

October 16th news

International issues:

- **Pakistan Drops Terrorism Charges against Hafiz Saeed**

The Pakistan government has withdrawn terrorism charges against Mumbai attack mastermind and JuD chief Hafiz Saeed, paving the way for his release.

On January 31, Saeed and his four aides were detained by the Punjab government for 90 days under the preventative detention of the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997. They have been under house arrest since then.

A three-member federal judicial review board headed by Justice Ejaz Afzal Khan of the Supreme Court said that the government did not require the extension of detention of Saeed and his four accomplices. Charges of terrorism have not been included in the new order.

Bilateral issues:

- **India starts an implementation of motor pact with Bangladesh**

India has embarked on the implementation of the BBIN motor pact with Bangladesh and Nepal, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said on the 15th of October.

The Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) Initiative is a sub regional architecture of countries in Eastern South Asia, a subregion of South Asia. It meets through official representation of member states to formulate, implement and review quadrilateral agreements across areas such as water resources management, connectivity of power, transport and infrastructure.

India in June 2015 signed the major sub-regional transport project, Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA), for the seamless transit of passenger and cargo vehicles among them. However, Bhutan could not get public and parliamentary support for it.

Bhutan, which had inked the pact could not get public and parliamentary support for ratification of the agreement, while India, Bangladesh and Nepal have already ratified the pact.

The four SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) countries had in June 2015 signed the Motor Vehicle Agreement. The pact aims at allowing motor vehicles of all categories registered in three countries to move freely in the region.

The government has earlier said that the pact will realise the ultimate objective of free movement of people and goods in the region and said that this would be supplemented through the building and upgrading roads, railways and waterways infrastructure.

On bus services with Nepal and Bangladesh, Gadkari said proposals to start such services on Kathmandu-Bodhgaya, Janakpur-Patna and Dehradun-Mahendranagar routes are underway.

Bus services between Delhi and Kathmandu, Varanasi- Kathmandu, Delhi-Mahendranagar and Delhi-Pokhra have already been started. India and Nepal Bus Service pact was signed in November 2014.

Economy issues:

- Indian economy on very solid track in mid-term: IMF chief

According to International Monetary Fund Chief Christine Lagarde, the Indian economy was on a “very solid track” in the mid-term, days after the International Monetary Fund lowered its growth forecast for the current and the next year.

Describing the two major recent reforms — demonetisation and Goods and Services Tax (GST) — as a monumental effort, she said it was hardly surprising that there “is a little bit of a short-term slowdown” as a result.

The IMF last week lowered India’s growth projection to 6.7% in 2017, 0.5 percentage points less than its previous two forecasts in April and July, attributing it to demonetisation and introduction of the GST.

It also lowered the country’s growth for 2018 to 7.4%, 0.3 percentage points less than its previous two projections in July and April. India’s growth rate in 2016 was 7.1%, which saw an upward revision of 0.3 percentage points from its April report.

Sports issues:

- Federer triumphs

Roger Federer , on the 15th of October, defeated his old rival Rafael Nadal in Shanghai Masters. It was a 94th title for Roger Federer

Persons in news:

- Mehboob Shemsher Khan passed away

The first swimmer to have represented India in the Olympics, Mehboob Shemsher Khan, died of cardiac arrest at Kaithepalle village near Repalle town in the Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh

- Khan served in the Army for nearly 24 years and retired a subedar
- Khan set a national record in the 200 m butterfly stroke in 1954, and broke all records at the national meet in Bangalore in 1955, earning a slot in the Olympic squad.
- Khan, who joined the Army in 1946, fought two crucial battles: The 1962 war against China and the 1971 war against Pakistan.
- He was inducted into the Madras Engineer Group in Bangalore and completed nearly 24 years of service in the Army.