

## **March 21<sup>st</sup> news:**

### **International:**

#### **G20 sees need for 'dialogue,' fails to defuse trade war threat**

The world's financial leaders rejected protectionism on 20<sup>th</sup> March and urged "further dialogue" on trade, but failed to diffuse the threat of a trade war days before U.S. metals tariffs take effect and Washington is to announce measures against China

Finance ministers and central bankers of the world's 20 biggest economies, which represent 75 percent of world trade and 85 percent of global gross domestic product, discussed trade disruptions as a risk to growth at a two-day meeting.

But after talks described by participants as "polite" and mainly consisting of read-out statements with no debate, the G20 agreed only to stand by an ambiguous declaration on trade from 2017 and "recognize" the need for more "dialogue and actions".

But the declaration did little to dispel concern over a global trade war as the United States' tariffs of 25 percent on imported steel and 10 percent on aluminum take effect on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

Two officials briefed on the matter said U.S. President Donald Trump would also unveil tariffs on up to \$60 billion in Chinese technology and telecoms products, a move stemming from Beijing's intellectual property practices

The 2017 Hamburg declaration, which the financial leaders referred to on 20<sup>th</sup> March, said G20 countries would "continue to fight protectionism including all unfair trade practices."

But it also said G20 leaders "recognize the role of legitimate trade defense instruments," an ambiguity which provides the United States with a way to argue its cause on the tariffs.

Canadian Finance Minister Bill Morneau, comparing this G20 meeting to the one in Germany last year when Mnuchin demanded a rewrite of the longstanding communique language on trade, said the rest of the world now has a better sense of the U.S. view on how the rules of trade should be reworked.

### **National:**

#### **Seventh Women's Science Congress Inaugurated In Manipur**

The Women Science Congress, 2018 was inaugurated in the backdrop of the ongoing 105th Indian Science Congress on its 3rd day being held at Manipur University, Imphal. Keshari Nath Tripathi, Governor of West Bengal inaugurated the 7th Edition of Science Congress for women.

### **Bilateral:**

#### **Indian Navy to host Bilateral Exercise 'Varuna' with French Navy**

India and French held Bilateral exercise Varuna. The Indian Navy and the French Navy have conducted bilateral maritime exercises since May 1993. Since 2001, the exercises have been named VARUNA and there have been fifteen editions of the same till date. The last edition of VARUNA was conducted off the French Coast in Apr 2017.

The conduct of VARUNA and the special impetus on taking this Navy-to-Navy cooperative engagement forward was reiterated in the Joint Statement made by the Prime Minister of India and the President of France, on the 10th of March 2018.

In 2017, VARUNA was conducted in three sea areas in the European waters. This year too VARUNA-18 would be conducted in three sea areas, namely, the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal and South Western Indian Ocean.

The first phase, being conducted in the Arabian Sea, will see the participation of a French submarine and frigate Jean de Vienne from the French side.

The Indian Naval participation will include the destroyer Mumbai, frigate Trikand with their integral helicopters, IN submarine Kalvari, P8-I and Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft, as well as the Mig 29K fighter aircraft.

The VARUNA series of exercises have grown in scope and complexity over the years and provide an opportunity to both Navies to increase interoperability and learn from each other's best practices.

#### **Environment:**

##### **World water forum opens after dire UN warning**

The world must race to avert disastrous loss of water supplies, Brazil's President Michel Temer told a conference on 19<sup>th</sup> March, after the UN said some 5.7 billion people may run short of drinking water by 2050

Under the slogan "sharing water," the forum brought together 15 heads of state and government, 300 mayors and dozens of experts. An estimated 40,000 people were expected to attend, organizers say.

They were meeting shortly after publication of the United Nation's 2018 World Water Development Report, which said 3.6 billion people, or half the world's population, already live in areas where water can be scarce at least one month a year. That could rise to 5.7 billion people by 2050, the report said.

At the Brasilia forum, the main focus was on the specter of supplies collapsing in major urban centers, as almost happened in Cape Town this year.

Until earlier this month, the South African city was projected to run out of water as early as July, forcing the closing of household taps and extreme rationing.

That crisis has now eased, with the local government saying that a campaign to bring 60 percent reduction in consumption has done enough to dodge the shut-off.

The UN pointed to estimates that global agricultural production could increase by about 20 percent with greener water management practices.

In addition to improving water availability and quality, "it is possible to increase agricultural production per hectare with better water management" and thus feed more people, said Stefan Uhlenbrook, program coordinator at the UN World Water Assessment Forum.