

**“Start each day with a positive thought and a grateful heart.” Roy T. Bennett**

## INTERNATIONAL

### INDO-PAK DISPUTE UNDER INDUS WATER TREATY

Pakistan has informed the World Bank about India's completing of the Kishanganga hydropower project during the bank's "pause" period and has urged it to "recognise its responsibility" under the Indus Waters Treaty.

Pakistan has approached the World Bank, the mediator between the two countries of the water distribution treaty, in the past and raised issues over Kishanganga and Ratle projects in Jammu and Kashmir.

It has been flagging concern over designs of India's five hydroelectricity projects – Pakal Dul (1000 MW), Ratle (850 MW), Kishanganga (330 MW), Miyar (120 MW) and Lower Kalnai (48 MW) – being built/planned in the Indus river basin, contending these violate the treaty.

#### Background:

In December 2016, the World Bank had announced that it had "paused" the process for either appointing a Court of Arbitration (COA) or a neutral expert or started mediation between the two countries on how to advance and develop consensus in the light of the treaty on the mechanism for resolution of faulty designs of the two projects. Since then, the bank has arranged two rounds of talks between the two sides.

#### Kishanganga project:

The Kishanganga Hydroelectric Plant is an \$864 million dam which is part of a run-of-the-river hydroelectric scheme that is designed to divert water from the Kishanganga River to a power plant in the Jhelum River basin. It is located 5 km north of Bandipore in Jammu and Kashmir, India and will have an installed capacity of 330 MW. Construction on the dam was temporarily halted by the Hague's Permanent Court of Arbitration in October 2011 due to Pakistan's protest of its effect on the flow of the Kishanganga River (called the Neelum River in Pakistan).

In February 2013, the Hague ruled that India could divert a minimum amount of water for power generation.

## NATIONAL

### CABINET APPROVES THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (AMENDMENTS) BILL, 2018

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to the Protection of Human Rights (Amendments) Bill, 2018 for better protection and promotion of human rights in the country.

#### Salient Features:

It proposes to include "National Commission for Protection of Child Rights" as deemed Member of the Commission;

It proposes to add a woman Member in the composition of the Commission;

It proposes to enlarge the scope of eligibility and scope of selection of Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission as well as the State Human Rights Commission; and

It proposes to incorporate a mechanism to look after the cases of human rights violation in the Union Territories.

It proposes to amend the term of office of Chairperson and Members of National Human Rights Commission and State Human Rights Commission to make it in consonance with the terms of Chairperson and Members of other Commissions.

#### Benefits:

The Amendment will strengthen the Human Rights Institutions of India further for effective discharge of their mandates, roles and responsibilities. Moreover, the amended Act will be in perfect sync with the agreed global standards and benchmarks towards ensuring the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual in the country.

#### Background:

The amendment to the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 will make National Human

Rights Commission (NHRC) and State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) more compliant with the Paris Principle concerning its autonomy, independence, pluralism and wide-ranging functions in order to effectively protect and promote human rights.

#### **CABINET APPROVES RIGHTSIZING THE COMPETITION COMMISSION OF INDIA**

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for rightsizing the Competition Commission of India (CCI) from One Chairperson and Six Members (totaling seven) to One Chairperson and Three Members (totaling four) by not filling the existing vacancies of two Members and one more additional vacancy, which is expected in September, 2018 when one of the present incumbents will complete his term.

#### **Benefits:**

The proposal is expected to result in reduction of three Posts of Members of the Commission in pursuance of the Governments objective of "Minimum Government - Maximum Governance".

The faster turnaround in hearings is expected to result in speedier approvals, thereby stimulating the business processes of corporate and resulting in greater employment opportunities in the country.

#### **Background:**

Section 8(1) of the Competition Act, 2002 (the Act) provides that the Commission shall consist of a Chairperson and not less than two and not more than six Members. Presently, the Chairperson and four Members are in position.

An initial limit of one Chairperson and not more than ten Members was provided in the Act, keeping in view the requirement of creating a Principal Bench, other Additional Bench or Mergers Bench, comprising at least two Members each, in places as notified by the Central Government. In the Competition (Amendment) Act, 2007 (39 of 2007), Section 22 of the Act was amended removing the provision for creation of Benches. In the same Amendment Act, while the Competition Appellate Tribunal comprising one

Chairperson and two Members was created, the size of the Commission itself was not commensurately reduced and was kept at one Chairperson and not less than two but not more than six Members.

The Commission has been functioning as a collegiums right from its inception. In several major jurisdictions such as in Japan, USA and U.K. Competition Authorities are of a similar size.

#### **INDIA HAS ADVOCATED AGAINST THE "WEAPONIZATION" OF OUTER SPACE**

India has voiced opposition to the "weaponization" of outer space, saying it should not become an area of conflict. India has called for collective efforts to strengthen safety and security of the space-based assets.

This was said at the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC). India attaches much importance to the UNDC as the specialized deliberative leg of the disarmament machinery.

Deliberations will begin on the new agenda of outer space – the first in the last 18 years. The group of governmental experts on outer space will meet in Geneva in August later this year.

It has been mandated to make recommendations on the substantive elements of an international legally-binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

India has supported the proposal put forward by NAM for the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to commence negotiations on a comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention.

India has also supported the commencement of negotiations of an FMCT (Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty) in the CD on the basis of the agreed mandate.

#### **UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC):**

In 1952, the UN General Assembly created the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) under the Security Council

The Disarmament Commission was re-established at the first Special Session of the

General Assembly devoted to Disarmament in 1978 to succeed an earlier Disarmament Commission, which ceased to convene after 1965.

It was created as a deliberative body, with the function of considering and making recommendations on various issues in the field of disarmament and of following up on the relevant decisions and recommendations of the special session.

It has a mandate to prepare proposals for a treaty for the regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and all armaments, including the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

It reports annually to the General Assembly.

Since 1978, the Disarmament Commission has dealt with numerous disarmament-related questions, both nuclear and conventional.

#### **STUBBLE BURNING DOUBLES DELHI POLLUTION SAYS STUDY**

According to the study, agricultural fires are to blame for about half of the pollution experienced in Delhi in October and November, a peak stubble burning season in Punjab.

The researchers came to this conclusion by analyzing data from a satellite of the NASA.

The study published in the journal Environmental Research Letters, used satellite data from NASA to identify hotspots corresponding to active fires.

Many farmers in northwest India typically burn abundant crop residue on the fields after harvest season, to prepare their fields for subsequent planting.

On average, without fires, urban Delhi experiences about 150 micrograms per cubic meter of fine particulate air pollution.

To put that into perspective, the WHO puts the threshold for safe air at 25 micrograms per cubic meter, and India's Central Pollution Control Board limits exposure to 60 micrograms per cubic meter.

Extreme fires during the post-monsoon season can pump on average about 150

micrograms per cubic meter of fine particulate matter into the city.

Doubling the amount of pollution and increasing total levels 12 times higher than WHO recommendations and even 20 times higher on some days.

#### **GOVT. PLANNING TO INCREASE BENCHES OF NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL**

The government is planning to have more benches of the National Company Law Tribunal on the basis of case load, amid rising number of insolvency cases coming up before the NCLT.

Currently, there are 11 NCLT benches in different parts of the country, including two in the national capital.

#### **National Company Law Tribunal:**

National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) is a quasi-judicial body that will govern the companies in India. It was established under the Companies Act, 2013 and is a successor body of the Company Law Board.

NCLT will have the same powers as assigned to the erstwhile Company Law Board (which are mostly related to dealing with oppression and mismanagement), Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR)(revival of sick companies) and powers related to winding up of companies (which was available only with the High Court).

Decisions of the NCLT may be appealed to the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal. The decisions of NCLAT may be appealed to the Supreme Court of India.

The setting up of NCLT as a specialized institution for corporate justice is based on the recommendations of the Justice Eradi Committee on Law Relating to Insolvency and Winding up of Companies.

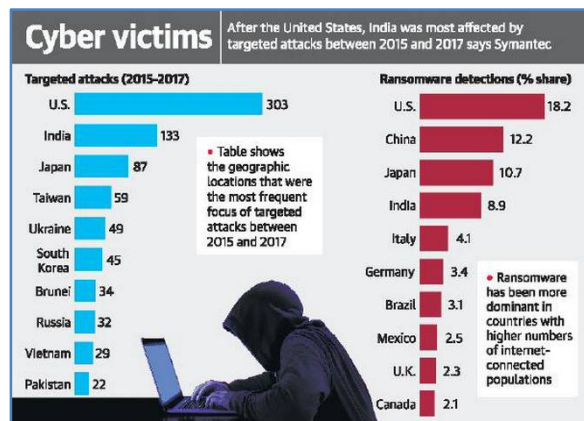
#### **INDIA THIRD MOST VULNERABLE COUNTRY TO CYBER THREATS**

According to 'Internet Security Threat Report' India emerged as the third most vulnerable country in terms of risk of cyber threats, such as malware, spam and ransomware, in 2017.

India moved up one place over previous year.

As per the report, India continues to be second most impacted by spam and bots, third most impacted by network attacks, and fourth most impacted by ransomware.

The report was published by security solutions provider Symantec.



In 2017, 5.09% of global threats detected were in India, slightly less than 5.11% in 2016. The U.S. (26.61%) was most vulnerable to such attacks, followed by China (10.95%).

The global threat ranking is based on eight metrics — malware, spam, phishing, bots, network attacks, web attacks, ransomware and cryptominers.

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