

“No one has ever achieved greatness without dreams.” Roy T. Bennett

INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL**INDIA VOTES AGAINST DRAFT DECISION ON CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE AT OPCW MEET**

India has voted against the draft decision on addressing the threat from chemical weapons use at a special conference of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

India has a view that the draft decision of such far-reaching importance and implications should be the end result of a comprehensive and extensive consultation.

India believes that on an issue of such grave importance, the consultations conducted by the sponsors remain incomplete.

The conference has been called by the UK, the US and the West to have discussions on upholding the global ban against the use of chemical weapons.

The UK has reportedly proposed to consider empowering the OPCW to identify the organization or government responsible for chemical attacks in addition to its existing power of carrying out the investigation into such cases.

The special session is being held in the backdrop of the widespread concern over reports of use of chemical weapons in Malaysia, the UK, Northern Ireland, Syria and Iraq.

The global ban against chemical weapons is the fundamental goal for which the Chemical Weapons Convention has been adopted.

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW):

OPCW is an intergovernmental organization and the implementing body for the Chemical Weapons Convention, which entered into force on 29 April 1997.

The OPCW, with its 193 member states, has its seat in The Hague, Netherlands, and oversees the global endeavor for the permanent and verifiable elimination of chemical weapons.

The organization promotes and verifies the adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which prohibits the use of chemical weapons and requires their destruction.

Verification consists both of evaluation of declarations by member states and onsite inspections.

The OPCW has the power to say whether chemical weapons were used in an attack it has investigated.

The organization was awarded the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize “for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons”.

OPPOSITE EFFECT OF MATERNITY LAW

A new law to improve maternity benefits for women in India’s workforce and encourage them to further their careers is likely to have the opposite effect.

The law, which makes India the most progressive country after Canada and Norway in enabling women to stay on in the workforce, will probably lead to job losses and discourage smaller businesses and start-ups from hiring women.

Maternity Benefits Law entitles women working in the organized sector to 26 weeks paid maternity leave, up from 12 weeks.

An estimated 1.1 million to 1.8 million women will lose their jobs across 10 sectors in the financial year to March 2019 because of the law.

If this estimate is computed across all the sectors, the job loss number would be an estimated 10-12 million across all sectors.

Post-maternity retention could cost 80 percent to 90 percent of the annual salary for white-collar employees, and up to 135 percent of annual salary for blue-collar employees.

Share of women in workforce decreasing

The share of women in the workforce has shrunk to around 24 per cent in the fiscal year ended 2016 from 36 percent a decade earlier

McKinsey and Co. estimates more than \$700 billion could be added to the country's gross domestic product by 2025 if more women were in jobs

Reasons:

- In socially conservative India, women are often discouraged from pursuing a career
- Better-educated women from wealthier families aren't encouraged to work and it's usually when a man's salary falls short that a woman seeks a job
- Many drop out to take care of older family members or children

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT FOR COOPERATIVE BANKS

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has come out with **draft guidelines on constituting a Board of Management (BoM)** in addition to the board of directors, for Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs), with the aim of strengthening the governance in these banks.

As UCBs are accepting public deposits, it is imperative that a separate mechanism be put in place to protect the interests of depositors.

Existing UCBs with deposit sizes exceeding Rs100 crore shall put in place the BoM within one year, while others banks may take two years. UCBs with deposit sizes up to Rs100 crore will have BoMs of a minimum of three members, while those with deposit sizes of more than Rs100 crore will have at least five members in the BoMs. The maximum number of members in the management shall not exceed 12.

It will consist of members with special knowledge and practical experience in banking to facilitate professional management and focused attention to banking related activities of UCBs.

The circular also said that **at least 50% of the members of the BoM should have specialization or practical experience in fields such as accountancy, agriculture, law.**

The **chief executive officer of the bank will be an ex-officio member of the BoD and BoM** and he will be under the general

superintendence, direction and control of the board.

The BoM will be responsible for credit, risk and liquidity management of the bank. It will be responsible for the day-to-day functions, including considering loan proposals, recovery of bad loans, borrowings and overseeing audit and inspection functions.

The BoM will report to the BoD, which will continue to oversee the general direction and control of a UCB. RBI shall have powers to supersede the BoM if the functioning of BoM is found unsatisfactory.

DAM SAFETY BILL 2018

The Tamil Nadu Assembly has unanimously adopted a special resolution urging the Centre to keep the Dam Safety Bill, 2018, in abeyance until the concerns raised over the legislation by Tamil Nadu and other States are addressed.

Tamil Nadu contended that certain clauses of the Bill affected the interests of Tamil Nadu and could potentially affect the State's rights on control and maintenance of dams located in neighbouring States.

Tamil Nadu is worried because the draft Bill, in the guise of facilitating dam safety, would affect the State's prospects in controlling the Mullaperiyar, Parambikulam, Thoonakkadavu and Peruvuripallam dams.

Highlights of Dam Safety Bill, 2018:

The Bill provides for proper surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of all specified dams in the country to ensure their safe functioning.

The Bill provides for constitution of a National Committee on Dam Safety which shall evolve dam safety policies and recommend necessary regulations as may be required for the purpose.

The Bill provides for establishment of National Dam Safety Authority as a regulatory body which shall discharge functions to implement the policy, guidelines and standards for dam safety in the country.

The Bill provides for constitution of a State Committee on Dam Safety by State Government.

Functions of the National Dam Safety Authority:

It shall maintain liaison with the State Dam Safety Organisations and the owners of dams for standardisation of dam safety related data and practices.

It shall provide the technical and managerial assistance to the States and State Dam Safety Organisations.

It shall maintain a national level data-base of all dams in the country and the records of major dam failures.

It shall examine the cause of any major dam failure.

It shall publish and update the standard guidelines and check-lists for the routine inspection and detailed investigations of dams and appurtenances.

It shall accord recognition or accreditations to the organisations that can be entrusted with the works of investigation, design or construction of new dams.

It will also look into unresolved points of issue between the State Dam Safety Organisation of two states, or between the State Dam Safety Organisation of a State and the owner of a dam in that State, for proper solution.

Further, in certain cases, such as dams of one State falling under the territory of another State, the National Authority shall also perform the role of State Dam Safety Organization thereby eliminating potential causes for inter-state conflicts.

There are over 5200 large dams in India and about 450 are under construction. Plus there are thousands of medium and small dams. Due to lack of legal and institutional architecture for dam safety in India, dam safety is an issue of concern. Unsafe dams are a hazard and dam break may cause disasters, leading to huge loss of life and property.

UDYAM SANGAM-2018

The President of India inaugurated the Udyam Sangam-2018, being organized by the **Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME)** to celebrate the 2nd United Nations Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day (27th June)

On this occasion, he also launched the Solar Charkha and MSME Sampark Portal.

The **Udyam Sangam-2018 is an important effort in developing effective eco-systems for MSME sector.**

The Sangam will provide representatives of finance, training and educational institutions, industry, media, state governments and NGOs an opportunity to engage in extensive discussions to strengthen the eco-systems in this sector.

Sampark Portal

'Sampark Portal' is a digital platform to connect five lakh job seekers with recruiters

It will be very useful in developing skill-pool and in enabling trained youth to know about different employment opportunities.

India's MSME Sector:

MSME sector is called the backbone of our economy.

This sector is the second largest employment provider after the agricultural sector.

Our demographic dividend shall be most gainfully utilized in this very sector.

This sector generates more employment opportunities at a lower cost of capital.

And the most important thing about this sector is that it creates jobs in rural and backward areas.

This sector could help in achieving the goal of inclusive growth through empowerment of weaker sections and decentralization of development.

CONSERVATION OF PVTGS OF ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has organized a Two days National Seminar on “Conservation of Particularly Vulnerable Tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands: The Way Forward”.

This Seminar has been organized in collaboration with Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) to deliberate on critical issues of tribal groups who are at the verge of extinction.

Andaman & Nicobar Islands are home to the most primitive tribal groups: Great Andamanese, Onge, Jarawa, Sentinelese, Nicobarese and Shompens.

The total number of tribes on these islands are 28077, out of which 97% are the more developed Nicobarese.

Many attempts have been made across history by the colonial British rulers to subjugate them and to keep Andamans as a penal colony, but the indomitable spirit of the tribes was not easy to defeat.

Threats to these PVTGS:

These fragile communities are facing expropriation of their ecosystem by outsiders.

There is an aggressive brush off with non-tribals- traders and tourists and this is impacting their physical, environment and routine life.

The outside influences are impacting their land use patterns, use of the sea, overall biodiversity leading to material and non-material changes in them and to some deleterious consequences.

These clearly need to learn from what happened to the Onges and the Great Andamanese who have been adversely impact by outside influences brought in by tourism and modern development.

Legislations for PVTs Protection

- Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation 1956 as amended in 2005 and 2012.
- Policy on Jarawa Tribes of Andaman and Nicobar, 2004.

- Policy on Shompen of Great Nicobar Islands, 2015

INAUGURATION OF NIMHANS DIGITAL ACADEMY, PROPOSED HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTRES

Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare inaugurated the NIMHANS Digital Academy and addressed the first batch of professionals enrolled for undergoing courses in the fields of Psychiatry and Psychiatric Social Work.

The passing of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 brings forth a stronger and more robust legal scaffold and humane and patient-centric rights-based approach for mental health care in our country.

Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 envisions adequate quality care for the citizens through skilled healthcare professionals so that we can reduce stigma against mental health disorders.

NIMHANS Digital Academy

NIMHANS has established infrastructure for starting a Digital Academy to provide large-scale training to healthcare service providers like Medical Officer, Psychologists, Social Workers and Nurses to deliver quality mental healthcare services throughout the country.

The main objective is to exponentially increase skilled capacity in mental health in the country.

Up to 50 people can be trained in the virtual classroom with only a cell phone/mobile phone with 3G connection required at the receiver’s end.

After successful completion of the course and evaluation, the participants will be awarded “Diploma in Community Mental Health” by NIMHANS, Bengaluru.

The courses for different categories of healthcare providers would be of about 30 hours duration each and spread across a period of three months and would be digitally delivered to remotely located healthcare providers across the country.

It will augment the existing skills in mental health in the country.
