

DATE: 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2018, Saturday

## Current Affairs

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Sources: THE HINDU and Indian Express

### 1. Neighbourhood first

- Suhasini Haider, An international author observes that the government's new neighbourhood policy of 2018 looks similar to the "neighbourhood first" Policy of 2014. Some of the examples of governments "Neighbourhood First" policy are:
- **Maldives:** Prime Minister attended the swearing-in of Ibrahim Mohamed Solih as the country's President. This was important for many reasons. First, Mr Modi's visited the Maldives for the first time. Second, Maldives is the only country in South Asia he had not yet visited in his tenure. Third, this is the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in seven years. Fourth, in swearing in ceremony Prime Minister chose to be one among the audience rather than on stage.

This was not the first time that India had a casual approach to the Maldives. There were other such instances also. They were -

- - In 2015, Prime Minister cancelled his trip to register a strong protest at the treatment of opposition leaders, who are now in government.
  - India made no attempt to oppose or threaten when the emergency was declared by the previous regime of Abdulla Yameen.
  - New Delhi had a very soft approach towards the Maldives when Mr Yameen denied visas to thousands of Indian job seekers and naval and military personnel stationed there.
- **Nepal:**
- During the last two years, Prime Minister has made two visits to Kathmandu and the third one is planned in December to be a part of the "Vivaha Panchami" festival there.
- It is to be noted that Mr Modi has not visited Nepal at all during the first three years of his tenure.
- **Afghanistan:**
- In November India sent envoys of ambassadors for a non-official "Participation" to the Moscow conference on Afghanistan.
- The Taliban's representatives also attended the conference.
- The U.S. attended as an "observer".
- Earlier, the government had distanced itself from the process as it felt that any meeting outside Afghanistan may not satisfy an "Afghan-owned and Afghan-led solution".
- The change in position of the government was eventually achieved by:
- First, a high-level outreach by the Russian government and Afghanistan President Ghani.

- Second, The Afghanistan President had made a strong pitch for backing talks with the Taliban during a visit to New Delhi in September.
- **Pakistan:**
- Two Union Ministers were sent by India to join Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on the opening ceremony of KARTARPUR CORRIDOR.
- **Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka:**
- India restrained from making any public opinion during the election campaign in Bhutan and Bangladesh.
- India chose to keep silence by avoiding any public or political opinion during the political crisis in Sri Lanka.

The reasons for such changes as sighted by the author are One, the backlash in Nepal. Two, the growing influence of China in the region.

## 2. DGP issue of Bihar and Punjab

### News

- The Supreme Court agreed to hear the pleas of Bihar and Punjab

Looking for modification of an earlier order directing the States to take the assistance of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) in shortlisting the names for appointing Director General of Police (DGP) and making it binding.

- The Supreme Court has earlier ordered a series of directions regarding the appointment of DGP
- SC ordered all states and Union territories to not appoint any police officer as acting Director General of Police (DGP)
- The appointment of DGPs and police officers should be merit-based and transparent.
- Officers like DGPs and Superintendents of Police should have a minimum fixed tenure of two years.
- Before appointing DGP, the states need to send names of senior police officers at least three months prior to the retirement of the incumbent to the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) as probable candidates to be appointed as DGPs or Police Commissioners.
- The UPSC will prepare a list of three most suitable officers and the states will be free to appoint one of them as police chief.
- A person, who had been selected and appointed as DGP, has a reasonable period of service left.
- Any rule or state law on the subject of the appointment of police officers “will be kept at abeyance”. However, the bench granted liberty to the states, which have made laws on police appointments, to move before it seeking modification of its order.
- The Supreme Court’s direction had come on an application filed by the Centre. The centre claimed that certain States have been appointing acting DGPs and then making them permanent just before the date of their superannuation. This enables them to get the benefit of an additional two-year tenure till the age of 62 years.
- The governments of Bihar and Punjab told the SC that the order needed to be modified as they have already come out with State laws to deal with the issue of

appointment of DGP. The apex court will hear the pleas of both the states on December 7.

### 3. Wage drag

#### News

- The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has recently released Global Wage Report for 2018/19
- Global wage growth slowed to 1.8% in 2017 from 2.4% in 2016.
- This is the lowest rate since 2008.
- The U.S. posted an unchanged 0.7% growth and Europe (excluding Eastern Europe) stalling at about zero among the G20 countries.
- In the emerging and developing economies in G20, the growth in wages slowed to 4.3% from 4.9% in 2016.
- In the Asia and Pacific nations, where workers had enjoyed the biggest real wage growth worldwide between 2006 and 2017, slid to 3.5% from the previous year's 4.8%.
- During 2008-17, real wage growth in India stood at 5.5 per cent.
- The real wage growth in India is the highest among all the countries in southern Asia
- The wage gap in India and Pakistan had the highest at 34.5 per cent and 34 per cent respectively between what men and women earn.
- This wage gap between the two neighbouring countries was the worst among all the 73 countries for which data was compiled.
- The report observes that the acceleration of economic growth in high-income countries in 2017 was led mainly by **higher investment spending rather than by private consumption.**
- It says that real wages almost tripled in the developing and emerging countries of the G20 between 1999 and 2017.
- The increase over the same period aggregated to **9% in the advanced economies.**
- In many low- and middle-income economies **the average wage, in absolute terms, was so low that it was still inadequate to cover the bare needs of workers**
- The report also finds that due to the intensification of competition in the era of globalisation there **is a worldwide decline in the bargaining power of labour.**
- The report finds **that the share of labour compensation in GDP** across many countries **remain substantially below** those of the early 1990s.
- It uses the U.S. example to claim that widening inequality is slowing demand and growth by shifting larger shares of income “too rich households that save rather than spend”.

### 4. Myanmar Leader Suu Kyi To Be Stripped Of Freedom Of Paris Award

- Myanmar leader Aung **San Suu Kyi** will be stripped of honorary freedom of the **Paris** award as she was failed to speak out against a crackdown on Rohingya Muslims.
- The honorary Canadian citizenship and her Amnesty International's "**Ambassador of Conscience Award**" has already been stripped off.
- She will become the **first person** to lose the freedom of Paris award.

- 700,000 or more Rohingyas fled violence in the Buddhist-majority country last year.

## 5. **South African President To be the Chief Guest At Republic Day Celebrations 2019**

**Cyril Ramaphosa**, the President of South Africa will be the Chief Guest at the 2019 Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi.

## 6. **FSSAI Launches New Campaign**

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) started a new mass media campaign aiming at eliminating the industrially produced trans-fat in the food supply.
- The mass media campaign is called the “Heart Attack Rewind”.
- It is a 30-second public service announcement (PSA) - the first mass media campaign of its kind.
- It will support FSSAI’s global target of eliminating **trans-fat** in India by the year 2022, a year ahead of the global target by the World Health Organization (WHO) for the complete elimination of trans-fat.

**Trans-fat:** It is made by adding hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid, and to increase the shelf life of foods.

Trans-fat is mainly found in Vanaspati, margarine and bakery shortenings, and can be found in baked and fried foods.

## 7. **Asia Pacific Summit-2018 Begins in Kathmandu**

- The Asia Pacific Summit-2018 began in Kathmandu.
- The theme of the Summit is: “**Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity, and Universal Values**”.
- Around 1500 participants from 45 countries, including India, are attending the summit.
- Various global issues i.e. peace, development, good governance and role of parliamentarians, climate change and role of media are to be discussed in the summit.

## 8. **G-20 Summit Buenos Aires 2018**

### News:

- This year the G-20 Summit was held in **Buenos Aires, Argentina**.
  - The theme of G-20 Buenos Aires Summit was '**Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development**'.
2. India presents 9-point agenda on fugitive economic offenders at the G-20 summit.
    - Strong and active cooperation across G-20 countries to deal comprehensively and efficiently with the menace fugitive economic offenders.

- Cooperation in the legal processes such as effective freezing of the proceeds of crime, early return of the offenders and efficient repatriation of the proceeds of crime should be enhanced and streamlined.
  - The joint **effort** by G-20 countries to form a mechanism that denies entry and safe havens to all fugitive economic offenders.
  - Principles of United Nations Convention against Corruption(**UNCAC**), United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (**UNOTC**), especially related to “International Cooperation” should be fully and effectively implemented.
  - Financial Action Task Force (FATF) should be called upon to assign **priority** and focus to establishing international co-operation that leads to the timely and comprehensive exchange of information between the competent authorities and Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs).
  - FATF should be tasked to formulate a standard definition of fugitive economic offenders.
  - FATF should also develop a set of commonly agreed and standardized **procedures** related to identification, extradition and judicial proceedings for dealing with fugitive economic offenders to provide guidance and assistance to G-20 countries, in accordance with their domestic law.
  - The **common platform** should be set up for sharing experiences and best practices including successful cases of extradition, gaps in existing systems of extradition and legal assistance etc.
  - G-20 Forum should consider initiating work on locating **properties** of economic offenders who have a tax debt in the country of their residence for its recovery.
- **Other challenges highlighted at the G-20 summit:**
  - The threat of increasing financial vulnerabilities, mainly arising from monetary policies of advanced economies and oil price volatility.
  - Unsynchronized policies of advanced economies and the uneven pace of revival of economies of various countries.
  - Escalating trade tensions and its resultant and collateral damages it caused to the least developed countries and other emerging economies.
  - Reformation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and dialogue on trade and service in promoting the global value chain in the agricultural sector.
  - The **2018 G20 Buenos Aires summit** was the 13th meeting of Group of Twenty (**G20**).
  - It was the first-ever G20 summit to be hosted in South America.
  - India is going to host the G20 Summit in 2022 when New Delhi will celebrate its 75th Independence Day.

#### 9. **External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj Co-Chairs India-UAE Joint Commission Meeting**

- The 12th session of the India-UAE Joint Commission Meeting for Economic and Technical Cooperation was held at Abu Dhabi.
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj co-chairs the India-UAE Joint Commission Meeting with UAE Foreign Minister, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi.

- She also inaugurated a Gandhi – Zayed Digital Museum in Abu Dhabi to mark the celebrations of 150 years of Mahatma Gandhi’s birth and centenary celebrations of the birth of Shaikh Zayed, founder of the modern UAE.

#### **10. International Day of Persons with Disabilities(IPDP)**

- The United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) has been annually observed on 3 December around the world since 1992.
- The theme of IDPD 2018 is “Empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”.