

# **NEWS ALERT**

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**HINDU**

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## **AGRICULTURE**

PIONEER, NOV 10, 2018

### **Govt data shows wheat sowing up but pulses sowing lagging behind**

The Ministry of Agriculture's latest data shows that wheat sowing has started picking up as the acreage under the crop rose by 20 per cent to 15.19 lakh hectares so far in the ongoing rabi (winter) season, but pulses and oilseeds area was lagging behind the corresponding year-ago period. Sowing of rabi crops begins from October and harvesting from March. Wheat is the main rabi crop. Wheat was sown in 12.65 lakh hectares in the year-ago.

As per data, maximum increase in wheat sowing was reported from Madhya Pradesh, where farmers have planted the crop in 6 lakh hectares so far this season, much higher than 2.17 lakh hectares in the year-ago period. Wheat acreage in Punjab remained at 4.68 lakh hectares and Uttar Pradesh at 1.73 lakh hectares so far this season.

However, pulses sowing has not picked up as the area under the crop remained lower at 28.22 per cent at 39.05 lakh hectares so far this season as against 54.34 lakh hectares in the same period last season.

“Planting of major Rabi crops such as wheat, coarse grains (maize), oilseeds (rapeseed-mustard) and pulses (chickpea) will accelerate in the next few weeks. The subsoil moisture conditions in many regions are

less than satisfactory. In the event El Nino becomes a reality, crop prospects could be hurt,” said officials of Agriculture Ministry.

Pulses acreage remained lower in all major producing States. In Karnataka, the acreage under pulses remained lower sharply at 5.52 lakh hectares as against 11.28 lakh hectares, while that of in Madhya Pradesh at 12.26 lakh hectares as against 17.62 lakh hectares in the said period.

Pulses area remained lower even in Uttar Pradesh at 5.31 lakh hectares so far this season as against 7.47 lakh hectares in the year-ago period, while that of in Rajasthan stood at 5.29 lakh hectares compared to 6.65 lakh hectares in the said period, the data showed.

Similarly, the area under oilseeds remained lower at 37.09 lakh hectares as against 40.86 lakh hectares, while that of coarse cereals at 14.14 lakh hectares as against 22.65 lakh hectares in the said period. Rice area too was lower at 5.24 lakh hectares so far this season as against 7.66 lakh hectare in the year-ago period.

In total, area covered under all rabi crops remained lower at 110.71 lakh hectares so far this rabi season when compared with 138.16 lakh hectares in the same period last season.

**HINDUSTAN TIMES, NOV 13, 2018**

**President Ram Nath Kovind calls for farm modernisation at 1st convocation of Pusa Agriculture University**

President Ram Nath Kovind on Friday underlined the need to growing modernize agriculture to face the emerging challenges both on the climate and productivity fronts.

He was delivering the convocation address at the first convocation of Dr Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University at Pusa (Samastipur), which was created in 2016 by converting the erstwhile Rajendra Agricultural University into a central university.

On the occasion, the President presented gold medals to 33 students. Altogether, 478 students of Ph.D, M.Sc and under-graduate courses were awarded degrees at the convocation

“The university has made significant contribution in boosting crop production in Bihar, which is contributing to better condition of farmers. It is all because of the work you all have done. Maize production in Bihar has increased due to a new breed developed here,” he added.

Kovind said that as land was limited, the country today required such crops that could give yield using less water and space. “The demand of today is to make agriculture modern. A number of schemes are running at the centre and state level with this objective in mind. There are sincere efforts being made through digitalization to ensure that the farmers got the right price for their produce. Neem-coated urea has helped farmers,” he added.

Kovind also exhorted the university administration to take the students to the birthplace of India’s first President Dr Rajendra Prasad to draw inspiration from his personality. Dr Rajendra Prasad’s birthplace is in Siwan district.

“With students from 20 states passing out from here and the institution named after the first President, people will ask them wherever they go if they ever saw his birth place,” he said, exhorting the passing out students to be creators of jobs and take advantage of government’s Mudra scheme.

Kovind also dwelt on his days in Bihar as the governor and recalled the beauty of Chhath festival. “The convocation is taking place just a day after Chhath concluded. “One state that deserves credit for making Chhath festival dedicated to worship of Sun God truly global, it is Bihar,” he added.

The President said that he had been witness to the devotion and passion for cleanliness during Chhath. “If the same passion of Biharis for cleanliness, as witnessed during the Chhath festivities, could sustain for all 365 days, Bihar could be a leader in the Swachch Bharat campaign,” he added.

Earlier, Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar highlighted the rapid strides Bihar has made in the field of agriculture in the last decade. “Bihar was considered a laggard state, but now we have been winning agriculture awards for highest productivity. Per hectare productivity of paddy, wheat, maize and other crops has doubled,” he added.

# CIVIL AVIATION

HINDU, NOV 8, 2018

## Six airports to be developed



‘In principle’ nod by Cabinet to PPP projects for ‘world-class’ non-metro airports

The Union Cabinet on Thursday gave an “in principle” approval for operating, managing and developing six non-metro airports — Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Guwahati, Thiruvananthapuram and Mangaluru — under a Public Private Partnership (PPP).

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given “...in-principle approval for leasing out six airports of Airport Authority of India (AAI)...for operation, management and development under PPP,” the government said in a statement.

## ‘Increase revenues’

Presently, airports at Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Cochin are managed under the PPP model. The PPP mode has helped create world-class airports, while also helping the AAI increase its revenues, IT and Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told reporters.

This will be done through the Public Private Partnership Appraisal Committee (PPPAC). Additionally, a committee headed by NITI Aayog CEO with the Aviation Secretary, Economic Affairs Secretary and Expenditure Secretary as its members, has been set up to decide on any issue falling beyond the scope of the PPPAC.

“PPP in infrastructure projects brings efficiency in service delivery, expertise, enterprise and professionalism, apart from harnessing the needed investments in the public sector,” the official statement said.

The airport sector is a top contender among infrastructure sectors in terms of international interest. “International operators and investors prefer Brownfield airport expansion opportunities with having more than 3-4 million passenger capacity,” the statement said.

# CLIMATE CHANGE

TRIBUNE, NOV 13, 2018

## India's transition to low carbon economy still short: Report



India's sectoral policies were still falling short of being consistent with the 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement, but the country's ambitious policy on renewable electricity was a promising sign, a report said.

Based on implemented policies, India's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions were expected to increase to a level of 4,469 to 4,570 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2030, excluding forestry, the Climate Transparency that partners with TERI in India, said in the report "2018 Brown to Green" released on Wednesday.

This emission pathway was not compatible with a 2 degrees Celsius scenario.

However, India's nationally determined contribution is already compatible with a global scenario to limit warming to below 2 degrees, but not to the 1.5 degrees Paris Agreement limit, it warned.

The report provides the most comprehensive overview of the climate actions undertaken in G20 countries.

Through key indicators, and in a concise way, it indicates how well India has advanced in emissions, policy performance, finance and decarbonization compared to its peers.

The report has been developed by a group of experts from Australia, Argentina, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa and Britain.

It's the most relevant analysis of the efforts being done in G20 countries to decarbonize their economies and push forward a climate agenda through a comparison of each country's performance indicators.

The report said 82 per cent of the G20's energy supply still comes from fossil fuels.

In Saudi Arabia, Australia and Japan fossil fuels make up even more than 90 per cent of the energy supply, with little or no change in recent years.

The 20 major economies play a key role for achieving the Paris targets because they alone account for 80 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

“The recent IPCC 1.5 degrees Celsius report showed us the world needs to ramp up action on climate change. Power generation from coal, oil and gas, and transport produce the biggest chunk of emissions in the vast majority of G20 countries,” said one of the report’s co-authors Jiang Kejun of the Energy Research Institute in China.

“No G20 government is really getting a grip on these sectors, especially Australia, the United States, Russia and Indonesia, who are all lagging behind. But some countries are already moving ahead, like the UK or France with their decision to quickly phase out coal and fossil fuel-based cars.”

The recent developments by India in the context of renewables, the report said: “India has rowed back from commitments to sell 100 per cent electronic vehicles (EVs) by 2030, and now targets a more moderate pace of development. Nonetheless, new EV support policies are being considered.”

India’s National Electricity Plan envisages reaching 47 per cent capacity from non-fossil sources by 2027, reaching the nationally determined contribution target ahead of schedule.

According to India Cooling Action Plan draft, there is plan to cut cooling demand by 20 to 25 per cent by 2037, thus curbing a source of huge growth in electricity demand. — IANS

## **DEFENCE**

PIONEER, NOV 10, 2018

### **To boost Army firepower, 3 artillery gun systems inducted**

In a major capacity-building and enhancement push that came nearly three decades after the induction of Bofors, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday inducted three major artillery gun systems, including the globally combat-proven US M 777 A2 Ultra Light Howitzers, into the Army.

The other artillery gun systems inducted into the Army at a dedication ceremony held at Deolali Field Firing Ranges near Nashik in north Maharashtra were: South Korea-made K-9 Vajra-Tracked Self-Propelled Guns and 6 x 6 Field Artillery Tractors into the Army.

Minister of State for Defence Subhash Bhamre, Chief of Army Staff General Bipin Rawat and dignitaries from the Government of USA and South Korea, senior serving officers of the Indian Army and Ministry of Defence, representatives of Manufacturing Industries were present at the induction ceremony.

The equipment induction ceremony comes in the run-up to the establishment the first regiment- comprising of about 18 guns- each of the M777s and the Vajra which is expected to take place in mid next year.

The 155mm, 39 Calibre Ultra light Howitzers have been procured from USA under Government to Government Foreign Military Sales and will be assembled in India by BAE Systems in partnership with Mahindra Defence.

“The 155 mm M777 Ultra Light Howitzers are procured from the Govt of USA. 25 guns are coming in while 120 being assembled & integrated in India. Can be air-lifted to areas devoid of roads & tracks. Negotiations started in 2006, gathered steam in the last 3 years,” Sitharaman tweeted.

According to a defence spokesperson, this gun System is versatile, light weight and can be heli-lifted, thereby providing the much needed flexibility in deployment in various terrains. The Howitzer is in service in the US, Canadian, Australian and Some other armies of the world. It has proven its mettle in difficult areas of Afghanistan and Iraq.

The first ten K-9 Vajra 155mm/52 calibre guns have been imported from Hanwha Techwin of South Korea in Semi Knocked Down state and have been assembled by L&T in India.

The remaining ninety Guns will be largely manufactured in India with some major assemblies coming from South Korea. Its induction will give a huge fillip to the firepower capability of Indian Army on our western borders.

“The K9 Vajra, 155mm 52 Calibre Tracked Gun is procured from S. Korea. Not a hybrid between a tank & a gun barrel but designed as a Self Propelled Gun. Ten guns assembled in India and ninety will be manufactured here,” Sitharaman tweeted.

The 6x6 Field Artillery Tractor has been indigenously developed by Ashok Leyland and will provide the much awaited replacement for the ageing fleet of artillery gun towing vehicles.

Speaking on the occasion, Sitharaman said: “Dedication of these equipment to the nation also give a major impetus to ‘Make In India’ initiative of the government”.

Sitharaman said that the procurement process for the equipment was initiated in 2006 during the Congress regime but didn't advance further. However, the BJP-led NDA government expedited the process after it assumed office in 2014.

"It is after 30 years that we are procuring such guns. Under the new government since 2014, procurement of Army equipment has been expedited. Under the PM's guidance, negotiations were started and within four years we inducted these guns and many more will be inducted in the future,” the minister said.

An impressive display of equipment and a firepower demonstration by the guns of the Indian Army was held as part of the equipment dedication ceremony. Also on display were indigenous Gun Systems/Surveillance & Target Acquisition Systems that have been recently introduced in service.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, NOV 13, 2018

## **‘I don’t lie... We chose Ambani,’ Dassault chief Eric Trappier on Rahul Gandhi’s allegations**

Dassault Aviation Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Eric Trappier rubbished allegations made by Congress Party president Rahul Gandhi that he lied about details of the Dassault- Reliance Joint Venture (JV) for offset contracts in the Rafale Jet deal.

“I don’t lie. The truth I declared before and the statements I made are true. I don’t have a reputation of lying. In my position as CEO, you don’t lie,” said Trappier when asked to respond to Rahul Gandhi’s charge that Dassault was covering up for possible cronyism in awarding the offset deal to Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group.

Rahul Gandhi, in a press conference on November 2, alleged that Dassault invested Rs 284 crore in a loss-making company promoted by Anil Ambani which was used to procure land in Nagpur. “It is clear the Dassault CEO is lying.If an inquiry starts on this Modi is not going to survive it. Guaranteed,” added Gandhi.

Speaking to ANI in the Dassault hangar housed in Istres-Le Tube Air base located North of the French city of Marseille, Dassault’s CEO Eric Trappier said that they had prior experience dealing with the Congress party and the comments made by the Congress president made him sad.

“We have a long experience with the Congress party. Our first deal was with India in 1953 with Nehru and other Prime Ministers. We have been

working with India. We are not working for any party. We are supplying strategic products like fighters to the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Indian Government. That is what is most important,” said Trappier.

When pressed further for the reason behind Dassault’s choice of Reliance as an offset partner which had no experience in manufacturing fighter jets, Trappier clarified that the money being invested was not going to Reliance directly but in a Joint Venture (JV) that included Dassault.

“We are not putting the money in Reliance. The money is going into the JV. I put my know-how free of charge on how to produce people. I have engineers and workers from Dassault who are taking the lead as far as the industrial part of this deal is concerned. At the same time, I have an Indian company like Reliance who is putting money into this JV as they want to develop their country. So the company is going to know how to produce aircraft,” added Trappier.

Trappier clarified further about the investments being made by Dassault, adding that Reliance would match the amount since the shareholding pattern is 49% Dassault and 51% Reliance as per prescribed Government norms.

“We are supposed to put in this company together about Rs 800 crore as 50:50. For the time being, to start work in the hangar and to pay workers and employees, we have already put Rs 40 crore. But it will be increased to Rs 800 crore, which implies Rs 400 crore by Dassault in the coming five years,” said Trappier.

He added Dassault has seven years to perform offset. “During first three years, we are not obliged to say with who we are working. We have already settled work and agreement with 30 companies, which represents 40% of total offset obligation as per contract. Reliance is 10% out of the 40, while rest 30% is a direct agreement between these companies and Dassault,” Trappier said.

On the pricing issue, the CEO said that the present aircrafts are cheaper by 9 %. “Price of 36 was exactly the same when you compare with 18 flyaway. 36 is the double of 18, so as far as I was concerned, it should have been double the price. But because it was government to government, there was some negotiation, I had to decrease price by 9%. The price of Rafale in flyaway condition is less expensive in the 36 contract than the 126 contract,” he said.

When asked about the initial agreement with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and the subsequent breakdown of talks with the Indian PSU for production of Rafale jets, the Dassault CEO said that if the initial deal of 126 jets went through they would not have hesitated to work with HAL and Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance.

“It’s because the 126 didn’t go smooth that the Government of India had to reconfigure to urgently acquire 36 from France. And then I took the decision to continue with Reliance, and HAL even said in the last few days that they were not interested to be part of the offset. So, it has been done by my decision and the decision of Reliance to invest in a new private company,” added Trappier.

He added that Dassault was earlier in discussions with several other companies for offset tie-ups. “Obviously, we could have gone to Tata or other family groups. At that time, the decision to go ahead was not given to Dassault. We were in 2011, Tata was also discussing with other flying companies. We finally decided to go ahead with Reliance as they have experience in big engineering facilities,” Trappier said.

Talking about the aircraft, the Dassault CEO explained that the present planes will have all necessary equipments but not weapons and missiles. “The weapons will be sent in different contract. But the aircraft with everything other than weapons will be dispatched by Dassault,” he said.

*(This story has been published from a wire agency feed without modifications to the text. Only the headline has been changed.)*

## ELECTION

HINDU, NOV 11, 2018

### **Election Commission warns parties on criminal cases** *Disclose antecedents of candidates or face action, says poll panel.*

Candidates with criminal antecedents and their political parties can be charged with contempt of the Supreme Court if they fail to widely publicise the cases against them as prescribed. They may also be penalised for false statements, the [Election](#) Commission has said.

Separate formats have been specified for the candidates and the parties to submit reports about publication of the declaration. The failure of the candidates and the parties to publicise the details in the manner prescribed may be a ground for post-election action like election petition or contempt of court.

The court has made it mandatory for the candidates and their parties to publish or broadcast details of the cases against them at least three times ahead of elections. The ruling applies to all candidates in the Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Telangana Assembly elections. The parties are also required to upload the details on their websites.

If anyone furnishes a false statement, the Election Commission can act under various provisions, including Section 171 (G) of the Indian Penal Code that prescribes a fine.

The Election Commission has received a representation about expenses on television and newspaper advertisements of criminal antecedents, and it may take a decision on Monday. “It is up to them to get advertisements published in television channels and newspapers with wider circulation in the constituencies or districts concerned, or publicise information about the cases through the media,” said a senior official of the Election Commission.

“Expenditure on advertisements has to be borne by the candidate and the political party concerned. Currently, it has to be accounted for in the calculation of election expense of a candidate. We have received representations in this regard and requesting an increase in the ceiling of expenditure for candidates,” the official said.

PIONEER, NOV 9, 2018

## **EC summons Mizo CEO, sets up panel to look into charges**

Taking note of ongoing crisis in Mizoram, the Election Commission has summoned State chief electoral officer SB Shashank and set up a three-member committee to look into the allegations. After the EC decision, the protest was called off by NGO Coordination Committee demanding the removal of Shashank.

Earlier, the EC has set up a high-level committee headed by a deputy election commissioner to hold talks with protestors seeking ouster of the Mizoram poll panel chief. The Mizoram is slated to go to polls November 28 to elect its new Assembly.

In a statement, the EC said it has accepted the broad contours of the resolution passed by the Mizoram's NGOs coordination committee, spearheading the protest, after its delegation's deliberations with the EC. "The Election Commission has also decided to depute a high-level team led by Mizoram Deputy election Commissioner Sudeep Jain to hold further deliberations on their resolution," the statement said. Jharkhand Chief Electoral Officer Lalbiaktluanga Kiangte, who is also a Mizo, has been included in the EC panel.

Members of the influential NGOs including Young Mizo Association (YMA) had blocked the office of CEO at Aizawl demanding his removal for his reported "pro-Bru refugee" stance and his role in the transfer of Mizoram principal secretary (home), Lalnunmawia Chuaungo, recently.

Shashank had earlier defended Chuaungo's transfer saying the latter was found "interfering" in preparation of electoral rolls for Bru refugees and deployment of central security forces.

About 40,000 Brus had fled ethnic violence in 1997 and have since spent their lives in refugee camps in adjoining Tripura when they had fled Mizoram following an ethnic clash with the Christian Mizos. A few returned after a quadripartite agreement signed among the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Governments of Mizoram and Tripura, and a group representing the refugees.

The NGOs demand that the Bru should cast their votes in Mizoram and not in relief camps as is being planned by the EC. The principal secretary (home) had reportedly tried to stop an EC's decision to allow Bru refugees cast their votes in relief camps.

## **ENERGY RESOURCES**

PIONEER, NOV 10, 2018

### **Govt welcomes US waiver on oil import sanctions**

The Narendra Modi Government on Friday welcomed the US decision to give 'sanction waiver' to India on Iran's oil imports and development of the crucial Chabahar port.

“We have seen the US notification including India in the list of countries granted significant reduction exemption for continued purchase of Iranian crude oil without attracting US sanctions,” External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said.

“We appreciate that the US Government has taken into account our need for energy security and understood our sensitivities on this matter,” he said. “We welcome this. We are now examining the details of the exemption.” There had been concerns in New Delhi following the fresh US sanctions on Iran, which came into effect on November 5, as Tehran is a major supplier of crude oil to India.

On Friday, the External Affairs Ministry spokesperson also said that New Delhi had taken note of the exception provided by Washington of the Chabahar port on the southeastern coast of Iran that is being jointly developed by India, Afghanistan and Iran.

“We have taken note of the US statement that exception has been provided under the Iran Freedom and Counter Proliferation Act of 2012 with respect to development of Chabahar Port and the construction of an associated railway line,” Kumar said.

“We appreciate that the US recognised the role which this port will play to bring strategic and long-term benefits to Afghanistan as well as enhance Afghanistan’s connectivity with the outside world.” India is investing \$500 million to develop the Chabahar port and a road link from there to Afghanistan to give access to that country by bypassing Pakistan.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on Monday that Washington was exempting India and seven other countries from the sanctions on importing oil from Iran.

The US pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) that Tehran signed with the five permanent members (P5) of the UN Security Council, Germany and the European Union and imposed the new sanctions on Iran over its alleged nuclear programme.

**INDIAN EXPRESS, NOV 15, 2018**

## **India’s fuel demand rises 4 per cent in October**

*Petrol price had touched an all-time high of Rs 84 a litre in Delhi on October 4 but has since declined to Rs 77.28 per litre on Thursday. Diesel, which had touched a record high of Rs 75.45, is now priced at Rs 72.09 per litre in Delhi.*

India's fuel demand rose by 4 per cent in October as a drop in prices propelled a rise in petrol and diesel consumption.

Fuel consumption in October totalled 17.99 million tonnes (MT) as compared to 17.3 MT in the same month last year, data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) of the Oil Ministry showed.

When fuel prices started to rise on the back of a spurt in international oil rates and depreciation in rupee value against the US dollar in August, demand marginally dipped by 0.3 per cent to 16.5 MT. In the following month, when petrol and diesel prices continued their upward trend, consumption rose by just 1 per cent to 16.51 MT.

However, rates have been on the decline in October as the government cut excise duty by Rs 1.50 a litre and asked oil firms to subsidise fuel by another Re 1 a litre, which many states matched with equivalent cuts in sales tax (VAT), and international oil prices softened.

In July, fuel demand had risen by 6.3 per cent to 16.99 MT, according to PPAC data.

During October, petrol sales were up 4.6 per cent to 2.33 MT while diesel consumption was up 6.7 per cent to 6.98 MT.

Petrol price had touched an all-time high of Rs 84 a litre in Delhi on October 4 but has since declined to Rs 77.28 per litre on Thursday. Diesel, which had touched a record high of Rs 75.45, is now priced at Rs 72.09 per litre in Delhi.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

HINDUSTAN TIMES, NOV 15, 2018

### **Under UGC's Paramarsh scheme, top varsities to mentor NAAC-aspirant colleges**

Top Indian universities and colleges will share their expertise and resources with educational institutes, which have failed to meet the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)'s quality standards, under the University Grants Commission (UGC)'s 'Paramarsh' scheme. The UGC, which regulates higher education in the country, on Wednesday gave its nod to a proposal at meeting in New Delhi in this regard.

"Many educational institutions have not been doing well when it comes to NAAC accreditation, which assesses minimum quality standards. The focus is to ensure that every institution shall get NAAC accreditation with a minimum score of 2.5 by 2022. So, a scheme named Paramarsh received the commission's in principle nod," said a UGC member.

Mentor institutions, under the scheme, will have to guide the mentees in achieving high-quality standards, said another UGC member. He said hundreds of top performing universities and colleges would be chosen to lead others, which have failed to get good ratings.

The second UGC member said improving the quality and ensuring institutions and their courses are accredited is a major focus area. "A

similar mentorship scheme has already been in the works for technical institutions. The new scheme aims to ensure that better performing varsities and colleges also help the ones lagging behind.”

Former UGC member Inder Mohan Kapahy said NAAC measures the quality of institutions on a scale of 4 by looking at various aspects like methodology of teaching, research, patents. “This is an attempt to raise the quality of several of our institutions, which could benefit from the better performing ones.”

A proposal for an institution to be in existence for at least 15 years to be conferred the status of a university was also discussed at the UGC meeting.

It is proposed that the institutions seeking the status should have high NAAC scores. Two-thirds of courses should have the National Board of Accreditation go-ahead in case a technical institution is seeking the deemed status. “The proposal was discussed. However, it was felt that more deliberations were needed on this,” said another UGC member.

# INFLATION

HINDUSTAN TIMES, NOV 13, 2018

## **Inflation lowest in year, but it may not be good news**

*The Indian economy was staring at an inflationary spike due to rising oil prices and falling rupee as recently as a month ago. These fears are not as pertinent anymore. Brent crude has fallen by almost 15% in the last one month.*

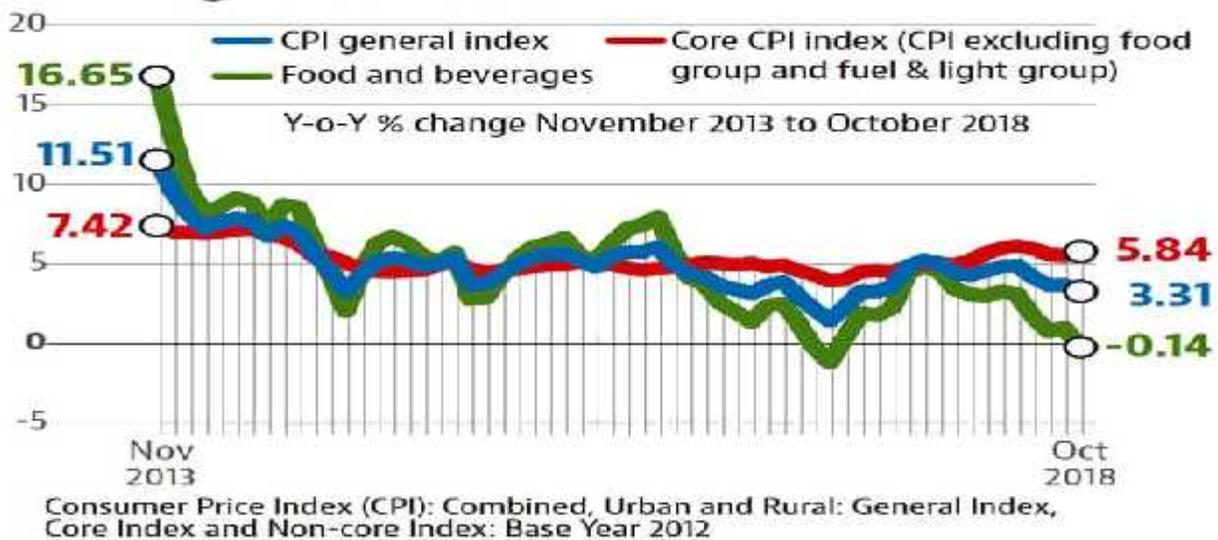


Retail inflation data released on Monday holds bad news for farmers, the government, and industry, with a disaggregated reading of the numbers showing that food inflation has turned negative and core inflation remains obstinate (and has actually increased). The first means that farmers haven't benefited from the government's move to raise minimum support prices; agrarian distress, largely caused by poor market linkages and falling prices of food, has become a significant political issue. The second means that the Reserve Bank of India will

likely retain its hawkish stance, despite demands from industry, and also some quarters of government, that interest rates be reduced to aid the cause of growth.

The Indian economy was staring at an inflationary spike due to rising oil prices and falling rupee as recently as a month ago. These fears are not as pertinent anymore. Brent crude has fallen by almost 15% in the last one month. The rupee has reversed its falling trend vis-à-vis the dollar during this period. The Latest Consumer Price Index (CPI; India's benchmark inflation measure) data has brought further relief on this count. Annual growth in CPI went down by 39 basis points between September 2018 and October 2018. One basis point is one hundredth of a percentage point. Inflation growth in October 2018 was 3.31%, the lowest since November 2017.

### Reading between lines



The details show that prices of food products actually fell, even as those of non-food and non-fuel product categories rose. The former is bound

to worsen rural distress, while the latter lowers the probability of a rate cut. Food and beverages is the only sub-component of CPI which registered negative inflation in October 2018. The decline in overall CPI is a reflection of the fact that this category has a weight of 45% in the commodity basket used to calculate CPI. Prices of vegetables, pulses and sugar continue to fall. Even that of cereals, which were expected to strengthen after the government announced a significant hike in Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for Kharif crops, have seen a decline in inflation in October 2018. Annual growth in inflation for cereals in the period between April 2018 and October 2018 was 2.77%. This is the lowest since 2016-17.

Meanwhile, core inflation continues to remain high and has actually gone up by 29 basis points to 5.84% in October 2018. Core inflation is a better indicator of non-cyclical inflationary pressures in the economy and hence is given importance in decisions such as setting interest rates. Rising core inflation might dent hopes of a reduction in policy rates by RBI in its next monetary policy review in the first week of December. Businesses gain from lower interest rates.

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP), or factory output growth, the short term indicator for industrial activity fell for the fourth consecutive month, and grew by 4.47% in September 2018. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a scheme earlier this month, which would enable small and medium enterprises to get a loan in just 59 minutes. This suggests a political premium for providing cheaper and easily accessible loans in the economy.

“Declining food inflation in October, when harvesting actually starts, shows that the increase in MSPs has not helped much,” said Pranab Sen, former chairman of the National Statistical Commission. This also shows that the farmers protests can’t just be wished away, Sen added. That’s worrying news for the government politically.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

HINDU, NOV 8, 2018

**In a first, India to send two former diplomats to talks that include Taliban representatives**



*Amar Sinha, India's former envoy to Kabul, and T.C.A. Raghavan, former Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, will represent New Delhi at the Moscow talks.*

In a significant departure from India's stand on engaging the Taliban, the government announced it would participate at a "non-official" level,

sending two former senior diplomats to attend talks on the Afghanistan peace process to be held in Russia on Thursday.

The talks, known as the “Moscow format” will include a “high-level” delegation from the Taliban as well as a delegation of Afghanistan’s “High Peace Council”, along with twelve countries, and will mark the first time an Indian delegation has been present at the table in talks with the Taliban representatives based in Doha. On Thursday, the United States said it would send representatives from its embassy in Moscow to the talks; Pakistan is also expected to send a representative.

"India supports all efforts at peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan that will preserve unity and plurality, and bring security, stability and prosperity to the country. India's consistent policy has been that such efforts should be Afghan-led, Afghan-owned, and Afghan-controlled and with participation of the Government of Afghanistan," said MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar, adding that “our participation at the meeting will be at the non-official level."

Sources told *The Hindu* that India will send two retired diplomats, Amar Sinha and TCA Raghavan as its representatives. While Mr. Sinha was ambassador to Kabul (2013-2016), Mr. Raghavan has held senior posts in the Ministry of External Affairs dealing with Afghanistan and Pakistan and was High Commissioner to Islamabad (2013-2015) and is currently the Director General of the government-run Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) think-tank based in Delhi.



***Mr. Raghavan was High Commissioner to Islamabad (2013-2015) and is currently the Director General of the government-run Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) think-tank based in Delhi.***

The Russian government welcomed India's decision to participate in the talks on November 9. "We highly regard Indian support in the peace process in Afghanistan and welcome Indian readiness and that of other partner countries in the Moscow format," the Russian Embassy said in a statement on Thursday.

When asked why India's stand had undergone a significant shift vis-à-vis the Taliban, government officials said that the decision was the

outcome of “close discussions with the Afghanistan government,” and it was felt necessary for India to have a “presence” there.

Analysts see the Modi government’s decision as a significant marker in the Afghan dialogue process, given that India has in the past declined to participate in the Moscow format with the Taliban unless the Afghan government participated. A Russian proposal to hold the talks on September 4 had to be cancelled after the US pulled out of them, and the Ghani government opposed them.

“India would have preferred a direct process between the Ghani government and the Taliban, but since that is not possible, a regional process like this one is the next best option. It is to Russia’s credit that they have been able to bring everyone to the table for this round of talks,” former Ambassador to Afghanistan Rakesh Sood told *The Hindu*.

The Ghani government said this week it is allowing the delegation of the High Peace Council (HPC) that is designated to further the reconciliation process with the Taliban on the understanding the Moscow format will lead to direct talks with the Taliban.

“Our agreement with the Russians is that this meeting should lead to direct talks between us (Afghan government) and the Taliban, if it does not happen like this, then this will reflect the intention of the Taliban and this means they (Taliban) are not prepared for peace,” MoFA spokesperson Sibghat Ahmadi was quoted in local reports.

Apart from the Taliban political leadership based in Doha, and the HPC from Kabul, the Russian government has invited delegations from India, Pakistan, the U.S., China, Iran and five Central Asian Republics.

PIONEER, NOV 9, 2018

## **Cabinet approves signing, ratifying extradition pact between India, Morocco**

The Cabinet on Thursday approved the signing and ratifying of an extradition agreement between India and Morocco.

The decision was taken at the Union Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The agreement will be signed during a proposed VIP visit from Morocco from November 11-18, an official statement said.

The agreement will provide a strong legal base for the extradition of fugitive offenders who are accused of economic offences, terrorism and other serious offences in one state and found in the other state.

The Cabinet also approved the agreement between India and Morocco on mutual legal assistance in civil and commercial matters.

This agreement between India and Morocco will enhance cooperation in the service of summons, judicial documents, letters of request and the execution of judgments decrees and arbitral awards.

## **JUDICIARY**

PIONEER, NOV 10, 2018

### **Six HC judges transferred**

Six judges were on Thursday transferred to different High Courts including Justice Nirmaljit Kaur, who is known as a whistleblower in the 2008 cash-in-bag scam.

Separate Law Ministry notifications said Justice Pavankumar Bhimappa Bajanthri, judge of the Punjab and Haryana High, stands transferred to the Karnataka High Court. Similarly, Justice Sujit Narayan Prasad of the Orissa High Court was posted to the Jharkhand High Court

Justice Raghvendra Singh Chauhan, a judge of the Karnataka High Court, was sent to the Telangana and Andhra Pradesh High Court. Justice Satrughana Pujahari of the Madras High Court was sent to the Orissa High Court.

Justice Rajeev Sharma of the Uttarakhand High Court was transferred to the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Justice Kaur, a judge of the Rajasthan High Court, was sent back to the Punjab and Haryana High Court. She was the whistleblower in the cash-in-bag scam of 2008. A clerk of an advocate had erroneously dropped a packet of Rs 15 lakh on the doorstep of Justice Kaur. She had then

informed the police and the then chief justice of the Punjab and Haryana High court.

The CBI reportedly later found that the money was meant for another high court judge who has since retired.

## **MIGRATION**

TRIBUNE, NOV 12, 2018

### **2,382 Indians in US jails for illegal entry**

As many as 2,382 Indians are languishing in various American jails for illegally crossing the US border to seek asylum in the country, according to the latest figures.

These detainees, a significant number of whom are from Punjab, are seeking asylum, claiming that they “experienced violence or persecution” in India. As many as 2,382 Indians are lodged in 86 jails in the US, according to the information obtained by North American Punjabi Association (NAPA) through Freedom of Information Act.

According to figures as of October 10, a total of 377 Indian nationals are detained at California’s Adelanto Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Processing Center, 269 at Imperial Regional Adult Detention Facility, 245 at the Federal Correctional Institution Victorville, and 115 at Washington State’s Tacoma ICE Processing Center.

“Most of the detainees at the federal facilities are asking for asylum claiming that they ‘experienced violence or persecution’ in their home country,” NAPA president Satnam S Chahal said. “This is a matter of serious concern that thousands of Indians, with an overwhelming

majority of them being from Punjab, are languishing in jails in the US,” he said.

Chahal who has been working in the field for several years alleged that there is a nexus of human traffickers and officials in Punjab, who encourage a young Punjabis to leave their homes to illegally enter the US and charge Rs 35-50 lakh from each individual. — PTI

# POLLUTION

HINDUSTAN TIMES, NOV 13, 2018

## **Lessons for Delhi: How Beijing shifted tide in its battle against pollution**



As a long, bitter winter and sub-zero temperatures clamp down on Beijing and northern China, the battle against pollution — spurred by an action plan launched in 2013 — is set to get intense again.

For this winter, the government's plan is to reduce the average intensity of PM2.5, a major air pollutant, by around 3% in Beijing and

surrounding areas, according to an official plan released by China's ministry of ecology and environment.

After years of battling crippling air pollution, the 2013 plan started yielding results “with average PM2.5 levels in the cities... falling by 30% from 2013 to 2016”, according to Greenpeace, a Netherlands-based non-governmental environmental organisation. In the five years since, Beijing's PM2.5 had fallen by about 54% — figures that a heavily polluted city like Delhi desperately needs to replicate.

The government's policies are broadly focussed on controlling pollution from vehicular emission, construction dust and coal-burning for winter heating.

## **TWO targets: vehicles and CONSTRUCTION**

A research project led by the Beijing Municipal Environmental Monitoring Centre had revealed earlier this year that emission from vehicles and construction dust accounted for most of Beijing's pollution.

“Currently, mobile sources, including automobiles, boats and planes are the largest contributor for locally generated PM2.5 particulate matter that poses health dangers,” state media had quoted the survey as saying.

“The research also found dust kicked up from roads and construction sites... to be on the rise. The proportion of its PM2.5 contribution increased from 14.3% in 2013 to 16% last year,” it added.

The second such survey on air pollution in Beijing revealed that in 2017, around 45% of PM2.5 came from vehicles. Diesel trucks were the worst offenders, it said.

The government is specifically targeting diesel vehicles. Since last year, the government has restricted the movement of diesel trucks within the city, said an official report released last week. “Judging from the effect of policy implementation, as of the third quarter of this year, the emission structure of the trucks entering Beijing was significantly optimised,” said the report.

“Pollutant emissions from major cargo corridors in and out of Beijing have been reduced by 34%, playing an important role in regional air quality management,” it added.

Last year, the government also banned construction of road and water projects as well as demolition of houses between November and 15 to March 15 within Beijing’s six major districts to curb construction dust.

An official statement published in state media added that the government would step up dust control supervision at construction sites and restrict use of machinery with high emissions.

The period of ban – other than for major livelihood projects — spans the four months when central heating is on for Beijing’s houses and other buildings.

From October 1, emission restrictions have also been put in place on heavily-polluting sectors including thermal power, steel, petrochemical and cement.

In addition, the 2013 plan requires reasonable targets to be set in local programmes regarding converting winter heating sources from coal to

cleaner natural gas and electricity, in order to ensure environment-friendly heating for residents.

## **THE RESULTS**

In a report last January – when pollution is usually high across northern China including Beijing – Greenpeace said PM2.5 had fallen by about 54% in the capital city since 2013.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has, in fact, recognised China's efforts to tackle pollution. "WHO's data captures impressive progress in China, where investment in clean energy, a national air pollution action plan and strict emission standards have driven dramatic progress, with average PM2.5 levels in the cities... falling by 30% from 2013 to 2016," Greenpeace said in a report this May.

One catalyst behind the drastic reduction was the policy to switch millions of homes and offices from coal-powered heating to heating by cleaner energy. "The consumption of coarse coal in rural areas of Beijing fell by about 3 million metric tons in 2017, as authorities helped switch homes to clean energy alternatives," state-controlled China Daily newspaper reported this year.

There-in is a tricky path for the government as it realised last year. "The large scale push to eliminate small-scale coal burning in provinces surrounding Beijing failed to install homes with gas heaters or pipes in time, leaving them without heating in sub-zero temperatures," Greenpeace had said last year.

Even state-controlled media admitted the problem. “Amid efforts to switch homes from coal to cleaner alternatives, families across northern China were left without heat during last winter due to a shortage of natural gas,” the China Daily report added.

## **LESSONS FOR DELHI**

A comparison of satellite-retrieved pollution levels in China and India, both for their respective national capital regions and for the whole country, shows how China turned a leaf on dealing with air pollution.

The data by Greenpeace shows how China reversed the turn of air pollution around 2014, soon after the National Atmospheric Pollution Prevention Action Plan was issued in September 2013.

The reduction in pollution levels since then is around 30%, representing more than a 100,000 premature deaths avoided each year, according to Greenpeace. “Our earlier analysis shows that by far the most impactful measures over this period are the strengthened emissions standards and enforcement for coal-fired power plants and industry, combined with levelling off of coal consumption growth. Other measures targeting coal use in industry and households directly have been very important in the Beijing region,” says Lauri Myllyvirta, senior global campaigner, coal and air pollution, Greenpeace, Beijing.

“By far the most important thing was setting comprehensive and ambitious targets, and holding provinces and cities accountable for meeting them,” Myllyvirta added.

# RELIGION

TRIBUNE, NOV 13, 2018

## No early hearing of Ayodhya title case

Supreme Court heard high-profile cases with Babri Masjid, CBI corruption on the list



The Supreme Court on Monday declined early hearing of the petitions in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title dispute case, saying it has already listed them in January next year.

The SC on October 29 had fixed the case for the first week of January before an “appropriate Bench”, which will decide the schedule of

hearing. “We have already passed the order. The appeals are coming up in January. Permission declined,” a Bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice SK Kaul said while rejecting the request of early hearing the cases.

The plea for early hearing was mentioned by lawyer Barun Kumar Sinha, representing Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha (ABHM) which is one of the respondents in the appeal filed by legal heirs of M Siddiq in the case. “Ram Janmabhoomi is the matter of tremendous faith of Hindus and they are very much hopeful about the decision at an early date of the aforesaid appeals,” the ABHM said.

The case is of great concern for both Hindus and Muslims of the country and the pendency of these cases have earlier caused communal disharmony, it said.

A three-judge SC Bench had on October 29, by a 2:1 majority, refused to refer to a five-judge constitution Bench the issue of reconsideration of the observations in its 1994 judgment of the Allahabad HC that a mosque was not integral to Islam.

## ROADWAYS

HINDUSTAN TIMES, NOV 13, 2018

### **Govt to miss highway target but overtake 2017-18 mark**

*This year, Nitin Gadkari set a target of constructing 16,420km of highways; last year, the ministry built 9,829 km of highways. Last year's target of construction was around 15,000km of highways at a rate of 41km/day while they could achieve only 27km/day.*

The ministry of road transport and highways is likely to miss the target of constructing 45km a day of highways this financial year, set for it by roads minister Nitin Gadkari, although going by the current pace of work, it may still overtake last year's achievement.

This year, Gadkari set a target of constructing 16,420km of highways; last year, the ministry built 9,829 km of highways. Last year's target of construction was around 15,000km of highways at a rate of 41km/day while they could achieve only 27km/day.

The current pace of construction from the period of April to October is around 23km a day, according to road ministry officials who asked not to be named. The government had also set a target of awarding works

for 20,000km of national highways during the current financial year, which was about 25% more than the 17,055 kilometers awarded during 2017-18. The total length of constructions awarded last year was 2,352km, marginally higher than this year's 1,999km.

“From April to October, we have been able to construct 4,830km of national highways. This is marginally better than the length constructed last year which was 4,085km with a rate of construction of about 19.5km per day,” the official added.

Going by last year's record, construction activity should pick up in the second half of the financial year (June to September are the months when much of India gets rain).

“Highway construction during monsoon season is quite slow. From April to November, there were four months out of six months where some part of the country had rains and hence the projects get affected. The results of six months cannot be extrapolated to the year. No doubt the targets are challenging but hopefully everyone in the ministry, financing spectrum, contractor and developers would take up the challenge and we would see much better results than last year,” said Kushal Singh, Partner, Deloitte India.

Still, the ministry has managed to construct more highways with every passing year. It did 4,410km in 2014-15, the first year of this government, 6,061km in 2015-16, and 8,200km in 2016-17.

“Our ministry is making all out efforts for improving and strengthening the highways network in the country... There will also be focus on

completing the detailed project reports of all the “in Principle” declared national highways,” Gadkari had said in April.

Gadkari also said that while the focus would be more on construction, the total length awarded would be more than last year. This also comes in the backdrop of the central government’s aim of doubling India’s national highways network to 200,000 lakh km by 2019.

“India needs massive infrastructure development up to Rs 50 lakh crore... At this speed, I am confident we will complete construction of 90,000km of national highways,” Union minister for finance Arun Jaitley said during the budget speech in February for the current financial year.

The Union budget for 2018-19 pegged the budgetary allocation for the highway ministry at Rs 71,000 crore, up from Rs 61,000 crore allocated during 2017-18. Despite the enhanced budget, a road ministry official said that it has written to the finance ministry seeking more budgetary support.

“Sanctioning of funds is slow this year. As per our estimate, we may run out of funds by January, 2019. Keeping this in mind, we have written to the finance ministry seeking extra budgetary support,” another official at the ministry added, asking not to be identified.

# TOURISM

INDIAN EXPRESS, NOV 14, 2018

## **Over 1.7 million foreigners visited India on e-visa in 2017: MHA**



More than 1.7 million foreigners visited India on e-visa last year and the number of tourists availing the popular scheme this year is likely to cross two million mark, home ministry said on Wednesday.

USD 105,558,496 has been received as e-visa fees in 2017 by the government and USD 137,527,270 (Rs 993 crore approx) till October 31 this year. The number of foreigners who visited India with e-visa has

gone up from 447,000 in 2015 to 1.7 million in 2017. The figure for 2018 is 1.87 million till October 31 this year and it may touch two million mark by the end of the year, a Home Ministry official said.

The e-visa facility now covers practically all the countries of the world, 166 as of now, and foreigners can arrive at any of the designated 26 airports and five seaports in India without interacting with any official before checking in at the immigration counter.

Under the e-visa scheme, an applicant receives an email authorising him or her to travel to India after it has been approved. The tourist can travel with a print-out of this authorisation, the official said. On arrival, the visitor has to present the authorisation to the immigration authorities who would then allow entry into the country.

E-visa is now available for five categories i.e. tourist, business, medical, conference and medical attendant. To promote cruise tourism immigration facilities have been provided at five major seaports where e-Landing permits are granted to passengers for their onshore site-seeing.

The government has received USD 105,558,496 as e-visa fees in 2017 and USD 137,527,270 till October 30 this year. The top five countries whose nationals availed e-visa services in 2018 (till October 31,) are: United Kingdom -292,143, the United States 221,339, China 127,022, France 107,185, Germany 89,863.

# WATER RESOURCES

HINDU, NOV 8, 2018

## Proposed Ganga bill bans ports, jetties

**What the Bill envisages**

- Create a supervisory vertical to check the health of the 2,500 km-long river
- The Bill lays down a host of restrictions to ensure uninterrupted flow of the river
- The proposed legislation specifies that "unauthorised" activities that cause "...obstruction or discontinuity of water in the Ganga... due to engineered diversion of water or stoppage of water... could be liable to a prison term of 3 years or fines upto ₹50 crore, or both



**Clean-up plan:** People washing clothes on the banks of the Ganga near the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi, U.P. • R V MOORTHY

*Centre's efforts have been on cleaning the river, while neglecting steps to ensure its natural flow: activists*

The government has banned the construction of jetties, ports or "permanent hydraulic structures" in the Ganga, unless permitted by the

National Ganga Rejuvenation Authority, according to a proposed ‘Ganga Act’, viewed by The Hindu.

The legislation, formally called the National River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Conservation and Management) Bill, 2018, proposes to create a management structure that will supervise the health of the 2,500-kilometre long Ganga which, the draft Bill defines, as ‘India’s national river.’

## **In Winter session**

The Bill is now being circulated for comments among several Ministries, and proposed to be tabled in Parliament during the Winter session, according to sources.

The Bill lays down a host of restrictions to ensure the “uninterrupted, ecological flow” of the river. Currently, a host of dams in the upper stretches of the river lead to the river’s flow being obstructed, say several activists and researchers, and persistent campaigns — notably led by the late G.D. Agrawal — led to the government finally recognising the need for proposed and existing hydropower projects to change their design plans to ensure minimum flows all through the year.

The legislation looms even as the government is developing a National Waterways Project-1 (River Ganga) from Haldia to Varanasi (1,390 km), with the technical and financial assistance of the World Bank, at an estimated cost of 5,369 crore. Food and beverage giant PepsiCo has dispatched 16 containers from Haldia containing packaged food and assorted goods, and — in a ceremony to be attended by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi — they are expected to dock in Varanasi on November 12, according to a statement from the Union Shipping Ministry. This is the first container movement aboard an inland vessel in independent India, according to that Ministry.

The waterways project involves creating permanent and movable terminals that require dredging and frequent de-silting to ensure that minimum river depths — for the smooth movement of the vessels — are maintained. However, the proposed legislation specifies that “unauthorised” activities that cause “...obstruction or discontinuity of water in the River Ganga...due to engineered diversion of water or stoppage of water...could be liable to a prison term of 3 years or fines upto 50 crore, or both.”

Activists say that while the government’s efforts have been largely on cleaning the Ganga — namely, by installing sewage plants in riverine cities such as Allahabad and Varanasi and Kanpur — but neglecting to take steps to ensure the river’s natural flow is maintained through the stretch. “The government’s draft does not keep the interest of the Ganga as prime focus. The intent seems to be to maintain a flow, whereas we have been insisting on achieving natural flow,” said Mallika Bhanot of the Uttarakhand-based NGO Ganga Ahwaan. The NGO was associated with G.D. Agrawal, and his call for a ban on hydropower projects on the Ganga.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, NOV15, 2018

## **NGT slaps Rs 50-cr fine on Punjab government for polluting Sutlej, Beas**

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Wednesday slapped a fine of Rs 50 crore on the Punjab government for polluting Sutlej and Beas rivers due to uncontrolled industrial discharge.

The bench had clubbed several similar cases, including the one dealing with the death of fish due to molasses discharge from a sugar industry in Gurdaspur district in May this year.

The bench headed by justice AK Goyal has asked the Punjab government to recover the fine from industries in two weeks. “Earlier a committee headed by Central Pollution Control Board, of which Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB) was a part, submitted a report saying it found that the industrial discharge was not being treated as treatment plants were not functioning,” PPCB counsel Nagendra Benipal said.

The tribunal clubbed some other cases of river pollution in Punjab, one based on a 2014 petition from Rajasthan-based activists Shabnam Godara and Sobha Singh of Hanumangarh district in Rajasthan, which claimed that polluted water from the Sutlej and Beas, entering the state through the Indira Gandhi Canal, was affecting eight districts there. Indira Gandhi Canal the longest canal of India. It starts from the Harike barrage, a few kilometres below the confluence of the Sutlej and Beas rivers in Punjab and terminates in irrigation facilities in the Thar Desert in the northwest Rajasthan.

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**For Limited Circulation**

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