not only have to go through screening of university admissions systems but also rigorous visa application and interview processes”.

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Cabinet approves SASEC Road Connectivity Investment Program - Tranche 2**Cabinet approves SASEC Road Connectivity Investment Program - Tranche 2**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for upgradation and widening of 65 kms of Imphal-Moreh Section of NH-39 in Manipur at a cost of Rs. 1630.29 crores.

Manipur being a landlocked state with almost 90% of the area under difficult terrain presently has only road transport as a means of mass transport system within the state. Hence development of the road infrastructure is of paramount importance to improve connectivity and progress of the State and to ensure that the administrative set up reaches the isolated and remote habitats. The project will improve connectivity between Imphal with the eastern part of the state. Based on the existing and projected traffic requirements the NH-39 will be widened to 4 lane between Lilong village and Wanginj village, while the stretch between Wanginj village to Khongkhang will be upgraded to 2 lane with paved shoulder.

The project is being developed with ADB's loan assistance under the South Asian Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Road Connectivity Investment Program which aims at upgradation of road infrastructure in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and India (BBIN) in order to improve the regional connectivity among BBIN nations. The project corridor is also a part of the Asian Highway No. 01 (AH01) and acts as India's Gateway to the East. Thus trade, commerce and tourism in the region will get a boost.

Background

For fulfilling India's "Look East" Policy and to promote and enhance trade link with South East Asia, the Government of India has notified an Integrated Custom Post (ICP) at Moreh. The development of this project is essential in order to support the increased traffic volume due to coming up of ICP. The workers of Manipur who specialize in creating bamboo and wood based handicraft items and uniquely designed hand woven textile items will get a new market among the Myanmar's customers. Small scale industries such as those making farm implements and tools, stationery, plastic extrusion items, carpentry units, could also develop markets beyond the border.

Besides socio-economic development the project will also lead to reduction in average travel time along the project road by nearly 40%. In addition, the new features of road

safety namely vehicular underpasses, crash barriers, road signs & markings, service roads for segregation of slow and high moving traffic, truck lay-by, bus-bays etc. will help in greatly reducing accidents. Improved highway and lesser travel time will lead to savings in terms of fuel cost.

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Cabinet approves establishment of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), South Asia Regional Center (ISARC) at campus of National Seed Research and Training Center (NSRTC) in Varanasi

Cabinet approves establishment of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), South Asia Regional Center (ISARC) at campus of National Seed Research and Training Center (NSRTC) in Varanasi

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the establishment of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), South Asia Regional Center (ISARC) at campus of National Seed Research and Training Center (NSRTC) in Varanasi.

Under the proposal, a Centre of Excellence in Rice Value Addition (CERVA) will be set up in Varanasi. This will include a modern and sophisticated laboratory with capacity to determine quality and status of heavy metals in grain and straw. The Centre will also undertake capacity building exercises for stakeholders across the rice value chain.

This Center will be the first international Center in the eastern India and it will play a major role in harnessing and sustaining rice production in the region. It is expected to be a boon for food production and skill development in the eastern India and similar ecologies in other South Asian and African countries.

Benefits from ISARC

The Centre will help in utilizing the rich biodiversity of India to develop special rice varieties. This will help India to achieve higher per hectare yields and improved nutritional contents. India's food and nutritional security issues will also be addressed. The Centre will support in adopting value chain based production system in the country. This will reduce wastage, add value and generate higher income for the farmers. The farmers in Eastern India will benefit in particular, besides those in South Asian and African countries.

Management of ISARC

ISARC will operate under the governance of the IRRI Board of Trustees who will appoint an appropriate IRRI staff member as Director. A Coordination Committee will be headed by Director General, IRRI as Chair and Secretary, Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare (DACFW) as Co-Chair. The other members of Coordination Committee are Deputy Director General (Crop Sciences), ICAR; Director, NSRTC; IRRI representative in India, representative of Government of UP and representatives of Governments of Nepal & Bangladesh and Private Sector.

For setting up of the Centre, A Memorandum of Agreement, will be signed between DAC&FW and IRRI, Philippines. The Department of DAC&FW will provide physical space for laboratories, offices, training classes, etc. with associated infrastructure and land at

NSRTC, Varanasi. The Centre will be commissioned within six months.

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Cabinet approves Joint Interpretative Notes on the Agreement between India and Bangladesh for Promotion and Protection of Investments

Cabinet approves Joint Interpretative Notes on the Agreement between India and Bangladesh for Promotion and Protection of Investments

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for the Joint Interpretative Notes (JIN) on the Agreement between India and Bangladesh for the Promotion and Protection of Investments.

The JIN would impart clarity to the interpretation of the existing Agreement between India and Bangladesh for the Promotion and Protection of Investments (BIPA). The JIN includes interpretative notes to be jointly adopted for many clauses, including, the definition of investor, definition of investment, exclusion of taxation measures, Fair and Equitable Treatment (FET), National Treatment (NT) and Most Favoured Nation (MFN) treatment, expropriation, essential security interests and Settlement of Disputes between an Investor-and a Contracting Party.

Joint Interpretative Statements in general play an important supplementary role in strengthening the investment treaty regime. With increasing Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) disputes, issuance of such statements is likely to have strong persuasive value before tribunals. Such pro-active approach by States can foster a more predictable and coherent reading of treaty terms by arbitration tribunals.

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China sends PLA unit to man overseas base

Stronger vigil:A ship carrying Chinese military personnel departs a port in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province, on Tuesday.AP

China has dispatched People's Liberation Army (PLA) personnel to man its first overseas military base at Djibouti in the strategic Indian Ocean region, a move likely to spark concerns in the U.S.

Ships carrying Chinese military personnel departed Zhanjiang in southern China's Guangdong Province on Tuesday to set up a support base in Djibouti, located in the Horn of Africa, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Shen Jinlong, commander of the PLA navy, read an order on constructing the base in Djibouti, and conferred the military flag on the fleets.

The establishment of the PLA Djibouti base was a decision made by the two countries after friendly negotiations, and accords with the common interest of the people from both sides, the PLA navy said. The base will ensure China's performance of missions, such as escorting, peace-keeping and humanitarian aid in Africa and West Asia, the report said.

Joint drills

The base will also conduct overseas tasks, including military cooperation, joint exercises, evacuating and protecting overseas Chinese and emergency rescue, as well as jointly maintaining security of international strategic seaways.

Djibouti base, which China says is more of a logistical and resting centre than a military base, was under construction since 2011.

It is the first such base being set up by China. The second base is coming up in Gwadar, Pakistan, which links up with China through the \$50 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

In March this year, Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* had reported that China plans to increase the size of its marine corps from 20,000 to 1 lakh personnel for overseas deployment, including at Gwadar and Djibouti.

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DIPP to set up India's first TISC in Punjab

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The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, signed an Institutional agreement with the Punjab State Council of Science and Technology in New Delhi today to establish India's first Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC) at Patent Information Centre, Punjab, under the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) TISC program.

The objective of the TISC is to stimulate a dynamic, vibrant and balanced Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) system in India to foster creativity and innovation, thereby promoting entrepreneurship and enhancing social, economic and cultural development by establishing a network of TISCs in India.

WIPO's Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC) program provides innovators in developing countries with access to locally based, high quality technology information and related services, helping them to exploit their innovative potential and to create, protect, and manage their Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).

Services offered by TISCs include:

- Access to online patent and non-patent (scientific and technical) resources and IP-related publications;
- Assistance in searching and retrieving technology information;
- Training in database search;
- On-demand searches (novelty, state-of-the-art and infringement);
- Monitoring technology and competitors;
- Basic information on industrial property laws, management and strategy, and technology commercialization and marketing.

The Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM) is designated as the National Focal Point for the TISC national network. As the national focal point, CIPAM shall identify potential host institutions, assess their capacities and support them in joining the TISC program. CIPAM will also act as the main intermediary between WIPO and TISC host institutions and coordinate all the activities of the national TISC network.

Over 500 TISCs operate worldwide and establishing TISC in India will give the host institutions an access to the global network. In upcoming years, CIPAM is planning to establish TISCs in Universities, State Science Councils, R&D institutions etc. TISC will give an impetus to knowledge sharing, sharing of best practices among the TISCs, capacity building, generation and commercialization of IPs.



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India ranks 116 out of 157 nations on SDG index

UNITED NATIONS: [India](#) is ranked 116 out of 157 nations on a global index that assesses the performance of countries towards achieving the ambitious sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The [SDG](#) Index and Dashboards Report produced by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and the Bertelsmann Stiftung shows that [world](#) leaders need to strengthen their joint efforts to realise the 17 global goals.

"Not only does a rising trend of nationalism and protectionism impede the implementation of the goals, but as the report shows, industrialised countries are not serving as role models," the report added.

It said many of the richest countries in the world are nowhere near achieving the global policy objectives but also deteriorate the implementation process for poorer countries because of negative spillover effects.

India is ranked 116th on the index with a score of 58.1, behind countries such as Nepal, Iran, [Sri Lanka](#), Bhutan and [China](#). [Pakistan](#) is ranked 122.

The report said that the countries which are closest to fulfilling the goals are not the biggest economies but comparably small, developed countries.

Sweden leads the list, followed by Denmark and Finland. Among the G7 countries, only Germany and France can be found among the top ten performers. The [United States](#) ranks 42nd on the Index, while Russia and China rank 62nd and 71st respectively.

"One of the greatest obstacles to achieving the global goals for high-income countries are poor performances regarding sustainable consumption and production. All countries that score lowest on electronic-waste generation, for example, are high-income countries," it said.

Bertelsmann Stiftung chairman and CEO Aart De Geus said the report's findings show that politicians, businesses and society altogether must urgently intensify their efforts and commit themselves to this agenda.

"SDG Index and Dashboards highlight the need for urgent action on the part of G20 countries in making sustainable development a reality both within and beyond their borders. If the world is to achieve the SDGs, all countries must take up the goals as part of their national development strategies, and ensure that they take responsibility for their impact on the rest of the world," said Jeffrey D Sachs, Director of the SDSN.

The SDG Index and Dashboard collect available data for 157 countries to assess where each country stands in 2017 with regard to achieving the SDGs.

The SDG Index ranks countries based on their performance across the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

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India Give Additional \$1 Million To United Nations Partnership Fund

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India had made an initial contribution of a million dollars when the UN partnership fund was created

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EU, India set up fund for investments

Investment boost: The mechanism will help promote European Union's investments in India.

European Union (EU) and India on Friday announced the establishment of an Investment Facilitation Mechanism (IFM) for EU investments in India.

"The mechanism will allow for a close coordination between the European Union and the Government of India with an aim to promote and facilitate EU investment in India," an official statement said.

Ramesh Abhishek, secretary, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (or DIPP -- the nodal body for foreign direct investment policy), said: "The IFM has been established with the key objectives of paving the way for identifying and solving problems faced by EU companies and investors with regard to their operations in India."

He added that the IFM will cover new investors as well as those already established in India. "The IFM is also going to serve as a platform for discussing general suggestions from the point of view of EU companies and investors with regard to ease of doing business in India, which I am sure, would boost and encourage the EU investors to avail the investment opportunities available in India," said Mr Abhishek.

Ease of doing business is a fundamental priority of the Indian Government's Make in India Campaign and the establishment of IFM for facilitating EU investments in India is another step to achieve this goal, he said.

The IFM builds on the Joint Statement of the 13th EU-India Summit held in Brussels in March 2016, where the EU had welcomed India's readiness to establish such a mechanism and leaders from both sides had reaffirmed their shared commitment to oppose protectionism and to work in favour of a fair, transparent and rule-based trade and investment environment, the statement said.

As part of the IFM, the EU Delegation to India and the DIPP will hold regular high level meetings to assess and facilitate "ease of doing business" for EU investors in India. This will include identifying and putting in place solutions to procedural impediments faced by EU companies and investors in establishing or running their operations in India. Invest India, the Indian government's official Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency, will also be part of the IFM. It will create a single-window entry point for EU companies that need assistance for their investments at the central or state level. The DIPP will also facilitate participation of other relevant ministries and authorities on a case-to-case basis.

Tomasz Koslowski, Ambassador of the European Union to India, said, "the establishment of the IFM is a right step in the direction of strengthening the trade and investment ties between the EU and India. The EU is the largest foreign investor in India and this initiative helps ensuring a more robust, effective and predictable business environment for the EU investors."

Trade and Investment are key elements of the EU-India Strategic Partnership launched in 2004. Along with being the first trade partner in goods and services, EU is one of the biggest provider of foreign investment in India, with a stock exceeding \$81.52 billion (more than Rs 4.4 lakh crores) as of March 2017, the statement said. There are currently more than 6,000 EU companies present in India, providing direct and indirect employment to over 6 million people.

Such expenditure needs expeditious resolution of stressed loan problem: Crisil

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US House passes bill on defence co-operation with India

American Congressman Ami Bera during an interview, in New Delhi. (File Photo) | Photo Credit: [Shanker Chakravarty](#)

The U.S National Defence Authorisation Act (NDAA) 2018 passed by the House of Representatives has mandated the Secretaries of Defence and State to come up with a strategy for advancing defence cooperation between India and the U.S in six months. The legislation that appropriates funds for defence will have to be passed by the Senate before it moves for the President's signature.

Indian American Representative Ami Bera, Vice-Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, moved the amendment on US-India defence cooperation. Last year's NDAA had designated India as a "major defence partner," and also had a similar provision for preparing a strategy, but the findings of the review has not been published yet. The term, 'major defence partner' remains undefined, but senior officials have explained that after the designation, India's request for arms and technology is treated with a presumption of approval now, as opposed to a presumption of denial that existed earlier.

"The United States is the world's oldest democracy and India is the world's largest democracy. It is vitally important to develop a strategy that advances defense cooperation between our two nations. I am grateful this amendment passed and look forward to the Defense Department's strategy that addresses critical issues like common security challenges, the role of partners and allies, and areas for collaboration in science and technology. Cooperation between the US and India enhances our own defense and our ability to meet the evolving security challenges of the 21st century," Mr. Bera said in a statement.

The bill passed by the House supports the massive hike in defence spending proposed by President Donald Trump, focussing on missile defence, adding more troops and ships, a 2.4 percent salary increase for soldiers. The bill, however, has several provisions that the Trump administration is not keen on. After the Senate passes its version of the bill, both will have to be reconciled.

The bill also asks the administration to pursue the communications interoperability and security memorandum of agreement and the basic exchange and cooperation agreement for geospatial cooperation, the foundational agreements on defence that the U.S is keen to sign with India.

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E-commerce: RCEP nations talk details

Sixteen Asia Pacific nations, including India, are understood to be discussing in detail norms on e-commerce as part of negotiations on the proposed mega Free Trade Agreement known as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

Incidentally, technical level talks of the RCEP are being held from July 18 to 28 in Hyderabad.

India has been opposing binding norms on opening up the e-commerce sector at the level of RCEP as well as the global level (WTO) talks on grounds including that it (India) is yet to have a comprehensive national policy on the topic.

However, it is understood that many RCEP nations including Australia, Japan and China, are pushing for inclusion of a host of elements for 'Terms Of Reference' for RCEP negotiations concerning e-commerce. This is with a view to have some binding commitments from the RCEP members on liberalising e-commerce and ensure that the final pact has a separate chapter on e-commerce.

According to Jane Kelsey, professor of law, The University of Auckland, developing countries, including India, should be wary of demands for absolute prohibition on disclosure of 'source code' (code behind the software) because lack of access to 'source code' will make it tough to prevent anti-competitive practices, hacking and rights violation. Ms. Kelsey also cautioned against demands for prohibition of 'data localisation' saying accepting such demands will lead to difficulties in ensuring regulatory control over e-commerce firms.

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BITs and pieces of trade with Israel

Many pundits in India continue to gaze at the India-Israel relationship through the lens of Palestine. However, some argue that it is critical to de-hyphenate India's relations with Israel and Palestine, a process that began in 1992 when New Delhi established diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv and which has gathered steam since then. [Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel](#) earlier this month made this de-hyphenation blatant and conspicuous.

Growing trade and investment relations are a strong reason to study India-Israel relations on their own merit. Bilateral merchandise trade increased from \$200 million in 1992 to around \$4 billion in 2016, an increase of 2,000% in 25 years. Cumulative foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows from Israel, from April 2000 to March 2017, stood at \$122 million. While these are low, constituting only 0.04% of total FDI inflows to India, there is enormous potential for Israeli investment in fields such as renewable energy and water management (drip irrigation and desalination). Defence production, which is at the heart of the 'Make in India' campaign, is another area with significant potential for Israeli investment, a move that will help India save billions of dollars it currently spends on importing weapons from Israel. Israel is the third largest supplier of arms to India after Russia and the U.S. Investment in defence production will also give a fillip to domestic manufacturing, reduce dependence on bureaucratic state-owned ordnance factories and bring in new technology — an example being the recently set up plant in Madhya Pradesh, between India's Punj Lloyd and Israel Weapon Industries, to manufacture small arms.

Boosting trade and investment ties found explicit mention in the India-Israel joint statement during Mr. Modi's visit. To encourage bilateral investments, Mr. Modi and his Israeli counterpart, Benjamin Netanyahu, also agreed to conduct negotiations on a bilateral investment treaty (BIT).

Is an India-Israel BIT possible? In 1996, India and Israel signed a BIT. However, this was reportedly terminated by India when it unilaterally discontinued 58 BITs recently. For a new BIT to be negotiated, both sides will have to start afresh. However, there are challenges given the many fundamental differences Israel and India have on BITs, as outlined in their Model BITs of 2003 and 2016, respectively. The first is on the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provision that allows foreign investors to bring claims against a host state for alleged treaty breaches at international arbitral forums. Foreign investors prefer international arbitration — which is faster and independent — over litigating in domestic courts. The Israeli model gives an investor the choice to submit any investment dispute with a state to international arbitration if not resolved within six months through negotiations. The Indian model imposes many procedural and jurisdictional restrictions on an investor's right to bring an ISDS claim. These include a foreign investor having to litigate in domestic courts for five years before pursuing a claim under international law. These requirements make it very difficult for a foreign investor to make efficient use of the ISDS provision.

Bit of a bumpy ride

Second, Israel's model provides a broad asset-based definition of foreign investment that covers both FDI and portfolio investment. The Indian model of 2016 defines investment narrowly as an enterprise (with its assets) that has to possess certain characteristics of investment including the investment having 'significance for the development' — words not defined in the BIT — of the host country. Third, the Israeli model contains a broad most favoured nation (MFN) provision — a cornerstone of non-discrimination in international economic relations — which is missing in the Indian model. The absence of MFN, from Israel's perspective, would mean that its businesses would have no remedy under international law if India were to discriminate against it, say, by offering greater incentives to another defence manufacturer over an Israeli one.

Fourth, the Indian model excludes taxation altogether from the purview of the BIT. Thus, the foreign investor cannot bring an ISDS claim even if taxes imposed are confiscatory, discriminatory or unfair. However, in the Israeli model, taxation-related measures are recognised as an exception only to MFN and national treatment provisions. Foreign investors can still challenge taxation-related measures for violating other BIT provisions such as the fair and equitable treatment or expropriation. India's recent record in administering its taxation laws has made foreign investors jittery. The World Investment Report 2017 issued by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development also points out that tax-related concerns are a deterrent for some foreign investors to invest in India. Thus, Israeli investors will not be comfortable if taxation is completely outside BIT's purview.

In sum, the Indian position on BITs is very pro-state, offering limited rights and protection to foreign investors. The Israeli position is the opposite. An India-Israel BIT looks difficult till both sides move away from their stated positions. Both sides should work towards having a BIT that reconciles investment protection with a state's right to regulate.

Prabhash Ranjan is an Assistant Professor of Law at South Asian University, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal

The new U.S. Fed Chairman is unlikely to opt for policies that might upset the President's plan

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Ministry, NITI Aayog moot privatisation of select services in district hospitals

Model contract: Under the Public Private Partnership , care for three non-communicable diseases — cardiac disease, pulmonary disease, and cancer care — will be provided.

As a part of a radical 'privatisation project', the Health Ministry and the NITI Aayog have developed a framework to let private hospitals run select services within district hospitals, on a 30-year lease.

In a 140-page document, prepared in consultation with the World Bank, the government will be allowing "a single private partner or a single consortium of private partners" to bid for space in district level hospitals, "especially in tier 2 & 3 cities."

Under this Public Private Partnership (PPP), care for only three non-communicable diseases — cardiac disease, pulmonary disease, and cancer care — will be provided.

A model contract drawn up by NITI Aayog was sent out to State governments on June 5 by Amitabh Kant, Chief Executive Officer of NITI Aayog, giving the states a two-week window to furnish responses.

In a letter sent out last month, Mr. Kant adds that the draft document was prepared by a working group comprising representatives from the industry, Health Ministry and "representatives of a few states".

The policy document has come under sharp criticism for the Ministry's failure to consult with key stakeholders from civil society and academia. Dr. Amit Sengupta, convener of the India chapter of the People's Health Movement, said that the government was handing over critical public assets without gaining anything much in return.

"NITI Aayog has no locus standi to make health policy, which is a state subject in India. The logic behind shutting down the Planning Commission was to ensure that policies are not centralised. NITI Aayog was to be an advisory body but here they are rushing through a policy that will essentially hand over public assets to the private sector, leading to a further dismantling of the public services available for free. If the government has to give seed money, share blood banks and other infrastructure, and still not be able to reserve beds for poor patients, it seems like we are not getting much in return," said Dr. Sengupta.

Mr. Kant, Health Minister JP Nadda and Health Secretary C.K. Mishra did not respond to emails and phone calls.

According to the draft model contract, private hospitals will bid for 30-year leases over portions of district hospital buildings to set up 50- or 100-bed hospitals in smaller towns across the country. The State governments could lease up to five or six district hospitals within the State.

Further, the State governments will give Viability Gap Funding (VGF), or one-time seed money, to private players to set up infrastructure within district hospitals. The private parties and State health departments will share ambulance services, blood banks, and mortuary services.

A major concern about the policy is that under 'principles' of the financial structure, the document states that "there will be no reserved beds or no quota (sic) of beds for free services" in these facilities.

"While it is clear that insured patients will receive free care, it is not at all clear what will happen to

the vast majority of the population. In particular, how will these referral arrangements work? Whereas it says that states can, if they wish, refer 100% of patients for cashless care, it is a matter of concern that it also proposes that States can set a cap on this entitlement. How would this work? What happens when the cap is reached? Would people only be able to access services for half the year, or less,” said Robert Yates, a leading expert on universal health coverage (UHC) and Project Director of the UHC Policy Forum at Chatham House, London.

“What is particularly disturbing is the suggestion that only Below Poverty Line (BPL) patients and those in insurance schemes will be able to access free care. This would effectively exclude hundreds of millions of the Indian population from vital hospital services.

“If implemented, these proposals could threaten to take India away from UHC, a key sustainable development goal, rather than towards it,” Mr. Yates said.

Says BJP will campaign against corruption, law and order problems and lack of development work in Himachal Pradesh

The process of holding the requisite Board Meetings and Shareholder Meetings has been completed in phases in September 2017.

Ruben George is staying at Ram Nath Kovind’s house at Kalyanpur, near Kanpur

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Cabinet approves MOC in respect of tax matters between India and BRICS countries - Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa**Cabinet approves MOC in respect of tax matters between India and BRICS countries - Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa**

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given the approval for the signing of Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) in respect of tax matters between India and the Revenue administrations of BRICS countries namely, Brazil, Russian Federation, China and South Africa

Objective:

The MoC aims to further promote cooperation amongst the BRICS Revenue administrations in international forum on common areas of interest in tax matters and in the area of capacity building and knowledge sharing. It envisages regular interaction amongst the heads of Revenue administration of BRICS countries to continue discussion on common areas of interest and strive towards convergence of views and meeting of the Experts on tax matters to discuss the contemporary issues in areas of international tax. In addition, the MoC accords confidentiality and protection to information exchanged under this MoC.

Impact:

The MoC will stimulate effective cooperation in tax matters. The collective stand of BRICS countries can prove to be beneficial not only to these countries but also to other developing countries in the long run in tax matters being steered by the G20.

Background:

The Heads of Revenue of the BRICS countries have been meeting regularly to discuss the potential areas of cooperation in tax matters and to exchange opinions and views based on the existing commitment to openness, solidarity, equality, mutual understanding, inclusiveness and mutually beneficial cooperation, as stated in the Goa Declaration issued on October 16, 2016. The BRICS countries have identified four areas of mutual interest on which understanding and cooperation can be further strengthened. The heads of Revenue of BRICS countries in their meeting held on the sidelines of FTA plenary at Beijing, China in May, 2016 decided to sign a MoC outlining these areas of cooperation.

AKT/VBA/SH

END

Cabinet approves IRDAI's admission as a signatory to International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS), Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MMoU)

Cabinet approves IRDAI's admission as a signatory to International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS), Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MMoU)

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its ex-post facto approval for IRDAI's admission as a signatory to International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS), Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MMoU)

The International Association of Insurance Supervisors is a global framework for cooperation and information exchange between insurance supervisors. International Association of Insurance Supervisors, Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding is a statement of its signatories' intent to cooperate in the Field of information exchange as well as procedure for handling information requests. With increasing integration of financial market and growing number of internationally active insurance companies there is an increased need for mutual cooperation and information exchange between insurance industry supervisors. In this background the IRDAI had become a signatory member of the International Association of Insurance Supervisors, Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding. In the absence of any bilateral agreements the IAIS, MMoU provides a formal basis for cooperation and information exchange between the Signatory Authorities regarding the supervision of insurance companies where cross-border aspects arise. The scope of the IAIS MMoU is wider than the existing agreements as this agreement also provides for supervision of other regulated entities such as insurance intermediaries under Anti Money Laundering, (AML) and Combating the Finance of Terrorism (CFT).

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Cabinet approves revision of Indian Community Welfare Fund guidelines**Cabinet approves revision of Indian Community Welfare Fund guidelines**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved revision of the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) guidelines.

ICWF, set up in 2009, is aimed at assisting Overseas Indian nationals in times of distress and emergency in the most deserving cases on a means tested basis. The revised guidelines being made broad-based seek to expand the scope of welfare measures that can be extended through the Fund. The guidelines would cover three key areas namely Assisting Overseas Indian nationals in distress situations, Community Welfare activities and Improvement in Consular services. They are expected to provide Indian Missions and Posts abroad greater flexibility in swiftly addressing to requests for assistance by Overseas Indian nationals.

Apart from assisting Indian nationals in distress abroad, ICWF has been a critical support in emergency evacuation of Indian nationals in conflict zones in Libya, Iraq, Yemen, South Sudan and other challenging situations like assistance extended to undocumented Indian workers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the Nitaqat drive in 2013 and the ongoing Amnesty drive in 2017.

The scale and speed of these evacuations and assistance rendered through the Fund has been universally appreciated. It has also created a sense of confidence among the migrant workers going overseas about the support they can expect from India during critical times.

ICWF stands extended to all Indian Missions and Posts abroad and is primarily funded by levying service charge on various consular services rendered by Indian Missions and Posts abroad.

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India, Japan civil nuclear deal comes into force

S. Jaishankar | Photo Credit: [PTI](#)

The landmark India-Japan civil nuclear agreement came into force on Thursday. Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar exchanged the diplomatic notes with the Japanese envoy to India to formalise the completion of the process.

“The India-Japan Agreement for Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy entered into force on July 20, 2017 with the exchange of diplomatic notes between Dr. S. Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary and H.E. Mr. Kenji Hiramatsu, Ambassador of Japan to India,” said a statement from the Ministry of External Affairs.

The pact was signed in Tokyo during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Japan on November 11, 2016.

“This Agreement is a reflection of the strategic partnership between India and Japan and will pave the way for enhanced cooperation in energy security and clean energy. It seeks to promote full cooperation between the two countries in the development and uses of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes on a stable, reliable and predictable basis,” said the statement.

The deal is essential for bringing a network of nuclear energy cooperation for India, especially with the U.S. as prominent American nuclear companies are owned by the Japanese nuclear majors like Toshiba.

Says BJP will campaign against corruption, law and order problems and lack of development work in Himachal Pradesh

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India performs miserably in war on inequality

NEW DELHI: India has been ranked 132 out of 152 countries in an index that rates countries by their commitment to reducing inequality. The first report edition of the index, released recently, showed that OECD countries headed by [Sweden](#) ranked the highest while Nigeria was at the bottom. The US had the highest level of [inequality](#) among developed countries, though it is the wealthiest country in history.

Ironically, Bhutan, known for coining the term 'Gross National Happiness', is ranked even lower than India at 143. Of India's immediate neighbours, all but Nepal (81) and China (87) ranked between 138 and 150. Given that this region is home to the largest chunk of poor people in the world, that's worrying news.

The index and the inequality report were put together by the international NGO [Oxfam](#) and Development Finance International to measure the efforts of governments that had pledged to reduce inequality as part of the sustainable development goals. The index mainly focused on redistributive actions governments can take, rather than those that would prevent rising inequality in the first place.

"A recent study of 13 developing countries that had reduced their overall inequality level found that 69% of the reduction... was because of public services," stated the report. It added that progressive taxation, where corporations and the richest individuals are taxed more in order to redistribute resources and ensure the funding of public services, is a key tool for governments committed to reducing inequality.

The report noted that government spending on health, education and social protection was woefully low in India.

The tax structure looks reasonably progressive on paper, but in practice much of the progressive tax is not collected, it added. India fared poorly on labour rights as well as respect for women in the work place. The report said that if India were to reduce its inequality by a third, 170 million people could be raised out of poverty. In contrast, it noted how Namibia had halved the poverty rate from 53% to 23% with very high spending on health and education.

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FM: Entry into force of the WTO-Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) on 22nd February, 2017 is a major milestone for the global trading system; Releases National Trade Facilitation Action Plan today.

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The Union Minister of Finance, Defence and Corporate Affairs, Shri Arun Jaitley said that the entry into force of the WTO-Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) on 22nd February, 2017 is a major milestone for the global trading system. The Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley was speaking after releasing the National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (NTFAP) here today in the national capital. He said that with the release of this Action Plan today, we look forward to ensuring compliance with the TFA and also, impetus to trade facilitation. The Finance Minister further added that this Action Plan gives a time bound map, not only for implementing TFA, but also for India's initiatives for trade facilitation and Ease of Doing Business which goes beyond TFA.

Earlier, under Article 23.2 of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), a National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF) headed by the Cabinet Secretary was constituted. The NCTF comprises of stakeholders from the Government and the private sectors including trade community. The NCTF has adopted 76 point National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (NTFAP) which is a reflection of the Government's commitment to implement the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).

The National Action Plan aims to transform cross border clearance ecosystem through efficient, transparent, risk based, co-ordinated, digital, seamless and technology driven procedures which are supported by state-of-the-art sea ports, airports and land borders.

The objectives to be achieved by National Action Plan are improvement in ease of doing business by reduction in cargo release time and cost, move towards paperless regulatory environment, transparent and predictable legal regime and improved investment climate through better infrastructure.

The Action Plan lists out specific activities which would be carried out by all regulatory agencies like Customs, FSSAI, Drug Controller, Plant Quarantine, DGFT etc in time bound manner. The Co-ordination among all the stakeholders is the key to achieve the objective of Trade facilitation.

The Action Plan not only covers the activities coming under the TFA but they go beyond the ambit of TFA per se, which have been defined as TFA Plus category. The Action Plan covers many activities in the areas of infrastructure augmentation, particularly the road and rail infrastructures leading to ports and the infrastructure within ports, airports, ICDs, Land Customs stations that cuts across all stakeholders for which various ministries like Shipping, Civil Aviation, Railways, Road transport and Highways, Home Affairs, Finance, Commerce etc have been assigned specified targets.

All actions covered under the plan have been categorized by prioritizing the activities into short term, midterm and long term. The National Plan would be monitored by the Steering Committee (the operational arm of the NCTF) chaired by the Revenue Secretary and the Commerce Secretary. The plan would be reviewed by the Cabinet Secretary.

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Arab League, Erdogan warn Israel

The Arab League on Sunday accused Israel of “playing with fire” with new security measures at a highly sensitive Jerusalem holy site.

“Jerusalem is a red line,” its chief Ahmed Abul Gheit said in a statement, adding that “no Arab or Muslim will accept violations” against the city’s holy sites.

Abul Gheit accused Israel’s government of “adventurism” and said its moves could trigger a “crisis with the Arab and Muslim world”.

Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan too condemned the Israeli security precautions, saying the Islamic world would not remain silent. He had called on Israel to remove the detectors in a phone conversation with his counterpart Reuven Rivlin on Thursday.

Pope Francis also expressed concern and said that he was alarmed by the recent violence. He called for dialogue and moderation to help restore peace. “I am following with trepidation the grave tension and violence of recent days in Jerusalem. I feel the need to express a heartfelt call for moderation and dialogue,” he told pilgrims in St Peter’s Square.

(With Reuters inputs)

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India to Host Global Conference on Cyber Space 2017 – World's Largest Conference on Cyber Space

India to Host Global Conference on Cyber Space 2017 – World's Largest Conference on Cyber Space

- *The GCCS is taking place outside OECD nations for the first time*
- *The theme for the GCCS 2017 is ‘**Cyber4All: An Inclusive, Sustainable, Developmental, Safe and Secure Cyberspace**’*
- *The conference to take place on 23rd & 24th of November 2017 in New Delhi*
- *Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to Inaugurate the conference*

“India will be hosting the 5th **Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS) in 2017**, one of the world's largest conference on Cyber Space and related issues” announced **Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Hon'ble Union Minister for Electronics & Information Technology and Law & Justice**, in the presence of Shri P.P. Chaudhary, Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology and Law & Justice after chairing a High-Level Organizing Committee meeting here today.

GCCS 2017 to have:

- **Over 2000 delegates**
- **Representatives from more than 100 countries**
- **More than 50 Ministerial delegates**
- **4 sessions with keynote addresses by eminent speakers on themes of GCCS 2017**
- **12 Parallel discussions with other focused topics**
- **Participation of policy makers, industry, academia, civil society and think tanks**

Themed on **Cyber4All: An Inclusive, Sustainable, Developmental, Safe and Secure Cyberspace**, the GCCS 2017 will be inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India **Shri Narendra Modi**. To be held in India for the first time, the two-day conference will see participation of around 2000 delegates from senior Government officials, industry leaders, academia and civil society from over 100 countries. GCCS will congregate and deliberate on issues relating to promotion of cooperation in cyberspace, norms for responsible behaviour in cyberspace and to enhance cyber capacity building. Many of these delegations will be headed at Ministerial level delegates thereby making it an important forum of global consultation of various issues of cyber space.

Addressing the media, **Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad** said, “We feel proud to host the 5th of edition of the prestigious Global Conference on Cyber Space in 2017. The theme of this conference in a way reflect the changing architecture of India in the Digital space. Among the multiple transformative programmes under Digital India, the biggest thing that India brings about to the table is Digital Inclusion that makes it sustainable and developmental; which has been given utmost importance under the theme Cyber4All.”

“The Internet must be safe and secure, which necessitates a safe and secure digital space. This will remain a focal point throughout the conference. We are in consultation with the industry leaders, educational institutions and trade bodies to discuss the concerns related to cyber security and collectively works towards robust cyber security system. Through GCCS, we would like to show the international community how Indian digital ecosystem is becoming a beacon for development to the rest of the world.” Added **Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad**.

The GCCS 2017 will take place on the 23rd and 24th of November, 2017 in Aero City, New Delhi. Multiple run-up events are planned across India and abroad to create awareness about GCCS 2017, along with 2 days of pre-event activities right before the conference.

GCCS is a prestigious international conference that aims at encouraging dialogue among stakeholders of cyberspace, which has been taking place since 2011. Incepted in 2011 in London, GCCS witnessed a participation of 700 global delegates. It helped in setting up rules and guidelines for the editions to follow. The second conference was held in 2012 in Budapest with focus on *relationship between internet rights and internet security* and was attended by 700 delegates from nearly 60 countries. The third edition of GCCS was held in 2013 in Seoul with participation from 1600 delegates. The conference built on the themes such as Economic Growth and Development, Social and Cultural Benefits, a Safe and Secure Cyberspace, Cybercrime and International Security.

The fourth version GCCS 2015 was held on April 16-17, 2015 in The Hague, Netherlands. Nearly 1800 members from nearly 100 countries participated in this conference and over 60 countries participated with delegations led at Ministerial level. The conference focused on *Freedom, Security and Growth* in cyber space. GCCS 2015 was a program designed as high level stock taking exercise and to generate input for other ongoing processes rather than an independent norm setting initiative. The launch of Global Forum on Cyber Expertise (GFCE) was main deliverable of the conference for capacity building in cyber space.

‘Goal of GCCS 2017 is to promote an **inclusive Cyber Space** with focus on policies and frameworks for **inclusivity, sustainability, development, security, safety & freedom, technology and partnerships for upholding digital democracy, maximizing collaboration for strengthening security and safety and advocating dialogue for digital diplomacy**’. It will be an opportunity to showcase the “Digital India” program as a positive, sustainable and scalable model for use of ICTs for addressing developmental challenges and growth opportunities. It can help provide vision of inclusive digital society for inclusive growth, education, healthcare especially for

developing world.

The plenary sessions and other activities during GCCS 2017 will be designed around the themes of **Cyber4Inclusive Growth, Cyber4DigitalInclusion, Cyber4Security and Cyber4Diplomacy**. During various sessions and activities focused around these themes, GCCS 2017 will bring forth the business, empowerment and developmental potential of Cyber space for realizing the goals of sustainable development.

Cyber security will be one of the major focus areas in GCCS 2017 especially as the central government is in the process of setting up separate sector specific emergency response centres to ensure cyber security and strengthen technology infrastructure. The conference will be an ideal forum for the exchange of ideas with global think tanks and promote closer co-operation among the international community.

GCCS 2017 will be an excellent platform for Industry and its Associations, Civil Society, Academia, Governments and Think-tanks from across the world to deliberate on issues, opportunities and challenges faced in the cyber world and pave the way for a better digital future. Indian start-ups will also get exposure to the global industry leaders and investors in GCCS 2017 to pitch their ideas through multiple seminars, side events and exhibitions.

NNK/MD

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All you need to know about Doklam and the India-China border standoff

A file photo of the Nathu La border. | Photo Credit: [DIPTENDU DUTTA](#)

It was the tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan that sounded the alarm — Chinese soldiers had arrived with bulldozers and excavators, and were building a high-mountain road near India's border in an area the two nuclear-armed giants have disputed over for decades.

India responded to the call by sending troops last month to evict the Chinese army construction party from the Doklam Plateau. Within a few days, Indian media were running leaked video footage of soldiers from both sides shoving one another atop a grassy flatland.

The [tense standoff has only escalated, raising concerns in both capitals](#) of an all-out military conflict. Both sides have made threats while simultaneously calling for negotiations. The U.S. State Department has urged the two sides to work together toward a peaceful resolution.

Don't underestimate our determination to safeguard national security, China warns India

India told China last week that it was ready to hold talks if both sides pulled their forces back from the disputed border area. But China countered on Monday by insisting the road was being built on its sovereign territory, and warned India not to "push your luck."

India has said the two governments reached an agreement in 2012 that the status of the Doklam area which falls between China and India on a Bhutanese plateau would be finalised only through joint consultations involving all parties.

India and China have faced off frequently since fighting the bloody 1962 war that ended with China seizing control of some territory. Troops from both sides still regularly patrol other unmarked territories, though neither side has fired any shots in decades. Negotiations since 1985 to settle the boundary dispute have seen little success.

The land in question spans 269 square kilometres on a sparsely populated plateau in western Bhutan, which has no diplomatic ties with China and coordinates its relations with Beijing through New Delhi.

From Doklam to Taiwan, China shows zero tolerance to 'sovereignty' threats

But India and China have staked rival claims to other Himalayan areas as well, including 90,000 sq.km in Arunachal Pradesh, which China refers to as "Southern Tibet," as well as 38,000 sq.km of another plateau called Aksai Chin.

Bhutan said the road China has been building would run from the town of Dokola to the Bhutanese army camp at Zompelri.

Bhutan's Foreign Ministry called it a "direct violation" of agreements reached in 1988 and 1998 to maintain peace and refrain from unilateral action in the area pending a final border settlement. "Bhutan hopes that the status quo in the Doklam area will be maintained," it said in a June 29 statement.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said last week that India's border guards, in responding to Bhutan's call for help, had "illegally trespassed the boundary into Chinese territory" when they confronted the Chinese army construction team.

For India, securing the Doklam Plateau is seen as essential to maintaining its control over a land corridor that connects to its remote northeastern States.

India has said the Chinese road project threatens its access to the corridor, while China has questioned why India should even have a say in a matter that concerns only Beijing and Bhutan.

India's Army chief warned earlier this month that India's army was capable of fighting "2 and a 1/2 wars" if needed to secure its borders.

Army, PLA in a tug of war over Doklam Plateau

Indian analysts said China appeared to be trying to pre-empt settlement negotiations by establishing a Chinese presence in Doklam.

"China has been trying for a long time to gain a tactical advantage in this sector," having already established dominance along the Indian borders at Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh, said security expert Uday Bhaskar, a retired Indian navy officer. "The Chinese did not expect this resolute Indian response, and that's why the standoff has continued."

The dispute was discussed briefly without resolution by Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G-20 summit earlier this month in Hamburg, Germany. It is expected to be taken up again when National Security Adviser Ajit Doval visits Beijing for another security forum on Thursday and Friday.

The Doklam standoff is just the latest of many irritants dogging relations between the world's two most populous nations.

For years, China has vigorously wooed Bhutan and other, smaller countries in India's traditional sphere of influence, including Nepal, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

"This is not the first time that we have a standoff with China," said foreign affairs analyst and retired Indian diplomat G. Parthasarathy, predicting a period of stalemate followed by a political compromise if the tensions follow past patterns.

"China is in an ultra-nationalist mood of establishing a hegemony power in Asia," he said. "The best thing for China is to sit down and talk."

China, meanwhile, has been frustrated with India's refusal to sign onto a massive effort to build railways, ports and roads reaching from Asia to Europe and the Middle East. The project includes a China-Pakistan economic development programme aimed at absorbing as much as \$46 billion in investment, most of it from Chinese banks.

China also has complained bitterly for decades over India's accepting the Dalai Lama as a refugee in 1959. The Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader has kept his headquarters in northern India since fleeing Chinese-ruled Tibet.

Despite their disagreements, India and China entered a trade agreement in 1985 and have stepped up cooperation in agriculture, science and cultural exchange. But a \$46.6-billion trade deficit favouring China has irked Indian members of parliament, who call regularly for more balance.

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223 anti-dumping probes initiated by India since Jan 2012 - Times of India

New Delhi, Jul 24 () India has initiated as many as 223 anti-dumping investigations between January 2012 and July 14 this year against various countries, including China and Indonesia, Parliament was informed today.

During the period, maximum number of cases were against China (62).

In a written reply to the [Lok Sabha](#), Commerce Minister [Nirmala Sitharaman](#) said that from time to time, the directorate general of anti-dumping and allied duties (DGAD) receives applications from domestic producers for imposition of the duty on various products.

"As on July 14, 2017, anti-dumping duty is on force in 141 cases and 54 more cases have been initiated," she said.

Product categories on which the levy was imposed include chemicals, fibre boards, glass & glassware, pharmaceuticals and steel.

Countries impose anti-dumping duties to guard domestic industry from surge in below-cost imports.

Anti-dumping steps are taken to ensure fair trade and provide a level-playing field to the domestic industry.

They are not a measure to restrict import or cause an unjustified increase in cost of products.

In a separate reply, she said during the last five years and this fiscal (June 30), more time have been given to as many as 145 special economic zone developers to complete their projects.

As per SEZ rules, the letter of approval granted to the developer is valid for a period of three years within which time effective steps are to be taken by the developer to implement the approved project.

The board of approval, highest decision making body of SEZ, may grant more time by extending the validity period of the letter of approval. RR BAL

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India rejects OIC move on vigilantism

India on Tuesday strongly rejected the resolutions of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) that had expressed concern about the recent attacks on people by cow-vigilante groups. An official statement from the Ministry of External Affairs stated that the resolutions adopted at the Organisation's latest foreign ministers' meeting were "factually incorrect".

"India notes with utmost regret that the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation, during its 44th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, has again adopted certain resolutions which contain factually incorrect and misleading references to matters internal to India, including the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, which is an integral part of India. India outrightly rejects all such references," said the statement.

The MEA added, "the OIC has no locus standi on India's internal affairs. We strongly advise the OIC to refrain from making such references in future."

The OIC noted that incidents of violence against the Muslim community were being committed by extremist Hindu groups and said it viewed such incidents "with grave concern".

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Sri Lanka clears revised deal for Hambantota port

File photo: Sri Lankan Buddhist monks march in a protest against an industrial zone project at Mirijjawila village in Ambalantota, Sri Lanka. The banner reads "peaceful protest against selling of Hambantota port and land grabbing." | Photo Credit: [AP](#)

Sri Lanka's Cabinet on Tuesday cleared a revised deal for the Chinese-built port in Hambantota, the government said. The modified agreement, the government added, was more profitable to Sri Lanka and also addressed security concerns raised by other countries.

Speaking to reporters here, Ports Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe said the Cabinet gave final approval to sell 70% stake in the southern port to the state-run China Merchants Port Holdings for \$1.12 billion. "Some [diplomatic] missions here were worried that the port would be used as a military naval base. As per the revised agreement Sri Lanka will manage the port security," he said.

While the Chinese would manage port operations, "no naval ship, including Chinese ones, can call at Hambantota without our permission", Mr. Samarasinghe said.

Wary of the Chinese

India's apprehensions about the apparently growing Chinese presence in the island are well known, given the two countries' competing strategic interests in the island. The Hambantota port is part of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Beijing's stake in the port and its plan to acquire 15,000 acres of adjoining land to help Colombo set up an industrial zone have strengthened fears of those wary of China's growth in the region. "Our foreign policy today is reaching out to everyone and not giving special treatment to anyone," Mr. Samarasinghe said, responding to accusations that the current government is as close to Beijing as Mahinda Rajapaksa's administration was.

The Hambantota port was built with Chinese loans in 2010 during Mr. Rajapaksa's term. Deeming the project a "white elephant", the Maithripala Sirisena-Ranil Wickremesinghe government decided in late 2016 to sell 80% stake in the port to the Chinese company in order to tackle the \$8 billion debt Sri Lanka owes China. Under the agreement, Colombo was to receive \$1.12 billion for a 99-year lease.

The deal would be tabled in Parliament on Friday, and is likely to be signed on Saturday, the Ports Minister said.

A Bangladeshi auto-rickshaw driver is suing for damages after his phone number was used in a movie, leading to a barrage of calls from female fans

Nuclear disarmament campaign group ICAN won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday for its efforts to consign the atomic bomb to history, firing off a

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Shri Subhash Chandra Garg, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs appointed as India's Alternate Governor on the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Shri Subhash Chandra Garg, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs appointed as India's Alternate Governor on the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Shri Subhash Chandra Garg, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance, Government of India has been appointed as India's Alternate Governor on the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Manila, Philippines with effect from 12th July, 2017. Shri Garg has been appointed in place of Former Secretary, DEA, Shri Shaktikanta Das.

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CAC adopts Codex norms for three spices

In a significant move, the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) adopted three Codex standards for black, white and green pepper, cumin and thyme paving the way for an universal agreement on identifying quality spices in various countries.

The CAC cleared these standards at its session held in Geneva recently.

The adoption of Codex standards for the three spices, it is pointed out, will help evolve a common standardisation process for their global trade and availability.

“This (Codex standard) will bring harmony to the global spice trade and ensure availability of high quality, clean and safe spices to the world,” said Union Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in a statement.

“It may be a small beginning considering the number of commodities waiting in the ranks for the standardisation process. But what is really heartening is that spices have made a definitive entry into the league of commodities having Codex standards, and India played a key role in achieving this objective,” she added.

‘Food code’

The Codex Alimentarius or “Food Code” is a collection of standards, guidelines and codes of practice adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Commission, also known as CAC, is the central part of the joint FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations)/WHO (World Health Organisation) Food Standards Programme. It was established by FAO and WHO to protect consumer health and promote fair practices in food trade.

The CAC move is considered a crucial endorsement of the India’s initiatives to usher in a common standard across the globe for spices trade.

The adoption of Codex standards by CAC must be read in the context of the efforts put in by New Delhi in arriving at a common code for spices trade. India conducted three sessions of Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) at Kochi (2014), Goa (2015) and Chennai (2017). The Chennai session especially succeeded in achieving this consensus. Subsequently, these drafts were placed before the CAC and the member-nations adopted them by consensus.

With the adoption of Codex standards, member-nations would now have reference points and benchmarks to align their national standards for spices with Codex.

Around 2013, the need for Codex standards for spices and herbs became a subject matter of increased concern owing to the increased level of issues in spice trade. At that time, there was no Codex committee exclusively for spices and culinary herbs. The first step in the development of Codex standards was taken with the establishment of a dedicated Codex committee for spices and herbs. Not surprisingly, the adoption of Codex standards is viewed as a major victory for India.

Such expenditure needs expeditious resolution of stressed loan problem: Crisil

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India all set to access resources under the Green Climate Fund for Finance Climate Action**India all set to access resources under the Green Climate Fund for Finance Climate Action****'India Committed to the cause of Climate Change': Dr Harsh Vardhan**

Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan has said that India is committed to the cause of Climate Change. Delivering the keynote address on the occasion of the signing of Accreditation Master Agreement (AMA) between Green Climate Fund (GCF) and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) here today, the Minister said that India has been leading from the front in tackling global climate change issues and it will continue to do so in the future as well. "India, like other developing countries, can do more, if finance and technology development & transfer and capacity building support are ensured as per the convention and its Paris Agreement", Dr. Harsh Vardhan said.

The Minister emphasised that climate justice demands that we remain mindful of the needs and aspirations of the poor. He pointed out that despite being one of the fastest growing economies of the world, India has a significant percentage of population living below the poverty line. "We need to take cognizance of the population size and income inequality and cannot ignore the basic requirement of electricity, housing and food for the poor. We expect GCF to partner with us on these issues and prioritize their work to overcome these challenges," Dr Harsh Vardhan said. He highlighted that India is creating a network of strong institutions that can act as enablers for scaling-up climate action through technologically sound and innovative projects.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan stated that environmental consciousness is the bedrock of our growth aspirations. "We are fully conscious of the need to pursue an ecologically sustainable development pathway. Our Prime Minister Modi ji wants to build a new India by 2022 - riding on the demographic dividend and opportunities to use off beat solutions like solar and wind power, smart cities, incentivizing forestry, creating investment openings and overall, involving all in the development process", the Minister said.

Speaking on the occasion, Executive Director of GCF, Amb. Howard Bamsey said that India has been acknowledged as a strong proponent of climate change action and GCF looks forward to greater engagement with India.

Several of the mitigation and adaptation targets, articulated in India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), to meet the international climate obligations are aligned with the Fund's strategic impact areas - viz clean energy, energy efficiency, cities, transport, forestry, agriculture, water health and ecosystems. India's NDC is among the few that make specific reference to the GCF specifically with regard to its role as a source for low-cost finance for its 40% non-fossil fuel based power target. India, with numerous climate change and developmental challenges, needs to engage more purposefully and actively with GCF. The accredited entities need to proactively engage with GCF to take advantage of the available opportunities.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is one of the operating entities under financial mechanism set up under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to provide support to developing countries in combating climate change, with resources to be generated from funding by developed country Parties and various other public and private sources. It supports both climate change adaptation and mitigation projects in developing countries.

So far, one project from India on “Installation of Ground Water Recharge System” in Odisha has recently been approved by the GCF for \$34 million. Another proposal on coastal areas has already been submitted to the GCF Secretariat and several more projects are in the pipeline.

India has nominated a total of five direct access entities for accreditation by the GCF. Two of these from the public sector and three from the private sector for accreditation by the GCF. The public sector entities are NABARD and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI). The private sector entities nominated are YES Bank, IDFC Bank and IL&FS Environmental Services. So far, NABARD and SIDBI have been accredited by the GCF.

NABARD is the first entity from India to be accredited as Direct Access Entity (DAE). The signing of AMA between GCF and NABARD is an essential first step for accessing the GCF resources to help safeguard the lives, property and livelihoods of millions of people against climate change impact.

Board Member of GCF from India, Shri Dinesh Sharma, stressed upon submission of large size of proposals or multi state proposals from India to access the GCF resources and said that in coming years, GCF may play an important role in supporting climate change projects.

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Shri Bandaru Dattatreya attends the BRICS Labour & Employment Ministers' Meet in China**Shri Bandaru Dattatreya attends the BRICS Labour & Employment Ministers' Meet in China**

Indian delegation led by Shri Bandaru Dattatreya, the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Labour & Employment participated in the BRICS Labour & Employment Ministers' Meet, held on 26-27th, July, 2017 at Chongqing, China. China is the chair for the BRICS Labour & Employment Ministers' Meet for the year 2017. The delegation included M Sathiyavathy, Secretary(Labour and Employment), Manish Gupta, Joint Secretary, Anuja Bapat, Director and Prof Sasikumar, Sr. Fellow, VVGNI.

The meeting concluded with the adoption of the BRICS Labour and Employment Ministerial Declaration by the BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers on 27th July 2017 in Chongqing, China. The Declaration covered a variety of areas that are of critical importance to all BRICS countries including India and called upon strengthening collaboration and cooperation on these through appropriate institutionalisation . These areas consisted of : "Governance in the Future of Work", "Skills for development in BRICS", "Universal and sustainable social security systems", "BRICS Network of Labour Research Institutions", "BRICS Social Security Cooperation Framework" and "BRICS entrepreneurship research".

On this occasion, Shri Bandaru Dattatreya said that the BRICS countries should collaborate to address the challenges of the 'Future of Work' emerging in the area of non-standard forms of employment like part-time work, temporary work, fixed term contracting and subcontracting, home based work, etc. that are changing the character of the labour markets in the BRICS countries. Networking of labour institutes of BRICS nations could create mechanisms for regular exchange of information and creating further areas of cooperation in this and other common areas.

Labour & Employment Minister reiterated that India has always adhered to the principle of CBDR in Global Supply Chain and was pleased that the BRICS countries echoed this policy stand. Shri Dattatreya added that technology could be a critical enabler for creating efficient and transparent labour governance structure and that in India ICT has been deployed to ensure effective, timely and efficient delivery of services and for creating simpler and transparent compliance structure in all areas including financial inclusion, social security, employment generation and skilling.

The Minister emphasized that skilling not only increases the employability of the workers but also the productivity of the employers which leads to a cycle of increased production, increased revenue stream and increased GDP of the country. India endorsed the BRICS Action Plan for Poverty Alleviation and reduction through Skills which inter alia includes policy recommendations to integrate poor into overall national plan for vocational training, improving lifelong vocational training and learning systems, promoting high quality apprenticeship systems, strengthening collaboration between Governments, sectors and enterprises for research initiatives, and leveraging the network of BRICS National Research Institutes for creating such alliances.

India complimented the Chinese Presidency for taking forward the commitments made collectively by BRICS during the previous presidencies in a very articulate manner. India supported the proposed institutionalization of Social Security Cooperation Framework for BRICS as it will help us understand strategies being followed by fellow BRICS countries towards universalisation of social security especially in respect of on standard forms of works. Minister said that asymmetry in labour market information is big challenge for all of us. In this context the network of National Labour Institutes presents significant possibilities for integrating research and information sharing. Shri Dattatreya said that the network will also help us to form common positions on relevant labour and employment issues. Encouraging innovation and Entrepreneurship is a key priority for India. India expressed her desire to work with BRICS partners in strengthening the BRICS Entrepreneurship Initiatives.

The BRICS Labour and Employment Ministerial Declaration would now be presented to the Leaders/ Head of the State summit scheduled to be held on 3-5th, 2017 Xiamen, China.

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Ministry of WCD seeks suggestions issues related to civil aspects of "International Child removal"

NEW DELHI: The [ministry for women and child development](#) has put out in the public domain a "concept note" on issues related to civil aspects of International Child Removal. A multi member committee led Chairmanship Justice Rajesh Bindal, Judge Punjab and Haryana High Court was set-up in February to study all aspects of the matter pertaining to [Hague Convention on Child Abduction](#) in detail and make its recommendation. Before it gives the final report the Committee has sought suggestions on the concept note and the various concerns raised by July 31.

The report once ready will steer further deliberations of the WCD ministry to recommend to the government of India on whether India should ratify the [Hague convention](#) and if it does how to ensure that the rights of the parents and child are not compromised in any way.

The Ministry in a press statement issued on Tuesday pointed that with the rise in trans-national marriages and complexities involved in modern day relationships, the protection of rights of parents and children involved is a critical issue of National and International importance.

The Committee has said in the concept note that "the instances of an Indian citizen marrying an NRI or a person of Indian origin having citizenship of a foreign nation, popularly referred to as 'transnational marriages' are frequent and in abundance". "However, many a times, it so happens that the spouses fall apart and the marriage breaks down irretrievably. In many such cases, the spouses return to the net of their families/extended families in India, seeking mental comfort for themselves and their children. However, such instances often land such estranged spouse in a situation of being perceived as abductors of their children in light of The Hague convention provisions," it is pointed.

The Committee has further stated that "in another situation where both the spouses may be Indians, residing in India, one of the spouses may move out of India along with the child born out of such wedlock after breakdown of marriage. In such situation, the issue of getting the child back from the foreign land assumes importance, in the process of redressing the grievance of the left behind spouse".

"In such cases, the signatory countries of the Hague convention can avail access to the Central authorities of the other contracting states to resolve such issues. Another factor that deserves consideration, is that many a times, on account of the broken marriages, often the complaint of child abduction is alleged against each other by the estranged spouse, to settle their personal scores," it is explained in the concept note.

In the backdrop the Committee states that "since the matter is likely to have large scale ramifications, it is desirable and in the fitness of things to put the same in public domain and invite suggestions from various quarters." The Committee may even hold meetings with different stakeholders. The committee has sought suggestions which may be sent by e-mail to the Committees Member Secretary, Meenaxee Raj.

The Hague Convention on the [Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction](#) is a multilateral treaty on custodial issues of children. The Convention seeks to protect children from the harmful effects of abduction and retention across international boundaries by providing a procedure to ensure their prompt return.

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