

January 13th news:

National:

4 judges go to people's court against CJI Dipak Misra

Discontent simmering for some time came out in the open on 12th January when four of the most senior judges of the Supreme Court held a press conference and assailed the functioning of the Chief Justice of India (CJI), Dipak Misra.

The main allegations related to the opaque workings of the collegium, which selects judges, and flouting of conventions regarding the assigning of cases. Justice J Chelameswar, second in the Supreme Court hierarchy, flanked by three other judges — Kurian Joseph, Ranjan Gogoi, and Madan Lokur — released a letter sent by them to Chief Justice Misra two months ago. The seven-page letter said rules regarding the composition of Benches and their strength had of late not been strictly adhered to.

India registers significant decline in under-five child mortality rate

India has registered a significant decline in Infant Mortality Rate (IMR). IMR of India has declined by three points (8% decline), from 37 per 1000 live births in 2015 to 34 per 1000 live births in 2016, compared to two points decline last year.

Not only this, India also recorded a major drop in birth cohort, which has for the first time come down to below 25 million. India has registered 90000 fewer infant deaths in 2016 as compared to 2015.

The total number of estimated infant deaths have come down from 930000 (9.3 Lakhs) in 2015 to 840000 (8.4 lakhs) in 2016.

According to the SRS Bulletin the gender gap in India for child survival is reducing steadily. The gender difference between female and male IMR has now reduced to <10%, giving a major boost to the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme of the Government.

The results signify that the strategic approach of the Ministry has started yielding dividends and the efforts of focusing on low performing States is paying off.

Among the EAG States and Assam, all States except Uttarakhand have reported decline in IMR in comparison to 2015. The decline is reported as 4 points in Bihar, 3 points in Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand and two points decline in Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Rajasthan.

These remarkable achievements in merely one year is also the result of a countrywide efforts to increase the health service coverage through various initiatives of the Government that includes strengthening of service delivery; quality assurance; RMNCH+A; human resources, community processes; information and knowledge; drugs and diagnostics, and supply chain management, etc.

Economy:

November IIP growth jumps to 17-month high; Dec inflation rises to 5.2%

India's industrial output and headline retail price indices registered the highest growth since July 2016 — among the last crucial set of economic data before the Union Budget 2018-19. The data released on 12th January showed that the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), after slowing for two straight months, bounced back in November, rising by 8.4 per cent and signalling that industrial revival was back on track.

Meanwhile, the Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation rate for December rose to 5.21 per cent, compared to 4.88 per cent in November and 3.41 per cent in December 2016.

The divergent trends, with robust industrial data and high inflation numbers, indicate that the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) may not go in for an interest rate cut in the foreseeable future, with some analysts indicating there could even be a rate hike. Rising global oil prices not only increased fuel inflation to almost eight per cent in December, but will also make the Budget math a bit of a complicated exercise in these fiscally difficult times.

Science and Technology:

Isro's PSLV-C40 successfully places 31 satellites in two different orbits

Isro's PSLV-C40 successfully places 31 satellites in two different orbits. The flight, designated as PSLV-C40, successfully lifted off at 0929 hrs IST from the First Launch Pad of Sriharkota space port, near Chennai on 12th January with the 710 kg Cartosat-2 Series Remote Sensing Satellite along with 30 co-passenger satellites. So far, PSLV has successfully launched 51 Indian satellites and 237 customer satellites from abroad.

- There were 28 nanosatellites from the US, France, Finland, the UK, South Korea and Canada.
- The space agency has also placed the 100th satellite it has built in its laboratory.
- The PSLV-C40 mission is happening four months after the failure of PSLV-C39. PSLV-C39, which lifted off on August 31 last year, failed after the heat shield, the tip of the rocket, did not open as programmed. The satellite separated from the rocket circling in space within the closed heat shield.

Sports:

Sarjubala, Sonia, Sarita Win gold, RSPB Claim Team Title

Former world silver-medallist Sarjubala Devi (48kg), representing Manipur, claimed the gold as well as the best boxer trophy even as the Railways Sports Promotion Board emerged overall champions in the National Women's Boxing Championships.

Former world and Asian champion L Sarita Devi (60kg), representing the All India Police (AIP), also picked up a gold medal after beating RSPB's Pavitra in her summit clash.