

My Notes....

NATIONAL

INDIA'S MEMBERSHIP FOR EBRD APPROVED

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved **India's Membership for European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD)** Necessary steps will be initiated by the **Department of Economic Affairs**, Ministry of Finance to acquire the membership of the EBRD.

Impact:

1. Membership of EBRD would enhance **India's international profile and promote its economic interests**. Access to EBRD's Countries of Operation and sector knowledge.
2. India's investment opportunities would get a boost.
3. It would increase **the scope of cooperation between India and EBRD** through co-financing opportunities in manufacturing, services, Information Technology, and Energy.
4. EBRD's core operations pertain to private sector development in their countries of operation. The membership would help India leverage the technical assistance and sectoral knowledge of the bank for the benefit of development of private sector.
5. This would contribute to an improved investment climate in the country.
6. The membership of EBRD would enhance the competitive strength of the Indian firms, and provide an enhanced access to international markets in terms of business opportunities, procurement activities, consultancy assignments etc.
7. This would open up **new vistas for Indian professionals on the one hand**, and give a fillip to Indian exports on the other.
8. Increased economic activities would have the employment generating potential.
9. It would also enable Indian nationals to get the employment opportunity in the Bank.

Background

1. The **issue relating to acquiring the membership of the "European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD)" had been under consideration of the Government.**
2. With the country's impressive economic growth over the years and enhanced international political profile, it was considered appropriate that India should expand its presence on the global developmental landscape beyond its association with the **Multi-lateral Development Banks (MDBs)** such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and African Development Bank.
3. The decision to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the New Development Bank (NDB) was taken earlier in this backdrop.

Financial Implications:

1. The **minimum initial investment towards the membership of EBRD will be approximately €1 (one) million.**
2. However, this assumption is based on India deciding to buy the minimum number of shares (100) required for obtaining the membership.
3. If India were to buy a higher number of Bank shares, the financial implications could be higher. In-principle approval of the Cabinet at this stage is being obtained for joining the Bank.

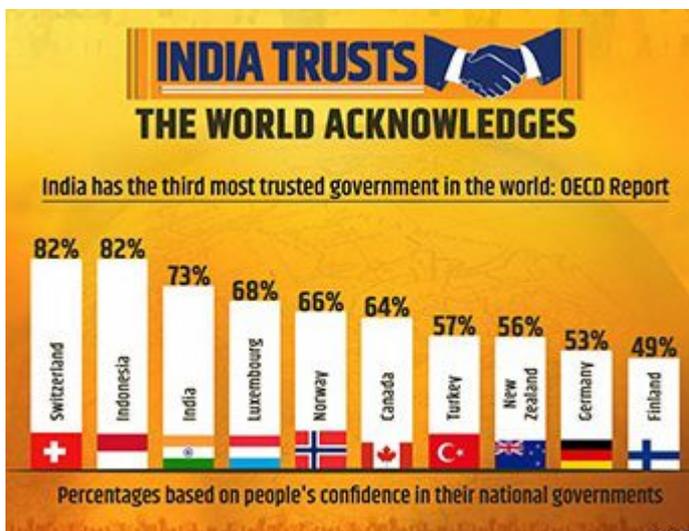
INDIAN GOVT. 3RD MOST TRUSTED

India ranked third in World Economic Forum's list of most trusted governments. The list was testimony to India's development. **India securing third best**

place in the list of most trusted governments worldwide is evidence that the country is treading in the right direction of development under present government led by Narendra Modi.

What

1. **The report reveals that almost three quarters (74 percent) of Indians** say they have confidence in their national government.
2. The factors taken into consideration were- the economy, political upheaval, and headline-grabbing events like major corruption cases.
3. This is compared to only about one third of Americans. The situation is even worse in Greece, where only about one in 10 citizens trust those in charge, according to the report.
4. **The list is topped by Switzerland**, followed by Indonesia, while India grabs the third spot.



FIRST TIME IMBAX - 2017

After successful joint training exercise between the **armies of India and Bangladesh this month**, the Umroi Joint Training Node in Meghalaya is all set to host **similar exercise with Myanmar army** from November 20 to November 25. Defence PRO, Lt Col Suneet Newton said the **first India-Myanmar Bilateral Military Exercise 2017(IMBAX - 2017)** is for the first time to be held in India.

What

1. **The joint exercise is also the first of its kind military training exercise on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO)** between India and Myanmar.
2. The aim of this bilateral training event is to train the Myanmar delegation for participation in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations **under the UN Flag**.
3. The upcoming bilateral exercise will be conducted at the Joint Training Node, Umroi, Meghalaya by Army's RED HORNS DIVISION under the aegis of GAJRAJ CORPS. The opening ceremony will be held on November 20.
4. The exercise includes participation of 15 officers from Myanmar army and 16 officers from the Indian army who will jointly train for over a period of six days.
5. The focus will be on training the Myanmar army delegation on the tactics, procedures, expertise and methodology required by the contingent of the member nations for serving in UNPKO.

BHANDARI'S RE-ELECTION TO ICJ

India's Dalveer Bhandari was re-elected to the International Court of Justice as the General Assembly overwhelmingly threw its weight behind him, **forcing Britain to withdraw its candidate** from a hard-fought race to the World Court. **Bhandari and UK's Christopher Greenwood** was locked in a neck-and-neck fight for re-election as the UN could not decide between them after electing four out of five judges to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

What

1. **Bhandari, 70, received 183-193 votes in the General Assembly** and secured all 15 votes in the Security Council to fill the final vacancy on the ICJ after separate but simultaneous elections were held at the UN headquarters in New York.
2. In a dramatic turn of events, British Permanent Representative to the UN Matthew Rycroft wrote identical letters to the presidents of the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council before the two chambers was scheduled to meet for the 12th round of voting.
3. **The UK will not have a judge on the bench of the ICJ for the first time in its 71-year history.**
4. Based in The Hague, the **ICJ has a bench of 15 judges**, five of whom are elected **every three years for a nine-year term.**
5. Established in 1945, the role of the ICJ is to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by states and to give advisory opinions on legal questions.
6. The permanent members of the Security Council - the US, Russia, France and China - were understood to have been throwing their weight behind **62-year-old Greenwood.**
7. Rycroft thanked judge Greenwood for his service and paid tribute to his outstanding contribution to the working of the court and to the development of international law.
8. **The statute of the ICJ provides in its Article 12** that if after the third meeting, one or more seats still remain unfilled, a joint conference may be formed any time at the request of either the General Assembly or the Security Council for the purpose of choosing one name for each seat still vacant to submit to the General Assembly and the Security Council for their respective acceptance.

A First For ICJ

For the first time, since ICJ was created in 1945, there won't be any British judge on it

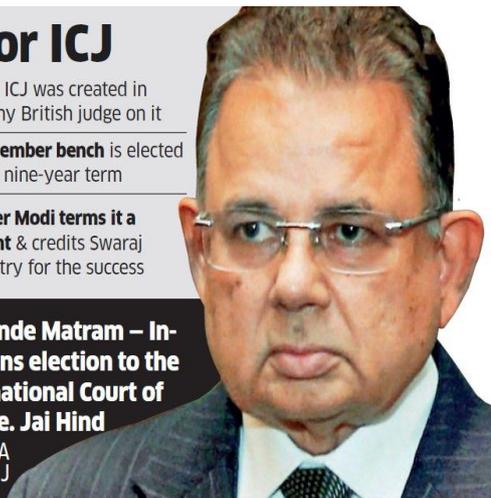
One-third of ICJ's 15-member bench is elected every three years for a nine-year term

Prime minister Modi terms it a proud moment & credits Swaraj and her ministry for the success



Vande Matram – India wins election to the International Court of Justice. Jai Hind

SUSHMA SWARAJ



MEGA MOCK TSUNAMI EXERCISE 2017

The **Ministry of Home Affairs** through **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** and the **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)** conducted a **first-of-its-kind multi-State mega mock exercise on tsunami preparedness** covering the entire eastern coastline of the country. Simulation exercises were conducted **simultaneously in 35 coastal districts across four States of West Bengal, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh & Tamil Nadu and Union Territory of Puducherry** along the entire East Coast, to assess and improve the early warning and response mechanism to mitigate the impact of a high-intensity tsunami.

What

1. The exercise scenario depicted a **high intensity earthquake near the Andaman and Nicobar Islands**, at about 0930 hrs.
2. Within moments, the **Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC), INCOIS**, issued a massive tsunami threat notification for the eastern coast through e-mails, fax and SMSes.
3. **Post the simulated landfall of the tsunami**, damage assessment was carried out at the SEOCs on the basis of information received from affected districts and **first-hand information by air sorties**, both fixed wings and helicopters. This helped

- the administration in prioritising the response and dispatching the appropriate task forces to the affected sites.
4. Representatives from **11 Pacific Island countries observed the exercise for key lessons** and best practices to be adopted while preparing for and responding to a disaster situation.
 5. Their participation was part of a training programme meant for enhancing their ability to improve the preparedness of their organisations to reduce disaster risks, especially for tsunamis.
 6. After the drills, **post-exercise analyses were carried out by NDMA representatives**, in which all concerned officials took part. Detailed discussions were conducted on gaps and shortcomings, and ways to improve coordination among participating agencies and officials.
 7. Initial reports and analyses suggest that the response of the State/UT machinery was effective and encouraging. A detailed analysis is underway which will help us further help improve our response to such disasters.
 8. The exercise is one of the various activities planned on the occasion of the **2nd World Tsunami Awareness Day held on 5th November this year**.
 9. It began with an orientation conference on 8th November, which was held to ensure the smooth facilitation of the exercise. This was followed by coordination conferences and table-top exercises at various SEOCs in which all the involved districts participated through videoconferencing.
 10. **Tsunami is a highly devastating natural hazard**, and requires rapid response when it occurs as the reaction time is limited.
 11. The exercise is significant as India's eastern coast is susceptible to both cyclones and tsunamis.
 12. **The region was one of the worst affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004**. This exercise will go a long way in helping States/UTs in updating their resources, procedures and plans.

ANTI-HIJACKING LAW

As the **National Investigation Agency (NIA) probes the first case under the amended Anti-Hijacking Act**, the civil aviation ministry plans to delegate certain powers under the stringent law to the home ministry. Once the powers are delegated, the home ministry would not have to refer every case with respect to **issuing notification for designating an investigation officer under the Act**.

What

1. The **incident of a Mumbai-Delhi Jet Airways flight making an emergency landing at Ahmedabad airport** on 30 October following a hijack threat is the **first case to be taken up under the amended act**.
2. **NIA, that comes under the home ministry**, is probing the case of an individual who has been detained for allegedly planting a note about hijackers and a bomb in the toilet of the Jet Airways flight.
3. There are plans to delegate certain powers under the Act to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). **This law comes under the civil aviation ministry and only it can issue notifications pertaining to the Act**. Through an executive order, the ministry can delegate powers under the Act to the home ministry.
4. On 7 November, the civil aviation ministry issued a notification authorising the NIA to carry out probe in the Jet Airways incident. The central government hereby confers on Shri Vikram Khalate, Superintendent of Police, NIA, Mumbai, the powers of arrest, investigation and prosecution exercisable by a police officer under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973" in relation to the case **under the Anti-Hijacking Act, 2016**, the notification had said.
5. A Jet Airways flight 9W 339 that had taken off from Mumbai with 115 passengers and seven crew members was diverted to Ahmedabad airport around 3.45 am on 30 October.

FIRST RO-RO SHIPMENT

The **first ever Ro-Ro (Roll on /Roll off) export shipment of Tata trucks** was flagged off from Kolkata to Bangladesh from Kolkata Port. As many as 240 trucks were flagged off. **These trucks will be shipped to the Port of Mongla in Bangladesh from Kolkata Dock System of Netaji Subhash Dock** in the vessel M.V IDM Doodle.

What

1. The **trucks manufactured in Jamshedpur and Pantnagar plants of Tata Motors** were previously shipped to and from Petrapol Border through land route.
2. **Kolkata Port Trust expects to regularise this service** in the coming months.
3. Officials are hopeful that the transport through sea route would save time.
4. **For the first time, Kolkata Port Trust is privileged to act as an enabler in starting this new trade lane.**
5. This showcases the port's potential to create new venture with the neighboring country and to enhance customer delight.

EXPANSION OF UMBRELLA SCHEME

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for **expansion of the schemes of Ministry of Women and Child Development under Umbrella Scheme "Mission for Protection and Empowerment for Women" for a period 2017-18 to 2019-20**. CCEA has also given approval to the new scheme called '**Mahila Shakti Kendra**', which will **empower rural women through community participation** to create an environment in which they realize their full potential. Expansion under **BetiBachaoBetiPadhao has also been approved based on the successful implementation in 161 districts**. The financial outlay during 2017-18 to 2019-20 will be Rs.3, 636.85 crore with a Central Share of approximately Rs.3, 084.96 crore.

Benefits of the Scheme:

1. The approved **sub-schemes are social sector welfare schemes** especially for **care, protection and development of women**.
2. It will also aim at **improvement in declining Child Sex Ratio**; ensuring survival. & protection of the girl child; ensuring her education, and empowering her to fulfil her potential.
3. It will provide an **interface for rural women to approach the government** for availing their entitlements and for empowering them through training and capacity building.
4. Student volunteers will encourage the spirit of voluntary community service and gender equality. These students will serve "agents of change" and have a lasting impact on their communities and the nation.

Major activities of the Umbrella Scheme:

1. The new scheme "**Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK)**" is envisaged to work at various **levels**. While, National level (domain based knowledge support) and State level (State Resource Centre for Women) structures will provide technical support to the respective government on issues related to women, the District and Block level Centres will provide support to MSK and also give a foothold to BBBP in 640 districts to be covered in a phased manner.
2. **Community engagement through Student Volunteers is envisioned in 115 most backward districts as part of the MSK Block level initiatives.**
3. Student volunteers will play an instrumental role in awareness generation regarding various important government schemes/ programmes as well as social issues.

4. **The outcome based activities** of student volunteers will be monitored through web based system. On completion, certificates for community service, will be displayed on national portal for verification and can also be used as resource /asset for the participating students in future.
5. Expansion and intensification of efforts have also been approved for **BetiBachaoBetiPadhao (BBBP) through sustained nation-wide Advocacy and Media Campaign in 640 districts and focused multi-sectoral action** in selected 405 districts.
6. All low CSR districts shall be taken up in the first year itself under BBBP. To provide support to working women 190 more Working Women Hostels to accommodate approximately 19,000 additional working women will be set up.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Scheme:

1. **One common Task Force shall be created at National, State and district level** for planning, reviewing and monitoring all the sub-schemes in this Umbrella, with the objective of ensuring convergence of action and cost efficiency.
2. Every scheme shall have a set of clear, focused target set forth in the guidelines, aligned with SDGs. Mechanism for monitoring of outcome based indicators for all the sub-schemes as suggested by NITI Aayog will be put in place.
3. The schemes will be implemented through the States/UTs and Implementing Agencies. All the sub-schemes have inbuilt monitoring structure at the Central Level, State, District and Block level.

SAMPRITI 2017 CULMINATES

Joint Indo-Bangladesh Training Exercise **SAMPRITI 2017**, which is being conducted at **Counter Insurgency & Jungle Warfare School, Vairengte in Mizoram** culminated with a validation exercise. **It is the seventh** such exercise in the **SAMPRITI series**. The exercise has been aimed to strengthen and broaden the aspects of interoperability and cooperation **between the Indian and Bangladesh Armies**.

What

1. **The 13-day long field training exercise commenced on 06 November 2017**, which was culminated with a validation exercise on November 15-16.
2. It was conducted in a progressive manner wherein the participants initially familiarised themselves with each other's organisational structure and tactical drills. Subsequently, the training advanced to various joint tactical exercises by the two Armies.
3. The final exercise was reviewed by Major General Md Moshfequr Rahman of the Bangladesh Army and Major General M S Ghura of the Indian Army.
4. The combined exercise was an unprecedented success. Besides promoting understanding and interoperability between the two Armies, it further helped in strengthening bilateral ties.

INDIA'S FIRST HEALTH ATLAS MIRROR

The **India State-level Disease Burden Initiative** released was at once both revealing and frightening. **For the first time, it comprehensively identified the disease burden of the country**; at the same time though, it revealed the extent of disease burden, which if unaddressed on a war footing as it were could nix the country's enormous growth potential. This is something that Bill Gates, who coincidentally was in town, captured in a wide-ranging interview unrelated to the health study published on 18 November. **Every other country that moved to middle-income status spends over 3% (of its gross domestic product, or GDP) on public health**. If you are (paying) out of your pocket (for

healthcare) it can bankrupt your family, before highlighting the consequences of not prioritizing spending on healthcare:

What

1. **Most countries that moved to middle-income status** provide insurance—either through the private sector, through government or some weird mix.” In short, Gates is laying down the red line: spend on healthcare or stay stuck as a low-income nation.
2. In a nutshell the health study, conducted jointly by the Indian Council of Medical Research, Public Health Foundation of India and Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, revealed that between 1990 and 2016 the life expectancy improved significantly.
3. But the disease burden underwent a structural shift: six out of 10 Indians now die due to non-communicable diseases (like a heart attack), even while child and maternal malnutrition continue to cause premature deaths (an estimated six million children die before they are five years old) and tuberculosis, with the highest incidence in the world, continues to be a threat.
4. **The study captures the disease burden expressed as the number of years lost due to ill-health**, disability or early death—it was nine-fold for diarrhoeal diseases and tuberculosis, and seven-fold for lower respiratory infections in 2016. Lest we forget, not too long ago, the epidemic of AIDS all but destroyed a generation of South Africa’s workforce.
5. Ideally, **this health atlas (because that is what it is doing by drilling down to the state level with such detail) should have been published decades ago.**

BRAHMOS CREATES HISTORY

Brahmos, the world’s fastest supersonic cruise missile created history on 22nd Nov 2017 after it was **successfully flight-tested first time from the Indian Air Force’s (IAF) frontline fighter aircraft Sukhoi-30MKI** against a sea based target in the **Bay of Bengal**. The **missile was gravity dropped from the Su-30 from fuselage**, and the two stage missile’s engine fired up and straightway propelled towards the intended target at the sea in Bay of Bengal.

What

1. This test effectively gives the Indian armed forces the ability to fire Brahmos **Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM)**. According to a post launch release by the Ministry of Defence, the successful test firing “will significantly bolster the IAF’s air combat operations capability from stand-off ranges.”
2. The Brahmos **ALCM weighs 2.5 tonne** and till date it is the heaviest weapon to be deployed on the Su-30 MKI. The aircraft was especially modified by **Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd** for giving it the missile-carrying capability. The missile is propelled first by a solid propellant booster engine that takes it to supersonic speeds. After it separates, the missile is accelerated further to around three times the speed of sound (mach 3) in the cruise phase with a **liquid ramjet**.
3. The armed forces now have a multi-platform, multi-mission cruise missile that can be launched from land, sea and air. This completes the tactical cruise missile triad for India which is a world record. **The Brahmos cruise missiles have an effective strike range of around 290-300 km**. The land and warship versions have already been inducted by the armed forces. **It is also first supersonic cruise missile known to be in service.**
4. The air-launched version of the missile has lesser weight and additional rear fins which add aerodynamic stability while separating from the aircraft. Besides, all three versions have a “fire and forget” principle of operation. It also takes a variety of trajectories while in flight and is equipped with advanced guidance technology. Its stealth features also give it a low radar signature.
5. **Brahmos is a joint venture between India and Russia**. The missile has been jointly developed by India’s Defence Research and Development Organisation

(DRDO) and Russia's NPOM. **The name Brahmos has been taken as a combination of the two rivers Brahmaputra and Moskva.**

EXERCISE TO 'FREE' ANDAMAN

The Indian military, for the first time, carried out a 'Defence of Andaman' exercise that simulated the scenario of retrieving an island in case of invasion by an enemy. The mock drill involving **Indian Air Force's Jaguar ground attack combat jets,** army's armoured vehicles and para-commandos took place between November 20 and November 24. It is unprecedented.

What

1. **The goal of the war game was to free an island taken over by enemy.** It involved fighter operations, para-jumping at night from C-130J Super Hercules, slithering of troops from helicopters and amphibious landing of infantry troops and armoured (BMP) vehicles carried by the navy's tank-landing ships that can come very close to the beach, allowing troops and vehicles to move to the island.
2. **The Indian Navy operates three types of Landing Ship Tank (LST) vessels** belonging to the Shardul, Magar and Kumbhir class of warships.
3. The para-commandos came from Agra, while the armoured vehicles were from the army brigade deployed on the island as part of the tri-service command.
4. **There are 572 islands in Andaman and Nicobar.** Many of them are uninhabited. For a long time, security agencies feared intrusion into one of the islands by an enemy, which could even be non-state actors.
5. **The forces will focus on the takeaways from the exercise** for being fully prepared for any eventuality in future.
6. The maiden Defence of Andaman exercise takes place days after the **Indian Coast Guard's Exercise Sagar Kavach** that seeks to secure the islands and respond to any emergency.
7. The maritime exercise on the eastern sea board comes at a time when China is making an effort to expand its footprint in the Indian Ocean.
8. Chinese nuclear submarines are frequently criss-crossing the ocean, the communist country has publicly declared its plan to strengthen its maritime forces to assert supremacy in the strategically important region.

INDIA'S NEW DIPLOMATIC PUSH FOR IMO

India will undertake another major diplomatic exercise and this time to secure its seat in the **International Maritime Organisation (IMO)** for the next two years. India has been a **member of the council since 1959** and was always elected unopposed. But this time it's facing a challenge as more countries are contesting for the group that can have only 10 members.

What

1. In its bid to win support of member countries, shipping minister Nitin Gadkari is visiting London this week when he is scheduled to meet their representatives.
2. He is also scheduled to reach out to the NRIs, corporates and other philanthropists and urge them to donate for clean Ganga initiative.
3. **London is the headquarters of IMO** and Indian high commissioner in London is a permanent representative in the UN's specialized agency for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships.
4. **India has been a member of Category (B) in the IMO Council since its inception - 1959 - except in 1983-84.**
5. A former Indian civil servant was the longest serving secretary general of this group from 1974 to 1989.
6. **It has 10 members** - Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, India, Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. But this time Australia and UAE are also

in the fray, which has forced the Indian government to campaign for securing its place.

7. **There are three categories and India has been a member in Category B which has 10 members.** This year, the entrants include Australia and UAE.

8. Earlier this year, former shipping secretary had hosted a dinner for heads of various permanent missions in London.

9. **IMO council is an executive organ of IMO and between**

sessions of the assembly, the council performs all the functions of the assembly, except that of making recommendations to governments on marine safety and pollution prevention.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO)

- A specialized agency of the United Nations established in 1948 – working since 1958
- 169 Member States
- Mandated to develop and maintain a comprehensive regulatory framework for all aspects of shipping - 51 treaty instruments
- Safety, **environment**, legal matters, technical co-operation, maritime security, seafarer's training and certification and efficiency of shipping

DATA PRIVACY AUTHORITY

The **Justice B N Srikrishna Committee**, formed to draft a data protection and privacy Bill, in a white paper suggested setting up a **data protection authority, data audit, registration of data collectors, enacting provisions for protecting children's personal data**, defining penalties and compensation in the case of a data breach. The committee, **which studied the privacy and data protection laws of many countries**, including the **US, Singapore, Australia and the EU**, has released an over 200-page document inviting comments from the public on various issues such as the definition of personal data and proposed penalties for misuse of data. **The deadline for sending feedback is December 31**, implying the government is unlikely to table a data protection Bill in the winter session of Parliament.

What

1. **The Srikrishna Committee was set up on July 31** following a government decision to **make Aadhaar compulsory for all its services**. The government gave the panel three months to suggest a draft Bill.
2. Despite an obligation to adopt adequate security safeguards, no database is 100 per cent secure. In light of this, the interplay between any proposed data protection framework and the existing Aadhaar framework will have to be analysed.
3. **The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has issued a 12-digit unique identification number called Aadhaar** to over 1 billion people after collecting their personal and biometric data.
4. **The Aadhaar number is now used by both the government and private entities** for the purpose of authentication and financial transactions.
5. Though the UIDAI has various in-built data protection mechanisms, it is not bound to inform an individual in cases of misuse or theft of his or her data.
6. **The Committee, which has met thrice since its formation**, is of the opinion that both the government and the private entities be brought under the ambit of the proposed law.
7. At present only private or corporate entities are governed by the Reasonable Security Practices and Sensitive Personal Data or Information Rules under the Information Technology Act.

8. **The Committee appears to be taking a middle path between the EU privacy law**, where protection of personal data is equated with protecting the fundamental right to privacy, and the US law, which focuses on protecting the individual from excessive state regulation.
9. **The Committee has divided the white paper into three substantive parts**, including scope and exemptions; grounds for processing, obligation on entities and individual rights; and regulation and enforcement.
10. **The Committee is of the view that certain exemptions** should be granted by law for collecting information for investigating a crime, apprehension or prosecution of offenders, and maintaining national security and public order. But the paper stated, “An effective review mechanism must be devised.”
11. **The panel suggested strict penalties be imposed on data controllers in cases of violation.** A civil penalty of a specific amount may be imposed on the data controller for each day such violation continues, which may or may not be subject to an upper limit.
12. An upper limit may be a fixed amount or may be linked to a variable parameter, such as a percentage of the annual turnover of the defaulting data controller.

INTERNATIONAL

G-20 SHERPA

Former economic affairs secretary Shaktikanta Das was appointed **India's Sherpa till December 31, 2018, for the G20's Development Track.** There are **two tracks in G20 — the Finance Track and the Development Track.** Finance Track is managed by the Secretary (Economic Affairs), Ministry of Finance, as India's Deputy to G-20 and the **Development Track is coordinated by the Sherpa.** The Department of Economic Affairs will provide necessary support to the Sherpa.

What

1. **Das had retired, after a 37-year-long career, in March this year.** His predecessor on the job, former NITI Aayog vice-chairman Arvind Panagariya had suggested to the government that the position be made a permanent one and a senior official be appointed as the permanent representative to the G20, similar to the arrangement at the United Nations.
2. **The last G20 summit, held in Hamburg in July this year,** had discussed **sustainable development and volatility in global currency markets at length.**
3. The event had also seen other nations acknowledge steps taken by India for sustainable and inclusive growth as well as support to the global economy.
4. **The G20 had noted the initiatives in the country** for promoting ease of doing business, start-up funding, and labour reforms.
5. Panagariya was appointed India's Sherpa for the G20 talks in September 2015, replacing then railway minister Suresh Prabhu.

G20 Outreach Dialogue



6. Sherpas, who are representatives of leaders of G20 member countries, coordinate on the agenda of the summit.

INTERNATIONAL ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE

Nearly 20,000 women and children were victims of human trafficking in India in 2016, a rise of almost 25 percent from the previous year. Experts cited data from the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** at the opening day of the two-day International Anti-Human Trafficking Conference on 25 November 2017, to show **how traffickers lure thousands of people each year.**

What

1. The conference, organised by the **Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre (KMWSC)** and the **Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre (DMWSC)**, aims at strengthening awareness about the crime and sharing best practises with **like-minded NGOs and governments.**
2. Survivors of trafficking from **the United States, Bangladesh and India** will also share their experiences during the conference. A number of speakers deliberated on topics ranging from trends in human trafficking to how cyber crime was affecting the lives and safety of young children and women.
3. The event also coincided with the **celebration of 175 years of the Loreto Congregation in India.**
4. South Asia is taking its role a step further, drawing on the strength of networking and adding their voice to individuals, civil society, NGOs and governments who work for this cause.”

UNGA ADOPTS PAK-BACKED RESOLUTION

A **UN General Assembly committee** has unanimously passed a **Pakistan-sponsored draft resolution** over the right to self-determination for peoples who are subject to **colonial domination and foreign occupation.**

What

1. **It was co-sponsored by 75 countries.** However, the US was quick to point out that the draft resolution contains many misstatements of international law and is inconsistent with current state practice.
2. Introducing the resolution, the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN, Maleeha Lodhi said the **right to self-determination “forms the bedrock”** of the most important human rights conventions – the covenant of civil and political rights and the covenant of economic social and cultural rights.
3. The latter categorically states ‘All people have the right of self-determination by virtue of their right to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic social and cultural development’.
4. The right to self-determination has also been reaffirmed and upheld time and again repeatedly by **all major UN, NAM, OIC and other summits** as well other numerous resolutions and declarations.

INDIA AND ITALY SIGN MOU

India and Italy signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for enhanced cooperation in the health sector. Shri J P Nadda, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare and Ms. Beatrice Lorenzin, Health Minister of Italy signed the MoU in the presence of senior officers from the Health Ministry and a high level delegation from Italy.

Shri J P Nadda stated that both the countries share a **strong and rich traditional relationship which has been enhanced by high level visits.** There is a **mutual interest in the promotion of stronger ties in the health sector.** The MoU recognizes the potential for exchanges in the health sector between the two countries and the need to tap the capabilities and opportunities in a focused and comprehensive manner. **The objective of this MoU is to establish comprehensive inter-ministerial and inter-institutional**

cooperation between the two countries in the field of health by pooling technical, scientific, financial and human resources with the ultimate goal of upgrading the quality and reach of human, material and infrastructural resources involved in health care, medical education & training, and research in both countries.

The main areas of cooperation include:

1. Exchange & training of medical doctors, officials, other health professionals and experts;
2. Assistance in development of human resources and setting up of health care facilities;
3. Short term training of human resources in health;
4. Regulation of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and cosmetics and exchange of information thereon;
5. Promotion of business development opportunities in pharmaceuticals;
6. Procurement of generic and essential drugs and assistance in sourcing of drug supplies;
7. Procurement of health equipment and pharmaceutical products;
8. Collaboration in the prevention of NCDs of mutual interest, such as neurocardiovascular diseases, cancer, COPDs, mental health and dementia, with an emphasis on SDG3 and related factors;
9. Collaboration in the field of climate change impact on communicable diseases and vector borne diseases;
10. Nutritional aspects of food intake, including malnutrition (over-nutrition and under-nutrition) in the light of the SDG2 and organization of nutritional services;
11. Safety of production, transformation, distribution and food delivery;
12. Research and training of food industry operators;
13. Information and communication to citizens on hygiene and food safety and healthy eating habits; and
14. Any other area of cooperation as may be mutually decided upon.

NEPALESE VOTE IN FIRST PROVINCIAL POLLS

Nepalese in mountain villages and foothill towns voted on 26 November 2017 in the **Himalayan nation's first provincial polls** that promise to bring government closer to rural and remote areas. Some 3.2 million voters were choosing lawmakers in seven newly-formed federal states as well as the national assembly and turnout is expected to be high. The lawmakers who are elected on 26 November 2017 and Dec. 7 in the remaining part of the country will be able to name their states, draft provincial laws and choose local leaders.

What

1. **Chautara was one of the areas hardest hit by the 2015 earthquake.** People in the mountain regions complained they did not get enough help from the central government because their voices were not heard. Two years later, destroyed and damaged houses are still scattered around Chautara and surrounding areas.
2. **Nepal's slow path to democracy began in 2006**, when protesters forced the king to give up his rule.
3. Two years later, Nepal officially abolished the centuries-old monarchy and decided that a federal system would best deliver services to all corners of the nation, which remains one of the poorest in the world.
4. But bickering among political parties delayed until 2015 the implementation of the new constitution, which **declared Nepal a republic.**
5. Security has been stepped with thousands of police and army soldiers deployed for the elections. According to the Home Ministry, more than 400 people were detained in days leading up to the vote.

ECONOMY

15TH FINANCE COMMISSION APPROVED

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the **setting up of the 15th Finance Commission. Under Article 280 (1) of the Constitution**, it is a Constitutional obligation. The Terms of Reference for the **15th Finance Commission will be notified in due course of time.**

What

1. **The Finance Commission is set up every five years** and the government had allocated Rs10 crore in the 2017-18 budget for the FFC.
2. **The recommendations of the previous 14th Finance Commission (FFC)**, chaired by former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Y.V. Reddy, is valid from 2015 to 2020.
3. The recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission will be implemented for the period starting 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025.
4. The FFC is considered to have fundamentally reset the Centre-state fiscal relationship by raising the untied share of states in net Central taxes to 42% from 32% after ending discretionary resource transfers from the Union to the states.

Background:

1. **Article 280(1) of the Constitution** lays down that a Finance Commission (FC) should be constituted "...**within two years from the commencement of this Constitution** and thereafter at the expiration of **every fifth year or at such earlier time as the President considers necessary.**" In keeping with this requirement, the practice has generally been to set up next Finance Commission within five years of the date of setting up of the previous Finance Commission.
2. **Fourteen (14) Finance Commissions have been constituted in the past.** The 14th Finance Commission was set up on 02.01.2013 to make recommendations covering the period of five years commencing on 1st April, 2015.
3. The Commission submitted its Report on 15th December, 2014. The recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission are valid up to the financial year 2019-20.
4. In terms of Constitutional provisions, setting up the 15th Finance Commission, the recommendations of which will cover the five years commencing on April 1, 2020, has now become due.

CONSUMER DEVICES SURVEY 2017

TeleAnalysis and **The Mobile Indian (TMI)** have released the **Consumer Devices Survey 2017** for the Indian consumer devices industry. Findings of the survey were revealed during **Device World 2017 event on November 22 in New Delhi.** According to the survey, over **43 per cent people voted for Xiaomi Redmi Note 4 smartphone as their preferred choice** in the budget segment. Coming to the mid-segment (between Rs 12,000 to Rs 20,000), Huawei Honor 9i emerged as the winner with 39 per cent vote share. In price range of above Rs 35,000 or premium category, Samsung Galaxy S8 along with Apple iPhone 8, Google Pixel 2, and OnePlus 5 were among the most preferred devices.

What

1. **Chinese brand Comio bagged the award for new smartphone companies** that have entered in to India in last one year, with 51 per cent vote share.
2. The survey was conducted in **five zones – east, west, north, south and central – in 30 cities across India**, with over 15,00,00 sample size.
3. **The survey is like a litmus test for the smartphone brands** as it captures the feedback of the customers and it says it aloud if their strategy is on right track or not.

4. The Indian smartphone industry is very dynamic and on an average, there is a phone being launched every alternate week. So, we wanted to take consumers' feedback on what they feel about their smartphone brands.
5. **This survey finding is also a testimony of customer's trust in their smartphone brands** and at the same time it sends a message about what the customers expect from these companies in future.

NAA UNDER GST

The Union Cabinet on 16 November 2017 approved the **establishment of the National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA) under the GST** to ensure that **the benefits of reduction in GST rates on goods and services** are passed on to the ultimate consumers by way of reduction in prices. The Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for the **creation of the posts of chairman and technical members of the NAA under GST**, following up immediately sharp reduction in the GST rates of a large number of items of mass consumption. This paves the way for the immediate **establishment of this apex body**, which is mandated to ensure that the benefits of the reduction in GST rates on goods and services are passed on to the ultimate consumers by way of a reduction in prices.

What

1. **The establishment of the NAA, to be headed by a senior officer of the level of secretary** with four technical members from the Centre and/or the states, is another measure aimed at reassuring consumers that the government is fully committed to take all possible steps to ensure the benefits of implementation of the GST in terms of lower prices of the goods and services reaching them.
2. The **anti-profiteering measures enshrined in the GST** law provide an institutional mechanism to ensure that the full benefits of input tax credits and reduced GST rates on supply of goods or services flow to the consumers.
3. **This institutional framework comprises the NAA, a standing committee, screening committees in every state** and the Directorate General of Safeguards in the Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC).
4. Affected consumers who feel the benefit of commensurate reduction in prices is not being passed on when they purchase any goods or services may apply for relief to the screening committee in the particular state.

GSTN COMMITTEE CONSTITUTIED

The government on 21 November 2017 **constituted a 10-member committee under GSTN chairman Ajay Bhushan Pandey** to look into the requirements of filing returns in current financial year. The committee, which has tax commissioners from the state of **Gujarat, Karnataka, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh**, will also suggest if modifications, including changes in rules, laws and format, are required in filing returns. **It will submit report by December 15.**

What

1. The whole idea is that people who are nil filers, who have no sale/purchase transactions, have taken a registration for some future use, they should be able to file GSTR-1 and GSTR-3B by pressing just a few buttons. That is our ultimate aim, Pandey.
2. As many as 40 per cent of the businesses filing returns on **GST Network (GSTN) portal** have nil tax liability.
3. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council had announced forming the committee on November 10 to suggest ways for simplification of the returns filing process.
4. It has also decided to keep in abeyance till March 31 the filing of GSTR-2 (purchase returns) and GSTR-3 (the matching of sales and purchase returns).
5. Now, businesses will have to file simplified initial GSTR-3B forms till March, along with sales returns GSTR-1.

6. **The committee would look into simplification exercise because all (GST returns) are intricately connected**, Pandey said.
7. The committee will collect feedback from people, the trade and industry and study the whole system in detail and then come out with an appropriate plan.

CHAIRMAN OF 15TH FINANCE COMMISSION

Former Planning Commission Member N K Singh was appointed **chairman of 15th Finance Commission**, which among other things has been asked to look into the impact of GST on finances of both the Centre and states, said a government notification. The other members of the commission, which is required **to submit its report by October 2019**, are former Economic Affairs Secretary Shaktikanta Das and former Chief Economic Advisor Ashok Lahiri, Niti Aayog Member Ramesh Chand and Georgetown University professor Anoop Singh.

What

1. The commission will review **the current status of the finance, deficit, debt levels, cash balances and fiscal discipline efforts of the Union and the states**.
2. It will also recommend a **fiscal consolidation road map for sound fiscal management**.
3. **As per Article 280 of the Constitution**, the commission is required to make recommendations on the distribution of the net proceeds of taxes between the Centre and the states.
4. The commission also suggests the principles which should govern the grants in aid of the revenues of the states out of the Consolidated Fund of India.
5. As per the terms of reference, the panel will also "the impact of the GST, including payment of compensation for possible loss of revenues for 5 years, and abolition of a number of cesses, earmarking thereof for compensation and other structural reforms programme, on the finances of Centre and states.
6. Further, **the commission will examine progress made in promoting ease of doing business** by effecting related policy and regulatory changes and promoting labour intensive growth.
7. **The new Finance Commission will cover five-year period commencing April 1, 2020**.
8. The **14th Finance Commission was set up on January 2, 2013**. Its recommendations cover the period **from April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2020**.

INDIA MOVES UP IN PER CAPITA GDP

India has moved up one position to **126th in terms of per capita GDP of countries**, still **ranked lower than all its BRICS peers**, while **Qatar remains the world's richest on this parameter**. The IMF data, which forms part of the latest **World Economic Outlook report of the International Monetary Fund**, ranks over 200 countries in terms of per capita GDP based on **purchasing power parity (PPP)**.

What

1. **PPP between two countries** is the rate at which the currency of one country needs to be converted into that of a second country to ensure that a given amount of the first country's currency will purchase the same volume of goods and services in the second country as it does in the first.
2. **India has seen its per capita GDP rise to \$7,170 in 2017**, from USD 6,690 last year, helping improve **its rank by a position to 126th**.
3. **Qatar remains top-ranked** with per capita GDP of \$1, 24,930, **followed by Macao at the second position** with \$1, 14,430 and **Luxembourg third with \$1, 09,190**.
4. Among BRICS countries, India has the lowest per capita GDP. Russia boasts of a GDP per capita of \$27,900, while for China, it stood at \$16,620, Brazil at \$15,500 and South Africa at \$13,400.

5. Interestingly, as per a recent Credit Suisse report, **India is home to 2.45 lakh millionaires** with a total household wealth of \$5 trillion.
6. As per the IMF data, **the richest 10 countries in the world in terms of per capita GDP** also include Singapore (4th, \$90,530), Brunei (5th, \$76,740), Ireland (6th, \$72,630), Norway (7th, \$70,590), Kuwait (8th, \$69,670), United Arab Emirates (9th, \$68,250) and Switzerland (10th, \$61,360).
7. The **US has failed to make it to the top 10 and is ranked 13th** with a per capita GDP of \$59,500, while the UK is ranked even lower.
8. According to a Fortune magazine report based on the IMF data, **several top-ranking countries such as Qatar and Brunei “have fuel and oil propelling their economies”**, while investment and strong banking systems have helped propel economic growth in other countries like Iceland and Ireland.

BAA2 AFTER LONG GAP

India's credit rating upgrade by Moody's is a reflection of the country's growth story. The US-based Moody's upgraded **India's sovereign rating after a gap of 13 years to Baa2**, with 'stable' outlook, from Baa3 earlier, citing improved growth prospects driven by economic and institutional reforms. **Moody's upgrading India's Ratings** is a reflection of India growth story and sound economic principles for #NewIndia.

What

1. **Moody's upgrade India's credit rating after 13 years.** A clear recognition of economic & institutional reforms; well paced shift towards formalisation of the economy; improvement in business climate; positive growth outlook." **In 2015, the rating outlook was changed to 'positive' from 'stable'.**
2. The '**Baa3**' rating was the lowest investment grade -- just a notch above 'junk' status.
3. The negative forces within India will shout aloud. Just ignore them and proceed with the future plans and development.
4. The decision to upgrade the ratings is underpinned by Moody's expectation that continued progress on economic and institutional reforms will, over time, enhance **India's high growth potential** and its large and stable financing base for government debt, and will likely contribute to a gradual decline in the general government debt burden over the medium term.
5. It cautioned however that high debt burden remains a constraint on the country's credit profile.

TASK FORCE TO DRAFT NEW DIRECT TAX LAW

The government on 22 November 2017 **constituted a task force for redrafting the 50-year old income tax law** in sync with the economic needs of the country. The **six-member task force will have Arbind Modi**, CBDT Member (Legislation) as the Convener and other members, including Girish Ahuja (chartered accountant), Rajiv Memani (Chairman and Regional Managing Partner of EY) and Mansi Kedia (Consultant, ICRIER). Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during the annual conference of tax officers in September, had observed that the Income-tax Act, 1961 was drafted more than 50 years ago and it needs to be redrafted.

What

1. Accordingly, in order to review the Act and to draft a new direct tax law in consonance with economic needs of the country, the Government has constituted a task force.
2. The task force will submit its report to the government **within 6 months.**
3. **Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian will be a permanent special invitee in the task force.**

4. The panel has been tasked to draft a direct tax legislation keeping in view the tax system prevalent in various countries, the international best practices and economic needs of the country.
5. **The Direct Taxes Code (DTC) Bill, 2010**, which was introduced in Parliament in 2010, lapsed with the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha.
6. The Bill had proposed annual I-T exemption limit at Rs 2 lakh, and levying 10 per cent tax on income between Rs 2 lakh and Rs 5 lakh, 20 per cent on Rs 5-10 lakh and 30 per cent above Rs 10 lakh. For domestic companies it suggested tax rate of 30 per cent of business income.
7. The NDA government, since coming to power in 2014, has already implemented general anti-avoidance rules GAAR. In 2016 Finance Minister Arun Jaitley also promised to lower corporate tax rate to 25 per cent in 5 years.
8. **Currently, income up to Rs 2.5 lakh per annum is exempt from tax for individuals.**

TELECOM REGULATOR BACKS NET NEUTRALITY

The telecom regulator upheld the basic principles of net neutrality, and prohibited internet service providers from making any discrimination in internet access. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai), in its much awaited recommendations, said "internet access services should be governed by a principle that restricts any form of discrimination or interference in the treatment of content, including practices like blocking, degrading, slowing down or granting preferential speeds or treatment to any content.

What

1. **This principle would apply to any discriminatory treatment based on the sender or receiver**, the network protocols or the user equipment, but not to specialised services or other exclusions.
2. **It would also not restrict adoption of reasonable traffic management practices** by the service provider, said the recommendations.
3. The Trai's support for net neutrality came at a time when a debate is raging over US Federal Communications Commission chairman Ajit Pai's recent proposal to dismantle the 2015 rules, which require **ISPs (internet service providers) to treat all content travelling through their pipes equally.**
4. The regulator's recommendations are paving the way to end all sorts of discriminatory practices that telecom operators may exercise to differentiate among services and content over the internet such as reducing its speed for accessing online videos.
5. In February 2016, **the Trai had ruled in favour of net neutrality by barring internet service providers** from offering discriminatory tariffs for data. The latest recommendations go one step further. Now, the Department of Telecom has to take a call on whether to accept or reject the recommendations.
6. The regulator also suggested **changing licence terms of players to explicitly restrict any form of discrimination in internet access** based on content.
7. However, the regulator made a provision to exempt "**specialised services**" from its principles of discriminatory treatment, clarifying that relaxation would only be applicable to those services where optimising is necessary in order to meet specific quality of service requirements.

PRESIDENT GIVES NOD FOR CODE ORDINANCE

Wilful defaulters and entities whose accounts have been classified as NPAs will be barred from bidding for assets under the insolvency law, with the President giving his assent to an ordinance to amend the bankruptcy code. The President of India has given his assent to the **Ordinance to amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016** (the Code).

What

1. **The ordinance aims at putting in place safeguards to prevent unscrupulous persons** from misusing or vitiating the provisions of the Code.
2. The amendments aim to keep out such persons **who have wilfully defaulted**, are associated with **non-performing assets (NPAs)**, or are habitually non-compliant and, therefore, are likely to be a risk to successful resolution of insolvency of a company.
3. Those who have their accounts classified as non- performing assets for one year or more and are unable to settle their overdue amounts include interest thereon and charges relating to the account before submission of the resolution plan" would also be ineligible.
4. According to the ordinance, **corporate, promoters and associate companies undergoing insolvency resolution** or liquidation under the Code would not be eligible for bidding for the stressed assets.
5. The amended Code also says that **the Committee of Creditors (CoC) should ensure the viability and feasibility of a resolution plan** before approving it.
6. The release further said CoC should "**reject a resolution plan, which is submitted before the commencement of the Ordinance** but is yet to be approved".
7. The Code, which became operational in December, last year, provides a market-determined and time-bound insolvency resolution process. Over 300 cases have already been approved by the National Company
8. **Law Tribunal (NCLT)** to be taken up under the law, implemented by the corporate affairs ministry.

FIRST GREEN BOND ON LSE

India's Power Finance Corporation (PFC) has listed its first international bond in almost two decades on the **London Stock Exchange to fund renewable energy projects** in the country. **The 10-year dated green bond raised \$400 million**, paying a 3.75 per cent semi-annual coupon and listed on London Stock Exchange's new International Securities Market (ISM) this week. **The funds raised will help promote renewable energy projects across the country** and aid in achieving the government's target of 175GW of installed renewable energy capacity by 2022.

What

1. **The bond issuance allows PFC to access a new offshore investor base** and also diversify its funding sources.
2. The state-owned PFC said that projects eligible for the funds will be identified within its Green Bond Framework, which was drafted in accordance with the Green Bond Principles, a global set of guidelines framing the issuance of green bonds.
3. **The latest Climate Bonds Initiative certified bond is the seventh green bond listed on London Stock Exchange in November 2017**, and the **fifth green bond by an Indian issuer in London**.
4. **PFC is unlocking and promoting green finance across India**, enabling the country to achieve its ambitious climate change targets set out under the COP21 agreement.
5. **London Stock Exchange is a recognised world leader in green, sustainable and debt financing**, highlighted by this year's exceptional green fixed income activity.
6. London supports issuers from Abu Dhabi to China, Finland to India in accessing international investment capital.
7. **The London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG)** said it has been supporting investors and issuers in the transition to a low- carbon and sustainable economy for over a decade, developing innovative products and services in close collaboration with the market.

8. The comprehensive sustainable finance offering is focused on green financing for issuers (both debt and equity), indexing and analytics.
9. **LSEG had joined the UN's Sustainable Stock Exchanges initiative as a Partner Exchange in 2014** and has also signed The Paris Pledge for Action.
10. One of the leading lenders to the power sector, the PFC is an infrastructure finance company engaged in providing financial assistance to state power utilities for meeting the financing and development requirements of the power sector.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ROSS 128 B DISCOVERED

Astronomers have discovered an **Earth-sized planet outside our solar system** which is expected to be temperate and could be a **“comfortable abode for possible life”**. This Earth-sized world, **named Ross 128 b**, is likely to have a surface temperature that may also be close to that of the Earth, according to a paper presented in the journal Astronomy & Astrophysics.

What

1. The low-mass exoplanet orbits the **red dwarf star Ross 128 every 9.9 days**. The star is currently located at a **distance of 11 light-years from Earth**.
2. Many red dwarf stars, including Proxima Centauri, are subject to flares that occasionally bathe their orbiting planets in deadly ultraviolet and X-ray radiation.
3. The team found that **Ross 128 b** orbits 20 times closer than the Earth orbits the Sun. Despite this proximity, Ross 128 b receives only 1.38 times more irradiation than the Earth.
4. The discovery was made by a team working with European Southern Observatory, or ESO's High Accuracy Radial velocity Planet Searcher (HARPS) at the La Silla Observatory in Chile.
5. **This discovery is based on more than a decade of HARPS intensive** monitoring together with state-of-the-art data reduction and analysis techniques, explained study co-author Nicola Astudillo-Defru from Geneva Observatory – University of Geneva, Switzerland.

JOINT MISSION TO MOON

The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and the **Japanese space agency (JAXA)** have begun preliminary discussions for a **joint mission to the moon** involving a landing on its surface and a return with samples. Speaking on the sidelines of the **24th meeting of the Asia Pacific Regional Space Agency forum**, ISRO chairman A S Kiran Kumar and JAXA director Naoki Okumura said that the two agencies have begun exploring the possibility of combining forces for a joint lunar mission.

What

1. The **efforts at launching a joint lunar mission are part of increasing collaboration between the two countries**, the heads of the two space agencies said.
2. Last year an agreement signed **for collaboration between ISRO and JAXA**.
3. In the future we will also be looking at how we can make use of this relationship for generating more inputs for climate change, Kiran Kumar said.
4. The **Asia Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum** has recommended that the established space agencies in the region should “promote space application, including rice crop monitoring, global rainfall monitoring, fire hotspot, haze monitoring and disaster management.

FIRST EDITION OF INSPIRE 2017

The first edition of the **International Symposium to Promote Innovation & Research in Energy Efficiency (INSPIRE 2017)** was kicked off in Jaipur. The **five-day symposium** is being **organized by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)** in partnership with **The World Bank**, and **Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy (AEEE)**.

What

1. **INSPIRE 2017 is an International Conference** that brings together various stakeholders such as policy makers, innovators, financiers, influencers to showcase best practices in the sector.
2. **It provides a platform for energy efficiency community** to discuss energy efficiency policies, **market transformation strategies**, emerging technologies, delivery and business-model driven transformations.
3. The event is further **designed to provide global and national thought-leaders and implementers** to expand perspectives on energy efficiency and spur ideas and solutions that will help leverage the full potential of energy efficiency and bring its multiple co-benefits to the fore.
4. The highlight of the symposium is the **high-level deliberations driven by policy makers** and experts from **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), The World Bank Group, The Energy Institute (TERI), International Energy Agency (IEA), Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI)**, USA and representatives of the Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM) - a high-level global forum to promote policies and programmes that advance clean energy technology.
5. Several global organizations like the **Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, International Finance Corporation, The World Bank, International Energy Agency, International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation**, Clean Energy Ministerial, Copenhagen Center on Energy Efficiency, GIZ, will also share their perspectives at INSPIRE.
6. **INSPIRE 2017 intends to create a platform for deliberations** and sharing of best practices around energy efficiency policy solutions, high-impact research, innovative financing and implementation that are driving large scale market transformations in India and across the globe. The event has brought together over 350 participants from 13 countries across North America, Asia, Europe and Middle East.

NPSIF

The Union health ministry has come up with a **draft framework aimed at ensuring patient safety while undergoing any medical intervention** and it proposes measures such as setting up of an **online grievance system**. The draft **National Patient Safety Implementation Framework (NPSIF)** states that patient safety is a fundamental element of healthcare and is **defined as freedom for a patient from unnecessary harm** or potential harm associated with the provision of healthcare.

What

1. It is about safe drugs dispensing, surgical care, safe childbirth, injection safety, blood safety, medication safety, medical device safety, safe organ, tissue and cell transportation and donation.
2. It is also **about bio-medical waste management**, prevention of healthcare-associated infections and much more, the official said.
3. Failure to deliver safe care is attributed to unsafe clinical practices, unsafe processes and poor systems and processes.
4. **The framework is based on six main pillars**—health system strengthening, improvement in adverse events reporting, training of healthcare personnel, research, vertical campaigns which include injection safety, blood safety, surgical safety, maternal and child healthcare and quality of healthcare services through accreditation.

5. The provisions of healthcare services have significantly **grown in the public sector over the past few years** and there is a large unregulated private sector. Therefore, the quality of services and its legal aspects need to be taken up at this point,” the official said.
6. Challenges in patient safety in India are numerous, ranging from unsafe injections and biological waste management to medication and medical device safety, high rates of healthcare associated infections, anti-microbial resistance etc.
7. **There are a wide range of initiatives in patient safety being implemented in India at different levels of care in both public and private sectors**, and there is a multiplicity of national and international stakeholders working in this area.
8. **The draft NPSIF proposes setting up of a web-based grievance system** and toll-free helplines for patient safety in all healthcare facilities and introducing anonymous reporting system in healthcare facilities to be used by healthcare facility staff, students, patients and their families.
9. It also suggests setting up of a national-level steering committee as a central coordinating mechanism for patient safety on the basis of a patient safety expert group.
10. The draft proposes incorporating patient safety principles and concepts in the Public Health Act and streamlining patient safety in different insurance schemes.
11. To strengthen quality assurance mechanisms, including accreditation system, the draft suggests incorporating selected patient safety indicators within the accreditation system for hospitals and laboratories.
12. **It also proposes the establishment of a culture of safety and improving communication**, patient identification and handing over transfer protocols in healthcare facilities.
13. The draft calls for ensuring that patient safety processes are clearly communicated to patients and caregivers prior, during and after the medical intervention using different communication means such as videos, mobile apps, leaflets, brochures, etc.

IHMI LAUNCHED

Smt Preeti Sudan, Secretary (HFW) and Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Secretary, DHR and DG, ICMR, **launched the India Hypertension Management Initiative (IHMI)**. The **IHMI aims to reduce disability and death related to cardiovascular disease (CVD)**, the leading cause of death in India, by improving the control of high blood pressure (hypertension), reducing salt consumption and eliminating artificial trans-fats, leading risk factors for CVD.

What

1. The **India Hypertension Management Initiative (IHMI) is a collaborative project of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), State Governments, World Health Organization (WHO), and Resolve to Save Lives initiative of Vital Strategies**.
2. The primary goal of this project is **to reduce morbidity and mortality due to CVDs**, the leading cause of death in India, by improving the control of high blood pressure, which is a leading risk factor for CVDs among adults in India.
3. **The IHMI is focused on five essential components of scalable treatment of hypertension**. It will support the adoption of standardized simplified treatment plans for managing high blood pressure, ensure the regular and uninterrupted supply of quality-assured medications, task sharing so health workers who are accessible to patients can distribute medications already prescribed by the medical officer, and patient-centered services that reduce the barriers to treatment adherence.
4. **Data on hypertension will be improved through streamlined monitoring systems**, and the lessons learned and practice-based evidence will inform further interventions to improve cardiovascular care.

5. **IHMI will be progressively rolled out in 25 districts in the first two years across districts selected by the Health Ministry** for expansion of active screening and intensification of treatment activities for hypertension.
6. **Around 200 million adults in India have high blood pressure**, yet control rates for the condition remain low. Studies suggest that in rural areas in India, only one quarter of people with hypertension are aware of their condition, and only around 10 percent have their blood pressure controlled.
7. In urban areas, around 40 percent of people with hypertension are aware of their condition, and only around **20 percent have their blood pressure controlled**.
8. **This initiative aims to strengthen the cardiovascular disease** component of the Health Ministry's National Program for Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS).
9. It will focus on strengthening hypertension management and monitoring at the primary health care level, within the existing healthcare system, and is aligned with WHO's Global HEARTS Initiative and National Guidelines.

MISCELLANEOUS

INDIRA GANDHI PEACE PRIZE 2017

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will receive the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development this year for his leadership of the country between 2004 and 2014 and for enhancing India's stature globally. According to a statement from the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust, **Singh was unanimously chosen for the award** by an international jury chaired by ex-president Pranab Mukherjee.

What

1. The Trust said Singh is **only the third Indian prime minister to complete two full terms as the PM**. His tenure witnessed the **path-breaking nuclear agreement with the US** and the **Copenhagen Climate Change agreement**.
2. Singh, **who as the governor of the Reserve Bank of India** and the **finance minister in the government headed by P V Narasimha Rao**, played a pivotal role in ushering economic reforms.
3. The Trust said Singh has been responsible for making India's voice heard more effectively at international forums. The 10 years of his premiership were not only a period of rapid economic and social changes, they witnessed the lowest terrorist violence, prolonged period of communal harmony, peace on the country's borders and a globally acknowledged rise in India's standing in the global community of nations.
4. **The international award named after former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was instituted in 1986**. The last two recipients have been the **Indian Space Research Organisation** and the **UN High Commission for Refugees**.

IMD WORLD TALENT RANKINGS 2017

The annual IMD World Talent Ranking covered 63 countries and assessed the methods the countries adopted to attract and retain talent. India has improved its ranking by three notches to **51 globally in terms of ability to attract, develop and retain talent** while Switzerland topped the list compiled by leading global business school IMD. Globally, **Europe continues to dominate the rankings**, with Switzerland, Denmark, and Belgium being the most competitive countries. Austria, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Germany, Sweden and Luxembourg made up the top 10. The outstanding education system in Europe sets them apart from the rest of the pack. This allows them to develop local talent and at the same time attract foreign, highly- skilled professionals, which many European businesses rely upon to perform.

What

1. **The annual IMD World Talent Ranking covered 63 countries** and assessed the methods the countries adopted to attract and retain talent.

2. The rankings are based on a country's performance in **three main categories -- investment and development, appeal, and readiness** -- and **India was ranked 62nd, 43rd and 29th** on these terms, respectively.
3. According to Arturo Bris, Head of Competitiveness, IMD Switzerland, **India is not doing a good job at retaining local talent** and attracting foreign labour.
4. On both fronts, remuneration levels, quality of life, security and property rights are deterrent to domestic employment, Bris said.
5. Furthermore, relative to other economies, investment in education is still weak. India ranks among the bottom five countries on the list in terms of investment in education as a percentage of GDP.
6. India needs to emphasise the education system as a key to prosperity. It also needs to prevent brain drain by providing better opportunities to local talent.
7. **From the BRICS bloc, China stayed in the lead with a ranking of 40**, followed by Russia at 43 and South Africa at 48. Brazil was ranked just after India at the 52nd slot.
8. The country's labour growth provides necessary domestic talent pool. Besides, the emphasis on science in schools, the availability of finance skills and knowledgeable senior managers are the areas in which India performs relatively well, but the country needs to invest in all levels of education and job related competence mastering.
9. The leading Asian economies -- Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan -- have cemented their global status as hubs of attracting and retaining highly-skilled workers though they trail Europe in this regard.

WORLD'S TOILETS 2017 REPORT

India, the world's second-largest country by population, has the highest number of people without basic sanitation, according to a report. The report says despite immense progress through the **Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission**, more than 732 million people still suffer fear and indignity of relieving themselves in the open or in unsafe or unhygienic toilets -- a situation that is worse for women and girls. "In India, a **staggering 355 million women and girls are still waiting for a toilet**; if they were all to stand in a queue, it would stretch around the Earth more than four times." **WaterAid's State of the World's Toilets 2017 report** says.

What

1. The report, quoting government data, says **there has undoubtedly been immense progress made in improving access to sanitation** by working with the Swachh Bharat Mission -- with 52 million household toilets built between October 2014 and November 2017.
2. **India also ranks in the top ten for reducing open defecation** and improving access to basic sanitation. But there is still a long way to go," says the report, titled '**Out of Order.**'
3. According to the report, **after India, China, the world's most populous country, comes in second**, with 343 million people without decent toilets. However, it too has made a lot of progress since 2000, when 40 per cent of the population lacked basic sanitation. Africa's most populous country, Nigeria, is in the third place.
4. The report says globally, one in three people still have nowhere decent to go to the toilet, and demonstrates how women and girls bear the brunt of this global crisis.
5. For more than 1.1 billion women and girls, this injustice results in an increased risk of poor health, limited education, lost opportunities, vulnerability and embarrassment of having to go out in the open.

6. **WaterAid is an international charity** that engages in improving access to **safe water, hygiene and sanitation**.

16 YEARS AFTER

India's Manushi Chhillar won the coveted Miss World 2017 pageant in China (Sanya), **16 years after Priyanka Chopra won the title in 2000**. Chhillar competed against 108 contestants from various countries at a glittering event held at Sanya City Arena in China. Miss World 2016 winner Puerto Rico's Stephanie Del Valle gave away the coveted crown to the winner.

What

1. **Chhillar, who is from Haryana**, had earlier this year won the Femina Miss India 2017.
2. **India, England, France, Kenya and Mexico** grabbed the top five spots at the pageant.
3. Manushi, born to doctor parents, studied in St. Thomas School in New Delhi and Bhagat Phool Singh Government Medical College for Women in Sonapat.
4. Her entire family including brother and sister were present and they looked excited watching Manushi grabbing top five spot.
5. In question and answer round post getting the top five spot, Manushi was asked: "**Which profession deserves the highest salary and why?**" She replied: "I think a mother is of highest respect. I don't think its just about cash but love and respect she gives to someone. She is the biggest inspiration in my life. Mother should get highest respect."
6. As many as 108 beauty queens from different parts of the world participated in the prestigious pageant.
7. **Chhillar is the sixth Indian to win the coveted crown**, which was first won by Reita Faria back in 1966.
8. Aishwarya Rai had bagged the title in 1994, followed by Diana Haydon in 1997, Yukta Mookhey in 1999 and **Priyanka Chopra in 2000, the last for India**.

FORBES LIST OF ASIA'S RICHEST

Mukesh Ambani family has topped the **list of Asia's 50 Richest Families** with a net worth of \$44.8 billion, up \$19 billion from the previous year, Forbes said. Despite dropping to the second spot, **South Korea's Lee family still saw its wealth soar by \$11.2 billion to \$40.8 billion this year** as shares of Samsung Electronics moved up 75% over the past year. According to **Asia's 50 Richest Families compiled by Forbes**, Hong Kong's Kwok family, Asia's richest real estate household that controls Sun Hung Kai Properties, ranked third this year with a net wealth of \$40.4 billion.

What

1. **Thailand's Charavanont family of the Charoen Pokphand Group took the fourth spot** on the list, with a net worth of \$36.6 billion.
2. **The Ambanis are the only Indian family on the top 10 richest families list in Asia**. "No family highlights this surge better than the Ambanis of India, this year's biggest gainer in dollar and percentage terms.
3. On the list of Asia's Richest Families 2017, compiled by Forbes, **India enjoys the biggest presence in the ranking for the third time with as many as 18 families**.
4. Other richest Indian families on the list feature the Premjis (rank 11, \$19.2 billion net worth), the Hinduja (12th, \$18.8 billion), the Mittals (14th, \$17.2 billion), the Mistrys (16th, \$16.1 billion) and the Birlas (19th, \$14.1 billion).
5. Other Indian families that got into the exalted list include the **Godrej family (20th, \$14 billion)**, the **Bajajs (26th, \$9.3 billion)**, the **Jindal family (32nd, \$7.7 billion)**, the Burmans (35th, \$7.05 billion), Eicher Motors' Lals (36th, \$7 billion) and Shree Cement's Bangur family (37th, \$6.7 billion).

6. Motherson Sumi Systems Sehgal family (41st, \$6.2 billion), the Wadia family (42nd, \$6.14 billion), DLF's Kushal Pal Singh (44th, \$D 6.1 billion), the Patel family which controls Cadila (45th, \$6 billion), the Piramals (47th, \$5.38 billion) and the Munjals (48th, \$5.37 billion) also made the cut.
7. The 50 families in the club are worth a record \$699 billion, up by nearly \$200 billion from last year, according to Forbes.
8. The list of **Asia's 50 Richest Families is a snapshot of wealth using stock prices** and currency exchange rates from the close of markets on 3 November.
9. Private companies were valued by using financial ratios and other comparisons with similar publicly traded firms.
10. The ticket to entry for this year's list was \$5 billion, \$1.6 billion more than in 2016.

MOST VIOLENT REGION FOR WOMEN

Latin America and the Caribbean is the most violent region in the world for women, the United Nations said, **highlighting Central America and Mexico as particularly dangerous**. In a report presented in Panama, UN Women and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) found assaults on women persisted in the region despite severe laws aimed at curbing the phenomenon. **The issue of violence against women in Latin America is critical**. It's the most violent region in the world against women outside of conflict contexts.

What

1. The rate of sexual violence against women outside of relationships is the **highest in the world in the region** and the second-highest for those who are in, or were in, a couple, the report stated.
2. Three of the 10 countries with the **highest rates of rape of women and girls were in the Caribbean**.
3. **Femicide -- the killing of women** -- occurred on a "devastating scale" in Central America, explaining that **two out three women murdered died because of their gender**.
4. In some countries it has become a severe crisis. In the Northern Triangle (Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala) and Mexico the problem of femicide and violence against women has reached epidemic levels, in many cases with links to organised crime.
5. Central America's Northern Triangle is considered the most dangerous area in the world outside war zones, mainly because of rampant gangs and drug cartels.
6. The UN report noted that **24 of the 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have laws against domestic violence**, but only nine of them have passed legislation that tackles a range of forms of other violence against women in public or private.
7. **16 of the countries had femicide on the books** and a few punished newer types of crimes, such as cybercrime, political violence, or acid attacks.
8. The report added **one third of women worldwide have been a victim of violence in their relationship** or of sexual violence by people outside their relationship.

QS RANKINGS 2017

Three IITs and the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore have made the cut **among top 20 varsities in BRICS countries**, according to the latest QS Rankings. Over 300 universities from India, China, Russia, South Africa and Brazil have been observed and graded for the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranking, **one of the global prestigious rankings**.

What

1. The **Indian Institute of Technology Bombay** has secured **ninth rank followed by IISc, Bangalore (10), IIT Delhi (15) and IIT Madras (18)**.
2. Chinese universities, including Tsinghua University, Peking University and Fudan University have secured the top three ranks with the country occupying eight of the top 10 positions.
3. Role of ranking in terms of students getting to know about the institutions can't be negated, but also sometimes overplayed.
4. Rankings are relevant for institutions and most importantly because of the rankings what happened in India is that institutions have started to look at themselves," UGC Chairman VS Chauhan said at unveiling of rankings in Delhi.
5. Indian education has expanded and we are trying to change a lot of regulations which are made log ago. In this there is space for rankings and the government is also realizing this that the universities are a matter of prestige for the country, he added.
6. **GraphIndia has the second highest representation in the 2017 list after China.**
7. Based on eight performance indicators, namely academic reputation, employer reputation, proportion of staff with a PhD, faculty/student ratio, research publications and citation rates and proportion of international faculty and students, the **ranking provides insights into the relative strengths and weaknesses of leading institutions in the five countries.**
8. According to the rankings, among the top 10 public varsities in India are IIT Bombay, IISc Bangalore, IIT Delhi, IIT Madras, IIT Roorkee, IIT Kanpur, Delhi University and Kolkata University.
9. Among the top 10 private universities in the country are BITS Pillani, Thapar University, Symbiosis International University, Manipal University, Amrita University, VIT University, Kalinga University and OP Jindal Global University.

NAVY GETS ITS FIRST WOMAN PILOT

In a first, a woman has been inducted as a pilot in the Indian Navy. **Shubhangi Swaroop**, who hails from **Uttar Pradesh**, will soon be flying Maritime Reconnaissance aircraft. Three other women cadets, **Astha Segal from New Delhi, Roopa A from Puducherry** and **Sakthi Maya S from Kerala**, also created history by becoming the country's first women officers at the Naval Armament Inspectorate (NAI) branch of the Navy.

What

1. **Shubhangi is the first Naval woman pilot**, the Navy's Aviation branch has had women officers operating as air traffic control officers and as 'observers' in the aircraft who are responsible for communication and weapons, Southern Naval spokes person Commander Sreedhar Warriar told.
2. The NAI branch is responsible for auditing and assessing the state of weapons and ammunition of the Navy.
3. All the four will be undergoing subsequent professional training in their respective chosen branches before being employed on duty.
4. Shubhangi will be trained at the Air Force Academy at Hyderabad which trains pilots of the Army, Navy and the Air Force.

ESSENTIAL DRUGS UNDER NPPA

National drug pricing regulator NPPA on 24 November 2017 said **it has capped prices of 51 essential formulations**, including those used for the treatment of cancer, pain, heart conditions and skin problems. **The prices have been slashed in the range of 6 to 53 per cent.** In separate notifications, the drug price regulator said it has notified ceiling prices of 13 formulations, while revising the same for 15 formulations. Moreover, retail

prices of 23 essential formulations have also been notified, National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) said. Drugs whose ceiling prices have been capped include colon or rectal cancer treatment drug **oxaliplatin (injection 100mg)**, Japanese encephalitis vaccine and **measles rubella vaccine**.

What

1. On the other hand, ceiling prices of drugs including **anaesthetic sevoflurane, Phytomenadione (Vitamin K1) and tuberculosis prevention medicine BCG vaccine** have been revised.
2. According to highly placed sources in NPPA, the reduction in prices following the latest exercise will range between 6- 53 per cent.
3. NPPA fixes ceiling price of essential medicines of Schedule I **under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO) 2013**.
4. In respect of medicines that are not under price control, manufacturers are allowed to increase the maximum retail price by 10 per cent annually.
5. The calculation for essential drugs is based on the simple average of all medicines in a particular therapeutic segment with sales of more than 1 per cent.
6. **Set up in 1997**, NPPA has been entrusted with the task of fixation/revision of prices of pharma products, enforcement of provisions of DPCO and monitoring of prices of controlled and decontrolled drugs.

TWO INDIANS HONOURED WITH OZONE AWARD

Two Indians — **ex-Union environment minister Anil Madhav Dave** and the **Centre for Science and Environment's (CSE) deputy director Chandra Bhushan** — were honoured with **Ozone Awards by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** at the 30th anniversary of the Montreal Protocol in Canada on 23 November 2017. Dave was posthumously awarded in the '**Political Leadership**' category while **Bhushan was awarded in 'Partnership' (providing policy and research support) category** for their roles in getting the Kigali amendment to the Montreal Protocol adopted in October last year.

What

1. The **Kigali amendment** seeks to phase down climate-warming refrigerants hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). It will enter into force on January 1, 2019.
2. Developed countries will start reducing HFCs as early as 2019 while developing countries will start later. Phasing down HFCs under the Protocol is expected to avoid up to 0.5°C of global warming by the end of the century while continuing to protect the ozone layer.
3. Though the Montreal Protocol was earlier meant for phasing down only ozone-depleting substances, the Kigali amendment - adopted by over 190 countries including India - empowered it to deal with the HFCs which aren't ozone-depleting chemicals but are clubbed in the category of climate-damaging substances.
4. Every 10 years, **the Ozone Secretariat of the UNEP gives awards to individuals** and organisations that have demonstrated extraordinary commitment and contribution to the progress and achievements of the Montreal Protocol.
5. The 'Political Leadership' category award is given to key political-level individuals (ministers and other senior political leaders) and organisations that contributed most to bridging gaps, building consensus, and providing inspiration and political guidance over the last several years of discussions and negotiations to reach an agreement.
6. The '**Partnership**' category award recognises the work of civil society and other international organisations that have played a critical role in the development of the Kigali Amendment and/or implementation of the Montreal Protocol.

CONSTITUTION DAY CELEBRATION

The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the **Constitution Day celebrations**, organised by the Supreme Court to mark the anniversary of the **adoption of our Constitution on November 26, 1949** in New Delhi. Speaking on the occasion, the President said that our Constitution is **not static but is a living document**. The Constituent Assembly was conscious that the Constitution would need to be interwoven with new threads. In a dynamic world, this would be the best way to serve the people and the nation as a whole. As such, over the years, many amendments have been carried out to the Constitution by Parliament.

What

1. **The Constitution is not just an abstract ideal.** It has to be made meaningful to the lives of ordinary people in every street, every village and every mohalla of our country. It has to somehow connect with their everyday existence and make it more comfortable.
2. **The heart of the constitutional project was trust** – trust in each other, trust between institutions, trust in the goodness of fellow citizens, and trust in the wisdom of future generations.
3. This sense of trust is inherent in constitutional governance. When the Government trusts citizens to attest their documents themselves, it is in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution.
4. Our Constitution framers realised that a Constitution, **no matter how well written and how detailed**, would have little meaning without the right people to implement it and to live by its values.
5. And in this, they placed their faith in generations that would follow. The Constitution empowers the people as much as the people empower the Constitution.
6. When individuals and institutions ask what the Constitution has done for them and how it has built their capacities – they must also consider what they have done to uphold the Constitution. And what they have done to support its value system. The Constitution is ‘We, the People’ as much as ‘We, the People’ are the Constitution.
7. The President said that our fundamental commitment must continue to be to take the values of our Constitution – and the fruits of our social, economic and political development – to the very grassroots of our society. For this we must make constant efforts to raise standards of subordinate institutions and bring them at par with apex institutions in all spheres.
8. **The President received the first copies of books – ‘The Constitution at 67’ and ‘Indian Judiciary: Annual Report 2016-17’** from the Chief Justice of India, Mr Justice Dipak Misra.

WORLD MALARIA REPORT 2017

Malaria deaths in India also witnessed a total of 331 malaria deaths in 2016, making it the highest number of deaths to the disease in the **Southeast Asia region**. **Only eight per cent of malaria cases were diagnosed last year in India**, which accounted for **six per cent of the 216 million new cases globally**, a World Health Organization (WHO) report has said. **India was the third on the list of 15 countries** which accounted for 80 per cent of all malaria cases in the world in 2016, the **WHO’s World Malaria Report 2017** said.

What

1. The report stated that **the surveillance mechanism in India was weak as it detected a mere 8 per cent of Malaria cases**. Countries with weak malaria surveillance systems include India and Nigeria, two major contributors to the global burden of malaria, with 8 per cent and 16 per cent of cases, respectively, detected by the surveillance system.

2. **Nigeria, with 27 per cent, had the most number of malaria cases**, followed by the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, which accounted for 10 per cent. Mozambique, at four per cent of global malaria cases, followed India.
3. **India also witnessed a total of 331 malaria deaths in 2016**, making it the highest number of deaths to the disease in the Southeast Asia region.
4. **Odisha, the highest endemic state of India**, reported an increase in cases in 2016 (to double the number in 2013). The other countries had no major outbreaks reported.
5. Malaria deaths in India were only lower than those in WHO's Africa region where the figure soared to 33,997 for the Democratic Republic of Congo.
6. In 2016, there were an estimated 445,000 deaths from malaria in the world, compared to 446,000 estimated deaths in 2015.

CYCLONE OCKHI

The **southern districts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu received heavy rainfall as Cyclone Ockhi**, which originated near the **Sri Lankan coast**, rattled through the **Arabian Sea towards Lakshwadeep islands**.

What is cyclone Ockhi?

1. **The name Ockhi is coined by Bangladesh.**
2. According to Hurricane Research Division, tropical cyclones are named to provide ease of communication between forecasters and the general public regarding forecasts, watches, and warnings.

How did cyclone Ockha form?

1. The **deep depression in the south of Kanyakumari and west of Sri Lanka**, intensified and resulted into a cyclonic storm.
2. **The cyclone moving at a speed of 38 kmph, is centered at Latitude 7.5°N and Longitude 77.5°E**, around 55 km south of Kanyakumari, 120 km southwest of Thiruvananthapuram, 480 km east-southeast of Minicoy and 340 km west--northwest of Galle in Sri Lanka and is moving towards Lakshadweep island.