

## **April 18<sup>th</sup> news:**

### **International:**

#### **India wins election to crucial NGO committee in United Nations**

India won places on the executive boards of four UN bodies, three commissions and a committee. The NGO committee is considered influential because it scrutinises the NGOs applying for consultative status with Ecosoc and can recommend or block them. India will serve a four-year term on the panel starting January 2019. Separately India was also elected to a three-year term starting January 2019 on the Executive Board of UN-Women, which works for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

India has won six elections to UN Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc) bodies, five of them unanimously. In the polls held on 16<sup>th</sup> April, India won places on the executive boards of four UN bodies, three commissions and a committee.

India faced an election within the Asia-Pacific group only for the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) Committee and it polled the highest number of votes, receiving 46 votes, followed by Pakistan with 43, while China received 39. After that Asia-Pacific vote, India was elected by acclamation in all the six elections by the entire Ecosoc, which comprises all the 193 members of the UN.

The NGO committee is considered influential because it scrutinises the NGOs applying for consultative status with Ecosoc and can recommend or block them.

India will serve a four-year term on the panel starting January 2019. Another important election was to the Executive Boards of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS). One election is held for the three and India will serve three-year terms from January 2019 on those executive boards

Separately India was also elected to a three-year term starting January 2019 on the Executive Board of UN-Women, which works for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. India will start immediately on the Commission on Population and Development and its term will end in September 2021. India will serve a four-year term starting immediately on the Commission for Social Development. On the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, India will serve a three-year term starting January 2019.

### **National:**

#### **Gadkari announces a new highway alignment between Delhi and Mumbai**

Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari has announced development of a new highway alignment between Delhi and Mumbai.

A sum of one lakh crore rupees will be spent on this expressway. The Minister also disclosed plans for a Chambal Expressway which would be connected to this Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, and is likely to

benefit states like Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, where the backward areas will also shine like Gurugram.

A total of ten projects are underway costing 35,600 crore rupees. He said, about forty thousand commercial vehicles enter Delhi on a daily basis, which cause increased pollution and congestion in the city state.

An ambitious scheme of developing Eastern and Western Peripheral Expressways around Delhi was taken up, and the Eastern Peripheral Expressway will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the April 29. Similarly, to ease traffic in East Delhi, Delhi-Meerut Expressway was envisaged, and its Delhi-Dasna portion will also be inaugurated by PM on 29<sup>th</sup> April by a road show.

### **Bilateral:**

#### **India and Sweden entered into an agreements**

India and Sweden on 17<sup>th</sup> April discussed ways for Sweden to become partner in India's development story. Both countries have entered into an agreement.

Both the leaders witnessed signing and exchange of Joint Innovation Partnership and announcement of adoption of the Joint Action Plan. This will cover Start Ups, investments as well as renewable energy, urban transport and other such issues.

India and Sweden will also jointly organise the India-Nordic Summit in Stockholm. The summit will also be attended by the prime ministers of Finland, Norway, Denmark and Iceland.

#### **PM holds bilateral meetings with PMs of Finland, Denmark, Iceland and Norway**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Finland, Denmark, Iceland and Norway and discussed ways to enhance ties with these Nordic countries in key areas such as trade and investment, and renewable energy.

Prime Minister Modi met Danish Premier Lars Lokke Rasmussen and held talks on renewing and enhancing cooperation.

The two leaders expressed their mutual desire to take the relationship forward, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said. After the bilateral meeting between PM Modi and Rasmussen, documents were exchanged between the two sides in areas of animal husbandry, dairying and urban development.

Prime Minister Modi also had meeting with his Finnish counterpart Juha Sipila. The two leaders discussed enhancing cooperation in trade and investment, renewable energy, space, waste management, start-up and education, Kumar said.

### **Economy:**

#### **GoM finalises new model for GST return filing**

A ministerial panel, chaired by Sushil Modi, worked out a new simplified model for GST return filing as per which credit could be given on a provisional basis once the supplier uploads the sales invoice.

As it looks to finalise a single-page return form for businesses under GST, the panel met in New Delhi on 17<sup>th</sup> April about 40 industry representatives and 15 tax experts to discuss simplification of return filing process.

According to the Group of Ministers, a fusion model of return filing after incorporating stakeholder suggestion has been worked out, which will be placed before the GST Council for approval.

The GST Council, headed by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and comprising state counterparts, last month discussed on two models of GST returns and suggested that the GoM would discuss further simplification.

One of the models presented before the council was provisional credit should not be granted unless the taxpayers file returns and pay taxes.

The second model stated that provisional credit could be granted to a taxpayer, but returns have to be filed within 3-4 months and taxes have to be paid or else the credit amount would be reversed.

After consulting the stakeholders, the GoM worked out a third model for return filing as per which credit could be extended once the invoice uploaded by the supplier is verified by the purchaser on the GSTN portal.

Explaining the contours of the fusion model, an official said that the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) is now working on mechanism to deal with instances of nonpayment of taxes even after availing credit.

The official said the model, being drafted by the tax officers, would be to sent notices to taxpayer in case he fails to pay the due taxes seeking explanation, following which the credit could be reversed.

Modi said there was unanimity in the GoM that businesses would have to file only one return every month, instead of GSTR-1, 2 and 3 as was conceived earlier.

Also there was unanimity that there would be no system based matching and purchaser would have to verify the invoice uploaded by the seller.

Modi said the model for simplified return filing that is being worked out would safeguard the interest of revenue to the exchequer, and avoid inconvenience to the taxpayers.

As per the structure being worked out by the Centre and state officials as well as Nandan Nilekani, businesses having zero tax liability for six consecutive months may get to file returns only twice a year.

The return filing date would be spread out and businesses having annual turnover of up to Rs 1.5 crore will have to file return by 10th of next month, while others can file return by 20th.

The number of returns filed by both small and large taxpayers would be 12 in a year, in place of 36 at present.

### **World Bank forecasts 7.3 pc growth for India this year**

The World Bank has forecast a growth rate of 7.3% for India this year and 7.5% for 2019 and 2020. The World Bank in its twice-a-year South Asia Economic Focus report in Washington said that growth is expected to accelerate from 6.7 in 2017 to 7.3 per cent in 2018 and to subsequently stabilise supported by a sustained recovery in private investment and private consumption.

In its report the World Bank said, India should strive to accelerate investments and exports to take advantage of the recovery in global growth.

### **DARPAN-PLI App launched**

Minister of State for Communication Manoj Sinha on 17<sup>th</sup> April launched DARPAN-Postal Life Insurance App, in New Delhi. The DARPAN-PLI App will help in collection of premium for postal life insurance and Rural postal life insurance policies at Branch Post offices anywhere in India, with online updation of the policies.

### **Global growth is expected be 3.9% in next two years**

The IMF on 17<sup>th</sup> April projected a global growth of three point nine per cent in the next two years due to strong momentum, favourable market sentiment among other factors but warned that any trade disputes threaten to undermine confidence and derail global growth prematurely.

The IMF said in its latest World Economic Outlook report that the partial recovery in commodity prices should allow conditions for commodity exporters to gradually improve.

The 3.9 per cent global growth forecast for 2018, 2019, Maurice Obstfeld, Economic Counsellor and Director of the Research Department, IMF said, is being borne out by continuing strong performance in the euro area, Japan, China, and the US, all of which grew above expectations last year.

### **Science and Technology:**

#### **Indian scientists make Ayurvedic drug to cure dengue**

Indian scientists have formulated an Ayurvedic drug to cure dengue. The drug is claimed to be the first in the world. The medicine is likely to be available in the market by next year. The drug has been made with seven herbal ingredients which are in use in Ayurveda system of medicine for centuries.

During the pilot study, 90 patients were given this drug in highly concentrated liquid form. But in the ongoing clinical trial, it is given in tablet form. At present, there is no specific drug or antibiotic to treat dengue and the treatment focuses on providing relief from the symptoms.

### **Awards:**

## **New York Times, New Yorker win Pulitzer for #MeToo watershed**

The New York Times and The New Yorker won the Pulitzer Prize for public service for explosive reporting that brought down Harvey Weinstein and spawned a cultural watershed on the issue of sexual harassment.

The prestigious prize was awarded to the Times team led by Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey and New Yorker contributor Ronan Farrow, for reports that disgraced the Hollywood mogul and sparked an avalanche of accusations against other powerful men.

Since the Times and New Yorker articles last October, more than 100 women have publicly accused the producer of misconduct ranging from sexual harassment to rape, sparking the #MeToo movement that has seen a string of influential men lose their jobs and reputation.