

## **November 15<sup>th</sup> news:**

### **International:**

#### **ASEAN summit silence on Rohingya**

After two days of ceremonious meetings, Southeast Asian leaders missed talks about two major human rights issues affecting their region: Myanmar's handling of the Rohingya crisis and the Philippines' bloody campaign against illegal drug traffickers.

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, this year's Chairman of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), managed to fend off criticism of his "war on drugs", which has left thousands of people dead.

Duterte spared his Myanmar counterpart, de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi, from having to explain or account for the plight of the 600,000 Rohingya who have been forced to flee the country to Bangladesh.

- Driven out by violence from state forces, the displaced Rohingya are languishing at refugee camps. United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres has described their situation as "catastrophic".
- In the penultimate draft of Duterte's "Chairman's Statement" - a document issued by the host leader to sum up the results of the group's discussions - the ASEAN leaders briefly tackled the Rohingya situation as a matter of "disaster resiliency".
- There was no other mention of the issue in the 26-page document.
- Meanwhile, the document contained two paragraphs on the illegal drug problem and how the member countries have worked together in efforts to solve it. There was, however, no mention of Duterte's campaign against illegal drugs or its victims.
- The document's segment on human rights tackled neither the Rohingya crisis nor the drug war.
- A statement released in September by ASEAN foreign ministers on the "humanitarian situation in Rakhine State" foreshadowed the leaders' silence on the matter
- Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, which comprise ASEAN, have agreed never to say or do anything unless they are in "consensus", as well as to never interfere in one another's domestic affairs.

#### **Tenth South Asia Economic Summit begins in Nepal**

The tenth South Asia Economic Summit kicked off in Nepal on 14<sup>th</sup> November with an aim to deepen economic integration and attaining inclusive and sustainable growth in the sub-region.

The three-day regional summit is being organised by National Planning Commission of Nepal's Ministry of Commerce in collaboration with the South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment.

The main objective of the summit is to identify and prioritise challenges and opportunities in deepening regional economic integration for attaining goals of inclusive and sustainable growth for South Asia.

Over 200 delegates, including ministers, members of Parliament, top government officials, diplomats, planners and think tanks from the South Asian countries are attending the summit.

On the first day of summit, it was that the need to ensure food and energy security and promoting cooperation in tourism, trade, energy generation, climate change among the member countries for attaining inclusive and sustainable growth in the region.

South Asia is known as the least integrated region in the world mainly due to lack of connectivity and inadequate availability of infrastructure, experts at the summit pointed out

Intra-regional trade and investment among the South Asian countries is just five per cent of the total trade and investment of South Asian countries with other countries, which necessitates more collaboration and increasing connectivity among the countries of the region

The summit includes 18 different sessions in which a wide range of issues including regional trade potentials, energy generation, cooperation on power trade, collaboration for reducing disaster impact and employment generation will be discussed.

The main objective of the summit is to help the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) grouping to process on economic development.

#### **National:**

#### **Rajyavardhan Rathore releases the India Youth Development Index and Report 2017**

Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports (Independent Charge) Rajyavardhan Rathore on 13<sup>th</sup> November released the India Youth Development Index and Report 2017.

The objective of constructing the India Youth Development Index (YDI) 2017 is to track the trends in Youth Development across the States.

The Index enables recognizing the high and low performing states, identifies the weak domains and informs the policy makers the priority areas of intervention for youth development in the states.

The Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD), Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, an Institute of National Importance has come out with Youth Development Index and Report 2017. This is a pioneering attempt made by the Institute in 2010 which it followed up with the India Youth Development Index in 2017.

Constructing Youth Development Index for the year 2017 was done using the latest definition of youth as used in National Youth Policy – 2014 (India) and World Youth Development Report of Commonwealth (15 – 29 years) as well as using the Commonwealth Indicators in order to facilitate Global comparison.

In the India Youth Development Index 2017, the first five dimensions are retained same as that of Global YDI. The indicators and weights have been modified based on the availability of data at sub-national level and the importance of the indicators in explaining Youth Development with the aim of capturing

the multidimensional properties that indicate progress in youth development at the sub-national level i.e., state level. Global YDI is different from YDI constructed for India in one unique way; YDI for India adds a new domain, social inclusion, to assess the inclusiveness of societal progress as structural inequalities persist in Indian society. This construction helps to identify the gaps that require intensification of policy intervention.

This report is of immense value to enable comparisons across geographical areas and categories, as human development index has done in comparing the development situation across regions, nations and localities. The index also measures the achievements made besides serving as an advocacy tool for youth development and facilitates to identify priority areas for development of Policy and Interventions.

As an effective decision – support tool, the YDI-2017 will enable the policy makers track the national and the regional progress as well setbacks in youth development policies, planning, priority identification and implementation strategies. Besides providing insights to suggest alternatives and options, it also aids in judicious allocation of resources.

## **Bilateral**

### **Japan announces visa relaxation measures for Indians**

In a bid to boost people-to people exchanges and help businesses, Japan on 14<sup>th</sup> November announced visa relaxation measures effective from January 1, 2018, for Indian nationals seeking multiple-entry and short-stay visas.

According to a statement issued by the Japanese Embassy, under the new measures, an applicant need no longer furnish employment certificate and explanation letter stating the reason for applying for multiple-entry visa while seeking this category of visa.

Applicants will be able to apply for multiple-entry visa with only three documents -- passport, visa application form with photo and documents to prove the financial capability (for tourism purpose) or documents to prove the applicants affiliation to certain enterprises (for business purpose).

According to the statement, multiple-entry visas with validity of five years maximum and period of stay of maximum 90 days will be issued to applicants who have travel records to Japan twice or more in the last one year. In this case, the eligible applicants may submit only their passports and visa application form.

In February this year, Japan introduced the simplification of visa application procedure for single entry visa for Indian students to promote visit of Indian youths to Japan. This allowed for Indian students, graduate students and alumni of universities in India to submit certificate of student status or graduation instead of the document to prove financial capability in the application for single entry visa for short-term stay.

### **India, Philippines ink four agreements**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held bilateral meeting the Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte in Manila on 14<sup>th</sup> November. The meetings took place on the sidelines of the ASEAN and related summits that are underway in the Philippines capital.

Four agreements were signed by both the countries in areas including Defence Cooperation and Logistics, agriculture, Micro, Medium and Small Enterprises-MSME and forging closer relations between the Indian Council of World Affairs and the Philippines Foreign Service Institute.

As both the countries are victims of terrorism, it was decided by both the leaders to enhance cooperation in checking the scourge of terror. It was decided to establish a chair of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations in the Philippines University

### **Economy:**

#### **37th India International Trade Fair inaugurated in New Delhi**

The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the 37<sup>th</sup> India International Trade Fair (IITF) - 2017, on November 14<sup>th</sup> in New Delhi.

The President said that instinctively we have been an open society – free to trade winds and cultural exchanges. We have valued a liberal, rules-based international trading order. This is part of our DNA. And this is the legacy that modern India and IITF are building on.

The President said that this year's IITF takes place at a point when India is recognised as one of the bright spots of the global economy. The world has acknowledged the changed business environment in India and the strides made in ease of doing business.

The introduction of the Goods and Services Tax has been a milestone. It has broken down barriers between states. It has provided a boost to the creation of a common market and a more formal economy as well as a stronger manufacturing sector. As a result of these efforts, there has been a sharp rise in FDI in the past three years – from US\$ 36 billion in 2013-14 to US\$ 60 billion in 2016-17.

The President said that 3,000 exhibitors, including 222 companies from abroad, are participating at IITF 2017. Thirty-two of India's states and Union territories are represented.

#### **Dantewada Holds India's 1st Tribal Entrepreneurship Summit**

India's first Tribal Entrepreneurship Summit has been organised in Dantewada Chhattisgarh on 14<sup>th</sup> November, aiming to inspire, nurture and promote the spirit of entrepreneurship among the tribal youth.

Union MoS Science and Technology YS Chowdhary inaugurated the event, organized by NITI Aayog in partnership with Government of United States of America. The event is a part of 8th Global Entrepreneurship Summit being held in India.

The summit witnessed the participation of tribal entrepreneurs from various sectors across the country and abroad. The summit has been addressed by eminent speakers from NITI Aayog, health and agri-pharma sectors.

The speakers emphasised the importance of forest produce in generating livelihood opportunities for tribals.

## **Environment**

### **Lucknow's 'severe' air makes it most polluted city in country**

The air pollution levels in Lucknow once again surged to the highest in the country on 14<sup>th</sup> November with the state capital turning into a gas chamber. With the Air Quality Index (AQI) of 484, Lucknow earned the dubious distinction of being the most polluted city in country.

The city air has been severely polluted since the last seven days with the AQI hovering very near the AQI scale-end of 500 which denotes "public health emergency".

According to the AQI data released by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for 44 cities in the country, Lucknow's air was the most polluted on 14<sup>th</sup> November with PM2.5 as the prominent pollutant. The pollution was of 'severe' category that affects healthy people and seriously impacts those with existing diseases. Meanwhile, there was a dip in pollution levels in Varanasi and Delhi which topped the rankings last week.

The AQI of Lucknow was 186 units more than that of Delhi on 13<sup>th</sup> November. While the AQI of national capital improved by 152 units, that of state capital worsened by rising 58 units.

The PM2.5 concentration in Lucknow was seven times higher than the permissible limit of 60 micrograms/cubic metre set by the National Ambient Air Quality Standard.

PM2.5 is particulate matter of diameter less than 2.5 micrometers, about 3% the diameter of human hair. The most polluted location in Lucknow was Talkatora which recorded 401 micrograms per cubic metre followed by Aliganj (350 mcg/cm) and Lalbagh (386 mcg/cm).

After Lucknow, Ghaziabad with AQI of 467, Kanpur with 448, Noida with 410 and Varanasi with 400 were the most polluted in UP — all falling under the severely polluted category.

## **Persons in news:**

**Kenneth Juster:** He was sworn in as the US Ambassador to India. Vice President Mike Pence administered the oath of office to Juster in Washington.

His work related to India played an important role in the transformation of the US-India relationship and helped provide the foundation for the historic civil nuclear agreement between the two countries. He played a key role in enhancing the Indo-US ties under the George W Bush administration.