

# **NEWS ALERT**

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## **LIST OF NEWSPAPERS COVERED**

**BUSINESS LINE**

**DECCAN HERALD**

**ECONOMIC TIMES**

**HINDU**

**HINDUSTAN TIMES**

**INDIAN EXPRESS**

**PIONEER**

**STATESMAN**

**TELEGRAPH**

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## **APPOINTMENT**

BUSINESS STANDARD, DEC 3, 2018

### **IAS officer A N Jha is new Finance Secretary, succeeds Hasmukh Adhia**

Ajay Narayan Jha, secretary, expenditure, will be the country's new Finance Secretary, a government order said Monday.

The Cabinet's Appointments Committee cleared Jha's appointment after incumbent Hasmukh Adhia, a 1981-batch Gujarat cadre officer of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), retired on November 30.

Jha, 59, is a 1982-batch IAS officer of the Manipur-Tripura cadre.

An alumnus of St Stephens College from where he passed with first class in Graduation and post graduation in History, Jha is a recipient of World Bank scholarship to pursue Masters in Economic Policy Management from McGill University in Canada.

He holds an MPhil in public administration from Delhi University.

### **15 officers empanelled as union joint secretaries;**

AS MANY as 15 officers from various services on Tuesday were empanelled as union joint secretaries or joint secretary equivalent. Whereas six of the officers belong to Indian Revenue Service (Customs

and Central Excise) and three from Indian Statistical Service, there is one officer each from the following services: Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineering (IRSME), Indian Forest Service (IFoS), Indian Ordnance Factories Service, Indian Post and Telecom Account and Finance Service, Indian Audit and Accounts Service and Indian Ordnance Factories Service. Here's full list of 15 newly-empanelled GoI JS:

### **1986 Batch**

1. Ashok Kumar Misra, Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineering (IRSME)
2. R Savithri, Indian Statistical Service
3. James Mathew, Indian Statistical Service

### **1987 Batch**

4. Tanzin Wangyal, Indian Ordnance Factories Service
5. Saytendra Bahadur Singh, Indian Statistical Service

### **1991 Batch**

6. Simmi Jain, Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Central Excise)
7. L Satya Srinivas, Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Central Excise)

**8.** M Subramanyan, Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Central Excise)

**9.** Nitish Kumar Sinha, Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Central Excise)

**10.** Yogpal Singh, Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Central Excise)

**11.** P Venkata Subba Rao, Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Central Excise)

**1993 Batch**

**12.** SS Chhabra, Manipur cadre Indian Forest Service (IFoS)

**1994 Batch**

**13.** P Amudha, Tamil Nadu cadre IAS

**14.** Sachidanand Prasad, Indian Post and Telecom Account and Finance Service

**1995 Batch**

**15.** K Subramaniam Indian Audit and Accounts Service

HINDUSTAN TIMES, DEC 7, 2018

## **Dr Krishnamurthy Subramanian appointed new chief economic advisor**

*He replaces Arvind Subramanian, who resigned from the post on June 20 this year. His term was supposed to end in May 2019 but he wanted to return to academic research in the US.*



The government on Friday appointed Krishnamurthy Subramanian, associate professor and executive director (Centre for Analytical Finance) of Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad, as the new chief economic adviser to the finance minister for a period of three years.

He replaces Arvind Subramanian, who resigned from the post on June 20 this year. His term was supposed to end in May 2019 but he wanted to return to academic research in the US.

A PhD from Chicago-Booth and a top-ranking IIT-IIM alumnus, Subramanian is a leading expert on banking, corporate governance and economic policy.

He obtained his MBA and PhD in Financial Economics under the advice of Professor Luigi Zingales and Professor Raghuram Rajan, also the former RBI governor

His research in banking, law and finance, innovation and economic growth, and corporate governance has been published in leading journals, including The Review of Financial Studies, the Journal of Financial Economics, the Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis, and the Journal of Law and Economics.

Before beginning his academic career, Subramanian worked as a consultant with JPMorgan Chase in New York. He also served in a management role in the research group at ICICI Ltd., which at the time was India's top project financing institution and one of the most sought-after recruiters in top Indian business schools.

He was awarded ISB's inaugural Alumni Endowment Research Fellow in 2014 for his exceptional work in shaping the banking sector.

Because of his work in shaping the Indian banking sector and other path-breaking research with a significant societal impact, Subramanian was named ISB's inaugural Alumni Endowment Research Fellow in 2014.

In previous academic roles, Subramanian served on the finance faculty at Goizueta Business School at Emory University in the United States.

## **CHILD WELFARE**

PIONEER, DEC 1, 2018

### **SC highlights need to review guidelines**

The Supreme Court on Friday said the issue related to guidelines for media reporting in cases of sexual assaults, particularly offences against minors, was required to be dealt with in "great detail".

A bench of Justices Madan B Lokur and Deepak Gupta was told that the affidavits filed by media bodies including the Press Council of India (PCI) on action taken against media houses and scribes who have disclosed identity of victims of sexual assaults, contained "nothing much".

"They (media bodies) are almost saying that they cannot do anything.

There is nothing much (in the affidavits)," senior advocate Shekhar Naphade, representing the petitioner who has filed a plea in Muzaffarpur shelter home case, told the bench.

To this, the bench observed, "Yes, they are almost saying so".

"This guidelines issue has to be taken up in great detail," the bench said and posted the matter for hearing in the first week of February.

In a separate case, the court Friday reserved its order on the issue related to interpretation of provisions of the Indian Penal Code, the Protection

of Children from Sexual Offences Act and Contempt of Courts Act which deals with disclosure of identity of victims of sexual assaults and the procedure to be followed by media in reporting these cases.

The court had earlier asked media bodies including the PCI, the Editors Guild and the Indian Broadcasting Federation to file affidavits indicating whether they can inform the police about an offence related to disclosure of identity of victims of sexual assaults by the media.

It had also asked these bodies to inform the court as to why steps have not been taken for prosecution of the alleged offenders.

The court had observed that offence of disclosing identity of victims of sexual assaults has criminal liability, and if the law was violated, action must be taken.

The PCI's counsel had told the court that in cases related to disclosure of identity of such victims, the power of the Council was limited to censure such publication and they also send their orders to the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP).

The PCI's counsel had also said that prosecution should be launched in such cases but the Council needed "some more teeth".

The court had earlier said that documents filed before it by the News Broadcasting Standards Authority have "nothing" and it was quite clear from the affidavit filed by the authority that no prosecution was launched against any of the alleged offenders.

It had issued notices to these media bodies to assist the court in the matter which deals with alleged non-compliance of statutory provisions

about disclosure of identity of victims of rape and sexual abuses by the media.

The issue had cropped up when the court was hearing a plea related to Muzaffarpur shelter home where over 30 girls were allegedly raped and sexually exploited. PTI

# CLIMATE CHANGE

HINDU (BUSINESS LINE), DEC 3, 2018

## **World Bank to invest USD 200 bn in 2021-25 to fight climate change**



*World Bank looks to fight pollution and help the countries worst affected by climate change*

KATOWICE (POLAND), DEC 3

The World Bank on Monday unveiled USD 200 billion in climate action investment for 2021-25, adding this amounts to a doubling of its current five-year funding.

The World Bank said the move, coinciding with a UN climate summit meeting of some 200 nations in Poland, represented a “significantly

ramped up ambition” to tackle climate change, “sending an important signal to the wider global community to do the same.”

Developed countries are committed to lifting combined annual public and private spending to USD 100 billion in developing countries by 2020 to fight the impact of climate change — up from 48.5 billion in 2016 and 56.7 billion last year, according to latest OECD data.

Southern hemisphere countries fighting the impact of warming temperatures are nonetheless pushing northern counterparts for firmer commitments.

In a statement, the World Bank said the breakdown of the USD 200 billion would comprise “approximately USD 100 billion in direct finance from the World Bank.”

Around one third of the remaining funding will come from two World Bank Group agencies with the rest private capital “mobilised by the World Bank Group”.

“If we don’t reduce emissions and build adaptation now, we’ll have 100 million more people living in poverty by 2030,” John Roome, World Bank senior director for climate change, warned. “And we also know that the less we address this issue proactively just in three regions — Africa, South Asia and Latin America — we’ll have 133 million climate migrants,” Roome told *AFP*.

The bank’s financing package amounts to “about 40 billion a year, but the direct (finance) is 27 billion per year on average”, Roome said. He added that in the 2018 fiscal year, running from July 2017 to June this

year, the World Bank had committed USD 20.5 billion to climate action, compared with an annual average of USD 13.5 billion for the 2014-2018 period.

Roome said the money now being earmarked amounted to “about 35 per cent” of the World Bank Group’s total financing.

## **Striking a balance**

Much of the climate action financing is being set aside for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, notably through development of renewable energy strategies. However, the World Bank stated that “a key priority is boosting support for climate adaptation,” given the millions of people already battling the consequences of extreme weather.

“By ramping up direct adaptation finance to reach around USD 50 billion over (fiscal) 21-25, the World Bank will, for the first time, give this equal emphasis alongside investments that reduce emissions,” the bank stated.

Given the urgency to act in the face of sea level rise, flooding and drought “we must fight the causes, but also adapt to the consequences that are often most dramatic for the world’s poorest people”, said World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva.

By stepping up financial aid to developing countries worst affected, Georgieva said the bank was committed to adapting infrastructure while investing in “climate smart agriculture, sustainable water

management and responsive social safety nets” as well as early response networks.

“Even if we can keep global warming down to 2 degrees Celsius we know you’re going to need a significant amount of adaptation in places like Chad, Mozambique or Bangladesh,” said Roome.

The countries whose representatives are meeting at the UN climate summit which opened on Sunday in the Polish city of Katowice are seeking to make good on commitments made in the 2015 Paris climate accord. That agreement saw countries commit to limiting global temperature rises to well below two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), and to the safer cap of 1.5C if at all possible.

## DEFENCE

HINDU, DEC 1, 2018

### Defence Acquisition Council approval: New frigates to get BrahMos



*Arjun tanks to get armoured recovery vehicles.*

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), which met on Saturday, approved procurements worth 3000 crore which include BrahMos

cruise missiles for the two stealth frigates to be procured directly from Russia and armored recovery vehicles for the Army's Arjun tanks.

“As a follow up of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) decision in October 2018 for procurement of four P1135.6 follow-on ships, the DAC granted approval for procurement of indigenous BrahMos missiles for two Indian Navy ships to be built in Russia,” the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

The indigenously designed BrahMos Missile is a tested and proven supersonic cruise missile and will form the primary weapon on-board these ships, the statement added.

In October 2016, India and Russia signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) for four Krivak or Talwar stealth frigates - two to be procured directly from Russia and two to be built by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) and the commercial deals were signed recently.

The basic structures of two frigates are already ready at Yantar shipyard in Russia and will be finished now following the \$1 bn deal. Last week, Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) signed a \$500 mn deal with Rosoboronexport of Russia for material, design and specialists assistance to build two frigates in India.

BrahMos, which is a joint venture between India and Russia, has already been inducted on all frontline warships of the Indian Navy.

The DAC also approved the procurement of Armoured Recovery Vehicles (ARVs) for the Army's Arjun main battle tanks. These are designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development

Organisation (DRDO) and would be manufactured by Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML). The ARVs ensure efficient and speedy repair and recovery of tanks during combat.

## Sea defence



- The BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles will be deployed on the two stealth frigates to be procured directly from Russia

- The development trials of an anti-ship variant of the missile began in 2003 and combat trials began in 2005; The missile can be launched from land, sea, sub-sea and air against surface and sea-based targets
- Initially, the range was capped at 290 km to meet obligations of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR); after India joined the MTCR in June 2016, the range was extended to 450 km; work is on to increase it to 600 km

### By stealth

- In October 2016, India and Russia signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement for four Krivak or Talwar stealth frigates

– two to be procured directly from Russia and two to be built by Goa Shipyard Ltd. (GSL)

- In October 2018, the Cabinet Committee on Security gave final approval for the deals
- After that a \$1-bn deal was signed for direct purchase of two frigates from Russia. The basic structures of the frigates are already ready at Yantar shipyard in Russia and will be finished now
- Last week, the GSL signed a \$500 mn deal with Rosoboronexport of Russia for material, design and specialists assistance to build two frigates in India

## CORRUPTION

HINDU, DEC 5, 2018

### **Former Coal Secretary H.C. Gupta, two others get 3-year jail terms in coal scam case**



*All the three convicts were later granted statutory bail.*

A Delhi court on Wednesday sentenced former **coal** secretary H.C. Gupta to three-year imprisonment in a coal block allocation scam case that happened during the previous UPA regime at the Centre.

Former bureaucrat K.S. Kropcha and the Joint Secretary in Ministry of Minority Affairs K C Samria — were also awarded three-year jail term. All the three of them were also fined Rs. 50,000 each. They were later granted statutory bail as the jail term was below four years.

Special Judge Bharat Prasar sentenced other convicted persons Vikas Patni, MD of Vikash Metals and Power Limited, and its authorised signatory Anand Mallick to a four-year jail term. A fine of ₹ 1 lakh was imposed on the company.

The CBI had sought a maximum of seven-year imprisonment for the five convicted persons and imposition of a heavy fine on the private firm.

The offences for which they had been convicted entail a minimum punishment of one year in jail, going up to a maximum of seven years.

The case pertains to alleged irregularities in the allocation of Moira and Madhujore (North and South) coal blocks in West Bengal to VMPL. In September 2012, the CBI had registered an FIR in the case.

Gupta, who was the Coal Secretary from December 31, 2005 to November 2008, has already been convicted before this in two other cases of coal block allocation in which he had been sentenced to jail for two and three years respectively. He is out on bail in both the cases.

Kropha, who was then the Joint Secretary, Ministry of coal, retired in December 2017 as the Chief Secretary of Meghalaya. He has also been convicted and sentenced to two years in another coal block allocation scam and has been on bail.

Samria then held the rank of Director in the Ministry of coal and is Joint Secretary in Ministry of Minority Affairs. He has already been convicted and sentenced to two years jail term in another case and was out on bail.

All the convicted persons were taken into judicial custody after pronouncement of the order on the direction of the court.

All have been held guilty for the offences under Prevention of Corruption Act and IPC, including cheating, criminal conspiracy and criminal misconduct.

Gupta has been accused in 12 cases of alleged irregularities in coal block allocation scam, prosecutors had said.

The CBI has filed charge sheets in connection with alleged irregularities in 40 cases of coal block allocations during the UPA-1 and UPA-2 regime.

On July 25, 2014, the Supreme Court had approved appointment of Additional Sessions Judge Parashar as special judge to exclusively deal with all coal scam cases.

Till now the special court has decided six such cases.

In the present case, the court had on August 19, 2016 framed charges, including cheating and criminal conspiracy against Gupta, the two public servants, the firm and its two officials. They all had pleaded not guilty and claimed trial. All the accused were out on bail.

The other two coal scam cases in which Gupta was earlier convicted related to Kamal Sponge Steel and Power Ltd (KSSPL) and Vini Iron and Steel Udyog Ltd(VISUL). Kropcha and Samria were also convicted in KSSPL case.

# DISABLED

HINDU, DEC 4, 2018

## **Disabilities Act: States going slow on roll-out, says study**



### ***Only 10 States have notified rules under Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act***

A study conducted by the Disability Rights India Foundation (DRIF) on the implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, across 24 States, has revealed that more than half have not notified the State rules, despite a significant lapse of time.

Ten States including Bihar, Chandigarh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Telengana, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have notified the State rules, the survey said.

### **Deadline missed**

The study, conducted in collaboration with the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for **Disabled** People (NCPEDP) and National Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NCRPD), said the Act, passed in December 2016, should have been notified by all States within six months.

## **ELECTION**

### **EC taking concerns related to social media seriously: Sunil Arora**

ECONOMIC TIMES, DEC 3, 2018

New Delhi: Chief election commissioner Sunil Arora, who took charge on Sunday, said the Election Commission is taking social media-related concerns seriously. He added that the ‘social media’ special committee has been specifically told to submit its report at the earliest, so that a decision can be taken by December-end.

“We had appointed a committee to review the various facets of Section 126 of the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1951... It is going to submit the final report for perusal and consideration of the commission by December 30, 2018,” the chief election commissioner said.

The EC had appointed a 14-member committee in January to suggest changes to Section 126, keeping new media realities in mind. This section bans campaign 48 hours before elections. The chief election commissioner also assured that preparations for the Lok Sabha elections were on track.

“We will try to meticulously prepare on all fronts —whether it is related to dissemination of EVMs or VVPATs through our SVEEP (Systematic Voters’ Education and Electoral Participation) programme, ..

HINDU, DEC 4, 2018

## **Polls to 4 Assemblies likely with Lok Sabha election**

### *EC sources say J&K too likely to vote around that time*

The Election Commission is likely to hold Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh with the Lok Sabha election, highly placed sources in the panel have said. The terms of the four Assemblies end in May and June in 2019.

The sources said there is also the possibility of holding elections to the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, dissolved this month before it completed its tenure, along with the general election.

They pointed out that by holding Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh along with the Lok Sabha poll, the Election Commission will be following precedents.

Since the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly has been dissolved, the EC is bound to hold fresh election there within six months. “The upper limit ends in May. We may hold elections in Jammu and Kashmir along with the Lok Sabha poll. But it can be held before that also. We’ll see in the coming days,” a functionary said.

### *Convenience factor*

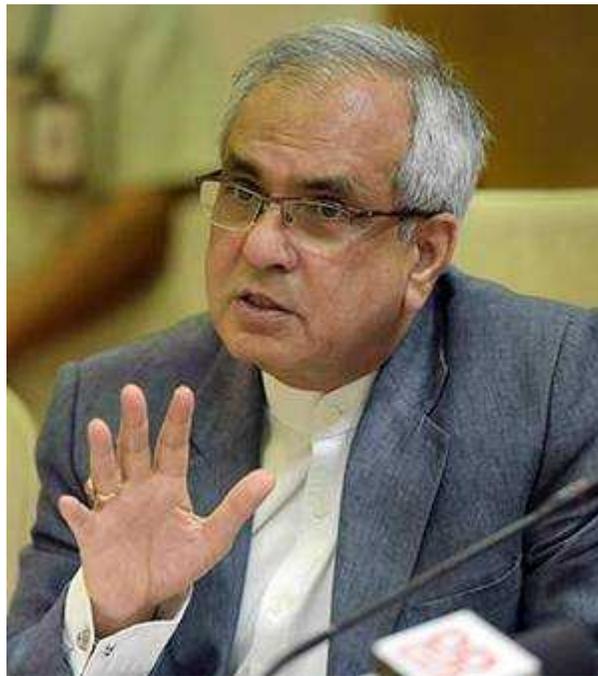
Sources in the government, meanwhile, pointed out that when security forces were deployed for the Lok Sabha election in the State, it would be convenient for election authorities to hold the Assembly poll

simultaneously. While the term of the Sikkim Assembly ends on May 27, 2019, the terms of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Arunachal Pradesh Assemblies end on June 18, 11 and 1, respectively. “When arrangements are in place for the Lok Sabha poll and the terms of the Assemblies are ending during the same period, it is but natural that all polls are held together,” the functionary said.

## EMPLOYMENT

HINDU, DEC 4, 2018

**‘70 lakh jobs were created in 2017-18’**



*Niti's Rajiv Kumar defends NDA govt.*

Terming the criticism of jobless growth during the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government as “spurious”, Niti Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar has said that 70 lakh jobs were created in the financial year 2017-18 alone.

Mr. Kumar further said that growth in sales of transport vehicles, huge disbursement of Mudra loans and Employees' Provident Fund

Organisation (EPFO) data show that enough opportunities for employment and self-employment were created over the past four years of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government.

Recently, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had said the Bharatiya Janata Party-led (BJP) government's promise to generate two crore jobs annually had turned out to be a "gimmick".

"With all due respect, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh does not put forward the data [on employment generation]. I think this is a spurious charge and I think the debate should be much more on further improving the quality of the jobs," Mr. Kumar said. Noting that the production of trucks, three-wheelers and auto rickshaws is rising significantly, Mr. Kumar said: "According to EPFO data, 70 lakhs jobs were created in 2017-18."

He further said if unemployment was rising in the country, then real wages in both rural and urban regions should decline, but that was not happening. "So, what is the basis for this [criticism of jobless growth during the NDA regime]? I think, the purpose is negative discourse for political aims and does not reflect economic reality," he said.

Replying to a question on protests by farmers in some parts of the country, he said: "We have increased minimum support price (MSP) for farmers by huge amounts. The rural economy is in good shape, farmers' income is rising."

## **ENERGY RESOURCES**

HINDU, DEC 2, 2018

### **Panel to look at selling OIL, ONGC fields**

The government has constituted a six-member committee to look at selling as many as 149 small and marginal oil and gas fields of state-owned ONGC and Oil India to private and foreign companies to boost domestic output, sources said.

The panel is headed by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar and includes Cabinet Secretary P. K. Sinha and Oil Secretary M. M. Kuttu.

Sources said the committee is a follow-up of the October 12 meeting called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to review domestic production profile of oil and gas and the roadmap for cutting import dependence by 10% by 2022.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION**

INDIAN EXPRESS, DEC 6, 2018

### **UGC asks varsities to observe December 7 as Armed Forces Flag Day**

In a letter sent to the heads of such institutions, the commission asked them to acknowledge the 'supreme sacrifices' made by our valiant Armed Forces personnel

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has directed all the universities across the country to observe December 7 as the Armed Forces Flag Day to commemorate the “supreme sacrifices” made by the country’s soldiers during conflicts.

In a letter sent to the heads of such institutions, the commission has asked them to acknowledge the sacrifices made by our valiant armed forces personnel for protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of “our country and securing our lives against the threats of insurgency and terrorism” and against natural calamities.

The commission also directed the varsities to organise functions or hold talks in the colleges or institutes to generate awareness on the issue among the students.

Since 1949, the Indian Armed Forces Flag Day is observed every year on December 7 to honour the soldiers, airmen and sailors of the

country. It is an important occasion to remind the nation of its obligation to look after veterans, disabled soldiers, war widows and dependents of those who have sacrificed their lives for the safety, honour and Integrity of the motherland.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

HINDU, DEC 4, 2018

### **India remains the cornerstone of our foreign policy: Bhutan Foreign Minister**



Bhutan's new Foreign Minister Tandi Dorji reiterates the country's policy of not having full relations with any permanent member of the UN Security Council, including China

Bhutan's Prime Minister Lotay Tshering is expected to visit Delhi in late December, in the first high-level exchange between the Modi government and the newly elected government of the Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT) party that won a surprise victory last month. Ahead of the visit, Bhutan's new Foreign Minister, Tandi Dorji, speaking over the

telephone, said the change in government would not alter the Himalayan country's foreign policy focus.

In the run-up to the election, the manifesto of your party, the DNT, had not focussed much on foreign policy issues. Many are hence curious about what your government's foreign policy agenda is?

The foreign policy of all parties in Bhutan follow the policies already established [by the monarchy], and I think whoever would have come to power would have the same policy in place. We will continue to build on that policy, with India as the cornerstone of our foreign policy. PM Dr. Lotay Tshering has said he would like to take India-Bhutan friendship to greater heights. His visit to India towards the end of the month will be his first call abroad, and we will hope to finalise India's assistance for the 12th Five-Year Plan. The government hopes to establish its ties with the Government of India and would like to invite Prime Minister [Narendra] Modi for his long-awaited visit to Bhutan.

There have been some divergences from the past policies however. In the campaign, for example, one party (DPT) made "Bhutan's sovereignty" its plank. Another concern was reducing Bhutan's indebtedness to India. Will you discuss these issues with New Delhi?

We are always grateful to India for its assistance, and it is only natural that as a land-locked country, we will continue to harness our needs from India. Yes, we are concerned about the issue of debt, but most of those debts are incurred from hydropower projects, which we believe will be paid back in time, once the projects are completed.

On non-hydropower projects, we are doing some rethinking. Bhutan will graduate from an LDC (least developed country) to a middle-income country by 2023. So we will have to look for ways for our domestic revenues to meet our current budget at least.

Those are serious issues for us, and we are very happy that India continues to assist us through this process.

But there have been serious differences over the rate of hydropower that India pays. How important will resolving this be?

I don't think this is a difficult issue. [Foreign Secretary] Mr. [Vijay] Gokhale had assured us that India will look at our requests very favourably. Eventually, what is good for Bhutan will also be good for India to a large extent, and we hope to discuss these issues during the PM's visit.

We are definitely looking at it, and we will reconsider the BBIN agreement.

The arrangement has advantages and disadvantages, but we know that some of the outcomes will benefit Bhutan, and we will reconsider the agreement.

The former Prime Minister, who had to deal with the Doklam crisis, spoke of Bhutan being one of the smallest countries sandwiched between two Asian giants. How does your government hope to navigate ties with China?

We have a very cordial relationship with China, but we do not have diplomatic relations with them.

This is not because we don't want them, but because it has always been our foreign policy not to build full relations with any of the permanent member of the UN Security Council, like China, U.S., etc. I don't think that will change. We have people-to-people interactions and we cannot wish away China as our neighbour to our north.

How do you hope to strengthen people-to-people ties with India? In the past few years, we have seen more Bhutanese students making the shift to colleges in countries such as Thailand, Australia and Singapore, instead of India...

There has always been a great interest from our students in India. I myself am a product of an Indian education: I went to St. Joseph's school at North Point, Darjeeling, when I was four years old and then later studied at the Armed Forces Medical College in Pune.

We would like to explore how more Indian universities can come to Bhutan and attract more students, because 70% of Bhutanese students would still prefer to study in India as it is more affordable and gives better value for them.

The rest may be wealthier and able to send children abroad to study, but we hope to step up India-Bhutan exchanges for all.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, DEC 2, 2018

## **India to host G20 summit in 2022**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday announced that India will host the G-20 summit in 2022. The G-20 is a grouping of the world's 20 major economies.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday announced that India will host the G-20 summit in 2022, the year the country would celebrate the 75th anniversary of its Independence. The G-20 is a grouping of the world's 20 major economies.

Modi made the announcement at the closing ceremony of the two-day summit held here in Argentina's capital. Italy was to host the international forum in 2022. Thanking Italy for allowing India to play the host, Modi invited G-20 leaders to India in 2022, which also marks the 75th anniversary of India's Independence.

“In 2022 India completes 75 years since Independence. In that special year, India looks forward to welcoming the world to the G-20 Summit! Come to India, the world’s fastest growing large economy! Know India’s rich history and diversity, and experience the warm Indian hospitality,” the prime minister tweeted after making the announcement.

G-20 members comprise Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the UK and the US. Collectively, the G-20 economies account for nearly 90 per cent of the gross world product, 80 per cent of world trade, two-thirds of the world population, and approximately half of the world land area. Spain is a permanent guest invitee.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, DEC 1, 2018

### **South Africa President Cyril Ramaphosa accepts PM Modi’s invite, to be 2019 Republic Day chief guest**

South Africa President, Cyril Ramaphosa, accepted Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s invitation to be the chief guest for India’s Republic Day celebrations in 2019, reported news agency ANI.

Earlier, US President Donald Trump had been invited to attend the Republic Day parade by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. However, Trump declined the invitation because of “scheduling constraints”, the White House had said, but stressed the “strong personal rapport” shared by them.

The White House did not elaborate on the constraints but the Republic Day parade on January 26 is around the time when US presidents present their annual report to Congress, the State of the Union address, which is a statement of achievements of the last year and plans for the next.

“President Trump was honored by Prime Minister Modi’s invitation for him to be Chief Guest of India’s Republic Day on January 26, 2019, but is unable to participate due to scheduling constraints,” a White House spokesperson had earlier said in a statement.

Barack Obama, who became the first American president to attend the Republic Day parade in 2015, had moved up his address to January 20 from the usual end-of-month slot he had favoured thus far. But it was not clear if Trump’s “scheduling constraints” included the address.



# LAW

HINDU, DEC 5, 2018

## India gets first witness protection scheme

*Court asks the States to implement it till Parliament comes out with legislation.*



The Supreme Court on Wednesday brought in place a witness protection regime in the country noting that one of the main reasons for witnesses turning hostile is that they are not given security by the State.

A Bench of Justices A.K. Sikri and S. Abdul Nazeer said Witness Protection Scheme, 2018 will come into effect immediately across all States.

Under it, witness protection may be as simple as providing a police escort to the witness up to the courtroom or, in more complex cases involving an organised criminal group, taking extraordinary measures such as offering temporary residence in a safe house, giving a new identity, and relocation at an undisclosed place.

The top court said the scheme, which aimed to enable a witness to depose fearlessly and truthfully, would be the law of the land till Parliament enacted suitable legislation.

## Asaram Bapu case

The issue came up when the Supreme Court was hearing a public interest litigation plea seeking protection for witnesses in rape cases involving self-styled preacher Asaram Bapu.

The Bench said witnesses feared serious consequences if they deposed against Asaram. “It is alleged that as many as 10 witnesses have already been attacked and three witnesses have been killed,” it noted.

# PARLIAMENT

HINDU, DEC 4, 2018

## **Criminal cases against MPs, MLAs: SC asks for special courts in Bihar, Kerala**



*The apex court directed the high courts to send back cases from special courts, which were already constituted, to jurisdictional district courts*

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the constitution of special courts in each district of Bihar and Kerala for the trial of pending criminal cases against present and former MPs and MLAs.

A bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices SK Kaul and KM Joseph passed the directions for setting up special courts in every district of the two States and also sought compliance reports from the Patna and Kerala high courts by December 14.

The apex court directed the high courts to send back cases from special courts, which were already constituted, to jurisdictional district courts. The Supreme Court has given the liberty of constituting as many courts as required in the districts of these two States for trial of cases against the legislators.

The apex court also said the special courts would take up life term cases on a priority while hearing pending matters against MPs and MLAs.

The court was hearing a PIL filed by lawyer and BJP leader Ashwini Upadhyay seeking a life time ban on politicians convicted in criminal cases besides the setting up of special courts to expeditiously try cases involving elected representatives.

# RAILWAYS

INDIAN EXPRESS, DEC 6, 2018

## **Train 18 breaches 180 kmph mark, set to become India's fastest train once operational**

With 16 coaches, the train will have the same passenger carrying capacity as that of the Shatabdi Express. The high-tech, energy-efficient, self-propelled (engine-less) train was flagged off by Railway Board Chairman Ashwani Lohani on October 29.

Train 18, India's first engine less-train, crossed the 180 kilometers per hour (kmph) mark during a trial run to outspeed Gatimaan Express which holds the record of being the fastest train in the country. The train once operational on Indian tracks will become the fastest train in India. Gatimaan Express operates at a top speed of 160 kmph.

### Advertising

“Train 18 breached the 180 kmph speed limit in the Kota-Sawai Madhopur section. The major trials are now over, with just some more remaining. Based on the reports, fine tuning would be done if needed. As of now, no major technical problem has cropped up,” S Mani, General Manager of Integral Coach Factory (ICF) that has manufactured the train was quoted as saying by PTI.

Officials in the Indian Railways maintained that the train holds the capability of reaching the top speed of 200 kmph if the tracks, signal

system work in tandem. “We expect Train 18 to commence its commercial run from January 2019. Normally, the trials take three months, but now it is happening faster than expected,” Mani added.

The fully air-conditioned semi-high speed train, which will cut travel time by 15 per cent as compared to the Shatabdi, has been manufactured under ‘Make in India’ initiative by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai at the cost of Rs 100 crore and completed in a record 18 months as opposed to around three years that private industry players generally take to build a product like this from scratch.

While Railways has been using driver-less Electrical Multiple Units running on similar basis for ages in suburban networks, what makes Train 18 special is that it is meant for long-distance travels to replace existing premium offerings like the Shatabdi. According to ICF designers, it is a marriage between the stability and sturdiness of LHB coach with the distributed traction power technology of train sets used globally.

## ROADS

HINDU, DEC 6, 2018

### **SC expresses concern over large number of deaths due to potholes in last 5 years**



The bench sought a response from the Centre on the report filed by the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety.

The **Supreme Court** on Thursday, December 6, 2018, expressed concern over 14,926 people being killed in accidents due to potholes on roads across the country in the last five years.

A bench headed by Justice Madan B. Lokur said the large number of deaths caused due to potholes was “unacceptable” and was “probably more than those killed on the border or by terrorists.”

The bench, also comprising Justices Deepak Gupta and Hemant Gupta, said the number of deaths from 2013 to 2017 in accidents due to potholes indicated that the authorities concerned were not maintaining the roads.

The bench sought a response from the Centre on the report filed by the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety, headed by former apex court judge Justice K.S. Radhakrishnan.

The bench has posted the matter for further hearing in January.

## **SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

BUSINESS STANDARD, DEC 3, 2018

### **Odisha, ADB sign agreement for skill development**

The Odisha government on Monday signed a loan agreement of \$85 million with Asian Development Bank (ADB) to train 1.5 lakh youths in the state, officials said.

With this assistance, youths in the age group of 15-34 years will be given skill development training to make them competent to get better work and higher paying jobs, a government statement said.

The total cost of the project is \$193 million with the Odisha government contributing \$108 million, it added.

In addition, the Japanese government will provide technical aid for capacity building through the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction.

The ADB would also provide \$2 million as technical assistance for capacity building component of the project.

In the project, the Odisha Skill Development Authority and ITE Education Services, Singapore will cooperate in the establishment and operation of World Skills Centre (WSC) in Bhubaneswar.

Training programmes at WSC have been designed to cater to the requirement of the industry through experiential learning.

The WSC would also act as a hub for all the Spoke ITIs to train the youths, advising on the curriculum development and developing the infrastructure of the ITIs.

The project aims to significantly reduce unemployment and under-employment rates in Odisha by 2025, it said.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

HINDUSTAN TIMES, DEC 7, 2018

### **IT ministry meets WhatsApp over tracing of fake news: Report**

WhatsApp has been working to curb the circulation of what technology minister Ravi Shankar Prasad termed “sinister” content in India, the firm’s biggest market where it boasts over 220 million users.



The ministry of electronics and information technology officials met with senior WhatsApp executives this week to ask the Facebook Inc unit to start tracing the origins of misinformation spread through its messaging platform, a senior government official said on Friday.

WhatsApp has been working to curb the circulation of what technology minister Ravi Shankar Prasad termed “sinister” content in India, the firm’s biggest market where it boasts over 220 million users.

Such misinformation has led to the lynching of over 30 people since January last year, according to data portal IndiaSpend, prompting Prasad to call on WhatsApp to trace its origins.

WhatsApp has previously declined to trace the origin of messages, citing security issues.

“We have been asking them for traceability,” said the official at the ministry of electronics and information technology, declining to be identified as the meeting was private. “They (WhatsApp) are non-committal on it but we are forcing this issue.”

WhatsApp was represented by director and associate general counsel Brian Hennessy and one other executive, and said it was working on measures to prevent the spread of misinformation, according to the official.

“WhatsApp regularly engages with the Government of India to discuss our commitment to maintaining a private and safe platform for people to communicate with one another,” the firm said in a statement. “We look forward to continued discussions on how we can work together towards these common goals.”

WhatsApp maintains that building traceability into its messaging service would undermine its private nature and end-to-end encryption, creating

the potential for misuse. It has also said it will not weaken the privacy protection it provides.

The firm has since launched print, radio and television advertising campaigns to educate users on the dangers of misinformation. It is also conducted roadshows in partnership with mobile phone network provider Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd.

WhatsApp has held digital literacy training for community leaders and law enforcement as well as introduced features on its app such as limits on message forwarding and labels for forwarded messages.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, DEC 7, 2018

## **Ahead of 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Facebook tightens norms for posting political ads**

*Early 2019, Facebook would also start to show a disclaimer on all political ads that provides more information about who's placing the ad, and an online searchable Ad Library for anyone to access.*

Facing intense scrutiny over the misuse of its platform globally during elections, Facebook has announced fresh steps to increase ad transparency and defend against foreign interference ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls in India.

Now anyone who wants to run an ad in India related to politics will need to first confirm their identity and location, and give more details about who placed the ad, the social networking giant said in a statement late Thursday.

“We’re making big changes to the way we manage these ads on Facebook and Instagram. We’ve rolled out these changes in the US, Brazil and the UK, and next, we’re taking our first steps towards bringing transparency to ads related to politics in India,” said Sarah Clark Schiff, Product Manager at Facebook.

“This is key as we work hard to prevent abuse on Facebook ahead of India’s general elections next year.”

Facebook said the advertisers in India will have to comply to new rules starting from Friday.

“The identity and location confirmation will take a few weeks so advertisers can start that process by using their mobile phones or computer to submit proof of identity and location. This will help avoid delays when they run political ads next year,” informed Schiff.

Advertisers in India can download the latest Facebook app and visit Settings to get started.

Early 2019, Facebook would also start to show a disclaimer on all political ads that provides more information about who’s placing the ad, and an online searchable Ad Library for anyone to access.

“This is a library of all ads related to politics from a particular advertiser as well as information like the budget associated with an individual ad, a

range of impressions, as well as the demographics of who saw the ad,” said Facebook.

At that time, the company would also begin to enforce the policy that requires all ads related to politics be run by an advertiser who’s completed the authorisations process and be labelled with the disclaimer.

“We will not require eligible news publishers to get authorised, and we won’t include their ads in the Ad Library,” Facebook added.

## TRANSPORT

HINDUSTAN TIMES, DEC 7, 2018

### **All cars sold from April 2019 to have fuel stickers, high-security registration plates**

*As part of guidelines, the transport ministry said stickers on car windscreens — “in the form of the third registration plate” — will be light blue colour for petrol and CNG vehicles and orange for diesel.*

All cars sold from April, 2019 will need to carry colour-coded stickers on their windscreens to indicate the type of fuel they operate on, according to a government notification issued on Thursday that also makes it mandatory for manufacturers to fix high-security registration plates (HSRP) at point of sale.

The order also says that buyers won't have to pay extra – the cost of the plates will be included in the vehicle's price – and that manufacturers will need to replace them free of cost in case they wither within 5 years of sale.

Hindustan Times reported on Thursday that the government has made it mandatory for vehicle manufacturers to provide HSRP from April, 2019. It was formalised by the HSRP Order, 2018 that laid down the guidelines for the number-plate rule.

As part of guidelines, the transport ministry said stickers on windscreens — “in the form of the third registration plate” — will be light blue colour for petrol and CNG vehicles and orange for diesel.

This differentiation stems from a plan to fight air pollution, particularly in the national capital region, during which vehicles may be banned or allowed based on their fuel type.

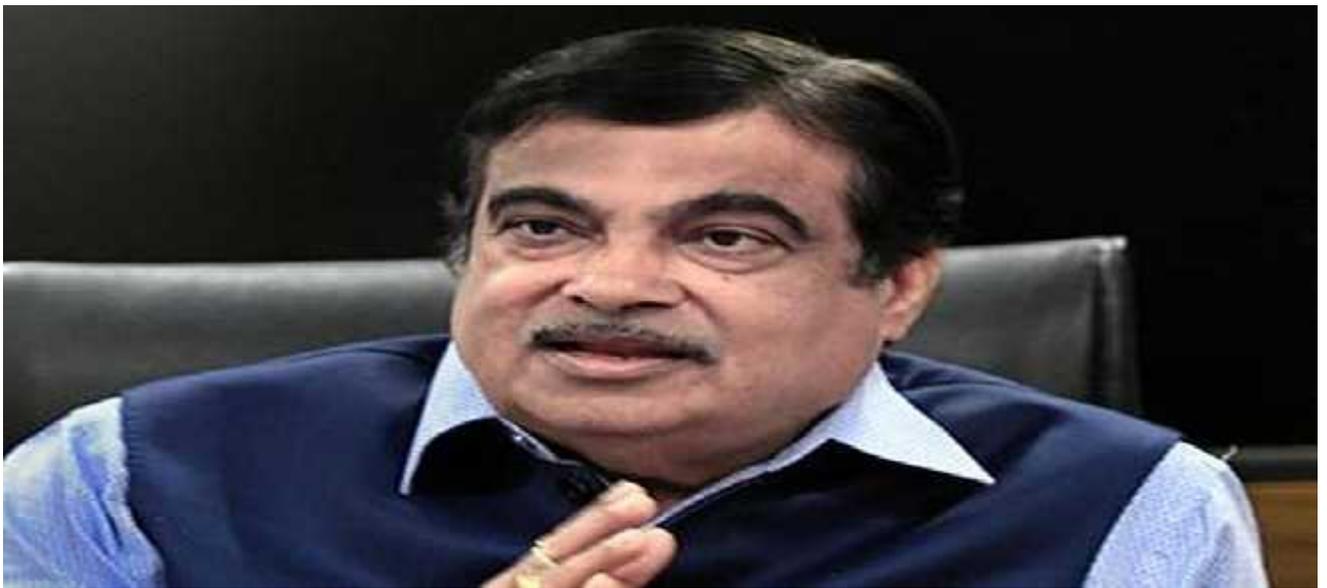
Diesel vehicles are regarded to have higher particulate matter emissions, while CNG cars are considered the least polluting among the three.

“... We were not expecting the HSRP order to come so quickly but pressure from stakeholders and court added to it. A lot of people were having problems with getting these plates and the industry has agreed to support it,” said Vishnu Mathur, director general of Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers .

## WATER RESOURCES

HINDU, DEC 5, 2018

### **Modi's priority is clean Ganga: Gadkari**



*“The issue of uninterrupted flow of the river can be addressed later”*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had suggested that efforts must first be made to clean the Ganga and then we could address the question of ensuring environmental flows, Nitin Gadkari, Union Water Resources Minister, said at the India Water Impact Summit here on Wednesday. This is a significant statement, as prioritising environmental flows — and not mere cleaning — was a key demand of the late environmentalist-and-seer G.D. Agrawal, who went on a fast in June

demanding that the government act on its promise to clean and save the Ganga and died on October 11.

## Hydropower projects

He had, in a letter to Mr. Modi on June 22, demanded that all under-construction and proposed hydropower projects on the Ganga and rivers that fed it be cancelled.

This was critical to ensuring that the river remained ‘aviral,’ its flow uninterrupted.

The tension between ‘aviral’ and ‘swachh’ (clean) has, for long, plagued the mission to clean the Ganga.

“The Prime Minister gave us a suggestion, that first you work for a ‘clean Ganga’ and then talk about ‘aviral Ganga.’ We constituted several committees of IITians and experts and concluded that ‘aviralta’ is a matter of great importance for us,” said Mr. Gadkari.

Former Union Water Resources Secretary, Shashi Shekhar, who led the Ministry between June 2015 and December 2016, told *The Hindu* that treating sewage and cleaning was always the priority.

“The Prime Minister had said that priority-1 was cleaning the river and priority 2 was ecology. We are still far from cleaning the river and the ecological flows notification (of October) is quite inadequate,” he said.

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