

**May 25<sup>th</sup> news:**

**International:**

**Trump cancels US-North Korea summit with Kim Jong-un**

US President Donald Trump will not meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in June, 2018, he announced in a letter to Kim released by the White House on 24th May, scrapping plans for what would have been a historic diplomatic summit.

He said during an appearance from the Roosevelt Room the decision amounted to a "tremendous setback" and warned North Korea that the US military is ready to act should Pyongyang take any "foolish and reckless" action. But he left open the door to renewing the diplomatic thaw which had preceded the anticipated talks.

**Iran still implementing nuclear deal, says IAEA watchdog**

Iran is still implementing the 2015 accord over its nuclear programme, just weeks after Washington ditched the accord, according to a report by the UN's nuclear watchdog.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report, seen by AFP on (May 24, shows that Iran is abiding by the deal's key restrictions on its nuclear facilities in return for relief from damaging economic sanctions.

The latest assessment from the IAEA comes after US President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the accord earlier this month, putting its future in jeopardy.

The IAEA urged Iran to stick with the accord and even go beyond its legal obligations so as to boost international confidence in Teheran's commitments.

Signatories Britain, France, Germany plus the European Union, Russia and China have been trying to salvage the deal after Trump's decision but Iran has warned that if it suffers as a result the reintroduction of US economic sanctions, it could walk away from the accord.

Uranium when enriched to high levels can be used in a nuclear weapon. At lower enrichment levels, it is used for peaceful applications such as power generation - Iran's stated aim.

Since the deal came into effect, Iran has twice inched over the agreed volume of heavy water, a reactor coolant.

However, the latest report said that for the past three months the volume had remained below the agreed maximum of 130 tonnes.

Apart from the relatively minor breaches of heavy water levels, IAEA reports have consistently shown Iran adhering to the terms of the deal in the two years since it came into force.

**National:**

### **TNPCCB orders immediate closure of Sterlite plant at Thoothukudi**

The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board has ordered closure of Sterlite Copper Smelter plant at Thoothukudi with immediate effect, and also told Tangedco to disconnect electricity supply to the unit.

The board issued the order. Subsequently, power supply to the unit was disconnected. The board said that an application submitted by Vedanta Limited–Copper Smelter Plant at Sipcot Industrial Complex in February for Renewal of Consent for 2018-2023 was rejected due to compliance of certain conditions imposed in previous renewal of consent order issued to the unit.

In April this year, the board said that unit shall not resume its production operation without obtaining prior approval/renewal of consent from the board. However, during inspection by Joint Chief Environmental Engineer, Tirunelveli, on May 18 and 19, it was found that the unit was carrying out activities to resume its production operation and recommended for the issue of direction for closure and disconnection of power supply to the unit.

Accordingly, it has been decided to issue directions for closure and disconnection of power supply to the unit, the board said.

### **Prakash Javadekar launches Samagra Shiksha scheme for school education**

Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar on 24h May launched Samagra Shiksha scheme for school education from pre-school to senior secondary levels.

The scheme focuses on improving quality of education, enhancing the Learning outcomes and using technology to empower children and teachers.

The scheme will provide holistic education for holistic development. The quality of education will be improved by focusing on teachers and technology.

Annual grant of five thousand to 20 thousand rupees will be provided for strengthening of libraries in the schools. The scheme will be focused on digital education and it will enhance use of digital technology in education through smart classroom and digital boards.

### **Bilateral:**

#### **Netherlands joins ISA**

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with his Dutch counterpart Mark Rutte in New Delhi on 24<sup>th</sup> May. The two leaders reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and discussed issues of mutual interest.

The Netherlands signed the International Solar Agreement and became the 64th country to do so. India and the Netherlands also signed several agreements across different sectors including education, water, agrifood, horticulture, IT and Health.

The Prime Minister said, areas of agriculture and food processing are important to India, and the Netherlands has expertise in both the fields. He added that Indo-Dutch Centre of Excellence for vegetables has started in Pune's Baramati.

India and the Netherlands agreed that terrorist and extremist organisations need to be denied space to radicalise, recruit, and conduct attacks on innocent people.

The two sides deplored the violence caused by Al Qaeda, Daesh/ISIS, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Tayabba, and their affiliates as well as terrorist groups threatening peace and security in South Asia and Europe.

In a joint statement after talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Netherlands Prime Minister Mark Rutte, both leaders reiterated their strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Both sides also affirmed that terrorism cannot be justified on any grounds.

The two leaders agreed to intensify their resolve to enhance cooperation under the aegis of the MoU in the field of water management signed in June 2017 with focus on the Clean Ganga campaign.

The Indian side invited the Dutch side to explore the feasibility of assisting in setting up food valleys and invest in cold chain as well as food processing facilities.

### **Economy:**

#### **The Fifteenth Finance Commission has constituted a high level group**

The Fifteenth Finance Commission has constituted a high level group consisting of eminent experts from across the country in Health Sector. Dr. RandeepGuleria, Director, AIIMS, New Delhi will be its Convenor.

The role and functions of the High Level Group on Health Sector will be:

- To evaluate the existing regulatory framework in the Health sector and examine its strength and weaknesses for enabling a balanced yet faster expansion of the health sector keeping in view India's demographic profile;
- To suggest ways and means to optimize the use of existing financial resources and to incentivize the state governments' effort on fulfillment of well-defined health parameters in India; and
- To holistically examine best international practices for the health sector and seek to benchmark our frameworks to these practices for optimizing benefits keeping in mind our local issues.

High Level Group on Health Sector will have following Convenor and Members:

1. Dr. RandeepGuleria, Director, AIIMS, New Delhi (Convenor);
2. Dr. Devi Shetty, Chairman, Narayana Health City, Bengaluru;
3. Dr. DeelipGovindMhaisekar, Vice Chancellor, Maharashtra University of Health Science, Pune;

4. Dr. Naresh Trehan, Medanta City, Gurgaon;
5. Dr. Bhabatosh Biswas, Prof & HOD of Cardio Thoracic Surgery, R.G.Kar Medical College, Kolkata;  
and
6. Prof. K. Srinath Reddy, President of Public Health Foundation of India

**Persons in news:**

**Nima Jangmu Sherpa:** Nepal woman Nima Jangmu Sherpa creates world record by scaling 3 highest mountains in single climbing season. She made her historic ascent on Mt Kanchenjunga, third highest peak of the world on 23<sup>rd</sup> May.

Nima Jangmu has become only woman in the world to climb three highest peaks in Nepal above 8,000 meters in one season within 25 days. She had successfully scaled Mt Everest on May 14 and Mt Lhotse on April 29. Meanwhile, a team of women journalists from Nepal also successfully climbed Mt Everest.