

April 24th news:

International:

Threat of nuclear weapons use growing, UN warns

A top UN official on 23rd April denounced growing rhetoric claiming that nuclear arms are necessary and warned that the risk of such weapons being used was on the rise.

The threat of the use, intentional or otherwise, of nuclear weapons is growing," the UN's top representative for disarmament affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, told a preliminary review meeting of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The NPT, which was introduced at the height of the Cold War a half century ago, seeks to prevent the spread of atomic weapons but also puts the onus on nuclear states to reduce their stockpiles.

But speaking at the opening of the Geneva meeting, Nakamitsu warned that "the world now faces similar challenges to the context that gave birth to the NPT." The preparatory committee in advance of the 2020 NPT review conference comes after North Korea, which pulled out of the treaty 15 years ago, declared a moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile tests and said it would dismantle its nuclear test site.

Nakamitsu hailed the announcement, voicing hope that the move "will contribute to building trust and to sustaining an atmosphere for sincere dialogue and negotiations." She warned however that the overall "geopolitical environment is deteriorating." "Some of the most important instruments and agreements that comprise our collective security framework are being eroded," she said.

Five of the world's nine nuclear-armed states -- Britain, China, France, Russia, and the United States -- are parties to the NPT. But despite their commitments under the treaty, they are all engaged in modernising their arsenals and making nuclear weapons a more central part of their defence strategies.

The administration of President Donald Trump has for instance recently decided to upgrade the US nuclear weapons arsenal and to complement massive "strategic" bombs with smaller "tactical" weapons, in a move critics say would make them easier to use.

National:

RS Chairman Venkaiah Naidu rejects removal notice against CJI

In a blow to the opposition parties led by Congress vice president and chairman of Rajya Sabha M Venkaiah Naidu rejected the notice for motion of impeachment of Chief Justice of India, Dipak Misra.

Naidu cited lack of merit in the charges leveled by the opposition after deliberating on all the aspects of the notice with legal and constitution experts. Notice was moved by 64 sitting members from 7 opposition parties.

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu has listed reasons for rejecting the notice given by opposition parties led by the Congress for impeachment of CJI Dipak Misra primarily citing lack of any substantial merit in it.

In a detailed 10 page order, Naidu stated that he held extensive consultations with top legal and constitutional experts on the matter before taking the decision.

In the order Naidu also states that he had detailed discussion with Attorney general as well as other legal experts to consider all the charges made by the opposition members and concluded that the motion does not deserve to be admitted.

He cited article 124(4) of the constitution which says that for such motion to be submitted proved misbehaviour and incapacity has to be proved. In absence of creditable and verifiable information which gives an indication of misbehaviour or incapacity, the motion was not considered.

Further the order comes down hard on the opposition members who have moved the notice. Naidu observes that the opposition members have certain words and phrases which imply that even they were not sure of the charges against the CJI.

Rejecting the motion as neither desirable nor proper the chairman of rajya sabha also disapproved of the conduct of the opposition who addressed a press conference after submitting the notice in contravention of said rules and regulations.

Vice President re-scheduled his travel plans to deal with the notice expeditely as he held the consultations with such experts given the importance of the situation, a fact that finds mention in his order too, which says that spate of statements in the press seemed to be vitiating the atmosphere , making him take a decision and end the needles speculation.

Seven opposition parties led by the Congress had last week moved a notice before him for impeachment of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) on five grounds of "misbehaviour". This was the first time ever that an impeachment notice has been filed against a sitting CJI.

Economy:

TCS is the first Indian Company With 100 Billion Dollar Market Value

Tata Consultancy Services created the history as the market capitalization of the company has hit the 100 billion dollar mark, making it the first Indian company to achieve the mark. TCS shares rose by 2% to Rs. 3476.75, pushing the market capitalization of India's biggest outsourcer to Rs. 6,64,918 crore. Shares of TCS had surged by nearly 7% recently, making investors richer by over Rs. 40,000 crores in a day.

India highest recipient of remittances at \$69 billion, says World Bank

Global remittances are expected to grow 4.6 per cent to \$642 billion in 2018 but longer-term risks to growth of remittances include stricter immigration policies. Remittances to low- and middle-income

countries rebounded to a record level in 2017 after two consecutive years of decline, says the World Bank's latest Migration and Development Brief.

The stronger than expected recovery in remittances is driven by growth in Europe, the Russian Federation, and the United States. The rebound in remittances, when valued in US dollars, was helped by higher oil prices and a strengthening of the euro and ruble.

Environment

India has 94 cities with toxic air

Every third city that failed to meet national air quality standards in India—where most people die of air pollution than any other nation—was in two of the country's biggest states, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, in five years to 2015, according to government data.

With 17 of 94 cities, Maharashtra had the highest number of cities identified by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) as failing to meet national air-quality standards over five years to 2015, according to this reply to the Lok Sabha (lower house of Parliament) by Mahesh Sharma, minister of state for environment, on April 6, 2018. Maharashtra was followed by Uttar Pradesh (15), Punjab (8) and Himachal Pradesh (7). Half of the 94 cities were in these four states.

In 2015, 2.5 million of 10.3 million deaths in India due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) were linked to pollution, according to a global study, IndiaSpend reported on January 3, 2018.

Rising air pollution in cities is increasing incidences of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cancer, diabetes and other pollution-related ailments, said the study, which noted that 27% of Indians died of causes related to air pollution, exceeding the proportion who died similarly in China.

Low- and middle-income groups are the worst affected by pollution; 92% of deaths due to pollution occurred in that income group, IndiaSpend reported on November 14, 2017.

Technically called "non-attainment cities", the 94 cities were identified as part of the National Air Quality Monitoring Programme, under which 683 operating stations in 300 cities/towns across the country monitor sulphur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, respirable suspended particulate matter (PM10) and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) for a day twice a week.

Sports:

India wins 8th South Asian Judo Championship

India has won 8th South Asian Judo Championship. On the concluding day of the championship Indian women and men won team events in Lalitpur, Nepal on 23rd April

Keeping the unbeaten streak Indian women white washed the championship by beating host Nepal by 5-0 in the final of team events. Indian men also won team championship. They defeated Pakistan by 3-2 in the final.

Earlier Indian women grabbed all 7 gold medals in the individual category while men bagged 3 gold and 3 bronze medals. India topped the medal tally winning 10 Gold and 3 Bronze medals in the individual category. Host Nepal remained second and Pakistan got third place.

A total 102 players from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participated in the 3 day championship.