

“Happiness is not the absence of problems; it's the ability to deal with them.” Steve Maraboli

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL ENERGY FORUM

India will host the 16th International Energy Forum (IEF) Ministerial Meeting from 10-12th April 2018 in New Delhi.

Petroleum Ministers from 42 countries would attend the Meeting.

The biennial IEF Ministerial Meetings are the world's largest gathering of Energy Ministers who engage in a dialogue on global energy issues. The IEF Ministerial meetings are informal dialogues, at both the political and technical levels, aimed to improve policy and investment decisions, and through increased knowledge and experience sharing.

Global energy security, sustainable and inclusive growth, energy access and affordability, fiscal regimes and legal reforms to attract investments in the energy sector and energy sector digitalization-benefits and challenges would be part of the deliberations among other important issues.

International Energy Forum (IEF):

The International Energy Forum (IEF) is an inter-governmental arrangement set up in 1991, based in Riyadh which serves as a neutral facilitator of informal, open, informed and continuing global energy dialogue among its members comprising of energy producing and energy consuming states, including transit countries.

There are 72 member countries of IEF, including India, covering all six continents, which are signatories to the Charter of the IEF. Its membership accounts for 90% of global supply and demand for oil and gas.

The Executive Board (EB) set up in 2002 comprising of 31 designated representatives of Ministers of the member states comprise the governing board of IEF. It meets twice a year. International Energy Agency (IEA) and Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) are non-voting members of the Executive Board.

The EB is chaired by the Host State of the next biennial Ministerial Meeting. Currently, India is the Chair of the Executive Board of IEF.

By virtue of being among the top 11 largest consumers of oil and gas (India is presently 4th), India has been the Permanent Member of the Executive Board since its set-up in 2002. India had earlier hosted the 5th IEF Ministerial in 1996 at Goa.

Apart from member countries, invitations have also been extended to 20 other countries where India has oil and gas engagements/interests.

NATIONAL

UTTAM

The government has launched UTTAM App for Coal Quality Monitoring.

UTTAM stands for Unlocking Transparency by Third Party Assessment of Mined Coal.

The Ministry of Coal and Coal India Limited (CIL) has developed the App.

It aims to provide an App for all citizens and coal consumers to monitor the process of Third Party Sampling of coal across CIL subsidiaries.

UTTAM App ensures accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in coal ecosystem. It provides a platform for monitoring of sampling and coal dispatches.

NIIF IN TALKS WITH EVERSTONE GROUP FOR A TIE-UP TO MANAGE GREEN GROWTH EQUITY FUND (GGEF)

The government's National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) is in talks with private equity firm Everstone Group for a tie-up to manage its Green Growth Equity Fund (GGEF).

GGEF:

The Green Growth Equity Fund will be the second investment platform to be set up by NIIF.

GGEF, which will invest in renewable energy assets, is a joint venture between NIIF and the UK government.

GGEF would be managed by a third-party investment manager, selected by NIIF Limited and the UK government through an efficient and robust screening and selection process.

NIIF:

NIIF was set up in 2015 as an investment vehicle for funding commercially viable Greenfield, Brownfield and stalled projects in the infrastructure sector.

NIIF will invest in areas such as energy, transportation, housing, water, waste management and other infrastructure-related sectors in India.

The corpus of the fund is proposed to be around Rs40,000 crore, with the government investing 49% and the rest to be raised from third-party investors such as sovereign wealth funds, insurance and pension funds, endowments etc.

NIIF's strategy includes anchoring equity, quasi-equity and debt funds in partnership with investors targeting investments across the relevant sectors in India.

POSHAN ABHIYAAN (NATIONAL NUTRITION MISSION)

POSHAN Abhiyaan under Innovation component envisages undertaking activities to be implemented intended to improve the service delivery system, capacity building of front line functionaries and community engagement for better nutritional outcomes. The successful pilots may be taken up later-on for scaling up in similar contextual specificities on a broader platform.

An Executive Committee has been set up under the Chairpersonship of Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development to provide policy support and guidance to States/UTs under POSHAN Abhiyaan from time to time. A National Council on India's Nutrition Challenges has also been set up under the Chairpersonship of Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog for policy direction, review, effective coordination and convergence between

Ministries which have a sectoral responsibility for the challenge of nutrition.

POSHAN Abhiyaan:

POSHAN Abhiyaan was launched on International Women's day (March 8) in 2018 to boost nutrition among children and women.

Prevent and reduce stunting in children (0-6 years): By 6% @ 2% p.a.

Prevent and reduce under-nutrition (underweight prevalence) in children (0-6 years): By 6% @ 2% p.a.

Reduce the prevalence of anemia among young Children (6-59 months): By 9% @ 3% p.a.

Reduce the prevalence of anemia among Women and Adolescent Girls in the age group of 15-49 years: By 9% @ 3% p.a.

Reduce Low Birth Weight (LBW): By 6% @ 2% p.a.

The target of the mission is to bring down stunting among children in the age group 0-6 years from 38.4% to 25% by 2022.

RBI ASKED BANKS TO STOP SERVICE TO ANY ENTITY DEALING WITH VIRTUAL CURRENCIES

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked banks to stop providing service to any entity dealing with virtual currencies, with immediate effect.

Regulated entities that are already providing such services should exit the relationship within three months.

Introducing its own digital currency

RBI said that it would explore introducing digital currency.

RBI has formed an interdepartmental group to study and provide guidance on the desirability and feasibility to introduce a central bank digital currency.

The report will be submitted by end-June 2018.

PATHANKOT GETS OPERATIONALIZED AS THE 21ST AIRPORT UNDER UDAN

Pathankot gets Operationalized as the 21st airport under UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) – RCS (Regional Connectivity Scheme).

UDAN:

UDAN is a market-based policy intervention that builds on similar programmes in the US, Canada and Australia. It is also consistent with universal service approaches established for other network-based services such as railways and telecom.

The objective of the Scheme is to make flying affordable for the masses, to promote tourism, increase employment and promote balanced regional growth. It also intends to put life into un-served and under-served airports.

It offers viability gap funding to operators to fly smaller aircraft to such airports with a commitment to price tickets for at least half of the seats at Rs. 2,500 for an hour-long flight.

DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACEUTICALS (DoP) CALLED FOR FASTER PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS BY NPPA

The Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) has called for faster processing of applications by foreign stent makers to withdraw their products from India, or alternatively, reconsider their petition demanding differential pricing of stents.

At a meeting called by DoP with officials from National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) and the ministries of health and commerce, the DoP secretary asked the NPPA to “examine” and “dispose of” the applications filed by multinational stent makers without any further delay”.

Background

The move comes ahead of a key meeting on 9 April by the US trade representative (USTR).

The American medical device makers had also asked the USTR to suspend or withdraw India’s benefits under GSP.

The US is pressing India not to extend price caps on medical devices and wants India to allow firms to withdraw products from the

market if they do not wish to sell at government determined rates.

Generalized system of preferences (GSP)

Under the GSP, Indian exports to the US enjoy lower import tariffs compared to those imposed on non-GSP exporters.

Specifically, it is a system of exemptions from the most favored nation principle (MFN) that obliges WTO member countries to treat the imports of all other WTO member countries no worse than they treat the imports of their “most favored” trading partner. In essence, MFN requires WTO member countries to treat imports coming from all other WTO member countries equally, that is, by imposing equal tariffs on them.

PARLIAMENTARY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE’S REVIEW ON ACTIVITIES OF BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS (BIS)

A Parliamentary Consultative Committee recently reviewed the activities of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and laid emphasis on easy redressal mechanism of complaints, mandatory certification, enhancing consumer confidence through publicity and various other interactive measures. It also stressed on the effective implementation of the provisions of new BIS Act 2016.

BIS Act 2016:

Bureau of Indian standards (BIS) Act 2016 which was notified on 22nd March, 2016, came into force with effect from 12th October, 2017. Parliament had in March 2016 passed the law to replace the BIS Act of 1986.

The Act establishes the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) as the National Standards Body of India.

The Act has enabling provisions for the Government to bring under compulsory certification regime any goods or article of any scheduled industry, process, system or service which it considers necessary in the public interest or for the protection of human, animal or plant health, safety of the environment, or prevention of unfair trade practices, or national security.

Enabling provisions have also been made for making hallmarking of the precious metal articles mandatory.

The new Act also allows multiple type of simplified conformity assessment schemes including self-declaration of conformity against a standard which will give simplified options to manufacturers to adhere to the standards and get certificate of conformity.

The Act enables the Central Government to appoint any authority/agency, in addition to the BIS, to verify the conformity of products and services to a standard and issue certificate of conformity.

There is also a provision for repair or recall, including product liability of the products bearing Standard Mark but not conforming to the relevant Indian Standard.

BIS:

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the national Standards Body of India working under the aegis of Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.

It is established by the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986.

The Minister in charge of the Ministry or Department having administrative control of the BIS is the ex-officio President of the BIS.

As a corporate body, it has 25 members drawn from Central or State Governments, industry, scientific and research institutions, and consumer organisations.

It also works as WTO-TBT enquiry point for India.

SCIENCE AND TECH

EXERCISE GAGANSHAKTI-2018

An all encompassing coordinated and composite exercise named Gaganshakti is being conducted by the IAF from 08-22 Apr 18.

The aim of this exercise is real time coordination, deployment and employment of Air Power in a short & intense battle scenario.

During Gaganshakti IAF will exercise the entire machinery to validate its concept of

operations and war waging capability. With each successive exercise, the lessons learnt in the previous exercises and doctrinal precepts are put to test, for developing new concepts. This year the IAF has planned tactics that will be tested in a real time scenario.

Apart from wartime drills, IAF will also practice and validate various Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief drills that the IAF is expected to undertake from time to time. Some such measure would involve mobilization of Air Ambulance version of transport aircraft and helicopters to airlift simulated sitting and bedridden casualties to metros/big cities having good medical facilities and would include evacuation of casualties from highways that facilitate such operations.

Full spectrums of operations are planned by IAF with special focus on 'Network Centric Operations', and 'Effect Based Operations'.

This exercise is aimed at coordinating operations, maintenance and administrative responses to achieve the stated objectives of the Indian Air Force, in case of any contingency. This exercise will hone the war fighting skills of the air warriors in a real time scenario thus affirming the IAF's role as the cutting edge of our nation's military capability.
