# CURRENT AFFAIRS

# (1ˢᵗ JULY- 7ᵀᴴ JULY)
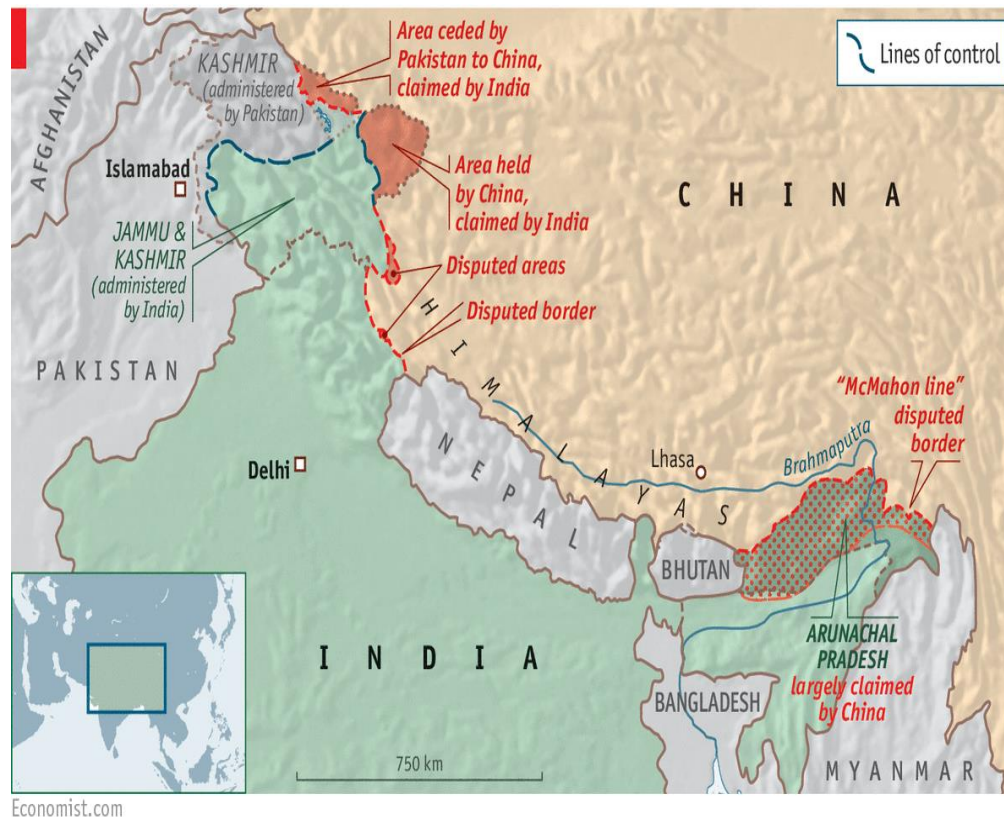
# CURRENT AFFAIRS

# (1st JULY- 7TH JULY)

# History of India-China Dispute:

Indian and Chinese troops are having problem once again in Sikkim at Doko-Lam area, which lies at the tri-junction of India, China and Bhutan.



Dokalam is the Bhutanese name of the region which is recognised by India as Doka La. China claims it as a part of its Donglang region.
The standoff started after a Chinese army's construction party came to build a road in the Dokalam region, which overlooks the strategic Chumbi Valley.

**Indian-China Border:**

**What is the dispute between India and China?**

**Eastern sector:**

The McMahon line, which India recognises as its boundary, is **not accepted by the Chinese**. The line was drawn by Sir Henry McMahon.

The McMahon line was negotiated between the British and Tibetans, without Chinese participation and when opposed by the Chinese it was declared as a bilateral accord between India and Tibet. The land south of Tibet was declared as British India. This made the Tawang region of Arunachal Pradesh a part of India. In 1950, Tibet lost its status as an independent territory and India took control of the area.

**Western Sector:**

The Chinese claim that Aksai Chin is just an extension of Tibet with regard to language, religion and culture. But in Chinese documentation regarding the actual occupation of the area by Tibet is inconclusive.

The Indians, on the other hand, claim that the area has been historically administered by the state of Jammu and Kashmir since 1849, and that the Indo-Tibet Treaties of 1665, 1684 and 1842 confirmed the boundary between Tibet and Ladakh.

China claims the Aksai Chin district, the Changmo valley, Pangong Tso and the Sponggar Tso area of north-east Ladakh as well as a strip of about 5,000 sq km down the entire length of eastern Ladakh. China also claims a part of Huza-Gilgit area in North Kashmir (ceded to it in 1963 by Pakistan), although the whole territory has been effectively under the British sovereignty since 1895.
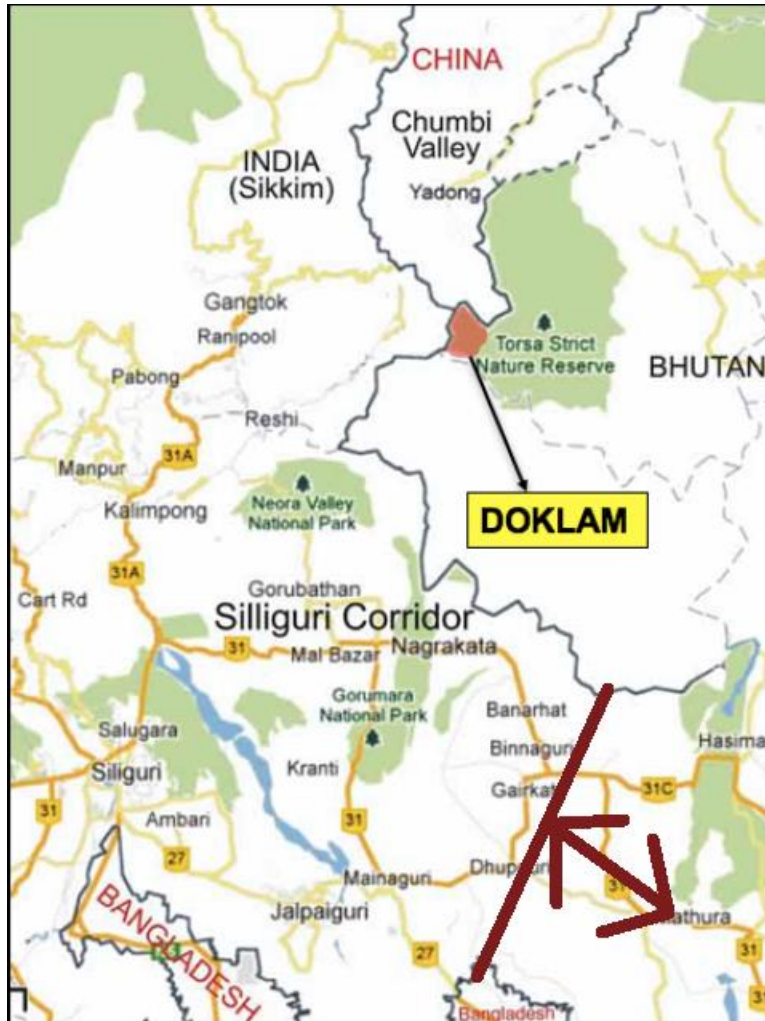
Since 1954, the Chinese have repeatedly violated the international border between India and China and penetrated deep into the Indian Territory in the western sector. China renewed aggression in 1959 and the Line of Actual Control (LoAC) become of series of positions occupied by the Chinese forces rather than a well defined border between the two countries.

**Importance of Chumbi Valley:**

Chumbi Valley of Tibet (China) is a narrow valley projecting towards the tri junction point of Sikkim (India), Bhutan and Tibet borders pointed like a dagger towards this tri junction point.

The road China claims to be building in its "own territory" in Doklam Plateau would give it a strategic advantage against India in a possible military conflict in future.The plateau overlooks the Chumbi Valley, which is not far from "Siliguri Corridor" - the narrow stretch of land that connects India's seven north-eastern States with the rest of the country. What makes Doklam Plateau and Chumbi

Valley important for China's strategic calculus is the fact that control over the area would make it easier for its People's Liberation Army to conduct military manoeuvres aimed at blocking the Siliguri Corridor.

**The marked region also known as "*The Chicken Neck*" connects the India with the North Eastern States and see how close the DOKLAM area to it.**

## India's commitment to defend Bhutan:

Under the 2007 India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty, the two sides have agreed to "cooperate closely with each other on issues relating to their national interests. Neither Government shall allow the use of its territory for activities harmful to the national security and interest of the other."

Under the previous treaty, India was to "guide" Bhutan on foreign and defence policies. The language of the 2007 treaty, is meant to respect the sensitivities of Bhutan regarding its sovereignty. But the reality is that the Indian military is virtually responsible for protecting Bhutan from the kind of external threat that the Chinese military poses.

The Eastern Army Command and the Eastern Air Command both have integrated protection of Bhutan into their role. The Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT), headed by a Major General, plays a critical role in training Bhutanese security personnel.

# World's sharpest LASER developed:

World's sharpest laser has been developed with record-breaking precision that can help make optical atomic clocks more precise as well as test Einstein's theory of relativity.

In theory, laser light has only one colour, frequency or wavelength. In practice, the spectrum of most types of lasers can, however, reach from a few kHz to a few MHz in width, which is not good enough for numerous experiments requiring high precision.

This precision can be useful for various applications such as optical atomic clocks, radioastronomy, precision spectroscopy, testing the theory of relativity and carry out new precision measurements on ultracold atoms.

## What is LASER?

The letters in the word laser stand for **L**ight **A**mplification by **S**timulated **E**mission of **R**adiation. A laser is an unusual light source. It is quite different from a light bulb or a flash light. Lasers produce a very narrow beam of light. This type of light is useful for lots of technologies and instruments—even some that you might use at home!

Laser light stays focused and does not spread out much (like a flashlight would), laser beams can travel very long distances. They can also concentrate a lot of energy on a very small area.

## Application of LASER:

They are used in precision tools and can cut through diamonds or thick metal.
They can also be designed to help in delicate surgeries.
Lasers are used for recording and retrieving information.
They are used in communications and in carrying TV and internet signals.

> Spectrometers can help scientists figure out what things are made of. For example, the **Curiosity rover** uses a laser spectrometer to see what kinds of chemicals are in certain rocks on Mars.

LASER is also used in laser printers, bar code scanners, and DVD players. Lasers are also used in instruments called spectrometers.

# END OF EBOLA OUTBREAK IN CONGO- WHO

It was DRC's eighth outbreak of EVD since the discovery of the virus in the country in 1976. It killed four of the eight people infected in the central African country.

## About Ebola Virus
Ebola is a serious and deadly virus transmitted by animals and humans. Although the Ebola virus has been present for more than 35 years, the largest outbreak began in West Africa in March 2014.

## What Causes Ebola?

The Ebola virus belongs to the viral family *Filoviridae.* Scientists also call it Filovirus. These virus types cause hemorrhagic fever or profuse bleeding inside and outside the body.

The Ebola virus likely originated in African fruit bats. The virus is known as a zoonotic virus because it's transmitted to humans from animals. Humans can also transfer the virus to each other. The following animals can transmit the virus:

- chimpanzees
- forest antelopes
- gorillas
- monkeys
- porcupines

Since people may handle these infected animals, the virus can be transmitted via the animal's blood and body fluids.

**What Are the Symptoms of Ebola?**
Extreme fatigue is often the first and most prominent symptom. Other symptoms include:

- diarrhea
- fever
- headache
- muscle pain
- stomach pain
- unexplained bleeding or bruising
- vomiting

# MERGER OF NMCE AND ICEX COMMODITY EXCHANGE

National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE), India's first demutualised online national multi-commodities exchange will merge with Indian Commodity Exchange (ICEX).
The merged entity will create India's third biggest commodity exchange. The largest commodity exchange First largest:-Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) Second Largest:-National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX).

**What is commodity trading?**

Commodity trading is an exchange where various commodities and derivatives products are traded. Most commodity markets trade in agricultural products and other raw materials and contracts based on them. These contracts can include spot prices, futures, forwards and options on futures.

**How does Commodity market work?**

Typically, you are not buying physical commodities. You are buying a "future," that is, a contract requiring you to deliver (or accept delivery of) a specific grade of coffee at a specific place on a specific date. A coffee farmer might use futures to manage their own production risk. For example, let's say the farmer expects to produce 1,000 tons of coffee, and knows it will be ready for sale in September. He might sell that equivalent amount of futures for September delivery, thereby locking in his sale price. There's no more risk from fluctuating prices.

At present, India has six national commodity exchanges namely,
1) Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX),
2) National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX),
3) National Multi-Commodity Exchange (NMCE)
4) Indian Commodity Exchange (ICEX),
5) ACE Derivatives exchange (ACE) and
6) Universal commodity exchange (UCX)

Government had established regulatory body is Forward Markets Commission (FMC) in 1953.
It was merged with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in September 2015.

# Study shown Sundarban Mangrove depleted

From 1986 to 2012, 124.418 sq km or about 5.5% of the mangrove cover of Sunderbans was lost.

This process in response to climate change and sea level rise poses a serious threat to the mangrove forest in future. The paper also notes that the mean sea level rise shows a rise by 2.6-4 mm a year. It can be considered a driving factor for coastal erosion, coastal flooding, and an increase in the number of tidal creeks. The Sunderbans is the largest mangrove forest in the world and is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

**Mangrove Forests and Blue carbon storage**

Coastal strips cover 6% of the earth's forests, but they make up a massive 20% of the deforestation carbon.

The mangrove forests also sequester each year a large amount of **'blue carbon'**. But with habit degradation very large pools of previously-sequestered carbon residing mostly in sediments, can be released to the atmosphere. Healthy mangrove forests, as well as marshes and seagrass meadows, are important and efficient method for sequestering carbon dioxide as 'blue carbon'.

**About Sundarban:**

The Sundarbans is the largest forested forest in the world, as the largest mangrove forest in the coastal environment.

In 1997, Sundarban was recognized as **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. Forests, known for its self-contained Royal Bengal Tiger, as well as numerous species of animals, including **Chital Deer, Crocodile and Snakes**.

The Sundarban forest lies in the vast delta on the Bay of Bengal formed by the super confluence of the **Ganges, Hooghly, Padma, Brahmaputra and Meghna** rivers across southern Bangladesh.

Sundarbans features two ecoregions — "Sundarbans freshwater swamp forests" and "Sundarbans mangroves"

# $220 million Loan Agreement for Rajasthan State Highways Investment Program between India and ADB

The Union Government and Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a $220 million loan agreement for improving connectivity as well as transport efficiency and safety on State Highways of Rajasthan.

**About Asian Development Bank**

1- The ADB is a regional development bank which aims to promote social and economic development in Asia.

2- It was established on 19 December 1966.

3- It is headquartered in Manila, Philippines.

4- ADB now has 67 members, of which 48 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside.

5- The ADB has been modeled closely on the World Bank.

6- It has similar weighted voting system where votes are distributed in proportion with members' capital subscriptions.

7- As of 2014, Japan is the largest shareholder (capital subscription) of ADB having 15.7% shares followed US (15.6%), China (6.5%), India (6.4%), and Australia (5.8%).

**National Highways in India**

1- These are a network of highways that is managed and maintained by agencies of the Government of India.

2- These highways measured over 165,000 km (in 2016)

3- National highways constitute 1.8% of Indian roads, they carry 40% of the traffic.

4- The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is the nodal agency responsible for building, upgrading and maintaining most of the national highways network.

5-It operates under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

6- The longest national highway is NH44,which runs between Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu

**How are National Highways numbered in India?**

1. All **North-South** highways will carry **EVEN number**

2. All **East-West** highways will have **ODD numbers**

3. All major Highways will be **single digit or double digit** in number (Read the exception in point F)

4. **North-South highways** will **increase their numbers from East to West**. For example, a particular North-South highway in Central India or Western India will have a higher number than the one in East India. To be specific, now you can guess that NH4 is somewhere in East India where as highway 44 may be towards the west of India while both runs north-south due to the even numbering

5. Similarly **East-West highways** will increase their numbers as we move **from North to South**. By this logic NH1 will be running East-West somewhere in North India while NH 83 may be somewhere down south. Of course, there may be a minor confusion among some roads that may be running diagonally in stretches

6. **THREE digit** numbered highways are **secondary routes or branches** of a main highway. For example, 144, 244, 344 etc will be the branches of the main National highway 44. Please note that since NH44 (NS Corridor) runs the length of the country from North to South a side shoot say 144 may be up north while something like 944 may be down south

7. **Suffixes A, B, C, D etc** are added to the three digit sub highways to indicate very small spin-offs or stretches of sub-highways. For example, **966A, 527B** etc

# Global Skill Park laid down in Bhopal

**Union Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** laid the foundation stone of the **India's biggest Global Skill Park in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh**.

**About Global Skill Park-**
The objective of the Global Skill Park is to prepare skilled youths who could get jobs in private companies as per their requirements. Besides, the youths will be able to get employment opportunities in foreign countries.

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**Government's past initiative in Skilling India**:-
1- National Skill Development Mission
2- National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015
3- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
4- Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana
5- National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme
6- Financial Assistance for Skill Training of Persons with Disabilities
7- Suryamitra Skill Development Programme
8- UDAAN
9- SKILL INDIA PROGRAM

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Thus, the skill park will function on the spirit of 'With Industry -For Industry'. The park will have capacity to impart skill training to 1000 students every year by trainers of international standard. The courses conducted for skill training at the park will also have provision of international joint certification.



BharatNiti
www.bharatniti.in

**SKILL INDIA**

1 YEAR OF MODI GOVT.

**India's Demographic Dividend**

India to become world's youngest country by 2020 (average age of 29 years)

64% of India's population to be in the age group of 15–59 years by 2026

1.5 crore youth join job market every year, but only 2 % gets trained

**Skill Development Programme**

Aims at providing skill development to 50 Crore youth by 2020

Separate Skill Development Ministry created

# President gives assent to Kambala

The President gave his **assent to the promulgation of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Amendment) Ordinance, 2017**, paving the way for conducting Kambala and bullock-cart races in Karnataka.

In pursuance of the proviso to **clause (1) of article 213 of the Constitution of India**, the President of India hereby approves the promulgation of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Amendment) Ordinance, 2017 by the Governor of Karnataka,".

**Background:**

1. Following protests by the public and Kambala organisers in Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts, **the Karnataka Assembly on February 13 passed the bill to exempt Kambala and bullock-cart racing from the ambit of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960**.

2. Though the Karnataka government sent the bill for the President's assent, it was returned, suggesting modifications. Following this, the state government modified the bill and issued an ordinance, since the Karnataka Legislative Assembly was not in session.

3. The **new legislation only permits those events in which animals are not subjected to "unnecessary pain" and suffering**.

4. The bill also says that the sport is vital to "preserving and promoting traditions and culture among the people in the state".

5. **Kambala (traditional slush track buffalo racing) and bullock-cart racing were barred in Karnataka** after animal rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals filed a petition against the practice.

6. The state will now have to pass a fresh amendment bill in the legislature and send it to the President for assent.

> **About Kambala**
> Kambala is the traditional slush track buffalo race that is held annually in coastal districts of Karnataka to entertain rural people of the area. Slushy/marshy paddy field track is used for

# SpaceX's Dragon returns

**SpaceX's Dragon cargo spacecraft returned to Earth from the International Space Station (ISS)** on 3 July 2017, **bringing back the first Chinese experiment ever to visit the orbiting laboratory**.

The unmanned spacecraft splashed down in the Pacific Ocean, about five hours after leaving the space station. **It wrapped up SpaceX's 11th contracted cargo re-supply mission for the US space agency NASA**.

**Details**

1. Good splashdown of Dragon confirmed completing **first re-flight of a commercial spacecraft to and from the Space Station**.

2. **Dragon is returning more than 1,860 kg of cargo**, including science samples from human and animal research, biotechnology studies, physical science investigations and education activities.

3. One of the science samples was the **first-ever Chinese experiment brought to the space station**, which is fully commercial, under an agreement with Houston-based NanoRacks, which offers services for the commercial utilisation of the orbiting laboratory.

4. The experiment from the Beijing Institute of Technology was aimed at studying the effects of the **space radiation environment on DNA and the changes in mutation rate**.

5. Unlike the disposable cargo ships that service the space station — like Russia's Progress vehicles, Orbital ATK's Cygnus craft and Japan's HTV-2 vehicles —SpaceX's Dragon capsules are equipped with a heat shield that allow cargo to be shipped back to Earth

**Other Experiments:**

1- Samples from a tissue regeneration and bone defect study, which studied how weightlessness affected the regrowth of lost bone and tissue from wounds;

2- a prototype laser communications device for faster data transmission;

3- a prototype for a space radiation proof computer for long space missions; and

4- a robotic refueling technology experiment for in-space refueling and satellite servicing.

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**About SpaceX**
**Space Exploration Technologies Corporation**, better known as **SpaceX**, is an American aerospace manufacturer and space transport services company headquartered in Hawthorne, California. (Founded by Elon Musk)
**It's a PRIVATE Company.**
**Founder- Elon Musk**

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# 97% discom debt covered under UDAY Scheme

Power ministry has announced that about 97% of the total outstanding debt of all state power distribution companies (discoms) has been covered under the Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY).

**Reason for large DISCOM debts-**

India's power distribution segment is plagued by two types of losses:-

- **Transmission & Distribution (T&D) Losses:** These losses are due to inefficiency in transmission sector and have mainly occurred due to feeder metering in the past. Please note that a substantial portion of T&D loss, including theft of electricity gets attributed to agricultural consumption.

- **Aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses:** These losses refer to the difference between units input into the system and the units for which the payment is collected.

Transmission and distribution losses run up to 25 per cent of the supply. When losses such as power thefts are also accounted for, then it escalates to 35 per cent.

**Other reasons:**

Power Theft

- Non-billing
- Incorrect billing
- Inefficiency in collection
- Leakage in transmission and distribution system
- Lack of investment

## Power Value Chain



## DISCOMs are the weakest link in providing 24X7 Power for All

### About UDAYA SCHEME:

*UDAY (Ujwal DISCOMS Assurance Yojana)*
**Aim**: To envision the Prime Minister's 24x7 power for all (100% village electrification) which is prerequisite to hassle-free implementation of projects like '*Make in India'* and *'Digital India'.*

**HOW IT WORKS?**

1. State governments 75% of the total debt of discoms as of sep 30 and pay back the lenders by selling government bonds at coupon rate of

8%-9%. 50% of loan will be taken in 2016 and rest in 2017. It will make state governments accountable for prevailing situations of discoms.

2. Remaining 25% concerned companies will be issuing bonds to raise funds and repriced at the minimum lending rate of banks plus 0.1 percent.

States are allowed to relax on FBRM act 2003 and Another great point about this plan with respect to the banks is that these state government bonds cannot be counted against banks statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) requirements – presumably the RBI was roped in for this provision already.

## SC allows abortion of ailing foetus

The Supreme Court allowed a Mumbai woman to abort her 24-week-old foetus that had no kidneys and would most likely die after birth..

Abortion in India is legal only up to twenty weeks of pregnancy under specific conditions and situations, which are broadly defined as: the continuance of the pregnancy would involve a risk to the life of the pregnant woman or of grave injury of physical or mental health.

This is the second case this year in which the Supreme Court has intervened to allow an exception under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971.

**What did the Court Observe in this case?**

- The court observed that the right of a **woman to have a reproductive choice was part of personal liberty**
- Every woman had a **sacrosanct right to bodily integrity**.

## LEGALLY SPEAKING

According to India's abortion laws only a qualified doctor can perform an abortion on a woman at an approved clinic or hospital. The Indian abortion laws fall under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, which was enacted by Parliament in 1971. The MTP Act clearly states that a pregnancy can be aborted only under certain conditions, such as:

- **Woman's physical and/or mental health are endangered by the pregnancy**
- The woman is facing the birth of a potentially disabled or malformed child
- **The woman is a rape victim**
- **The girl is minor and unmarried. Consent of a guardian is needed**
- The woman is a "lunatic"
- **Pregnancies that are a result of failure in sterilisation**
- The duration of pregnancy is under 20 weeks

The MTP Act made the abortions legal up to 20 weeks of pregnancy.

1. The termination of pregnancy requires the opinion of two doctors.
2. The abortion can happen if the physical or mental health of the mother is in danger due to pregnancy.
3. If there is a risk of the birth of a handicapped or malformed baby.
4. Pregnancy of unmarried girls under 18 years of age, with the consent of the guardian.
5. Pregnancy resulting due to rape.
6. Pregnancy resulting due to the failure of sterilisation.

## India, Israel sign 7 pacts

India and Israel on 5 July 2017 elevated their ties to the "**strategic partnership**" level with a vow to do "**much more together**" to combat growing radicalisation and terrorism and pitched for "strong measures" against those financing and providing sanctuaries to terror groups.

The issue of terror and "strategic threats" along with various other topics like **cooperation in defence and security**, **water**, **agriculture**, **space** and West

Asia figured prominently in the talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem.

**Full details:**

1. India and Israel signed 7 agreements to step-up cooperation in key sectors like **space, agriculture and water conservation**.

2. MoU signed between **Department of Science & Technology and Israel's National Technological Innovation Authority**for setting up of $40 million worth India-Israel Industrial R&D & Technical Innovation Fund.

3. Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation, and Israel's Ministry of National Infrastructure, Energy & Water Resources signed a pact on **National Campaign for Water Conservation in India.**

4. The second one was signed between **Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam and the Ministry of National Infrastructure, Energy & Water Resources on state water utility reform in India.**

5. In the farm sector, the two countries have agreed upon **India-Israel development cooperation - a three-year work programme in agriculture from 2018 to 2020.** They also agreed for cooperation between the ISRO and the Israel Space Agency (ISA) regarding cooperation in atomic clocks

6. India and Israel also **agreed to set up a $40 million fund for industrial Research and Development, and innovation fund**, with both countries contributing $20 million each.

7. The two leaders recognised that terrorism poses a grave threat to global peace and stability and reiterated their strong commitment to combat it in all its forms and manifestations.

# India ranks 23rd among 165 nations in Global cyber security index

India is ranked 23rd on the index with a score of 0.683 and has been listed in the "maturing" category, which refers to 77 countries that have developed complex commitments to cybersecurity and engage in cybersecurity programmes and initiatives.

**Which agency releases this index?** UN telecommunications agency International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

## Global Cybersecurity Index ranking 2017

| Country | GCI score* | 2017 ranking | 2015 ranking |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Singapore** | **0.92** | **1** | **6** |
| United States | 0.91 | 2 | 1 |
| Malaysia | 0.89 | 3 | 3 |
| Oman | 0.87 | 4 | 3 |
| Estonia | 0.84 | 5 | 5 |
| Mauritius | 0.82 | 6 | 9 |
| Australia | 0.82 | 7 | 3 |
| Georgia | 0.81 | 8 | 12 |
| France | 0.81 | 9 | 9 |
| Canada | 0.81 | 10 | 2 |

*Normalised

Source: U.N. INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION
STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

**Singapore has a near-perfect approach to cybersecurity**, but many other rich countries have holes in their defences and some poorer countries are showing them how it should be done, a UN survey showed on 5 July 2017.

Wealth breeds cybercrime, but it does not automatically generate cybersecurity, so governments need to make sure they are prepared, the survey by the **UN International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** said. There is still an evident gap between countries in terms of awareness, understanding, knowledge and finally capacity to deploy **the proper strategies, capabilities and programmes**, the survey said.

**More details:-**

1. The **United States came second in the ITU's Global Cybersecurity Index**, but many of the other highly rated countries were small or developing economies.

2. The **rest of the top 10 were** Malaysia, Oman, Estonia, Mauritius, Australia, Georgia, France and Canada. Russia ranked 11th.

3. **India was 23rd**, one place ahead of Germany, and China was 34th.

4. The ranking was **based on countries' legal, technical and organisational institutions, their educational and research capabilities**, and their cooperation in information-sharing networks.

5. **Cybersecurity is an ecosystem where laws, organizations, skills, cooperation and technical implementation need to be in harmony to be most effective.**

6. The degree of interconnectivity of networks implies that anything and everything can be exposed, and everything from national critical infrastructure to our basic human rights can be compromised."

7. The crucial **first step was to adopt a national security strategy**, but 50% of countries have none, the survey said.

8. Among the countries that ranked higher than their **economic development was 57th-placed North Korea**, which was let down by its "cooperation" score but still ranked three spots ahead of much-richer Spain.

![Shiksha IAS Academy logo — Your Dreams, Our Mission!]

9. The smallest rich countries also scored badly—Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino were all well down the second half of the table. The Vatican ranked 186th out of 195 countries in the survey.

10. But no country did worse than **Equatorial Guinea, which scored zero**.

## Malabar war games: India, Japan, US to deploy largest warships

**Amid heightened border tensions between Beijing and New Delhi near the Sikkim-Bhutan tri-junction**, **India, Japan and the US** will showcase their naval might with their largest warships in the Malabar war games scheduled for July 10 in the Indian Ocean.

**The Malabar war games are strategically significant for India** as Beijing very recently deployed one of their submarines in the Indian Ocean region, with the Indian Navy picking up information of an '**unusual surge**' in the number of Chinese vessels entering the region.



MALABAR EXERCISE

➤ India steadily stepping up strategic partnerships with both **US & Japan**, with a major thrust on maritime cooperation

➤ But **India wants to come across as "a neutral player"** in ongoing jostling between China & US-Japan in the Asia Pacific

➤ Both **US & Japan keen on the latter's participation** in Malabar exercise in Bay of Bengal in October

➤ But **India has so far kept Japan out of initial planning** for the exercise

➤ Inclusion of Japan, as also Australia & Singapore, in Malabar exercise in Bay of Bengal in 2007 had led China to protest against the **"emerging security axis"** against it

**More details:**

1. The Indian Navy is being assisted by **Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) very own GSAT-7 satellite**, which is also called **Rukmini**.

2. It was **launched in September 29, 2013**, **Rukmini is Indian Navy's military communication satellite** that aids in providing information in the high seas and strengthens India's maritime security.

3. The **Malabar tri-lateral exercise** will witness around **15 warships, two submarines, numerous fighter planes, helicopters and surveillance aircraft** participating in this much-awaited exercise.

4. The Malabar war games stands in consonance with New Delhi's '**Act East Policy**' and aims to foster deeper relations with US and Japan.

5. Aside from INS Vikramaditya, India's largest warship and the third aircraft carrier inducted into the Navy, USS Nimitz, Japan's largest helicopter carrier JS Izumo, and many other warships, submarines would take part in the games.

6. **Besides at-sea training off India's eastern coast in the Bay of Bengal**, the Malabar war games will also feature the three countries sharing their military expertise on land as well, with special focus on **Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW)**.

7. The Malabar war games come in the **backdrop of the recent standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in Doklam area in Sikkim**, with the Chinese media stepping up its

# COUNTERING THE DRAGON

**NAVAL EXERCISES**

**MALABAR:** India-US in Bay of Bengal in Oct 2015

**JIMEX:** India-Japan in Bay of Bengal in Nov 2015

**IN-RAN:** India-Australia in Bay of Bengal in Oct-Nov 2015

**INDO-THAI CORPAT:** India-Thailand along IMBL in Oct-Nov 2015

**IN-MN CORPAT:** India-Myanmar along IMBL in Feb-March 2016

*ANNUAL DEFENCE BUDGET
**MBT: MAIN BATTLE TANKS

|  | CHINA | INDIA |
|---|---|---|
| BUDGET* | $141 billion | $40 billion |
| ARSENAL | Large nuclear missile arsenal with ICBMs & SLBMs. DF-31A missile can hit targets 11,200km away, while JL-2 SLBM has 7,200km range | Limited nuclear missile arsenal with no operational ICBMs & SLBMs. Agni-IV (3,500km) & Agni-V (5,000km) still being tested |
| ARMED FORCES | 2.2 million troops | 1.3 million troops |
| SUBMARINES | 56 (5 nuclear-powered; set to induct 5 advanced Jin-class nuclear subs with JL-2 missiles) | 14 (1 nuclear-powered without strategic missiles; ageing conventional fleet) |
| WARSHIPS | 75 (1 aircraft carrier) | Over 30 (2 carriers) |
| FIGHTER JETS | Over 1,600 | Over 550 |

# J&K state legislature passed GST

**The Jammu and Kashmir Assembly** passed a resolution to pave the way for the implementation of GST.
**How the government would safeguard the special status of J&K.**

1. **Section 5 of the J&K constitution**, which grants the state exclusive powers of taxation, would be protected in the presidential order on GST.

2. **Article 370, which accords a special position to the state**, will not be compromised in the presidential order.

3. There will be enough safeguards to empower J&K in the GST Council.

4. **The GST Council would come under the ambit of Article 370**.

5. Exclusive powers of taxation by the state government would not be endangered.

The resolution stated: "**This House resolves that the Government of Jammu and Kashmir** may give consent to the adoption of the GST regime by application of relevant amendments made to the Constitution of India in a modified manner to safeguard the existing special constitutional position of J&K in the Union of India and the legislative powers under the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir."

# No-detention policy to go from 2018

The government has decided to do away with the no-detention policy for students from the next academic session.

**What is no detention policy?**
No child admitted to a school will be held back in any class or expelled till the completion of elementary education covering Classes 1 to 8 under the Right to Education Act, 2009.

**Merits of NDP**:

1- Students are able to cope up with the stress of school more easily.

2-Along with academics, students can handle co-curricular activities as well.

3- They can focus on their interests.

4- Makes more space for the increasing population trying to receive education

5- Economically weaker section students will be spared from discrimination.

**Demerits of NDP**:

1- The concept of reward and punishment which encourages a student to learn is negated.

2- Deteriorating academic standards.

3- Makes students lethargic.

4- Does not enable them to be competitive and mature enough to handle failure.

**Whether policy backfired?**

The basic objective behind this policy was to *prevent drop-outs*. The no detention policy in the RTE does not mean the abolition of assessment rather it calls for replacement of the traditional system of evaluation with continuous and comprehensive assessment that is non- threatening. The policy also intends to free the students from the pressure and fear of examination and give them a stress free academic environment and childhood.

However, somehow the policy has backfired on primary education system. The policy resulted in remarkable improvement in enrolments but then academic standard dropped down. No pass fail system means there is a negligence of children to study. Even parents started taking primary education for granted because they know that their wards would be promoted to next class irrespective of their performance in examination. Same is with teachers. Earlier, failure of students would put a question mark on teacher's performance also; but now it does not make any difference, inviting a lax attitude in teachers too.

**Vasudev Devnani Panel**

In December, Centre-appointment panel, led by Rajasthan education minister Vasudev Devnani, has recommended revocation of the 'no-detention policy'. The panel had sought opinion of 22 states, of which 18 favoured revoking the policy. The key recommendations of the panel are as follows:

- Introduction of state level compulsory exams for classes V and VIII. Students, who fail to achieve the required learning level, will be given one more opportunity to clear the exam in one month time. In case they fail to achieve the learning level again, they have to repeat the respective class.

- No-detention policy should be applicable to classes I to IV, VI and VII subjected to required learning levels. Those who fail to achieve the learning level will be marked as unsuccessful in their report cards.

**Subramanian panel recommendation**

The no detention policy in schools should be applicable till Class V and exams be held from Class VI onwards, the Subramanian committee formed by the government to formulate a New Education Policy (NEP) has recommended. However, in case a child does not pass in the first instance, he or she should be given two more chances to appear in the exam. The committee in its report is also learnt to have devoted a chapter on the impact of coaching classes for entrance exams.

**Way forward**

The poor learning outcomes of schools are caused by many factors of learning. One of them is the pupil-teacher ratio. Many government schools in India are facing acute shortage of teachers. And the available teachers are burdened with non-school activities. Until the desired pupil-teacher ratio is achieved, it is unreasonable to expect CCE (Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation) and NDP to succeed. Other factor responsible for poor learning outcomes is the lack of trained teachers. Lack of training has caused the confusion among the teachers on what their role is in implementation of CCE guidelines. Teacher training must be revised in line with the requirements of CCE. Instead of strengthening the foundation to implement the reforms, bringing back the old pass-fail system threatens to undermine the egalitarian promise of the RTE.

## India declares itself free from Bird Flu

India has declared itself free from Bird Flu (highly pathogenic **Avian Influenza – H5N1 and H5N8**) and notified it to the World Organisation for Animal Health.

**Background:**

1. All the **outbreaks of Avian Influenza (HPAI)** mentioned above were notified to World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the control and containment operations were carried out as **per the Action Plan on Preparedness, Control and Containment of Avian Influenza**.

2. Surveillance was carried out throughout the country and around the areas of the outbreaks since completion of the operation (including culling, disinfection and clean-up) and surveillance in the states showed no evidence of presence of Avian Influenza Virus.

3. In view of the above, India has declared itself free from **Avian Influenza (H5N8 and H5N1)** from 6th June, 2017 and notified the same to OIE.

**About H5N1?**

1. **H5N1 is a type of influenza virus** that causes a highly infectious, severe respiratory disease in birds called **avian influenza (or "bird flu")**.

2. Human cases of H5N1 avian influenza occur occasionally, but it is difficult to transmit the infection from person to person.

3. When people do become infected, the mortality rate is about 60%.

**About H5N8**

1. **H5N8 is a subtype of the Influenza A virus** (sometimes called bird flu virus).

2. **H5N8 is considered one of the less pathogenic subtypes for humans**, it is beginning to become more pathogenic.

3. H5N8 has previously been used in place of the highly pathogenic H1N1 in studies.

## Student-Scientist connect programme "JIGYASA"

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), has joined hands with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) to implement this programme.



**Objective**: Connecting school students and scientists so as to extend student's classroom learning with that of a very well planned research laboratory based learning.

It is an example of "Scientific Social Responsibility (SSR)" of scientific community and institutions.

The "JIGYASA" would inculcate the culture of inquisitiveness on one hand and scientific temper on the other, amongst the school students and their teachers.