**Be the master of your own image rather than letting others define if for you.**

## INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL

### QUAD COUNTRIES DISCUSS OCEAN SECURITY

The discussion was about maintaining high – level consultations among the Quad countries aiming at free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Australia, Japan, India and the US should work with countries in the IOR.

Four Quad member countries should work to oppose "the establishment of permanent Chinese military bases" in the IOR.

The report calls the four countries to enhance sea land defence capabilities. For this naval fleet should evolve long range operations.

This may require consideration in Japan of new options such as nuclear propulsion for its submarines

On the sidelines of the launch of a report by four think tanks from the Quad countries, Japanese diplomat highlighted the following points:

The Quad grouping should not be in an exclusive context. It is one of the groupings for interaction.

There are various modalities where Quad countries interact on bilateral and trilateral basis.

Japan's Indo-Pacific policy is open and inclusive

All four countries have used the word inclusive and so all are in agreement of the inclusiveness of the Indo-Pacific.

Australia National University, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, USA, Vivekananda India Foundation (VIF) formed the Quadripartite Commission on Indian Ocean Regional Security, which provides recommendations for stability in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

On the sidelines of the East Asia Summit in Manila last year, the Quad countries held discussion on reviving the grouping.

## NATIONAL

### STATE CAN STOP VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT OF DOCTORS

**Public Interest over & above Right to Retire:**

The State can stop government doctors from taking voluntary retirement in public interest, the Supreme Court has ruled.

The fundamental right to retire is not above the right to save lives in a country where government hospitals cater to the poorest.

The concept of public interest can also be invoked by the government when voluntary retirement sought by an employee will be against public interest.

The court said public health was suffering from a scarcity of doctors. Qualified doctors did not join the public service.

Even if they did so, they chose voluntary retirement and went into lucrative private practice.

The Court said that poor could not be put in peril by a paucity of specialists in government hospitals.

The State governments had an obligation "to make an endeavour under Article 47 to look after the provisions for health and nutrition."

The doctors, as citizens, had certain fundamental duties under Article 51(A) towards their fellow citizens.

The right to practice a profession under Article 19(1) (g) was subject to the interest of the general public, the court said.

The ruling is based on an appeal by the Uttar Pradesh government against the Allahabad High Court's decision.

The HC allowed Dr. Achal Singh, who was working as Joint Director, Medical, Health and Family Welfare, in Lucknow, to voluntarily retire.

Though the HC allowed Ms. Singh to retire, it ruled the way government doctors were seeking voluntary retirement almost every day in the State.

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The HC said the government healthcare sector needed senior doctors as they were "absolutely necessary to run the medical services which are part and parcel of the right to life itself."

## EPFO DATA NOT THE RIGHT GAUGE OF EMPLOYMENT LEVEL

The EPFO recently revised down the net enrolment numbers for the period from September 2017 to May 2018 by 5.54 lakh (12.4%) to 39.2 lakh from its earlier estimate of 44.74 lakh made last month.

The downward revision in the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation data does not imply a decrease in formal sector employment.

According to labour economists there are several problems with the EPFO data and caution against its use as a gauge of formal sector employment in the country.

EPFO data is a very complicated piece of work. There is a lack of clarity about the methodology being followed for this dataset.

It is not clear what happens when a person changes jobs — and that happens very, very frequently.

When someone applies for a new policy and already has an older one, what does EPFO do? Does it merge the two policies? Does it delete one? Does it keep the older policy active?

EPFO is not actually disclosing this. They must make a deduction somewhere, but it is not clear if this is happening.

Another major lacuna in the EPFO numbers was that it does not make clear whether the additions are to the total number of members (about 150 million) or to the number of active members who actually make payments and who number only about 60 million.

If this addition is simply people moving from the member to active member category, there is no new job creation, or even new formal job creation, at all.

Most of the informal employers have been outside the EPFO net; enterprises may not have registered at all, or may not have admitted that they employ enough people to meet the EPFO threshold.

The new GST regime created a certain incentive for many small enterprises to register themselves on the GST network, and so they may have registered under EPFO.

Thus, these are not new jobs being created; it is simply that they are newly registered under EPFO.

Changes in EPFO numbers are not always indicative of a change in employment levels since there are several reasons why EPFO numbers might change without a corresponding change in employment.

Some examples are a worker quitting their job to start their own company, a worker being transferred to a foreign branch of an Indian company etc.

Employees retiring, and employees quitting once they get married are the prime factors of reduced employment.

For example, a company employing 19 people may not be in EPFO, but as soon as it adds one more employee, all 20 are added to EPFO.

But the actual increase in employment has only been a single person.

The estimates may include temporary employees whose contributions may not be continuous for the entire year.

## 35% OF CYBER ATTACKS ON INDIAN SITES FROM CHINA: OFFICIAL REPORT

The report, prepared by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), which comes under the ministry, analyzed cyber attacks from April-June 2018.

It said that the maximum number of cyber attacks on official Indian websites is from China, US and Russia.

It has also flagged the possibility of "malicious actors from Pakistan using German and Canadian cyberspace for intruding into Indian cyberspace and carrying out malicious activities".

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**Highlights of the report:**

According to the report, it has been observed that China continues to "intrude" Indian cyberspace in a significant way.

The cyber attacks from China made up 35% of the total number of cyber attacks on official Indian websites, followed by US (17%), Russia (15%), Pakistan (9%), Canada (7%) and Germany (5%).

They are targeting by sending spear phishing emails with malware attachments.

Phishing attacks are usually in the form of an email from a trusted source where they ask for personal details such as bank details personal details, passwords.

Many of the institutions impacted by the malicious activities have been identified, and they have been advised to take appropriate preventive action.

These include ONGC, NIC, and IRCTC, Railways, Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS) and some banks like PNB, Oriental Bank of Commerce, SBI and state data centres, particularly in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.

**CERT-In:**

CERT-In is the nodal agency which deals with cyber security threats like hacking and phishing.

It collects analyses and disseminates information on "cyber incidents", and also issues alerts on "cyber security incidents".

The activities relating to intruding into the cyberspace are being regularly monitored.

### ICOMOS LAUNCHES INITIATIVE TO SAVE CULTURAL HERITAGE DAMAGED IN KERALA FLOODS

Kerala is facing its worst floods in nearly a century that has left many dead in a fortnight and forced over 10 lakh people out of their homes. The Centre has declared this calamity of 'severe nature'.

The ICOMOS, a global monument conservation body, has launched an initiative to assess the damage to the rich cultural and built heritage in flood-devastated Kerala and set up an emergency response platform.

ICOMOS is seeking support from the state government, the NDMA and reaching out to local conservation professionals.

Aftermath of rescue and relief it is very important to start preparations for assessing the damage and risks to the rich tangible, intangible, movable and immovable heritage that has been adversely affected by these floods.

These include monuments, historic buildings, museum collections and artifacts of significance to the community.

Kerala is endowed with natural beauty, and is home to a number of iconic forts, palaces and other heritage buildings, which attract a huge number of tourists every year.

Rome-based ICCROM is an inter-governmental organization dedicated to the preservation of cultural heritage worldwide through training, information, research, cooperation and advocacy programmes.

It imbibes the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, cultural heritage and its protection which helps build resilience and enhances the ability of the affected population to participate in its own recovery.

**International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS):** It is a professional association that works for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage places around the world.

Now headquartered in Paris, ICOMOS was founded in 1965 in Warsaw as a result of the Venice Charter of 1964, and offers advice to UNESCO on World Heritage Sites.

### NITI AAYOG LAUNCHES 5 THEMATIC REPORTS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN HIMALAYAN REGION

Recognizing the uniqueness of the Himalayas and the challenges for sustainable development, NITI Aayog had set up 5 Working Groups in June 2017 to prepare a roadmap for actions in 5 thematic areas.

1.  Inventory and Revival of Springs in Himalayas for Water Security,

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2. Sustainable Tourism in Indian Himalayan Region,

3. Transformative Approach to Shifting Cultivation,

4. Strengthening Skill & Entrepreneurship Landscape in Himalayas and

5. Data/Information for Informed Decision Making.

Mountain specificities require specific solutions for resilience building that address socio-economic and environmental challenges in the mountain setting.

The reports from the five working groups discuss the significance, the challenges, the ongoing actions and a future roadmap.

**Highlights of the Report:**

Nearly 30% of springs crucial to water security of people are drying and 50% have reported reduced discharge.

Himalayan Tourism growing annually at 6.8% has created huge challenge related to solid waste, water, traffic, loss of bio-cultural diversity etc.

The projected arrival of tourists in IHR States is expected to double by 2025.

In the north eastern States, thousands of the households continue to practice slash and burn (shifting cultivation) that need to be addressed in view of ecological, food and nutritional security.

Predominantly unskilled workforce remains a challenge for the mountains as well that need high priority to address migration of youths.

Also challenges related to data availability, data authenticity, compatibility, data quality, validation, user charges for Himalayan States need redressal for informed decision making at different levels of governance.

**Key Proposals by the Report:**

Spring Mapping and Revival, using 8 steps protocol be taken up across Himalayan States in phased manner

Apply carrying capacity concept to all major tourist destinations; implement and monitor tourism sector Standards and apply performance based incentives for States faring well on the standards.

Assessment of nature & extent of Shifting Cultivation area, improved policy coherence, strengthened tenure security & improved access to related programs/schemes are key recommendations to transform shifting cultivation.

Strengthening of skill & entrepreneurship will require focus on identified priority sectors where mountains have advantage, investment in trainers, assessors and training centers in industry partnership.

Having a Central Data Management Agency for Himalayas to provide data with high fidelity scenario while addressing data sharing, access, authenticity and comparability issues will go a long way in addressing data related issues.

The call for actions includes setting up of a Himalayan Authority for coordinated and holistic development of entire Himalayan region.

It launching of "Himalaya Calling": An Awareness to Action Campaign as people's movement.

**WAYFORWARD:**

o Mission on Spring Water Management in Himalayas,

o National Mission/Program on Transforming Shifting Cultivation in North Eastern States,

o Demand driven network of skill and entrepreneurship development Centers in Himalayan States,

o Consortium of institutions of high learning for mountain specific research and technology,

o Link with Hindukush Himalaya Monitoring and Assessment program (HIMAP) and

o Setting up Central Data Management Agency for Himalayan Database at GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development.

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