

November 18th news:

International:

Russia Casts 10th Veto of UN Action on Syria

Russia on 16th November cast its 10th veto of United Nations Security Council action on Syria since the war began in 2011, blocking a US-drafted resolution to renew an international inquiry into who is to blame for chemical weapons attacks in Syria.

The mandate for the joint inquiry by the UN and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which found the Syrian government used the banned nerve agent sarin in an April 4 attack, expires on 17th November.

A resolution needs nine votes in favour and no vetoes by the United States, France, Russia, Britain or China to be adopted. The US draft text received 11 votes in favour, while Russia and Bolivia voted against it and China and Egypt abstained.

Russia has now vetoed 10 resolutions on Syria, including blocking an initial US bid on October 24 to renew the JIM, saying it wanted to wait for the release two days later of the inquiry's report that said the Syrian government used sarin.

National:

EC recognises Nitish-led group as JD(U), gives it party symbol

The Election Commission recognised the Nitish Kumar-led grouping as Janata Dal(United) on 17th November, rejecting the claim of rebel leader Sharad Yadav. The EC in its order said the faction led by Nitish had "demonstrated overwhelming support" in the legislature wing as well as the majority in the national council, the apex organisational forum of the party.

Bilateral:

Post Doklam, India, China Hold First Border Consultation Meet

India and China on 17th November held their first meeting on the border consultation and coordination mechanism after the Doklam standoff and reviewed the situation in all the sectors of their border and exchanged views on enhancing CBMs and military contacts.

The 10th round of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India–China Border Affairs (WMCC) was held in Beijing

The WMCC was established in 2012 as an institutional mechanism for consultation and coordination for the maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the India-China border areas.

It was established to deal with the tensions over recurring border incursions as well as to exchange views on strengthening communication and cooperation, including between the border security personnel.

The stand-off which began in mid-June ended on August 28 after Chinese troops stopped building a key road close to India's Chicken Neck corridor. India objected to the construction highlighting its security concerns. The road was being built by the Chinese troops in the area also claimed by Bhutan.

Approval for Scientific and Technological agreement with Belarus

The Union Cabinet approved an agreement between India and Belarus on Scientific and Technological Cooperation for mutual benefit in the areas of science, technology, agriculture. The agreement was signed between Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (NASB). It was exchanged in September 2017 at New Delhi during official state visit of Belarus President H.E. Mr. Alexander Lukashenko.

The main aim of identifying, assessing, developing and commercializing globally competitive technologies from India and Belarus.

Economy:

Moody's upgrades India's government bond rating to Baa2 from Baa3;

Global ratings agency Moody's Investors Service raised India's sovereign credit rating to 'Baa2' from 'Baa3'. Moody's said continued progress on economic and institutional reforms will enhance the India's high growth potential. Moody's also changed its rating outlook to stable from positive, saying that at the 'Baa2' level the risks to India's credit profile were broadly balanced

The ratings upgrade by the US-based agency comes after a hiatus. It had last upgraded India's rating to 'Baa3' in 2004. The 'Baa3' rating was the lowest investment grade - just a notch above 'junk' status. In 2015, the rating outlook was changed to 'positive' from 'stable'.

North East Business Summit inaugurated in New Delhi

The Two-day "12th North-East Business Summit" was inaugurated in New Delhi. The summit aims to explore the scope for business opportunities in the North-Eastern region of India. Focus areas are Infrastructure and Connectivity with Public-Private Partnerships, Skill Development, Financial Inclusion.

Sports:

France announced as hosts of 2023 Rugby World Cup

France will host the 2023 Rugby World Cup. Earlier France held the event in 2007. The event is scheduled to be the tenth Rugby World Cup, taking place in the year of the 200th anniversary of the legendary 'invention' of the sport by William Webb Ellis. The host of the 2019 Rugby World Cup is Japan