

“If you believe very strongly in something, stand up and fight for it.” Roy T. Bennett

INTERNATIONAL**US, UK AND FRANCE JOINTLY LAUNCH AIR STRIKES AGAINST SYRIA**

US, UK and France jointly launch air strikes against Syria as punishment for a suspected chemical attack near Damascus.

US President announced that a joint US-British-French operation had been launched on Syria. It targeted the “criminal” regime of Bashar al-Assad.

United States armed forces to launch precision strikes on targets associated with the chemical weapons capabilities of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad.

Trump said the strikes would aim to deter chemical weapons use by the Syrian government, a week after a suspected chemical attack outside Damascus left more than 40 people dead.

In a combined operation, the United States, Britain and France launched a military operation against Syria in response to an alleged poison gas attack in Douma last week.

The UN Security Council will meet tonight at Russia’s request to discuss air strikes launched by the United States, France and Britain on Syria in response to a suspected chemical weapons attack.

Russia has warned that any military action against Syria would be in violation of international law as it was carried out without UN Security Council approval.

India has called for an impartial and objective investigation by the International Chemical Weapons Watchdog OPCW to establish the facts and urged all parties to show restraint and to avoid further escalation of the tension.

China has expressed opposition to the joint attack by the US, France and the UK on Syria. It said any action bypassing the UN charter violates the principles of international law and the basic norms governing international relations.

PRIME MINISTER INAUGURATED THE FIRST HEALTH CENTRE UNDER THE AYUSHMAN BHARAT SCHEME

Prime Minister inaugurates first of 1.5 lakh health and wellness Centres to be set up under Ayushman Bharat scheme at Jangala village in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh.

Prime Minister launched a scheme for the transformation of ‘Aspirational Districts’ at Jangala village.

Bijapur is among the 115 poorest districts in the country which have been selected on the basis of their poor indicators in the field of education, health, basic infrastructure and financial inclusion.

In January this year, Niti Aayog had identified 115 aspirational districts which occupy the bottom of the list of the districts in the country.

The Prime Minister also inaugurated the first phase of the Bastar Internet scheme under which a 40,000-km-long network of fibre optics cable would be spread across the seven districts of the tribal region. The districts are Bijapur, Narayanpur, Bastar, Kanker, Kondagaon, Sukma and Dantewada.

The Prime Minister also launched the Van Dhan Yojana. This scheme aims to empower the tribals by teaching them skills for value addition to the forest produce.

The Prime Minister also inaugurated bank branches in seven villages and visited a rural BPO centre developed under the India BPO promotion scheme.

Under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme, the government aims to open 1.5 lakh health and wellness centre by 2022, which would be equipped to treat a host of diseases, including blood pressure, diabetes, cancer and old-age illness.

Also under the scheme, the government has prepared the broad contours of the National Health Protection Scheme and work is on to finalize the parameters for identifying beneficiaries and hospital entitlement.

NAAMES MISSION

In a first, NASA is conducting a study of the world's largest phytoplankton bloom in the North Atlantic to see how the tiny sea critters influence the climate in every season.

The North Atlantic Aerosols and Marine Ecosystems Study (NAAMES) mission began its fourth and final deployment.

It is an interdisciplinary investigation resolving key processes controlling marine ecosystems and aerosols that are essential to our understanding of Earth system function and future change.

NAAMES is funded by the NASA Earth Venture Suborbital Program and is the first EV-S mission focused on studying the coupled ocean ecosystem and atmosphere.

NAAMES consists of four, combined ship and aircraft field campaigns that are each aligned to a specific event in the annual plankton lifecycle.

It is the first research mission to conduct an integrated study of all four distinct phases of the world's largest phytoplankton bloom.

It will study how phytoplanktons give rise to small organic particles that leave the ocean and end up in the atmosphere, ultimately influencing clouds and climate.

Satellites such as CALIPSO, a joint NASA and CNES mission, also help to study the ocean and the atmosphere.

Rates of phytoplankton accumulation are critical for understanding the ocean conditions that lead to phytoplankton growth and its timing, a key to unlocking the environmental drivers and controls of biological dynamics.

The North Atlantic plankton bloom is among the most conspicuous biological events annually recorded by satellite ocean color measurements, yet even fundamental controls on the bloom's magnitude and inter annual variability are controversial.

The bloom climax is one event within an annual plankton cycle that essentially oscillates between a decreasing-biomass phase beginning in the summer and an

increasing-biomass phase beginning in Winter-Spring and ending with the bloom climax in spring.

'E-FRRO' APPLICATION

The government has launched the web-based application 'e-FRRO' (e-Foreigners Regional Registration Office) which aims to provide efficient visa related services online to foreigners visiting India.

'e-FRRO' scheme:

The e-FRRO scheme is aimed at building a centralized, transparent online platform for the foreigners to avail visa related services and to provide Faceless, Cashless and Paperless services to the foreigners with user friendly experience.

Under the scheme, foreigners would be able to get as many as 27 Visa and Immigration related services in India from the comfort of their place of stay. Using the e-FRRO application, foreigners can apply online on the portal and obtain the service(s) through email/post without appearing in person at the FRO/FRRO office.

Advantages of e-FRRO include facilitation of legitimate foreigners through "Digital India" vision of the Government, foreigners need not visit FRRO/FRO office – "Services from the comfort of home", convenient and Time saving, exclusive dashboard for User friendly experience and Uniform & Standardized Services across the Country.

TASK FORCE CREATED HEADED BY JAYANT SINHA FOR ROAD MAP IMPLEMENTATION OF UAV

With an aim to prepare a road map and fast-track the implementation of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology, in the country, the Centre has announced setting up of a 13-member task force headed by Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha.

Apart from developing a road map, the task force would also lay down implementable recommendations for central and state governments, industry and research institutions.

The committee's road map would also focus on R&D, acquisition and commercialization, application and adoption in specific sectors, regulatory framework as well as preference for Make in India.

Some of India's startups are revolutionizing drone applications in areas as diverse as disaster management, precision agriculture and crop insurance, mining, infrastructure projects, and land records.

The increasing use of drone-enabled solutions by various state departments and ministries — such as the railways, surface transport, power, and law enforcement — further validates their efficacy. Yet, the Indian regulatory approach has been unfriendly thus far towards drone innovations and applications.

Draft Regulation on Civil Use of Drones Announced:

- I. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation, in November 2017, announced draft regulations on civil use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, commonly known as Drones.
- II. As per the draft, all commercial categories of drones except those in the Nano category and those operated by government security agencies, will have to be registered by DGCA in the form of Unique Identification Number (UIN).
- III. The Mini and above categories will require Unmanned Aircraft Operator Permit (UAOP), but the model aircraft up to maximum take-off weight of 2 Kgs flown below 200 feet inside educational institution premises will not require UIN/UAOP.
- IV. The draft regulation also mandates remote pilots to undergo requisite training, except for Nano and micro categories. As per the draft regulation, the Micro and above category drones will have to be equipped with RFID/SIM, return to home option and anti-collision lights.
- V. The draft regulation also specifies certain restricted areas for operations of drones.

Drones cannot be operated within an area of 5km from airport, within permanent or temporary Prohibited, Restricted and Danger Areas as notified by AAI in AIP and without prior approval over densely populated areas or over or near an area affecting public safety or where emergency operations are underway and within 50 km from international border and beyond 500 m (horizontal) into sea along the coastline.

CHILD RIGHTS BODY WARNS MEDIA AGAINST IDENTIFICATION OF A MINOR VICTIM

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has issued a notice warning media houses.

This was done after violations by media outlets of rules that prohibit identification of a minor victim.

The offense is punishable with imprisonment of up to six months and/or a fine of up to Rs 2 lakh under the JJ Act 2015.

Publication of photographs of rape victims or sexually-abused children is prohibited under section 74 (1) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.

JJ Act 2015 applies to even deceased minors.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR):

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) was set up in March 2007 under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005, an Act of Parliament.

NCPCR is a statutory body under the CPCR Act, 2005 under the administrative control of the Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India.

The Commission's Mandate is to ensure that all Laws, Policies, Programmes, and Administrative Mechanisms are in consonance with the Child Rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and also the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Child is defined as a person in the 0 to 18 years age group.

INFLATION TARGETING MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR INDIA

Making a case for doing away with inflation targeting by the RBI, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) member Surjit Bhalla recently said it has made zero impact on prices. Under the new policy framework, the RBI aims to contain inflation at 4% with a band of (+/-) 2%.

Average inflation in 2017-18 was 3.5%. India's real interest rate is higher by 2.5%, which is 3rd highest in the world.

Inflation targeting is a monetary policy in which a central bank has an explicit target inflation rate for the medium term and announces this inflation target to the public. It will have price stability as the main goal of monetary policy.

Many central banks adopted inflation targeting as a pragmatic response to the failure of other monetary policy regimes, such as those that targeted the money supply or the value of the currency in relation to another, presumably stable, currency.

It will lead to increased transparency and accountability.

Policy will be linked to medium/long term goals, but with some short term flexibility.

With inflation targeting in place, people will tend to have low inflation expectations. If there was no inflation target, people could have higher inflation expectations, encouraging workers to demand higher wages and firms to put up prices.

It also helps in avoiding boom and bust cycles.

If inflation creeps up, then it can cause various economic costs such as uncertainty leading to lower investment, loss of international competitiveness and reduced value of savings. This can also be avoided with targeting.

Inflation targeting puts too much weight on inflation relative to other goals. Central Banks Start to Ignore More Pressing Problems. Inflation target reduces "flexibility". It has the potential to constrain policy in some

circumstances in which it would not be desirable to do so.

Inflation targeting has been successfully practiced in a growing number of countries over the past 20 years, and many more countries are moving toward this framework. Over time, inflation targeting has proven to be a flexible framework that has been resilient in changing circumstances, including during the recent global financial crisis. Individual countries, however, must assess their economies to determine whether inflation targeting is appropriate for them or if it can be tailored to suit their needs. For example, in many open economies, the exchange rate plays a pivotal role in stabilizing output and inflation. In such countries, policymakers must debate the appropriate role of the exchange rate and whether it should be subordinated to the inflation objective.

MAP OF THE DAY:

Gulf of Aqaba


