

“Be happy with who you are and what you do, and you can do anything you want.”

Steve Maraboli

INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL

INDIAN OCEAN CONFERENCE

The third edition of Indian Ocean Conference is being held at Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam.

This year, the Indian Ocean Conference will emphasize on better cooperation, strategic collaboration and governance architectures. This conference will serve a platform to the countries to come closer and exchange better views on the economic and strategic importance of the region and neighborhood.

Theme: “Building Regional Architectures”.

Indian Ocean Conference:

The Indian Ocean Conference initiated by India Foundation along with its partners from Singapore, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh is an annual effort to bring together Heads of States/Governments, Ministers, Thought Leaders, scholars, diplomats, bureaucrats and practitioners from across the region.

Two successful editions of the Conference have been hosted so far in 2016 and 2017 in Singapore and Sri Lanka respectively. Both the Conferences were supported by the Ministry of External Affairs of India and had participation from over 35 countries with global media coverage.

NATIONAL

INDIA'S FIRST BIOFUEL POWERED FLIGHT UNDERTAKES MAIDEN VOYAGE

A historic flight powered by indigenously produced aviation biofuel based on the patented technology of CSIR-IIP Dehradun was flagged off from Dehradun airport

The Spicejet flight, featuring a latest generation Q400 aircraft powered by biofuel was received at Delhi airport

With this maiden flight, India joins the exclusive club of nations using biofuel in aviation

The genesis of this development goes back several years to an Indo-Canadian consortium

project from 2010 to 2013 involving CSIR-IIP, Indian Oil, Hindustan Petroleum, IIT Kanpur and IISc Bangalore

In this project, research was directed towards the production of Bio-aviation fuel by CSIR-IIP from jatropha oil and its evaluation under various conditions, culminating in a detailed engine test by Pratt and Whitney in Canada that showed fitness for purpose

The use of bio jet fuel will help in reducing greenhouse gas emissions by about 15 percent and sulfur oxides (SOx) emissions by over 99 percent

It is expected to provide:

- indigenous jet fuel supply security
- possible cost savings as feedstock availability at farm level scales up
- superior engine performance
- reduced maintenance cost for the airline operators

GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES REGULATIONS FOR DRONES

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has issued the Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) for civil use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) commonly known as drones.

Drone Regulations 1.0 will enable the safe, commercial usage of drones starting December 1, 2018.

These are intended to enable visual line-of-sight daytime-only and a maximum of 400 ft altitude operations.

Airspace has been partitioned into Red Zone (flying not permitted), Yellow Zone (controlled airspace), and Green Zone (automatic permission).

The Digital Sky Platform is the first-of-its-kind national unmanned traffic management (UTM) platform that implements “no permission, no takeoff” (NPNT).

The UTM operates as a traffic regulator in the drone airspace and coordinates closely with the defence and civilian air traffic controllers

(ATCs) to ensure that drones remain on the approved flight paths.

Users will be required to do a one-time registration of their drones, pilots and owners.

For every flight (exempted for the nano category), users will be required to ask for permission to fly on a mobile app and an automated process permits or denies the request instantly.

To prevent unauthorized flights and to ensure public safety, any drone without a digital permit to fly will simply not be able to take off.

Key features of Drone Regulations 1.0:

As per the regulation, there are 5 categories of RPAS categorized by weight, namely nano, micro, small, medium and large.

All RPAS except nano and those owned by NTRO, ARC and Central Intelligence Agencies are to be registered and issued with Unique Identification Number (UIN).

Unmanned Aircraft Operator Permit (UAOP) shall be required for RPA operators except for nano RPAS operating below 50 ft., micro RPAS operating below 200 ft., and those owned by NTRO, ARC and Central Intelligence Agencies.

The regulation defines "No Drone Zones" around airports; near the international border, Vijay Chowk in Delhi; State Secretariat Complex in State Capitals, strategic locations/vital and military installations; etc.

AFTER SAUBHAGYA, GOVT PLANS INDUCTION STOVES FOR THE POOR

The government is working on an ambitious plan to provide induction stoves to poor households in rural and urban India.

The scheme being explored by the Union power ministry will help reduce import of fossil fuels and generate fresh demand for electricity and consequently support underutilized power plants.

Induction cooking is more efficient as energy is directly transferred to the pan.

India is the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases after the US and China and among the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

India plans to reduce its carbon footprint by 33-35% from its 2005 levels by 2030, as part of its commitments to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted by 195 countries in Paris in 2015.

Implementation of the scheme:

The shift to induction cooking will be possible after the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya) is implemented.

The scheme is expected to increase India's electricity demand, with the centre setting a December 2018 deadline to provide electricity connections to more than 40 million rural and urban households.

Increasing electrical demand:

The country's energy demand is likely to go up by 2.7-3.2 times between 2012 and 2040.

Any substitution of fuels for cooking and heating will improve India's per capita power consumption of around 1,200kWh, which is among the lowest in the world.

According to the government, the Saubhagya scheme will require an additional 28,000 megawatts (MW) of power, considering an average load of 1 kilowatt (kW) per household for eight hours in a day.

The measures to boost demand include setting up a pan-India power distribution company, given that the segment will be key to the long-term fortunes of the power sector.

Distribution companies (DISCOMS) have so far been the weakest link in the electricity value chain.

Poor payment records of state-owned DISCOMS have not only adversely affected power generation companies, but have also contributed to stress in the banking sector.

EDITORIAL ANALYSIS**ARTICLE 35A AND THE BASIC STRUCTURE**

Article 35A was added into the constitution through presidential order of 1954. Empowers the Jammu and Kashmir state's legislature to define "permanent residents" of the state and provide special rights and privileges in respect to public employment, acquisition of immovable property in the State, settlement in different parts of the State, and access to scholarships.

According to author, struck down the article will damage the spirit of Indian Federalism.

High court bench to check the validity of Article 35A if it infringes on the Basic structure of Indian constitution.

HC believes present petition is meritless as the previous bench has already approved 1954 presidential order.

According to political scientist Louis Tillin, Article 370 has established Indian constitution is form of "asymmetric federalism"

Argument in favor of article 35A:

Instrument of Accession gave India the power to make laws only on Defence, External Affairs, and Communications.

Other area could be legislated only through the president order with prior assent of state government.

Though, Article 368 deals with the ordinary power of Parliament applicable to other parts of India, article 35A makes it clear that the changes made under article 368 will not apply to J&K.

Any amendment requires to be applicable for J&K needs to bring under Article 370 and needed prior state government assent.

President order to make any provision can be accepted only on the prior recommendation of state constituent assembly.

Article 370 is described as a tunnel because it seems to be the only way to take the Indian constitution in J&K.

Petitioner claims against Article 35A

Article 35A could not have been added outside the scope of Article 368. It infringes the basic structure of constitution. But Article 370 is also an integrated part of Indian constitution as Article 368 and Kashmir require special focus and attention.

Constituent assembly of state consent require for adding any scope in Instrument of Accession.

Constitutional validity of Article 370 further recognized by SC in PremNath and SampatNath Prakash case.

Constituent assembly was disbanded in 1956. Any presidential order made after 1956 without state approval will be considered null and void.

Any change in article 35A is not always against the basic structure of constitution. Because, SC verdict in Keshwananda case doesn't cover all the aspects of article 368 and logic doesn't extend to Article 370.

However the Supreme Court held in Waman Rao v. Union of India has cleared, amendment made prior to Keshwananda is not capable of challenging basic structure otherwise may cause more harm than expected.

GOVERNMENT PLANS TO REDUCE PRICES OF MEDICAL DEVICES

After having brought down the prices of drugs, the government has medical devices on its agenda

It will soon announce its decision on the method of rationalizing trade margins for medical devices from the first point of sale

According to the report of the committee of high trade margins in the sale of drugs, released by the department of pharmaceuticals in 2016, the price to the distributor for both global and indigenous companies was considered from the first point of sale

This report clearly identifies that it is the margin between the price to the distributor and maximum retail price (MRP) that results in

the escalation of the latter, and recommends that this should be capped

Till 2012, the practice followed by the NPPA was a maximum allowable post-marketing expense (Mape) over standardized manufacturing cost or over landing cost of the product

According to the observations documented in National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Policy, 2012 (NPPP-2012), the manufacturing cost/landing cost methodology of price capping had led to “possible manipulation” of cost data, resulting in entry barriers

The idea of price capping based on manufacturing cost/landing cost as per Drug Price Control Order 1995 was an unmitigated disaster.

The emphasis on price control starting at the bulk drug and formulation stages resulted in drug manufacturing shifting away from notified bulk drugs and formulations under price control.

Arguments against:

The scale of investment in pharmaceuticals is less than what it is for the medical device industry

In medical devices industry spending needs to be done on skill development, in-clinic support, innovation and after-sales service of equipment

If a patient feels a certain medication is not effective, he will go back to the doctor to change it, but this is not the case when it comes to medical devices

The risk factor is high, as medical devices can't be replaced without re-operating on patients

Doctors need to be aware of the availability of various medical devices for different conditions before treating a patient so that they can guide patients and form an effective referral chain to super-speciality care.

For this, the global research-based companies need to invest and support clinicians in education and skill building.

Ayushman Bharat:

In this Union budget, the government focused on the healthcare sector, launching the world's largest government-funded healthcare programme, Ayushman Bharat

Besides providing health insurance to 100 million poor families, the government also plans to open 150,000 health and wellness centers to provide comprehensive healthcare with free diagnostics and treatment

For the success of these initiatives, a lot of skill-building activities are required

At this stage, if the rationalization of trade margin is not calculated from the first point of sale, companies will stop investing in these activities

That would increase the chances of the scheme failing

Way Forward

The department of pharmaceuticals' recommendation on trade margin rationalization from the first point of sale is the most viable solution available

It will not only allow global companies to sell innovative products but also enable them to invest in skill development along with therapy awareness, while still ensuring affordability by correcting the skewed margins in the supply chain.
