

November 30th news:

International:

French film on AIDS wins Best Film Award at IFFI 2017

Robin Campillo's French film 120 Beats Per Minute, about a passionate fight against indifference towards AIDS, won the prestigious Golden Peacock award for best film at the controversy-ridden 48th International Film Festival of India. The film's actor Nahuel Perez Biscayart won the Silver Peacock in the best actor male category.

Malayalam film Take Off, which is loosely based on the evacuation of nurses from Kerala, who were stranded in Iraq's Tikrit in 2014, won two awards at the festival's Indian Panorama section winning Silver Peacocks for best direction (Mahesh Narayanan) and best actor female (Parvathy).

National:

India unlikely to cut malaria burden by half in 2020: WHO

India accounted for 6% of global malaria cases and 7% of deaths caused by it in 2016, according to a report released on 29th November by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The WHO figures also suggest that India is unlikely to reduce its case burden beyond 40% by 2020.

In contrast, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Kyrgyzstan achieved malaria-free status in 2015 and 2016 respectively. There were an estimated 4,45,000 deaths from malaria globally in 2016, compared with 4,46,000 estimated deaths in 2015. About 80% of the deaths were accounted for by 15 countries, namely India and 14 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. A key impediment to eliminating malaria is a weak surveillance system.

India and Nigeria, two major contributors to the global burden of malaria, were able to detect only 8% and 16% of cases respectively via the system.

In 2016, an estimated Rs. 13,000 crore was invested in malaria control and elimination efforts globally by governments of malaria endemic countries and their international partners. The majority (74%) of investments in 2016 was spent in the WHO's Africa region, followed by the WHO regions of Southeast Asia (7%), the Eastern Mediterranean and the Americas (each 6%), and the Western Pacific (4%).

Bilateral:

Singapore and India to boost cooperation in maritime security

Singapore and India will step up cooperation in maritime security, according to Singapore's Ministry for Defence (MINDEF). The two countries' defence ministers reaffirmed the "strong and long-standing defence relationship" between the two countries during the second India-Singapore Defence Ministers' Dialogue (DMD).

Singapore's Minister of Defence Ng Eng Hen and India's Minister of Defence Nirmala Sitharaman discussed ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation and talked about strategic regional security and defence issues. They also welcomed India's proposal of "institutionalising engagements", including maritime exercises, with Southeast Asian countries.

The two countries witnessed the exchange of the inaugural Navy Bilateral Agreement between both countries' chiefs of navy, in which both sides agreed to increase cooperation in maritime security, increase visits to each other's ports and facilitate mutual logistics support.

The latest pact - together with other army and air force bilateral agreements - is "testament to the breadth and depth" of ties between the Singapore Armed Forces and Indian Armed Forces, said MINDEF.

Economy:

Global Entrepreneurship Index: India moves up one spot to 68, US tops list

India has moved up one place to the 68th spot on the Global Entrepreneurship Index of 2018, which is topped by the US. India was at the 69th position last year. The US topped the index, which ranked 137 countries, this year also, Jonathan Ortman, president of the Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN), said on 29th November.

India is in 68th position in the Global Entrepreneurship Index. The USA is in the first position in 2018. The list was prepared for 137 countries in the world.

India was at 76th position in 2014, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Development Institute (GEDI), a Washington, DC-based policy development organisation dedicated to expanding economic opportunities for individuals, communities and nations.

Last year, India enjoyed the largest jump in the rankings, moving up 29 spots to 69th position.

GEN is a platform for programmes and initiatives to help new firms start and scale while working to create a global entrepreneurial ecosystem. GEN is a strategic partner of GEDI.

The network is conducting a series of public policy focused roundtable events in India to explore innovative public sector approaches to stimulate new firm formations and growth

GEN India is in the process of appointing 30 state ambassadors who will lead all GEN India initiatives, including policy panels, entrepreneurship celebrations, national competitions and partnerships, in their respective states

Ivanka at GES: Women's presence in tech, science, other sectors need a push

Policy changes are needed to encourage more women in high-growth sectors, including science and technology, said Ivanka Trump, US President Donald Trump's daughter and presidential advisor, at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit on 29th November.

Participating in a discussion on the topic, We Can Do It! Innovations in Work force Development and Skills Training, she said the policies that are aimed at closing the gender-wage gap in the industry have stagnated in the US and successive Presidents have been trying to change the situation.

24 per cent women represent computer professionals, and 13 per cent of entrepreneurs are women. The US government is currently working on measures to bring more women into STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education to help bridge the gap, she added.

MP to launch Panch Parmeshwar portal for digital gram panchayats

Madhya Pradesh becomes the first state in the country to adopt Panch Parmeshwar portal and app system for making panchayat's functioning more transparent easy and reliable.

It is the first state in the country to adopt this system in which all acts and dealings of the gram panchayats will be displayed on the public domain. It will prove to be a milestone to implement digital and cashless dealings in even far-flung villages under the Digital India Campaign of Government of India.

Science and Technology

North Korea missile launch

North Korea has claimed that the rocket it test-fired on 29th November is a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile that can strike anywhere on the US mainland, as it declared itself a "complete" nuclear state. The Hwasong-15 soared 4,475 kilometers (2,800 miles) in the sky, spending 53 minutes in the air, before splashing down in waters off the coast of Japan, North Korea said. The figures tallied with estimates released by Japan and South Korea.

Sports:

IOA formally recognises Boxing Federation of India

The Boxing Federation of India (BFI) was on 29th November recognized as a national body by the Indian Olympic Association, which removed the terminated Indian Amateur Boxing Federation (IABF) as its affiliate after months of indecision.

The BFI, already recognised by the International Boxing Association (AIBA) and the Sports Ministry, finally got the IOA's nod, which had IABF registered as the official body till now. The IOA's decision is expected to end the IABF's attempts at reviving itself.

The body, which was first suspended and then terminated by AIBA for manipulation in elections, has been trying to keep itself afloat by organising a couple of meetings with its former members in the past few months. The Sports Ministry had earlier barred IABF from representing India as it was no longer a national federation.

Ravichandran Ashwin created record

India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin became the fastest bowler to reach the milestone of 300 Test wickets on 29th November in his 54th match, breaking Dennis Lillee's record during India's win over Sri Lanka in the second Test.

Australian fast bowler Lillee had reached the milestone in 56 Test matches way back in 1981 and it took 36 years for another bowler to eclipse the record. Ashwin is only the fifth Indian bowler to complete a career 300 wickets in Test cricket behind Anil Kumble (619), Kapil Dev (434), Harbhajan Singh (417) and Zaheer Khan (311).

Seventh World Military Games to be Held at Wuhan in China

The 7th international military games will be held in Wuhan city in the central China's Hubei Province. The International Military Sports Council (CISM)'s Military World Games is a top sports event for military personnel. It comprises 329 competitions in 27 categories and is expected to attract around 8,000 participants from more than 100 countries and regions.

Persons in news:

Snehalata Shrivastava: Senior IAS officer Snehlata Shrivastava has been appointed as new Secretary-General of Lok Sabha. She will replace Anoop Mishra. She will be the first woman Secretary-General of Lok Sabha.

Badri Narain: The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) appointed senior bureaucrat Badri Narain Sharma as Chairman of National Anti-Profiteering Authority.

Sharma is 1985 batch IAS officer of Rajasthan cadre. Prior to this appointment, he was an additional secretary of Department of Revenue, Finance Ministry.

The Union Cabinet in November 2017 approved setting up of five-member NAA, mandated to ensure that the benefits of GST rate reduction.