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18 September 2018**Daily News Pedia*****BIMSTEC to launch ambitious land, air, sea transport plan***

Senior officials of all seven BIMSTEC countries will meet in Bangkok to discuss an ambitious rail, road, and port and air connectivity master plan.

It is another sign that the grouping has renewed diplomatic energy and is becoming India's preferred mode of encouraging regional cooperation. The draft connectivity master plan has been arrived at after over a decade of discussions at various levels.

The idea is to have a framework for the organization for seamless connectivity between and across BIMSTEC countries. It will use different transport modes to increase transport and trade linkages for faster and more inclusive growth.

A BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Study (BTILS) were completed with Asian Development Bank (ADB) funding in November 2007.

Since then, the plan went through many discussion processes, but a definite forward movement was not taking place. The plan complements the plan of other regional groupings with overlapping geographical territory such as ASEAN etc. The plan underlines the fact that lack of a regional connectivity plans hampered the economic progress of the region.

Connectivity in BIMSTEC countries:

- Road transport accounts for about 70% of the freight movement within the BIMSTEC region and dominates the overall regional transport system.
- BIMSTEC has one of the largest railway networks in the world.
- The region is also interconnected by both mainline and deep-sea container and feeder ships distributing containers throughout the region from hub ports.
- In addition, there are over 200 flights linking regional destinations.

Some of the arterial links the plan includes are:

- India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway
- Kolkata-Birgunj and Kolkata-Kathmandu links
- Dhaka-Chittagong corridor
- Kolkata-Siliguri-Guwahati-Imphal link
- Kandy-Colombo link.

The report also calls for better facilitation of cargo movements between the countries.

Source: The Hindu.

Govt proposes to merge Dena Bank, Vijaya Bank and Bank of Baroda

The government has proposed merger of three public sector banks i.e., Bank of Baroda, Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank.

To create India's third largest bank with a total business of more than Rs 14.82 lakh crore. This step will particularly help Dena Bank, the weakest of the three, which is currently under the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework

Prompt Corrective Action (PCA): It is an action taken by Reserve Bank of India, when banks breach certain regulatory requirements like minimum capital, return on asset and quantum of non-performing assets. In this framework, banks are restricted from expanding number of branches, staff recruitment and from increasing the size of their loan book. Apart from Dena Bank, ten other banks are currently under the PCA

It will follow the merger of the five associate banks of State Bank of India with itself. And the government move on Life Insurance Corporation of India's proposal to acquire majority stake in IDBI Bank.

Advantages of merger

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- The lending ability of this bank will be far higher.
 - It will reduce the amount of capital required by the government to pump into these lenders and will help clean their balance sheets.
 - The merged entity will have the ability to expand its banking operations, with the specific ability of the banks will add up to provide better operations:
 - Dena Bank has a strong CASA (current account savings account) base and a strong MSME portfolio.
 - Vijaya Bank has a strong credit culture and
 - BOB is an aspiration bank with a strong global reach and is technologically sound.
 - No employee will face any adverse service conditions after the merger
 - Merger of the banks will helps India's fastest growing economy, which need stronger and globally competitive banks.

Source: The Hindu.



State to set up cyber varsity

The Maharashtra Government is going to set up a varsity dedicated to mitigating cyber threats.

The new Cyber University will train 3,000 professionals to fight online space cyber attacks and internet crimes. It will also provide training in 15 other Internet of Things (IoT) areas such as Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence (AI), cloud computing, block chain, cyber forensics and cyber investigations. Maharashtra had already set up Indian Computer Emergency Response Team to ward off external cyber threats.

In 2016, Maharashtra used *GARUDA Technology* to fight against cyber threat

Garuda Technology is a Engineering Company with a team of talented and Skilled Engineers Specialized in Industrial Electrical, Electronics, Automation and Robotic Systems.

Source: The Hindu.

Fluoride contamination in Odisha

School Children in Odisha's Nuapada district are facing the brunt of Fluoride Contamination with potable water sources in as many as 54 schools and anganwadi premises testing for fluoride presence beyond permissible limits.

Laboratory tests found 5.25 mg per litre fluoride content in water. Consumption of water having fluoride content above 1.5 mg per litre is considered dangerous to health.

In 2018-19, drinking water sources in eight schools in Nayagarh, seven in Balangir and eight in Kalahandi districts were found to be fluoride contaminated.

Health Issues:

- Prolonged consumption of fluoride-contaminated water leads to dental and skeletal fluorosis.
- Mottled Teeth and crippled backbone and limbs are manifestation of the disease.
- Bones in children are in formation stage while fluoride tends to damage bones.

Source: The Hindu.

India calling: 5G networks may be in place by 2020

The Indian government is aiming to commercially introduce 5G services in the country by the end of 2020, almost in line with rest of the world. The steering committee has recommended that the 5G spectrum allocation policy should be announced by the end of this year. The high-level panel has recommended that 5G programmes be also funded by the government.

5G is the next generation of mobile Internet connectivity that would offer much faster and more reliable networks, which would form the backbone for the emerging era of Internet of Things (IoT).

Previous generations of mobile networks addressed consumers predominantly for voice and SMS in 2G, web browsing in 3G and higher speed data and video streaming in 4G. The transition from 4G to 5G will serve both consumers and multiple industries.

Globally, over 150 pre-commercial 5G trials are under way around the world, including South Korea, China and the U.S., 5G trials are yet to begin in India.

Challenges ahead:

- Coverage in rural areas remains a challenge.
- Disrupting industries: Once commercialised, 5G is expected to disrupt not only telecom but other industries as well as. 5G is expected to see use beyond delivery of services just on "personal phone platforms." It will also connect new devices to support a much larger range of applications and services.

Advantages:

- Next generation mobile Internet connectivity will offer faster, more reliable networks that will form the backbone for era of IoT.
- The next generation network will see usage in key government projects such as smart cities and Digital India, besides other business-to-business applications.
- Consumption in terms of using IoT (Internet of Things) devices such as connected refrigerators etc.
- It would enable revenue opportunity for Indian telecom operators by 2026.
- The largest opportunity would be seen in sectors like manufacturing, energy and utilities followed by public safety and health sector

Source: The Hindu.

Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS): Smart fencing will end infiltration

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the first phase of hi-tech 'smart fencing' of 11 km stretch on the International Border (IB) in Jammu.

CIBMS would provide for round-the-clock laser-guided surveillance of the borders.

The smart fencing project will initially be implemented to cover gaps in the physical fencing. Eventually, this technology will be implemented across the entire border. The smart fencing is a web of surveillance, communication and data storage devices. It will enable surveillance during difficult weather conditions and reduce the need for physical patrolling of the borders. It will rely on thermal imaging, infra-red and laser-based intruder alarms to stop infiltration.

Source: The Hindu

EDITORIAL

To read

Terrorised By Law

Criminalising the mere espousal of an ideology under the UAPA is unconstitutional.

The abuse of the UAPA, if unchecked by the judiciary, poses a greater threat to the sovereignty and integrity of India, than the people being arrested under this Act because nothing incites hatred like injustice.

The Unlawful Activities Prevention Act 1967, was enacted by Parliament in 1967, as sections 123 and 124 of the Indian Penal Code were thought to be inadequate to control organised crime and acts of terrorism. Oddly enough, these provisions were considered adequate by the British colonial government to quell anti-state forces! Today several human rights activists, communist thinkers, poets and Dalit voices are being detained under this Act. Even the reading of a translation by Bertolt Brecht, the famous German playwright, is being called an act of inciting sedition.

To determine whether these voices are voices of sedition, we must start with the Constitution. The Preamble to the Constitution makes a solemn resolve to constitute India into a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic and to secure to all its citizens, justice, social, economic and political and equality of status and opportunity. The Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in the Constitution provide that the State shall in particular, direct its policy towards securing — (a) that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to adequate means of livelihood; (b) that ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to sub serve the common good; (c) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment. The Constitution of a democratic and decolonised country could not have read any differently because the basis of true freedom is socialism.

Therefore, criminalising the mere espousing of socialist or communist ideology under the UAPA is patently unconstitutional as the objective is neither illegal nor unconstitutional. However, Article 19 of the Constitution sets limits to our freedom of speech and expression, even for legitimate and legal objectives. To test the scope within which a citizen is legally permitted to

voice their protest against a government or organise opposition to it even for a constitutional purpose, we must consider the scope and ambit set by the Supreme Court to Article 19 in the context of sections 123 and 124 of the IPC, in the matter of Kedar Nath vs. State of Bihar (1962). The Supreme Court clarified that the freedom of speech has three components: Discussion, advocacy and incitement. It is only when discussion and advocacy reach the level of incitement not just in words but deeds to provoke people to violate the law, that it falls in the realm of the mischief sought to be quelled by Section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code, according to the Court. The conviction of people for merely questioning the injustice of a government or possessing or reading socialist or communist literature, even if it is associated with banned groups (that believe in the unlawful method of armed struggle) on the basis of assumptions, without evidence, that those reading such literature must be inciting violence, is in fact an extra-legal act of violence by the state upon the citizen.

The National Crime Bureau Statistics indicate that 67 per cent of the cases under the UAPA 1967 end up in acquittal or discharge of the persons accused, after their having lived in detention, often for years, as the draconian provisions of the Act, deprive the accused of the right to bail, allow police remand for over 30 days as opposed to the 14 days under the IPC and give leave to the prosecution to file a chargesheet in 180 days rather than the usual mandate of 90 days. If a democratic state is permitted to arm itself with legislations such as the UAPA, empowering it to deny someone who opposes the government their freedom for an almost indefinite period of time, it casts a duty upon the judiciary to ensure that the arrest itself is based on cogent and irrefutable evidence. It requires the magistracy to be alert and willing to jealously guard the citizen from unlawful arrest. Because the abuse of the UAPA, if unchecked by the judiciary, poses a greater threat to the sovereignty and integrity of India, than the people being arrested under this Act because nothing incites hatred like injustice.

MAINS QUESTION

Q: Historically, be it the disaster of world war or floods of Kerala, time and again women proved their abilities. Critically comment in context of role of women in modern society and economy.