

“It takes guts and humility to admit mistakes. Admitting we're wrong is courage, not weakness.” Roy T. Bennett

NATIONAL

DIU SMART CITY BECOMES FIRST TO RUN ON 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY DURING DAYTIME

- Prototype being tested in Bangalore Smart City to develop Intelligent Traffic Management Solution

Diu Smart City has become the first city in India that runs on 100% renewable energy during daytime setting a new benchmark for other cities to become clean and green.

Diu had been importing 73% of its power from Gujarat until last year. It has now adopted a two-pronged approach whereby a 9 MW solar park spread over 50 hectares rocky barren land has been developed besides installing solar panels on the roof tops on 79 government buildings thereby generating 1.3 MW annually.

To improve traffic management in Bangalore Smart City, a prototype of an intelligent traffic management solution is currently being tested in collaboration with the Electronics City Township Authority (ELCITA).

It will provide traffic information that is currently unavailable, and help improve management of commuter traffic. It involves capturing video streams from several cameras and processing them using artificial intelligence so that typical traffic management tasks such as vehicle detection, traffic density estimation and control of traffic lights can be automated for real-time performance.

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR MINORITIES (NCM) TO GET CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS

The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) has decided to approach the government for granting it Constitutional status. This is being done in order to protect the rights of minority communities more effectively.

If granted such a status, the NCM will be able to act against errant officials who do not attend hearings, follow its order or are found guilty of dereliction of duty.

In its present form, the NCM has powers to summon officials, including chief secretaries and director generals of police, but has to rely on departments concerned to take action against them.

Till now, only the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes enjoy constitutional status.

National Commission for Minorities (NCM):

The Union Government set up the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992

Six religious communities, viz; Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains have been notified in Gazette of India as minority communities by the Union Government all over India

The NCM adheres to the United Nations Declaration of 18 December 1992 which states that “States shall protect the existence of the National or Ethnic, Cultural, Religious and Linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity”

Constitution of India doesn't define the word 'Minority' but has used the word minorities considering two attributes religion or language of a person

The Commission shall consist of

- a Chairperson,
- a Vice-Chairperson and
- Five Members to be nominated by the Central Government from amongst persons of eminence, ability and integrity; provided that five members including the Chairperson shall be from amongst the minority communities

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SURESH PRABHU TO CHAIR FIRST MEETING OF THINK TANK ON FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL POLICY ON E-COMMERCE

Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, chaired the first meeting of the think tank on the Framework

for National Policy on E-commerce held on April 24th, 2018.

The think tank on the Framework for National Policy on E-commerce has been established recently by the Department of Commerce.

It will provide a credible forum for an inclusive and fact-based dialogue leading to recommendations for informed policy making, so that the country is adequately prepared to take advantage of the opportunities, and meet the challenges, that would arise from the next wave of advancements in digital economy.

The think tank on the Framework for National Policy on E-commerce will seek to collectively deliberate on the challenges confronting India in the arena of digital economy with a view to developing recommendations for a comprehensive and overarching national policy on e-commerce. Some of the issues that will be discussed by the think tank include the following aspects of e-commerce and digital economy: physical and digital infrastructure, regulatory regime, taxation policy, data flows, server localisation, intellectual property rights protection, FDI, technology flows, responding to disruptions in industrial organisation, need for skill development and trade-related aspects.

Developments on e-commerce at the WTO and evolving appropriate national position on the underlying issues would be another important dimension of the discussions of the think tank on the Framework for National Policy on E-commerce.

The think tank will explore options for providing a fillip to entrepreneurship in digital economy. It will identify specific policy interventions for nurturing domestic firms and create jobs in e-commerce.

Representatives of almost fifty organisations participated in the first meeting of the think tank on the Framework for National Policy on E-commerce.

SUNDERBAN RESERVE FOREST TO BE DECLARED A RAMSAR SITE SOON

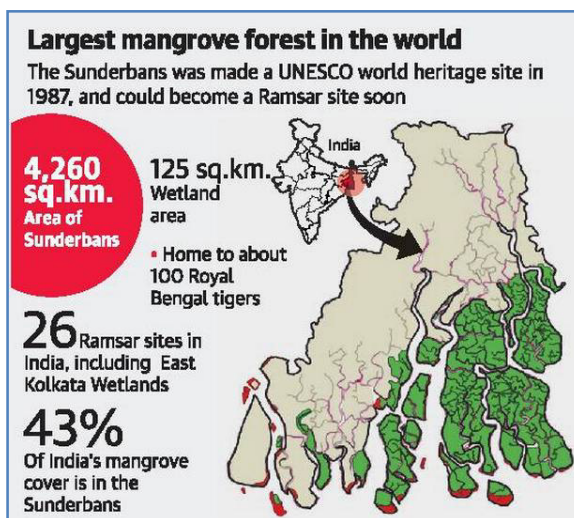
The Sunderban Reserve Forest having mangrove forests and creeks is likely to be declared a Ramsar Site soon.

The West Bengal government gave its approval to the State Forest Department to apply for recognition under the Ramsar Convention. Sunderbans is already a World Heritage Site.

This will bring a lot of international scientific attention and intervention to the area. It will be the largest protected wetland in the country.

The Indian Sunderbans, with 2,114 sq. km. of mangrove forests comprise almost 43% of the mangrove cover in the country according to a 2017 Forest Survey of India report.

There are currently 26 sites in India recognized as Ramsar wetland sites of international importance.



Ramsar Convention on Wetlands:

The Convention on Wetlands, called the Ramsar Convention, is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

The Convention was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975.

It is NOT a legally binding treaty.

The Convention uses a broad definition of wetlands. It includes all lakes and rivers,

underground aquifers, swamps and marshes, wet grasslands, peat lands, oases, estuaries, deltas and tidal flats, mangroves and other coastal areas, coral reefs, and all human-made sites such as fish ponds, rice paddies, reservoirs and salt pans.

Every three years the Parties meet at the Conference of the Contracting Parties (the COP), where they adopt decisions to administer the Convention and guide its implementation.

Between the COPs, the Parties are represented by the Standing Committee, which meets yearly.

The Montreux Record is a register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference.

It is maintained as part of the Ramsar List.

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION CERTIFICATE FOR WARANGAL DHURRIES

The Chennai-based GI Registry gave Geographical Indication certificate for Warangal dhurries.

The **shatranji carpets and jainamaaz prayer mats** are made in **Warangal Specialty of carpets**.

Bright colors, geometrically repetitive patterns and interlocking zigzag motifs in cotton and jute are the signature styles of the carpets.

One of the newest innovations by the weavers here is an adaptation of tie-dyed ikat techniques and hand-painted or block-printed kalamkari designs for the dhurries to save time and energy.

Kalamkari Paintings:

Kalamkari or qalamkari is a type of hand-painted or block-printed cotton textile, produced in Iran and India.

Its name originates in the Persian, which is derived from the words qalam (pen) and kari (craftsmanship), meaning drawing with a pen.

There are two distinctive styles of kalamkari art in India – the Srikalahasti style and the Machilipatnam style.

The Srikalahasti style of kalamkari, wherein the “kalam” or pen is used for freehand drawing of the subject and filling in the colors is entirely hand worked.

The Pedana Kalamkari craft made at Pedana nearby Machilipatnam in Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh, evolved with the patronage of the Mughals and the Golconda sultanate.

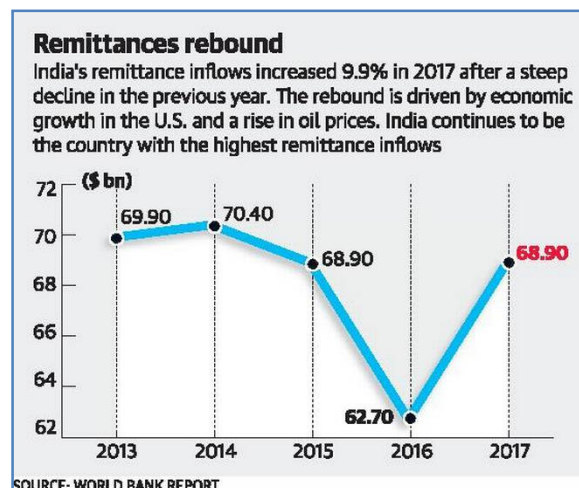
INDIA RETAINED TOP POSITION IN REMITTANCE

According to the World Bank data, India has retained the top position as a recipient of remittances with its Diaspora sending about \$69 billion back home last year.

Remittances to India picked up sharply by 9.9%, reversing the previous year’s dip, but were still short of \$70.4 billion received in 2014. India continued to top in terms of receiving remittance.

The data is provided by the World Bank in its latest Migration and Development Brief.

Global remittances (which include flows to high-income countries) grew 7 per cent to USD 613 billion last year, from USD 573 billion in 2016.



The upsurge is likely to continue into 2018 on the back of stronger economic conditions in advanced economies (particularly the U.S.) and an increase in oil prices that should have a positive impact on the GCC countries.

The possible reason behind this growth:

The stronger-than-expected recovery in remittances was driven by growth in Europe, Russia and the U.S.

The rebound in remittances, when valued in U.S. dollars, was helped by higher oil prices and a strengthening of the Euro and the Ruble.

Foreign remittance:

A remittance is a transfer of money by a foreign worker to an individual in his or her home country.

Money sent home by migrants competes with international aid as one of the largest financial inflows to developing countries. Workers' remittances are a significant part of international capital flows, especially with regard to labour-exporting countries.

HEALTH MINISTRY TO LAUNCH SPECIAL PROGRAMME FOR HEPATITIS

The Health Ministry has decided to roll out an initiative for prevention and control of viral hepatitis.

Under the initiative, the ministry has decided to establish a state coordination unit under the state NHM for efficient rollout of the programme in 26 large and four small states.

The National Health Mission (NHM) has decided to roll out 'Integrated initiative for prevention & control of viral hepatitis' with a budget of Rs 517.39 crore for three years.

Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver tissue.

Some people have no symptoms whereas others develop yellow discoloration of the skin and whites of the eyes, poor appetite, vomiting, tiredness, abdominal pain, or diarrhea.

Over time the chronic form may progress to scarring of the liver, liver failure, or liver cancer

SCIENCE AND TECH

THE LUNAR "GATEWAY" PROGRAM

National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (Nasa) goal of returning to the moon should see a major push in early 2019 with the lunar "Gateway" program.

The Lunar Orbital Platform-Gateway is Nasa's planned "staging" area intended for studies of the moon and the deep-space environment. The Gateway would also further Nasa's goal of another human landing on the moon and will help determine whether water near the surface could be used to manufacture propellant for deep-space missions.

The moon's gravity could also help a spacecraft reduce the blistering speeds used for six-month voyages back-and-forth to Mars, thus facilitating re-entry to Earth's atmosphere.

THE EARTH BIOGENOME PROJECT

The Earth Bio Genome Project (EBP) proposes a detailed genome-sequence draft of every eukaryote species (organisms with a defined nucleus and to which belong all plants and animals).

There are about eight million eukaryotic species and the authors argue that being able to create their detailed genetic sequences will reveal unexpected, evolutionary connections among the genus, orders and families that make up the so-called Tree of Life.

The EBP has a 10-year road map and hopes to sequence about 1.5 million eukaryote species in three phases. This exercise needs global collaboration and can have many benefits.

Sequencing such a large number of organisms will require innovative computation- and-storage solutions and the programming acumen of many thousands across the world.

The Human Genome Project, which involved preparing a blueprint of the sequence of genes that make up humans, gave scientists a way to link networks of genes with disease and well-being, as well as discover unexpected links; for instance, why some women were prone to breast cancer more than others.

If mining a single species' genes can yield such benefits — at least \$1 trillion to the U.S. alone, according to a 2013 Nature study — the bounty from preparing detailed sequences of every species on the earth could be many multiples of that and could benefit the world.
