

“What helps you persevere is your resilience and commitment.” Roy T. Bennett

INTERNATIONAL & BILATERAL

INDO-KAZAKHSTAN JOINT EXERCISE KAZIND 2018

The Joint Army Exercise will be conducted between the Indian and Kazakhstan Army in Otar region, Kazakhstan.

This is the third joint military exercise between the two countries which have a history of extensive cooperation in the defence arena.

The second edition of the exercise was held in India last year.

The aim of the exercise is to build and promote bilateral Army to Army relations and exchange skills and experiences between Kazakhstan Army and the Indian Army.

The vast experience and expertise of Indian troops in counter insurgency operations holds special importance to the Kazakhstan Army.

The fourteen days exercise with the Kazakhstan Army will follow a graduated continuum from orientation to a full scale mock exercise.

NATIONAL

TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES FOR COFFEE STAKEHOLDERS

Minister for Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu has launched Coffee Connect – India coffee field force app and Coffee Krishi Tharanga – digital mobile extension services for coffee stakeholders.

The mobile app Coffee Connect has been developed to ease the work of field functionaries and to improve the work efficiency.

This application provides solution by harnessing the power of mobility comprising the latest technology in easing the whole process of the field.

This includes activities like digitization of Coffee Growers & Estates with Geo Tagging, collecting the Plantation details.

It will also help in transparency in the activities of the extension officers and officials, transparency in subsidy disbursement and real time report generation.

The Coffee KrishiTharanga services are aimed at providing customized information and services to increase productivity, profitability, and environmental sustainability.

The solution will help in to reach maximum growers in limited period, efficient, timely, customized advisory, improve the efficiency through digitization and leverage existing mobile reach for wider delivery of improved technology.

Coffee Board of India:

The Coffee Board of India is an organization managed by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of the government of India to promote coffee production in India. Head Office is in Bangalore.

The Coffee Board of India was established by an act of Parliament in 1942.

The Coffee Board's traditional duties included the promotion of the sale and consumption of coffee in India and abroad, conducting coffee research, financial assistance to establish small coffee growers, safeguarding working conditions for laborers, and managing the surplus pool of unsold coffee.

GOOGLE TO HELP EC TRACK ONLINE POLITICAL ADS

Google will soon be helping the Election Commission (EC) keep tabs on online political advertising.

It will develop a mechanism that will not only ensure pre-certification of political advertisements but also enable it to share with the authority, details about the expenditure incurred on its platforms.

A committee has been set up to explore possible modifications in Section 126 (election silence) and other provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 in view of the expansion and diversity of media platforms.

Google will keep track of political advertisements and ensure that they are pre-certified by the EC's Media Certification and Monitoring Committees.

This would entail Google asking prospective clients, whenever an order is placed, whether they have been pre-certified.

Google has also assured that it would set up a mechanism for sharing information on the cost of the political advertisements.

The ECI is the nodal body for pre-certification of advertisements of a political nature, released by either an individual or an organisation.

This would be of use to Returning Officers when it comes to calculating the election expenditure of individual candidates.

The ECI asks the candidates to declare their official social media accounts.

As soon as someone is declared a candidate for any election, all the money spent by the person for campaigning gets added as election expenditure.

The EC's committee has agreed with Facebook to develop tools for removing any content related to election matters during the 48-hour period when the 'prohibition protocol' is in place.

It is working on ways to check fake news and share details of expenditure on poll-related advertisements.

JAPAN TO TEST MINI 'SPACE ELEVATOR'

A Japanese team has developed a space elevator and will conduct a first trial this month, blasting off a miniature version on satellites to test the technology.

The test equipment, produced by researchers at Shizuoka University will hitch a ride on an H-2B rocket being launched by Japan's space agency.

The test involves a miniature elevator stand-in a box just 6 cm long, 3 cm wide, and 3 cm high.

If all goes well, it will provide proof of concept by moving along a 10-metre cable suspended in space between two mini satellites that will keep it taut.

The mini-elevator will travel along the cable from a container in one of the satellites. The movement of the motorized "elevator" box will be monitored with cameras in the satellites.

The company said it could use carbon nanotube technology, which is more than 20 times stronger than steel, to build a lift shaft about 96,000 km above the earth.

RESERVE BANK TIGHTENS OMBUDSMAN SCHEME

The RBI has tightened the banking ombudsman scheme with the objective to strengthen the grievance redressal mechanism for customers.

It has asked all commercial banks having 10 or more banking outlets to have an independent internal ombudsman (IO) to review customer complaints that are either partly or fully rejected by the banks.

The IO shall examine customer complaints which are in the nature of deficiency in service on the part of the bank, that are partly or wholly rejected by the bank.

The instructions are not applicable for Regional Rural Banks sponsored by commercial banks.

As banks should internally escalate complaints that are not fully redressed to their respective IOs before conveying the final decision to the complainant, customers need not approach the IO directly.

According to bankers, the Internal Ombudsman Scheme of 2018 mandates banks to grant a fixed term of three to five years, which cannot be renewed, to the IO. The IO can be removed only with prior approval from RBI.

RBI has said that the Ombudsman Scheme of 2018 covers appointment/tenure, roles and responsibilities, procedural guidelines and oversight mechanism for the IO.

The implementation of IO Scheme 2018 will be monitored by the bank's internal audit mechanism apart from regulatory oversight by RBI.
