

NATIONAL**Gender wage gap highest in India, women are paid 34% less than men: ILO**

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has released Global Wage Report 2018-19. As per the report, women are paid the most unequally in India, compared to men, when it comes to hourly wages for labour. On average, women are paid 34% less than men.

Highlights of the report:

- The gender wage gap has remained unchanged at 20% from 2016 to 2017.
- In advanced economies (G20), real wage growth declined from 0.9 per cent in 2016 to 0.4 per cent in 2017, meaning near stagnation. By contrast, in emerging economies and developing G20 countries, real wage growth dipped marginally from 4.9 per cent in 2016 and 4.3 per cent in 2017.
- Inequality is higher in monthly wages, with a gap of 22 per cent.
- Overall, real wages grew just 1.8 per cent globally (136 countries) in 2017.
- In most countries, women and men differ significantly in respect of working time – specifically, that part-time work is more prevalent among women than among men.

'Heli-Clinics' for remote areas.

Speaking at "India Health Summit 2018", organized by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Healthcare Council Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Health Minister observed that the Corporate Hospitals and the leading private sector medical practitioners had mostly got concentrated in Tier-1 or big cities, while the rural and sub-rural areas, more so the remote areas, had been left deprived. Hence he has mooted "Heli-Clinics" / Helicopter Clinics for remote areas, which could particularly be of great help to provide specialized medical care to people living in inaccessible hilly terrains of the States like Jammu & Kashmir and Northeast.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, Tele-Medicine and e-Healthcare assume a special significance in a country like India to reach the patients in inaccessible regions. Here too, the private sector can play a big role by supplementing the government efforts, he said.

Lauding the Modi Government's focus on healthcare for all, Dr Jitendra Singh referred to some path-breaking decisions in the last four years, which include opening of Dialysis Centres in every district hospital, setting up of Wellness Centres and, above all, launch of "Ayushman Bharat". He also emphasized the need to incentivize medical practitioners to go to remote rural areas and to provide adequately satisfactory facilities for the government doctors to be able to serve in the rural areas.

Ayushman Bharat:

Ayushman Bharat is National Health Protection Scheme, which will cover over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families (50 crore beneficiaries) providing coverage upto 5 lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization. It will subsume the on-going centrally sponsored schemes – Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and the Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS).

INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL**Reggae- A new UNESCO Intangible Cultrural Heritage.**

The cultural agency of the United Nations – UNESCO – added reggae music to its list of international cultural treasures. The purpose of the list is to teach about and protect many international cultural traditions.

Reggae: It is Jamaican music originating from marginalized groups, mainly in Western Kingston. It was started out as voice of marginalized. But now it is played and embraced by wide cross-section of society, including various genders, ethnic and religious groups.

UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage : The UNESCO's coveted list is made up of those intangible heritage elements that help demonstrate diversity of cultural heritage and raise awareness about its importance. The list was established in 2008 when Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage came into effect. It includes important intangible cultural heritages worldwide. It has two parts viz. Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of urgent Safeguarding.

From India the Intangible Cultural Heritages added into this list include:

1. Tradition of Vedic chanting ,
2. Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana
3. Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre
4. Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas.
5. Mudiattu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala
6. Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan
7. Chhau dance
8. Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir.
9. Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur
10. Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab
11. Yoga
12. Nawrouz
13. Kumbh Mela

13th G20 Summit 2018 in Argentina:

The annual meeting is being attended by leaders of the top 19 countries and EU in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina and the theme for this year is 'Building Consensus for a Fair and Sustainable Development.'

In his pre-departure statement, PM Modi said that during the G20 summit, India will highlight the need for reformed multilateralism which reflects the contemporary realities and can effectively strengthen collective action for global good.

Shaktikanta Das, the former Secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), has been appointed as India's G20 Sherpa till December 31, 2018 for the Development Track of the G20 summit. A Sherpa is a personal representative of the leader of a member country at an international Summit meeting such as the G8, G20 or the Nuclear Security Summit and are responsible for thrashing out the details before the meeting of the leaders.

G20: Formed in 1999, the G20 is an international forum of the governments and central bank governors from 20 major economies. Collectively, the G20 economies account for around 85 percent of the Gross World Product (GWP), 80 percent of world trade. To tackle the problems or the address issues that plague the world, the heads of governments of the G20 nations periodically participate in summits. In addition to it, the group also hosts separate meetings of the finance ministers and foreign ministers. The G20 has no permanent staff of its own and its chairmanship rotates annually between nations divided into regional groupings. The first G20 Summit was held in Berlin in December 1999 and was hosted by the finance ministers of Germany and Canada.

Members: The members of the G20 consist of 19 individual countries plus the European Union (EU). The 19 member countries of the forum are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States.

PM Modi, Trump, Abe discuss major issues of global interests on G20 sidelines

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, U.S. President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met for their first trilateral meeting on the sidelines of the G20 summit to discuss major issues of global and multilateral interests. The meeting assumed importance in the wake of China flexing its muscles in the strategic Indo-Pacific region.

Highlights:

- Trump appreciated India's growth story during the meet.
- The leaders emphasized the importance of cooperation among the three countries on all major issue of global and multilateral interests such as connectivity, sustainable development, counterterrorism and maritime and cyber security.
- They shared their views on progressing a free, open, conclusive and rule-based order in the Indo-Pacific region, based on respect for international law and peaceful resolution of all differences.

- The trilateral meeting took place at a time when China is engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in the South China Sea, and with Japan in the East China Sea. Both the areas are said to be rich in minerals, oil and other natural resources.
- China claims almost all of the South China Sea. Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have overlapping claims in the waterway, which includes vital sea lanes through which about \$3 trillion in global trade passes each year.
- The U.S. has been conducting regular patrols in the South China Sea to assert freedom of navigation in the area where Beijing has built up and militarised many of the islands and reefs it controls in the region.
- Modi, Mr. Trump and Mr. Abe also agreed to cooperate in various ways and together with other countries. They also agreed on the importance of meeting in “Trilateral Format” at multilateral conferences.

India and China sign agreement to inspect fish meal, fish oil imports

India and China signed protocol on hygiene and inspection requirements for exports of fish meal, fish oil imports from India to China. It was signed as part of discussions between India's Commerce Ministry and six-member Chinese delegation led by Vice Minister, General Administration of Customs of China, Hu Wei on easing market access for exports of various farm products held in New Delhi.

Highlights of meeting : Both Indian and Chinese sides appreciated each other's concerns and agreed to resolve market access issues expeditiously to achieve the vision of the leaders of both the countries by promoting a more balanced trade. Chinese delegation also discussed issues regarding market access for Chinese products such as milk and milk products, agricultural goods like soy meal, fruits and vegetables, tobacco and pharmaceuticals.

Protocol on hygiene and inspection requirements : This protocol for export of fish meal and fish oil from India to China is significant as India has been seeking market access for these items from China. It will enable India to commence export of fish meal and fish oil to China. China imports fish oil to tune of USD 143.29 million per year and fish meal worth US \$263.43 million. It had so far not allowed these exports from India. This is the second Indian product to get clearance from China in the last six months. Earlier, during meeting of two countries in Wuhan, China protocol for Indian rice export to China was signed paving way for export of Indian rice to China.

ECONOMY

New Back Series GDP Data

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) and NITI Aayog recently released the back series detailing growth numbers for 2005-06 to 2011-12.

Back Series Calculation: Back series calculations are done to link a new series of national accounts with an old series, for better comparison of growth over the years. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) moved to a new base year of 2011-12 from 2004-05 for national accounts, in January 2015. There were differences of opinion on the methodology adopted for this calculation. So the final back series data is now jointly released by the CSO and NITI Aayog.

Highlights of the new report:

- The back series has trimmed the growth numbers for the UPA government's two terms (2005-06 to 2008-09 and 2009-10 to 2013-14).
- Indian economy growth is recorded at an average 6.7% in UPA's first term as well as the second term.
- These growth rates compare with an average 7.4% (2011-12 base year) in the first four years of the present NDA government.
- But the earlier report stated a faster growth under the UPA government from 2004-05 to 2013-14 than during the first four years of the current government.
- The new back series data released for years preceding 2011-12 scaled down growth rates for 2005-06 to 2013-14 by 0.8 to 2.1 percentage points.
- For 2012-13, with the new base year (2011-12), the GDP growth rate is revised upwards to 5.5% from 4.7% estimated earlier (2004-05 base year).

- Likewise, for 2013-14, the GDP growth rate was revised up to 6.4% from 5% estimated earlier.
- Sharp downward revisions were seen particularly for two years, 2007-08 and 2010-11.
- For 2010-11, the growth got revised downwards from a double-digit rate of 10.3% to 8.5%.
- The 8.5% cent growth in 2010-11 is the highest growth rate in the back series dating back to 2005-06.

RBI relaxes rules for NBFCs to sell or securitise their loan books to ease persistent stress in sector

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) relaxed rules for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) to sell or securitise their loan books in bid to ease persistent stress in the sector. RBI has relaxed minimum holding period (MHP) requirement for originating NBFCs, in respect of loans of original maturity above 5 years, to receipt of repayment of six monthly installments or two quarterly instalments. Earlier, they had to hold these assets for at least one year. However, relaxation on MHP will be allowed when NBFC retains 20% of book value of these loans. RBI also has prescribed certain Minimum Retention Requirement (MRR) for NBFCs for availing the relaxed norms. The relaxed dispensation will apply to securitisation/ assignment transactions carried out during six months.

NBFC: Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFC) are establishments that provide financial services and banking facilities without meeting the legal definition of a Bank. They are covered under the Banking regulations laid down by the Reserve Bank of India and provide banking services like loans, credit facilities, TFCs, retirement planning, investing and stocking in money market. However they are restricted from taking any form of deposits from the general public. These organizations play a crucial role in the economy, offering their services in urban as well as rural areas, mostly granting loans allowing for growth of new ventures.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Successful launch of the earth observation satellites HysIS and 30 foreign satellites by ISRO

The Indian Space Research Organization's (ISRO) Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C43) successfully launched 31 satellites from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota.

HysIS: It is an earth observation satellite built around ISRO's Mini Satellite 2 (IMS-2) bus weighing about 380 kg. The life of the satellite is five years. Satellites from Australia, Columbia, Malaysia, and Spain were flown aboard PSLV for the first time. These foreign satellites launched are part of commercial arrangements between Antrix Corporation Limited and customers.

Primary Goal:

- It is to study the earth's surface in both the visible, near infrared and shortwave infrared regions of the electromagnetic spectrum.
- Data from the satellite will be used for various applications including agriculture, forestry, soil/geological environments, coastal zones and inland waters, etc.

PSLV: Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) is the third generation launch vehicle of India. It is the first Indian launch vehicle to be equipped with liquid stages nicknamed as the Workhorse of ISRO.

- It is a four stage launch vehicle with a large solid rocket motor forming the first stage, an earth storable liquid stage as the second stage, a high performance solid rocket motor as third stage, and a liquid stage with engines as fourth stage.
- The vehicle successfully launched two spacecraft – Chandrayaan-1 in 2008 and Mars Orbiter Spacecraft in 2013

'Mini human placenta' may help prevent reproductive disorders

Scientists have successfully created 'mini-placentas' that can provide a window into early pregnancy and help transform our understanding of reproductive disorders such as still-birth and miscarriage. The placenta supplies all the oxygen and nutrients essential for growth of the foetus. It may also be used for screening the safety of drugs.

ENVIRONMENT

Climate Vulnerable Forum held in Marshall Islands

This is the first entirely online Heads of Government level intergovernmental meeting. Leaders at the Climate Vulnerable Forum have called on world's governments to raise the ambition of

their climate targets by 2020 in order to save vulnerable nations threatened by warming beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Climate Vulnerable Forum: The Climate Vulnerable Forum is an international cooperation group of developing countries tackling global climate change.

- The CVF was founded by the Maldives government before the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, which sought to increase awareness of countries considered vulnerable.
- United Nations agencies collaborate in implementing activities linked to the CVF with the UNDP, the lead organization supporting the forum's work.
- The CVF was formed to increase the accountability of industrialized nations for the consequences of global climate change.
- Afghanistan, Nepal and Bhutan are its members, whereas India is one of the observer states.

51 pilot whales die in another mass stranding in New Zealand

Fifty-one pilot whales died in another mass stranding in New Zealand, less than a week after 145 pilot whales and nine pygmy killer whales perished in two other, unrelated strandings.

- In the latest stranding, up to 90 pilot whales beached themselves at Hanson Bay on the remote Chatham Islands.
- Up to 40 of the whales had refloated themselves but another 50 had died on the beach.
- The Chatham Islands sit about 800 kilometers (500 miles) east of New Zealand's main islands and are home to about 600 people.
- Last weekend, 145 pilot whales died on Stewart Island. By the time conservation workers arrived there, about 75 of the whales were already dead and they decided to euthanize the others by shooting them due to their poor condition and remote location.
- They could be caused by the whales navigating incorrectly, trying to escape from predators, or some of them suffering injuries or illness.
- Whale strandings are most common in New Zealand during the Southern Hemisphere spring and summer.

MISCELLANEOUS

Konkan 18: It is the naval exercise between India and United Kingdom. The 2018 edition will be held in Goa. Bilateral KONKAN exercise was started in 2004 and since then has grown in scale. The exercise is aimed at deriving mutual benefit from each other's experiences and is indicative of continuing cooperation between two countries.

'COPE INDIA 2019': It is a bilateral exercise between Indian Air Force (IAF) and US Air Force (USAF) conducted on and over Indian soil. The 2019 edition will be held in West Bengal. The first such exercise was conducted at IAF air force station in Gwalior from February 2004.

eDrishti software: Indian Railways unveiled 'eDrishti' software that will help Union Railway Minister to keep track of punctuality of trains as well as freight and passenger earnings and much more from anywhere in the country. The software has been developed by Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS) to help Minister keep track of all information related to Indian Railways, one of the world's largest rail networks.