

**“Pursue what catches your heart, not what catches your eyes.” Roy T. Bennett**

## INTERNATIONAL

### TRILATERAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN INDIA, JAPAN AND THE US

India will host the strategically important trilateral dialogue between India, Japan and the US this week.

The US administration has sent two of its senior diplomats from the State Department to co-lead the American delegation for the trilateral dialogue.

The India-Japan-US trilateral was launched in December 2011 when Hillary Clinton was the Secretary of State.

It was elevated to ministerial level in 2015. The inaugural ministerial trilateral was held on September 29, 2015, in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly Session.

The last ministerial dialogue was also held in New York in September 2017.

#### India-US forum

One of the diplomats will also participate in the India-US Forum, hosted by the Ananta Centre and the Ministry of External Affairs.

The India-US Forum is a platform for both American and Indian leaders across the spectrum to discuss complex global and bilateral issues and promote greater cooperation between the two countries through consultation and collaboration.

## NATIONAL

### CRISIL, ICRA DIFFER ON STRESSED ASSET OUTLOOK

Two major rating agencies, Crisil and ICRA have differed on stressed asset outlook. While the former said there had been an improvement in credit quality sustained through fiscal 2018, the latter claimed that pressure on credit quality persists.

#### ICRA's stand:

- In its review of financial year 2017-18, while there were more upgrades than the downgrades, these trends did not imply that

the credit quality pressures on India Inc had subsided.

- When the above data is linked with the volume of debt that underwent a rating change and the number of notches by which the ratings shifted, a somewhat different portrayal emerges.

The volume of the debt downgraded, rose sharply to almost Rs. 3 trillion in FY18. Significantly higher than the debt of Rs. 1.7 trillion, downgraded in the previous fiscal.

Crisil, on the other hand divided the country's credit landscape into two categories 'good one' which is improving & 'bad one' that is with stressed assets worth Rs. 11.5 lakh crore, where resolution has begun.

- Crisil's credit ratio (the number of upgrades as compared to downgrades) continues to reflect the improvement in the 'good loan-book', though it has moderated from the levels seen in the first half. There were 14,023 upgrades to 8,393 downgrades in fiscal 2018.

Upgrades outnumbered downgrades in the 'good loan-book' on the back of better financial indicators due to lower capital expenditure (CAPEX) and record equity issuances.

### ROLL-OUT OF E-WAY BILL SMOOTH, NO GLITCH SO FAR

- The Centre said the re-introduction of the e-way bill system under GST had been "very successful" with no technical glitches.

- The GST provision, requiring transporters to carry an e-way bill when moving goods between states, was implemented to check rampant tax evasion and boost revenues.

- On the first day, 2.59 lakh e-way bills were generated and another 2.89 lakh were generated till 1600 hours the next day.

- E-way bill implementation was deferred as the systems had collapsed when the e-way bill was first introduced on February 1.

- The system now had capacity to take more load. Technical support team is working towards its smooth functioning.

Schedule for the roll out of e- way bill for intrastate movement of goods would be announced after a week.

- People will take some time to adjust but over a period the authorities will start checking the trucks.

- Without e- way bill, there are chances of tax evasion and honest taxpayers feel they are at a disadvantage compared to those people who are evading the taxes.

- 98% of the target had been met for GST collection.

- Rs. 89,264 crore revenue had come in from GST for the month of February, taking the total GST collection for the full fiscal to Rs. 7,17,638 crore.

- Besides, the Centre had sanctioned GST refunds to exporters to the tune of Rs. 17,616 crore.

Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan urged for inclusion of fuel products in the GST framework. In the context of rising oil prices, he did not mention any possible move to delink prices in India from international oil prices, nor did he say the Centre would consider cutting excise duties on fuel.

#### CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA SEEKS TIME ON NOTICE

U.K.-based Cambridge Analytica, which is accused of misusing data of 50 million Facebook users, has sought a week's additional time to respond to the notice issued by the government.

On March 23, the government had sent a notice to the data analytics firm asking it to disclose if data of Indian users was used, and name the entities that used their services.

A notice was also sent to the social networking giant Facebook on March 28, seeking clarification on whether the data of Indian users on its platform had been compromised.

Cambridge Analytica was asked to reply by March 31 Facebook was asked to reply by April 7.

"Cambridge Analytica has sought one more week to reply to the queries.

While having the Information & Technology Act in place for regulating conduct on the Internet, several other Acts and cyber laws include the whole set of legislation that can be applied to determine conduct on the Internet.

Information Technology Act 2000 provide legal recognitions to e-commerce and e-governance, and facilitate its development for the filing of government agencies documents, as an alternative to paper based traditional methods.

#### National Cyber security Policy 2013:

- 24x7 National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC).

- Protects personal information, sovereign data, financial/banking information, etc.

- Provides technological solutions and builds secure and resilient cyber space.

- Generates trust in IT transactions and creates a secure cyber ecosystem.

- Fiscal Benefits for businessman who accepts standard IT practices, etc.

The government has conducted several awareness and training programmes on cyber crimes for law enforcement agencies.

#### Cyber Surakshit Bharat

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has launched Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative to strengthen cyber security ecosystem in India in line Government's vision for a 'Digital India'.

It was launched in association with National e-Governance Division (NeGD) and industry partners.

- Cyber Surakshit Bharat is first public-private partnership to leverage the expertise of the IT industry in cyber security.

The objective is to spread awareness about cyber crime and building capacity for safety measures for Chief information Security Officers (CISOs) and frontline IT staff across all government departments.

It will be operated on three principles of awareness, education and enablement.

**34 PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED UNDER NATIONAL CULTURE FUND SCHEME**

As per latest data released by the government, 34 projects have been successfully implemented under National Culture Fund Scheme till date, thus, promoting, protecting and preserving India's cultural heritage.

**National Culture Fund:**

National Culture Fund (NCF) was set up as a Trust under the Charitable Endowment Act, 1890 in November 1996 by the Government, with a view to mobilize extra resources through Public Private Partnerships.

The National Culture Fund is managed and administered by a council headed by Hon'ble Culture Minister to decide the policies and an Executive Committee headed by Secretary, Culture to actualize those policies.

The Fund aims at inviting the participation of the corporate sector, non-government organizations, private/public sector as well as individuals in the task of promoting, protecting and preserving India's cultural heritage.

All the projects undertaken by the NCF are completed within a specified period, in accordance with a MoU signed by NCF with the concerned donor organization.

**RBI LETS BANKS SPREAD OUT PROVISIONING FOR BOND MARKET LOSSES OVER 4 QUARTERS**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has allowed banks to spread out the provisioning to cover losses on their government bond portfolio across four quarters.

This will give a relief for lenders who would have otherwise faced an immediate hit to their bond portfolio due to rising yields.

The RBI has also directed banks to create an investment fluctuation reserve to build up ammunition against rising yields.

**MTM provisioning:**

Mark-to-market (MTM) provisioning is available for the quarters ending December 2017 and March 2018.

Banks using such an option will have to make the disclosure in their notes to accounts of the quarterly results.

The disclosure should contain details such as how much provisioning is done and the balance that is required to be done.

Banks have to revalue their bond portfolio at the end of every quarter.

In case the value of the securities is lower than the market rate, they are mandated to keep aside funds as MTM provisioning.

The bond portfolio is divided into three categories, namely—available for sale (AFS), held for trading (HFT), and held to maturity (HTM).

HTM is the only category where quarterly MTM provisioning is not applicable..

When a loan is not being repaid, the Bank has to reconstitute this money from its other sources like Profit.

Setting aside of money from Profits to compensate a probable loss caused on lending a loan is called Provisioning.

**Provisioning is done to cover the risk**

There are various percentages of Provisioning to the value of loan based on the duration the account has been out of order.

If an account stays non-performing for a prolonged period of time, the account is eventually written off and the account is closed.

The amount set aside as the provisioned money is used to close the account.

**GMR AND ITC LTD ARE BIDDING TO ADOPT THE TAJ MAHAL**

Infrastructure conglomerate GMR and tobacco company ITC Ltd are currently bidding to adopt the Taj Mahal under the 'Adopt a Heritage' project.

### **Adopt a Heritage Project:**

The 'Adopt a Heritage Scheme' of Ministry of Tourism was launched on World Tourism Day i.e. 27th September, 2017. This project is a key initiative of Ministry of Tourism in close collaboration with Ministry of Culture and Archeological Survey of India (ASI), to develop the heritage sites / monuments and making them tourist-friendly to enhance the tourism potential and their cultural importance in a planned and phased manner.

The project plans to entrust heritage sites/monuments and other tourist sites to private sector companies, public sector companies and individuals for the development of tourist amenities. The project aims to develop synergy among all partners.

Successful bidders selected for adopting heritage sites / monuments by the Oversight and Vision Committee shall be called as Monument Mitras. The basic and advanced amenities of the tourist destinations would be provided by them. They would also look after the operations and the maintenance of the amenities. The 'Monument Mitras' would associate pride with their CSR activities.

#### **SCIENCE AND TECH**

##### **ISRO LOST COMMUNICATION WITH GSAT-6A SATELLITE**

ISRO has confirmed that it had lost communication with GSAT-6A satellite, three days after its launch.

But Efforts are underway to establish the link with the satellite.

GSLV-Fo8 (carrying the GSAT-6A) was the 12th flight of GSLV and Sixth flight with indigenous Cryogenic Stage.

The 2,140-kg GSAT-6A is a high powered S-band communication satellite which would help improve mobile communications to handheld devices, as well as network management techniques that would have been useful in satellite based mobile communication applications.

The technology was aimed at helping the armed forces among other users by improving communications in remote areas.

It had a mission life of 10 years.

##### **ASPIRE**

A supersonic parachute that will help NASA missions to land on MARS was successfully launched into the sky during a key test designed to mimic the conditions of entering the red planet. The Advanced Supersonic Parachute Inflation Research Experiment (ASPIRE) was launched aboard a sounding rocket from NASA's Wallops Flight Facility in the US.

An ambitious NASA Mars rover mission set to launch in 2020 will rely on a special parachute to slow the spacecraft down as it enters the Martian atmosphere at over 12,000 mph (5.4 kilometers per second). The Mars 2020 mission will seek signs of ancient Martian life by investigating evidence in place and by caching drilled samples of Martian rocks for potential future return to Earth.

##### **FIMBRISTYLIS AGASTHYAMALAENSIS: NEW PLANT SPECIES FROM THE WESTERN GHATS**

Researchers have reported the discovery of a new plant species from the Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot. Classified as sedge, the grass-like plant has been named Fimbristylis agasthyamalaensis, after the locality from which it was found.

The new species belongs to the Cyperaceae family. In India, the genus is represented by 122 species, of which 87 are reported from the Western Ghats. Many of the known Cyperaceae species are medicinal plants or used as fodder.

The researchers have recommended a preliminary conservation assessment of the plant as 'critically endangered,' according to IUCN criteria. The report says the species is highly prone to wild grazing.

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