

Mizoram celebrates 31st anniversary of Mizo peace accord

Janata Dal Leader V.P. Singh offering water to Ms. Lal Blak Diki, widow of former Mizoram chief Minister Lal Denga when she and Mizoram National Front Leaders staged a day long dharna at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on June 30, 1994 to protest against non implementation of Mizo accord. However, three decades after its signing, the accord has largely put an end to the era of violence that once prevailed in the state. | Photo Credit: [PTI](#)

The 31st anniversary of the signing of the historic Mizo peace accord between the Union government and the erstwhile underground Mizo National Front (MNF) was celebrated today in Mizoram.

All government offices and educational institutions remained closed as the day was declared a public holiday.

Though no official function was organised by the state government, the opposition MNF organised meetings in different parts of the state.

A press statement issued by the Peace Accord MNF Returnee Association (PAMRA) said that of the 572 MNF cadre who came overground due to the accord, 150 have died till date.

The Mizo Accord was signed on June 30, 1986 ushering in an era of peace after 20 years of violence and disturbance in the state.

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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'Petya' ransomware attack: what is it and how can it be stopped?

Companies have been crippled by global cyberattack, the second major ransomware crime in two months. We answer the key questions

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[Olivia Solon](#) in San Francisco and [Alex Hern](#) in London

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Many organizations in Europe and the US have been crippled by a ransomware attack known as "Petya". The malicious software has spread through large firms including the advertiser WPP, food company Mondelez, legal firm DLA Piper and Danish shipping and transport firm Maersk, leading to PCs and data being locked up and held for ransom.

It's the second major global ransomware attack in the past two months. In early May, Britain's National Health Service (NHS) was among the organizations [infected by WannaCry](#), which used a vulnerability first revealed to the public as part of a leaked stash of NSA-related documents released online in April by a hacker group calling itself the Shadow Brokers.

The [WannaCry or WannaCrypt ransomware attack](#) affected more than 230,000 computers in over 150 countries, with the NHS, Spanish phone company Telefónica and German state railways among those hardest hit.

Like WannaCry, "Petya" spreads rapidly through networks that use Microsoft Windows, but what is it, why is it happening and how can it be stopped?

Ransomware is a type of [malware](#) that blocks access to a computer or its data and demands money to release it.

When a computer is infected, the ransomware encrypts important documents and files and then demands a ransom, typically in Bitcoin, for a digital key needed to unlock the files. If victims don't have a recent back-up of the files they must either pay the ransom or face losing all of their files.

The ransomware takes over computers and demands \$300, paid in Bitcoin. The malicious software spreads rapidly across an organization once a computer is infected using the EternalBlue vulnerability in Microsoft Windows (Microsoft has released a patch, but not everyone will have installed it) or through two Windows administrative tools. The malware tries one option and if it doesn't work, it tries the next one. "It has a better mechanism for spreading itself than WannaCry," said Ryan Kalember, of cybersecurity company Proofpoint.

Most major antivirus companies now claim that their software has updated to actively detect and protect against "Petya" infections: Symantec products using definitions version 20170627.009 should, for instance, and Kaspersky also says its security software is now capable of spotting the malware. Additionally, keeping Windows up to date – [at the very least through installing March's critical patch](#) defending against the EternalBlue vulnerability – stops one major avenue of infection, and will also protect against future attacks with different payloads.

For this particular malware outbreak, another line of defence has been discovered: "Petya" checks for a read-only file, C:\Windows\perfc.dat, and if it finds it, it won't run the encryption side of the

software. But this [“vaccine”](#) doesn’t actually prevent infection, and the malware will still use its foothold on your PC to try to spread to others on the same network.

Strictly speaking, it is not. The malware appears to share a significant amount of code with an older piece of ransomware that really was called Petya, but in the hours after the outbreak started, [security researchers noticed that](#) “the superficial resemblance is only skin deep”. Researchers at Russia’s Kaspersky Lab redubbed the malware NotPetya, and increasingly tongue-in-cheek variants of that name – Petna, Pneytna, and so on – began to spread as a result. On top of that, other researchers who independently spotted the malware gave it other names: Romanian’s Bitdefender called it Goldeneye, for instance.

The attack appears to have been seeded through a software update mechanism built into an accounting program that companies working with the Ukrainian government need to use, according to the [Ukrainian cyber police](#). This explains why so many Ukrainian organizations were affected, including government, banks, state power utilities and Kiev’s airport and metro system. The radiation monitoring system at Chernobyl was also taken offline, forcing employees to use hand-held counters to measure levels at the former nuclear plant’s exclusion zone. A second wave of infections was spawned by a phishing campaign featuring malware-laden attachments.

The “Petya” ransomware has caused serious disruption at large firms in Europe and the US, including the advertising firm WPP, French construction materials company Saint-Gobain and Russian steel and oil firms Evraz and Rosneft. The food company Mondelez, legal firm DLA Piper, Danish shipping and transport firm AP Moller-Maersk and [Heritage Valley Health System](#), which runs hospitals and care facilities in Pittsburgh, also said their systems had been hit by the malware.

Crucially, unlike WannaCry, this version of ‘Petya’ tries to spread internally within networks, but not seed itself externally. That may have limited the ultimate spread of the malware, which seems to have seen a decrease in the rate of new infections overnight.

It initially looked like the outbreak was just another cybercriminal taking advantage of cyberweapons leaked online. However, security experts say that the payment mechanism of the attack seems too amateurish to have been carried out by serious criminals. Firstly, the ransom note includes the same Bitcoin payment address for every victim – most ransomware creates a custom address for every victim. Secondly, the malware asks victims to communicate with the attackers via a single email address which has been suspended by the email provider after they discovered what it was being used for. This means that even if someone pays the ransom, they have no way to communicate with the attacker to request the decryption key to unlock their files.

It is not clear, but it seems likely it is someone who wants the malware to masquerade as ransomware, while actually just being destructive, particularly to the Ukrainian government. Security researcher Nicholas Weaver told [cybersecurity blog Krebs on Security](#) that ‘Petya’ was a “deliberate, malicious, destructive attack or perhaps a test disguised as ransomware”. [Pseudonymous security researcher Grugg](#) noted that the real Petya “was a criminal enterprise for making money,” but that the new version “is definitely not designed to make money.

“This is designed to spread fast and cause damage, with a plausibly deniable cover of ‘ransomware,’” he added, pointing out that, among other tells, the payment mechanism in the malware was inept to the point of uselessness: a single hardcoded payment address, meaning the money can be traced; the requirement to email proof of payment to a webmail provider, meaning that the email address can be – [and was](#) – disabled; and the requirement to send an infected machine’s 60-character, case sensitive “personal identification key” from a computer which can’t even copy-and-paste, all combine to mean that “this payment pipeline was possibly the worst of all

options (sort of 'send a personal cheque to: Petya Payments, PO Box ... ')”.

Ukraine has blamed Russia for previous cyber-attacks, including one on its [power grid at the end of 2015](#) that left part of western Ukraine temporarily without electricity. Russia has denied carrying out cyber-attacks on Ukraine.

The ransomware infects computers and then waits for about an hour before rebooting the machine. While the machine is rebooting, you can switch the computer off to prevent the files from being encrypted and try and rescue the files from the machine, as flagged by @HackerFantastic on Twitter.

If machine reboots and you see this message, power off immediately! This is the encryption process. If you do not power on, files are fine. pic.twitter.com/lqwzWdlrX6

If the system reboots with the ransom note, don't pay the ransom – the “customer service” email address [has been shut down](#) so there's no way to get the decryption key to unlock your files anyway. Disconnect your PC from the internet, reformat the hard drive and [reinstall your files from a backup](#). Back up your files regularly and keep your anti-virus software up to date.

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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.

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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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AFSPA may be partially lifted in Assam, parts of Arunachal Pradesh

THE ARMED Forces (Special Powers) Act may soon be partially withdrawn from parts of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, with the Home Ministry asking the two BJP-ruled states to review the situation in areas under AFSPA and prepare recommendations for the Centre to examine in consultation with the Army, said officials. While the entire state of Assam has been under AFSPA for the last 27 years, three districts of Arunachal bordering Assam and 16 other police station limits in the state are currently under the Act.

Speaking to The Indian Express, a senior Home Ministry official said, "We want people in these states to lead a normal life, considering that the situation in both states have improved. A major insurgent group of the Northeast, United Liberation Front of Assam, is in peace talks with the government while smaller groups have been neutralised. A relook is required to see if the Act can be partially lifted in some areas."

Officials said the notification extending AFSPA in Assam and Arunachal is issued every six months after a review. "Recently, we reduced this duration to three months and will see if it can be withdrawn completely from certain areas. For the time being, the proposal is only for the two states but we are also looking at a similar solution in Manipur," said the official.

Earlier, the BJP had been against the withdrawal of AFSPA, saying that it could help extremists.

In May, the Home Ministry extended AFSPA for three more months in Assam. In the same month, the ministry issued a fresh notification to continue AFSPA in Arunachal for three months, until August 8. The notification stated that the three border districts of Arunachal were being used by militants of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) to escape to Myanmar and that 25 incidents of violence were reported here from September 2016 to February 2017.

The Act is also in force in Nagaland, Manipur (except the Imphal municipal area), parts of Meghalaya bordering Assam, and J&K.

The controversial Act, which has given rise to several allegations of rights violations, empowers the Army and central forces deployed in "disturbed areas" to "shoot to kill" and arrest any suspect without a warrant. It was imposed in Punjab during the militancy before being withdrawn in 1997, and in Tripura from 1997 to 2015.

"The Army is of the view that if state governments require its presence, it will have to be given powers under AFSPA. Once the Army is withdrawn, the states will be required to deploy their own forces. These local forces can be supplemented with central paramilitary, which will work under the Indian Penal Code instead of AFSPA," said another senior official.

The official said that the Army has already been removed from operational roles in some areas of these two states and replaced by the paramilitary.

One of the primary reasons cited by the Centre for imposing AFSPA in Arunachal's Tirap, Changlang and Longding, all bordering Assam, and 16 police station limits was alleged extortion and killing of security forces by the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) and NSCN-K in these areas.

While the NSCN-IM signed a framework agreement with the government, the NSCN-K's capabilities have been depleted after the death of its leader S S Khaplang, said officials.

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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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India's New, Tough Anti-Hijacking Law Comes Into Force

Sections

The new anti-hijack law covers offences against an aircraft or personnel even when it is on ground.

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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.

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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.

In 2009, when the UK held a special spring summit, former 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.

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 then Prime Minister Tony Abbott to allow the issue pride of place.

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.

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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.

END

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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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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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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Centre seeks debate in Supreme Court on Jammu & Kashmir special status

The Centre on Monday asked the Supreme Court to debate on the special status granted to the State of Jammu and Kashmir, saying it was both a sensitive and constitutional matter.

“It is a very sensitive matter. It is a constitutional issue. A debate is required,” Attorney General K.K. Venugopal submitted before a Bench led by Chief Justice J.S. Khehar.

The top law officer was responding to a PIL plea filed by a Delhi-based NGO, We the Citizens, contending that the J&K government, given the State’s special autonomous status under Articles 35A and 370, was discriminatory against non-residents as far as government jobs and real estate purchases were concerned. The Bench agreed to schedule the case before a three-judge Bench after six weeks.

Responding, the State government argued that its special status was sourced from the 1954 Presidential Order, which gave special rights to the State’s permanent residents. The hearing comes in the backdrop of an earlier Jammu and Kashmir High Court, which ruled that Article 370 assumed a place of permanence in the Constitution and the feature was beyond amendment, repeal or abrogation. The court said Article 35A gave “protection” to existing laws in force in the State.

“Article 370 though titled as ‘Temporary Provision’ and included in Para XXI titled ‘Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions’ has assumed place of permanence in the Constitution,” it observed. “It [Article 370] is beyond amendment, repeal or abrogation, in as much as the Constituent Assembly of the State before its dissolution did not recommend its Amendment or repeal,” the court said.

It also observed that the President under Article 370 (1) was conferred with power to extend any provision of the Constitution to the State with such “exceptions and modifications” as may be deemed fit subject to consultation or concurrence with the State government. The High Court said J&K, while acceding to the Dominion of India, retained limited sovereignty and did not merge with it.

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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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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Owaisi sends notice of private members' Bill on mob violence

Asaduddin Owaisi (File photo). | Photo Credit: [Sandeep Saxena](#)

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief and Lok Sabha MP Asaduddin Owaisi sent notice of a private members' Bill to combat incidents of mob lynchings, with sections that enjoin penalties of a minimum of ten years imprisonment on public servants for "acts of omission".

"The Bill criminalises the act of mob violence as well as acts of omission by public servants. As we have seen in the [Pehlu Khan case](#), two of the accused have not been arrested yet and similar slowing of investigations when the media spotlight is taken away from such incidents," Mr Owaisi told *The Hindu*.

"Unless there are measures that call public servants to account under the law, the sincerity of the investigation will be contingent on public uproar, popular demand and political expediency."

Provisions such as the establishment of Special Courts for the trial of mob violence, with judges for the same being appointed by a collegium of the five senior-most judges of the High Court are in the Bill. The Special Courts shall also have the additional responsibility of receiving complaints of mob violence, and has the responsibility of setting up Special Investigation Teams (SIT) and appointing a public prosecutor. The SIT and public prosecutor, besides reporting to the Special Court, shall also be under the supervision of the Supreme Court (via the appointment of an amicus curiae).

The pathology of lynching

Punishment of up to life imprisonment for those found guilty of engaging in mob violence, and special compensation and witness protection are also included in the Bill.

The most significant portion of the Bill is, however, the awarding of penalties on public servants for failing to investigate properly due to malafide intentions or wilful neglect of their duties.

Mob violence has been defined to include "any act where two or more persons injure, harm, oppress, threaten any person's enjoyment of a right guaranteed under the Constitution of India or on the basis of their identity."

Recent incidents of lynching related to cow vigilantism, in Haryana, Rajasthan and Jharkhand, have led to demands in various quarters for a law to deal with such incidents. The Rajya Sabha on Wednesday too debated the issue in the House. An MP unrelated to the executive can move a private members Bill by sending notice of it a month in advance to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. Mr Owaisi sent off the notice on July 6th.

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.

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

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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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Government mulls insurance cover for digital transaction frauds

NEW DELHI: The government is "very seriously" considering the recommendations of the Chandrababu Naidu committee on digital payment security, including insurance cover for the victims of fraudulent digital transactions, a union minister said on Friday.

In response to a question by [Samajwadi Party](#) MP Naresh Agrawal, Union Electronics and Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told the Rajya Sabha that the number of digital transactions in the country was rising and hence the concern for their security.

"The government is very seriously considering the recommendations made by the Chandrababu Naidu committee. And I am in principle for it (idea of insurance)," Prasad said.

The Committee of Chief Ministers on Digital Payment, chaired by Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh [N. Chandrababu Naidu](#), has in its interim report suggested several measures for digital payment security, including an insurance scheme to cover losses incurred in digital transactions on account of fraud, etc.

The report suggests that in order to address the apprehension of the general public in adopting digital payments, the scheme should target low-ticket transactions to cover the vulnerable sections like small merchants, farmers etc.

Prasad said the number of fraudulent digital transactions in comparison to the total number of digital transactions was negligible and the government was taking steps to curb those frauds.

"Around 1,200 crore digital transactions take place annually in the country. Of these, between 0.005 per cent and 0.007 per cent are fraudulent transactions," he said.

As per data presented by the minister before the House, the number of cases of frauds involving [credit cards](#), ATM/debit cards and Internet banking during 2015-16 was 16,468 and in 2016-17 it was 13,653.

He said that for prepaid payment instruments, including [e-wallets](#), the [Reserve Bank of India](#) (RBI) has started maintaining provisional data of fraudulent transactions.

According to the data for March, April and May 2017, the number of fraudulent transactions is between 0.005 per cent and 0.007 per cent of the total number of transactions.

"As per incidents reported to the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), 40 phishing incidents affecting 19 financial organisations and 10 incidents affecting ATMs, Point of Sale (POS) systems and [Unified Payment Interface](#) (UPI) have been reported during November 2016 to June 2017," Prasad said.

"As part of promotion of digital payments, the government is taking several steps to ensure that frauds are minimised and even when an incident of this nature takes place, corrective action is immediately taken," he added.

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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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Union Home Minister chairs first meeting of Islands Development Agency (IDA)**Union Home Minister chairs first meeting of Islands Development Agency (IDA)****IDA focuses on Holistic Development of Islands**

The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh chaired the first meeting of the newly constituted Islands Development Agency (IDA), here today. The IDA was set up on June 01, 2017 following the Prime Minister's review meeting for the development of islands.

The Union Home Minister presented the vision for developing India's maritime economy while preserving the natural eco-system and addressing the security concerns. He emphasized upon the need for sustainable development of Islands with people's participation.

The CEO, NITI Aayog made a detailed presentation on the current status and the way forward for holistic development of identified islands. He informed that Concept Development Plans and Detailed Master Plans are being prepared for identified islands with principles of sustainability, people's participation, eco-system preservation and determination of carrying capacity as the guiding principles. Such an exercise is being taken up for the first time in the country.

Admiral D.K. Joshi, former Navy Chief and Vice Chairman of IDA suggested taking up suitable interventions for sustainable implementation of planned projects.

During the meeting, the progress being made for the formulation of integrated master plans and other matters concerning the islands development were reviewed. It was also decided that Lt. Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Administrator of Lakshadweep Islands will be included as members of IDA.

After detailed consultations with key stakeholders, 10 islands namely Smith, Ross, Aves, Long and Little Andaman in Andaman & Nicobar and Minicoy, Bangaram, Suheli, Cherium and Tinnakara in Lakshadweep have been identified for holistic development in the first phase. With this meeting, the efforts for holistic development of Islands of India received a major boost.

Other Members of the IDA including Cabinet Secretary, Home Secretary, Secretary (Environment, Forests and Climate Change), Secretary (Tourism) and Secretary (Tribal Welfare) also participated in the meeting.

KSD/NK/PK/KM

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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.

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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First Two NOPVs Shachi and Shruti Launched by RDEL at Pipavav, Gujarat**First Two NOPVs Shachi and Shruti Launched by RDEL at Pipavav, Gujarat**

Reliance Defence and Engineering Limited (RDEL) today launched the first two Naval Offshore Patrol Vessels (NOPVs) at their shipyard in Pipavav, Gujarat. The ships are part of a five ship project being constructed for the Indian Navy. The two NOPVs, **Shachi** and **Shruti** were launched by Smt. Preeti Luthra, wife of Vice Admiral Girish Luthra, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC; the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief Western Naval Command at the RDEL Shipyard Pipavav, Gujarat.

The primary role of NOPVs is to undertake surveillance of the country's vast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) besides operational tasks such as anti-piracy patrols, fleet support operations, maritime security of offshore assets, coastal security operations, and protection of shipping lanes. The NOPVs would increase the ocean surveillance and patrolling capabilities of the Indian Navy.

The NOPVs being constructed at RDEL are patrol ships and are armed with 76mm Super Rapid Gun Mount (SRGM) system along with two 30mm AK-630M guns which provide medium range and short range offensive and defensive capabilities. The armament is remotely controlled through an electronic Fire Control System. The ships are fitted with diesel engine driven propulsion systems and can deliver speeds upto 25 knots. All ship operations are controlled by an intelligent Integrated Platform Management System which has interfaces for all operational activities onboard the ship.

Speaking on the occasion, Vice Admiral Girish Luthra, mentioned that the launch is a significant and milestone event, as these two NOPVs are the first warships to be launched by a private sector shipyard in India. He further noted that opening up of warship building to the private sector by the Indian Navy is an opportunity that the private sector must make full use of, and is an enabling factor for increased private sector participation in this key area of national capability. The CinC also mentioned that while we have constructed and commissioned a number of quality warships, our shipyards need to constantly strive to transform with an aim to achieve global standards in quality, productivity and build periods with focus on innovation, modern techniques, and processes, and all round efficiency. He added that projects need to be implemented as per planned schedule. He stated that in addition to meeting national requirements, the shipyards should also focus on export orientation.

The CinC also complimented Reliance Defence and Engg Ltd and their workforce, and the Navy's warship overseeing and Quality Assurance teams, for their perseverance and efforts to reach this important milestone, and mentioned that he looked forward to commissioning of *Shachi* and *Shruti* into the Indian Navy in the near future.

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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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NPCI gets RBI nod to operate Bharat Bill Payment System

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), the umbrella organization for all retail payment systems in the country, has received the final nod from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to function as the Bharat Bill Payment Central Unit and operate the Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS), it said in a statement on Friday.

“There is a specific direction from RBI to operate the central unit as a strategic business unit of NPCI. Nearly 45 crore bills which comprise of electricity, telecom, DTH, water and gas are permitted under BBPS. This initiative will provide a major push to digital payments as it is a big step forward in formalizing the bill payment system in the country,” A.P. Hota, managing director and chief executive of NPCI, said in the statement.

The final clearance from RBI comes almost a year after NPCI launched the BBPS pilot project to make payment of utility bills easier. The pilot started on 31 August with eight BBPS operating units that had received in-principle approval from RBI.

The total number of Bharat Bill Payment Operating Units certified by NPCI now stands at 24. The certified units include three public sector banks (Bank of Baroda, Union Bank of India and Indian Overseas Bank), 10 private sector banks, five cooperative banks and six non-bank biller aggregators.

As per the framework, a customer will be able to pay several bills such as electricity, telephone, water, gas, and direct-to-home television at a single location—physical or electronic—and receive instant confirmation once the payment is made.

Payments through BBPS may be made using cash, transfer cheques and electronic modes. Bill aggregators and banks, who will function as operating units, will carry out these transactions for the customers.

Currently, 42 large billers in five utility sectors have been on-boarded. Major public sector banks including State Bank of India (SBI) are still under certification.

“The real impact would be visible only when SBI joins,” added Hota.

At present the bulk of transactions on BBPS are towards payment of electricity bills. The power sector potentially contributes to about 180 million bills per month out of which only 10% is digital. The likelihood of meeting the target of generating 25 billion digital transactions during the current fiscal year depends critically on the power sector getting on-boarded on BBPS system, added the statement.

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