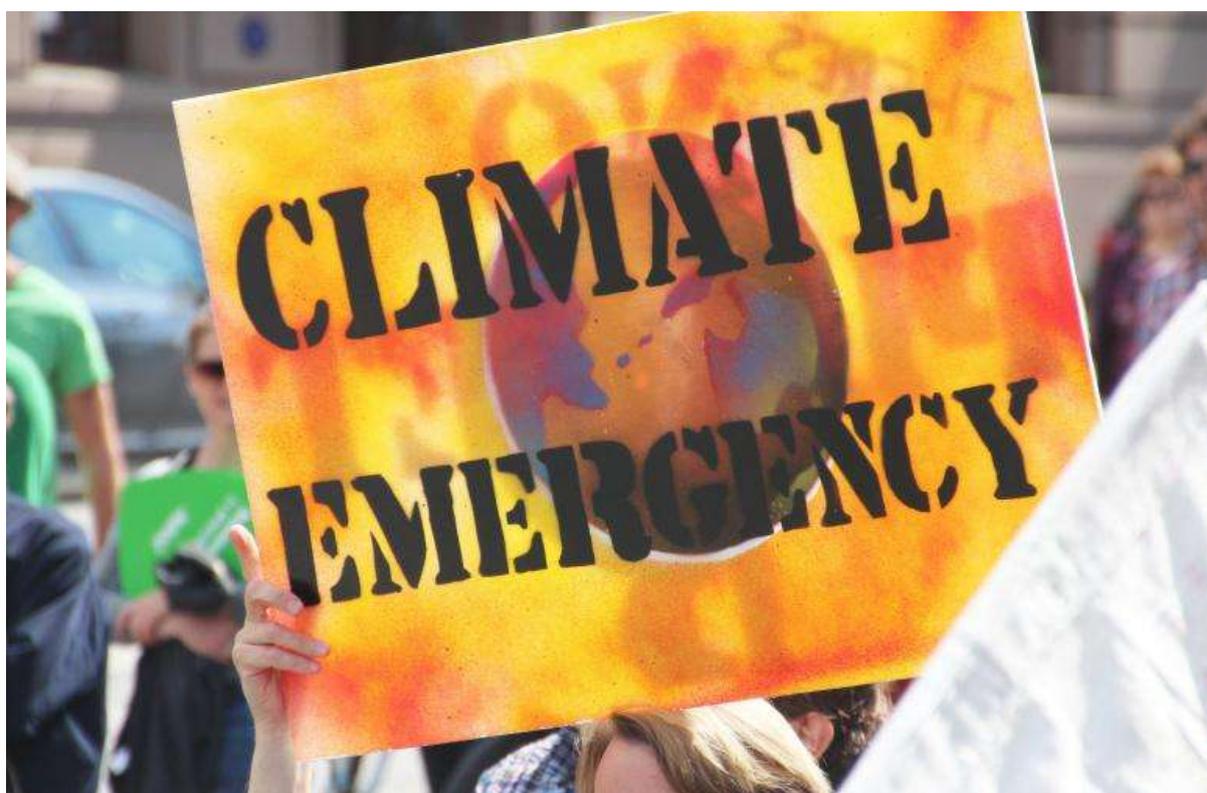


The Paris Climate Talks: India's Political Position



Source: Euractiv

In This Issue

LEAD ESSAY:

- The Paris Climate Talks: India's Political Position

HEADLINE OF THE WEEK:

- Core Sector Growth Slows to 3.2% in October
- Bundelkhand Survey Paints a Dire Picture of Rural Distress

SECTION 1: ECONOMY

- The Economics of Trade

SECTION 2: GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

- **Politics and Governance:** Down the Drain
- **Connectivity:** Let Common Sense Prevail
- **Education:** A Free Lesson In ineptitude
- **Urban:** Tamil Nadu Rains: A Mega Disaster Waiting to Happen
- **Environment:** Delhi Air Crisis: Norway May Classify New Delhi Posting a 'Hardship'
- **Agriculture:** Livestock, Forestry and Fisheries Save the Day for Agri Sector
- **Law and Justice:** The Nuclear Liability Law Has Passed Its First Legal Test but There Will be Others; Heinous Offenders Can be Sent to Jail in Excess of 14 Years; Gujarat's Courts Need 287 Years to Clear Pending Cases

SECTION 3: INDIA AND WORLD

- **India in the World:** Millions of Children Are at Risk Because of the Nepal Blockade, UNICEF Warns; India Could Send an All-party Delegation to Nepal to Broker Peace
- **East and South-East Asia:** China's Fitful Economic Reforms

SECTION 4: OPINIONS/ BOOKS

- **Opinions:** 2 World Wars are Converging – the War on Nature and the War of Resentment; The Free Market Way to Help the Poor; Goal Difference

Lead Essay

The Paris Climate Talks: India's Political Position

The start of the Paris climate talks or the COP 21 (21st Conference of Parties) on November 30th, 2015, has made the political dividing lines and the possible outcomes fairly clear. There is contention over three main areas:

- Who is responsible for bearing the burden of emissions reductions?
- What kind of an emissions reduction scenario are we looking at?
- How are the objectives of emissions reductions to be achieved?

The official position taken by the Indian government and which is resonated widely in the public sphere is that India should aim for an ambitious but equitable and just climate deal. This is easier said than done. For, on the one hand, there is a rising perception of India being painted into a corner by the developed countries with China largely keeping its cards hidden.¹ India is also not taking positions that might strongly advance its aim for a just and ambitious climate agreement, instead playing into the hands of the developed countries by limiting itself within the rich-poor country divide. On the other hand, the goal of reaching an ambitious climate agreement will almost certainly be compromised because the countries' individual climate goals do not address the core issue of decarbonisation and are likely to lock the global economy into a high emissions future if the current individual commitments are anything to go by.

Where are the Paris climate talks leading?

The Paris COP-21 is among the most significant climate talks since the failed Copenhagen negotiations of 2009. COP 21 is supposed to be negotiating a legally-binding successor treaty to the Kyoto Protocol of 1997, by laying out the post-2020 international commitments. The main institution responsible for this is the Ad hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) convened in the aftermath of the Durban climate talks of 2011. The ADP was convened with a clear mandate to “develop a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties, which is to be completed no later than 2015 in order for it to be adopted at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) and for it to come into effect and be implemented from 2020.”²

Ironically, this aim is fast being abandoned in the Paris negotiations. The US is attempting to block the ‘treaty’ outcome in its entirety, instead focusing on making only certain parts of the agreement legally-binding³ –that too those parts that do nothing really to obligate nations to hike up their commitments to combating climate change. This exposes the West double-speak on climate change.

Even before the commencement of the negotiations, the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, had made this clear. What the US does want as legally-binding is the process of transparency and ensuring a periodic (five-year) review of the targets set by the countries for themselves. This means that, unlike the Kyoto Protocol of 1997 where the developed countries had legally-binding emission reduction targets, the only emission-reduction targets Paris agreement will likely have are those that the individual countries have already submitted as their climate action plans⁴ to the UNFCCC.

For India, this poses a two-fold problem.

Can India push for an ambitious climate deal?

First, India is among the most vulnerable countries to climate change. The aftermath of the devastation in Chennai, widely attributed by experts to global warming, has brought home minutely how even our metropolitan coastal areas are vulnerable to changes in climate. The continued vulnerability of coastal areas will likely trigger internal migration and

¹ Bhushan, Down To Earth 2015.

² UNFCCC 2014.

³ The Indian Express 2015.

⁴ Also known as Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs).

Lead Essay

displacement in the not-so-far future. Not only will this take a toll on the economy, the social capital and the government machinery, but will cause extreme human suffering. Besides this, India's already depressed agricultural sector is going to be vulnerable to changing patterns of monsoon, negatively impacting crop yields and livelihood of the farmers. Already, there are predictions that the winter crop will not be sown.

And, with Chennai already gaining prominence at the Paris summit, India can no longer perceive climate change as a problem of the distant future. Under such conditions, India should press for a legally-binding treaty akin to the Kyoto Protocol under the UNFCCC mechanism. The US has been actively trying to subvert the UNFCCC process for years now and has just intensified its offensive at Paris. The latest was the leakage on November 30th, 2015, of the US 'non-paper' ahead of the Paris talks, which stated that the US was in favour of 'self-differentiation' where countries set their own targets.⁵ Since 2010, the international community has been moving towards this ideal, with the culmination being the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) or the voluntary targets submitted to the UNFCCC.

India should actively oppose these attempts to subvert the global climate regime. It will also have a strong moral ground for doing so. For, not only is it among the most vulnerable countries to climate change, but it has also set ambitious, yet realistic targets⁶ in its INDC, which can be met effortlessly. Not only that, but from a global standpoint, despite being the fourth largest emitter of greenhouse gases, India's per person emissions are much less than those of US, EU and China. While this obviously means that we need to ensure local climate justice and ensure people's access to power, it also puts India on a much stronger moral ground to stake its position globally.

Unfortunately, India is failing to leverage its position in the Paris talks. Not only is India not pressing for a legally binding treaty, but has also opposed the US's diluted proposal of five-year review of the countries' individual national commitments. Given that it would not take much on India's part to achieve its INDC targets, India is getting itself branded as an obstructionist, by raising objections to such issues.

Second, this stand by the US will also subvert India's objective of ensuring an 'equitable but ambitious' climate treaty. We have already seen above how the efforts to preclude a legally-binding treaty will prevent it from being ambitious. However, there is more to the story. The countries are not seriously considering decarbonisation or long-term phase out of fossil fuels, at all. In fact, decarbonisation has just become a rhetorical term being bandied about by the developed countries to keep the developing countries in line with their agenda. The fact that the negotiations endorsed giving free rein to countries in proposing INDCs as the only major way to target emissions-reductions, shows that decarbonisation was a failed enterprise right from the start. Even if the current INDCs are followed to the letter, it can constrain global warming to a temperature of no less than 2.7 degree Celsius, indicating that the danger threshold of 2 degree Celsius will likely be crossed.⁷ In such a current scenario, decarbonisation becomes a myth, more than anything. Yet, the G-7 has made a call for it, even knowing that endorsing the INDCs are never going to do it.

What more, recent research shows that the US Clean Power Plan – the mainstay of US climate commitments, endorsed even by US NGOs like Sierra Club – released ahead of the Paris talks, tactfully reduces the US's climate commitments.⁸ By keeping the baseline year as 2005⁹ –when the US actually peaked its emissions – the plan amounts to emissions-reductions of just about 15% over 1990 levels. Even these are 'expected' or potential rather than ascertained outputs.

⁵ Bhushan, Down To Earth 2015.

⁶ India's INDCs are not without criticism. They fail to satisfy on various counts like water governance, diverting CAMPA funds, advocating nuclear power and not looking at displacement caused due to renewable energy projects. But, from an international standpoint, the immediate need is to segregate India's strong position and leverage it globally to counter the US-hegemonization of global climate regime.

⁷ AOSIS (Alliance of Small Island States) which are staring at a wipe-out due to rising sea-levels due to climate change are strongly campaigning to retain the target of 1.5 degree Celsius.

⁸ Bhushan 2015.

⁹ The US plans to reduce power sector emissions by 30% by 2030 relative to 2005 levels.

Lead Essay

The unfortunate politics of it is that countries like India and Brazil are being blamed for not agreeing to ‘decarbonisation’¹⁰. Yet the politics of INDCs shows this is far from true. As one commentator aptly put it, “The INDCs of the developed countries constitute a carbon grab on this [atmospheric carbon space] scarce resource.”¹¹

The good news is that India was right to resist this bid, since the term has not been defined and by yielding to it, India may have been giving in to any political agenda. The bad news is that this issue exposes just how flimsy the emissions-reduction process envisioned for the Paris agreement really is, thereby undermining India’s push for an ‘ambitious’ climate deal.

An ‘equitable’ deal?

Will the negotiations lead towards an equitable outcome, not just for the developing countries, but also for the world’s poor? Given the current discourse at Paris, this is highly unlikely. There are 2 immediate reasons for this:

First, the most thorny issue is that of climate finance and technology transfer. This is a make-or-break issue for the entire summit.

Under the Green Climate Fund (GCF) established in 2010, the developed countries had pledged to donate USD 100 billion, from public and private sources, every year till 2020. As of 2015, there have only been pledges by 38 governments to the tune of raising USD 10.2 billion. Also, what happens beyond 2020 is a huge question mark. The rich countries are pressurizing ‘emerging’ economies, like India, to contribute to the GCF too.¹² This is rightly being opposed by India. While the GCF should remain the domain of the developed countries to ensure at least some historical responsibility, India should not rule out its current stand of contributing to a climate finance mechanism for the least developed and most vulnerable countries outside of the GCF, and should continue to insist that the developed countries scale up their contributions to the GCF upwards beyond 2020.

Another issue within climate finance is the fact that rich countries are pressing for keeping international development loans and overseas development aid as a part of climate finance. This has been a thorny issue since the 2002 Monterrey conference. India and other developing countries have opposed this position, arguing that climate finance should not be counted as a part of development aid.

Second, the definitions of equity are being redrawn in more ways than one. Not only is the US-led developed world coalition seeking to abandon the framework of the 1992 Convention which emphasized that developed countries have more responsibility to contribute to climate change mitigation, but Paris has also seen the emergence of the ‘most vulnerable’ countries group, including small island states most threatened by climate change. They are demanding that the threshold for dangerous anthropogenic climate change be declared at 1.5 degree Celsius.

For India, this means assuming greater responsibility to combat climate change even as it struggles to preserve the principle of differentiation between the developed and the developing countries. At the same time, it also means not being rigid about sticking to alliances like BASICs (Brazil, India, South Africa and China) and seeking active engagement with the vulnerable country groups, since these – especially, South Asian nations like Bangladesh, Nepal and Maldives¹³ – have become among the most vocal critics of India’s perceived rigidity in the climate talks. These countries are perhaps the most vulnerable and critical players when it comes to equity, since they face a dual challenge of development and vulnerability to climate change.

¹⁰ Associated Press 2015.

¹¹ Jayaraman 2015.

¹² Hindustan Times 2015.

¹³ Scroll.in 2015.

Lead Essay

The way forward

It is, thus, clear that India needs to further strengthen its stand in the ongoing negotiations in the dual direction of equity and ambition.

- It needs to resist the hijacking of the climate talks by the developed countries.
- Instead of resisting the 5-year review process of the national commitments, it should argue for an even more comprehensive and legally binding agreement, such as continue to insist on renewing the legally binding targets as part of the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period.¹⁴
- It needs to stake a clear development claim on the limited carbon space of 1000-1400 billion tonnes available up till 2100.¹⁵

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¹⁴ The first commitment period was from 2008 to 2012.

¹⁵ Bhushan, Down To Earth 2015.

Headlines

Core Sector Growth Slows to 3.2% in October

(*Business Standard*, December 1, 2015)

The eight crucial infrastructure sectors grew at the same rate in October as that of September at 3.2 per cent, but significant differences were witnessed in each sector's growth. While crude oil, steel and cement contracted in September, crude oil, natural gas, refinery, and steel declined in October.

"While the headline core sector growth was unchanged at 3.2 per cent, upon disaggregation, the core industries displayed a mixed trend. Four of the eight industries recorded a disappointing contraction in October 2015," said Aditi Nayar, senior economist at ICRA.

Read more: http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/core-sector-growth-slows-to-3-2-in-october-115120100052_1.html

Date Accessed: 2.12.2015

Bundelkhand Survey Paints a Dire Picture of Rural Distress

(*Devanik Saha, The Wire*, 27 November, 2015)

A survey done by Swaraj Abhiyan in seven districts in the Bundelkhand region – Jhansi, Jalaun, Lalitpur, Chitrakoot, Banda, Hamirpur and Mahoba, has revealed that 96% of households reported a total loss due to crop damage given the deficient rainfall. 38% of households reported inadequate availability of drinking water. 60% of the households haven't consumed milk in the past 30 days, 38% of villages reported at least one death due to hunger and malnutrition, 24% households reported sending their child for labourwork and 26% had to borrow food for survival. Only 59% of the poorest families had an MNREGA job card, while 42% possessed a BPL card. On an average, just 9.5 days of MNREGA work had been provided to households since Holi.

Read More: <http://thewire.in/2015/11/27/bundelkhand-survey-paints-a-dire-picture-of-rural-distress-16297/>

Accessed on 27.11.2015

Economics

Table 1: General Inflation Rates in Indian States: October 2015 (%)

States	Rural	Urban	General
All India	5.84	4.44	5.08
Northern Region			
Jammu & Kashmir	7.91	3.29	6.03
Himachal Pradesh	9.95	3.24	8.15
Punjab	7.80	6.04	6.88
Chandigarh	18.08	0.33	1.97
Uttarakhand	4.96	5.30	4.77
Haryana	6.99	5.23	5.78
Delhi	8.31	5.94	6.90
Uttar Pradesh	3.84	4.33	3.64
Western Region			
Rajasthan	6.16	8.00	6.53
Gujarat	5.46	4.75	5.05
Maharashtra	8.07	3.85	5.48
Goa	9.13	6.77	6.96
Lakshadweep	14.76	2.42	8.51
Daman & Diu	20.72	9.30	15.59
Dadra Nagar & Haveli	22.38	9.10	15.48
Central Region			
Madhya Pradesh	4.94	6.13	5.31
Chhattisgarh	12.56	5.52	9.36
Southern Region			
Andhra Pradesh	10.90	6.13	8.83
Karnataka	7.74	3.24	5.40
Kerala	3.91	-0.08	2.30
Tamil Nadu	4.87	4.44	4.78
Puducherry	9.64	5.06	6.64
Andaman & Nicobar Island	18.94	4.05	11.31
Northeastern Region			
Arunachal Pradesh	4.85		
Assam	4.54	3.38	3.77
Manipur	20.23	5.26	14.46
Meghalaya	-1.80	5.46	-1.45
Mizoram	7.60	3.97	5.43
Nagaland	12.31	6.09	9.48
Tripura	8.55	5.88	7.40
Sikkim	13.51	1.54	10.73
Eastern Region			
Bihar	5.70	5.49	5.23
Jharkhand	6.74	3.88	5.27
West Bengal	1.44	4.17	2.38
Odisha	7.80	1.09	5.47

- Source: State-wise monthly inflation rates are estimated from year on year Consumer Price Index (CPI) data of MOSPI.
- There is one month time lag in CPI data (From the month February 2015 onwards the New Series is introduced with base 2012=100) provided by MOSPI, Government of India.
- The 2014 October data at state-level with base 2010 is here converted to new base 2012 with linking factors of MOSPI 1.22, 1.20 and 1.21 for rural, urban and combined respectively.

Economics

The Economics of Trade

(A.V. Rajwade, *The Business Standard*, December 2, 2015)

The only help the government has given to exporters recently is an annual interest subvention of the order of Rs 2,500 crore. By my back-of-the-envelope calculations, this works out to less than 10 paise per dollar. Such munificence will do little to improve the economics of exports: even after the last few days of fall, the rupee remains significantly overvalued and the subvention is unlikely to make any difference, particularly when global economic growth and demand are slow.

Read more: http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/a-v-rajwade-the-economics-of-trade-115120201181_1.html

Date Accessed: 3.12.2015

Governance & Development

POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

Down the Drain

(*The Frontline*, December 11, 2015)

At a time when more workers are needed to keep the city clean, the civic authorities, along with private companies, have been echoing the Prime Minister's technology mantra. In this case, the civic agencies have been saying that technological improvements and mechanisation of sewerage work will replace the need for more workers in future. However, for that to happen, the governments must ensure proper segregation of waste. At present, the drain carries a mix of biodegradable waste and non-biodegradable objects like plastic bottles, glass particles, metal objects, and many such things—the most important reason for the clogging of drains.

Read more: <http://www.frontline.in/the-nation/down-the-drain/article7911952.ece?homepage=true>

Date Accessed: 3.12.2015

CONNECTIVITY

Let Common Sense Prevail

(*Governance Now*, November 21, 2015)

The recent WHO global road safety report too indicates that India stands out miserably on the road safety front. The report points out that users of two-wheeler and cycles, and pedestrians are among the most vulnerable groups and amount to nearly half of all road accident deaths world over. It also points out that India has no laws protecting pedestrians and cyclists who account for more than one-third of all road accident deaths in the country.

Read more: <http://www.governancenow.com/news/regular-story/let-common-sense-prevail%20-%20sthash.Lbzmm27v.dpuf>

Date Accessed: 3.12.2015

EDUCATION

A Free Lesson In Ineptitude

(**Pavithra S. Rangan**, *Outlook*, December, 2015)

It's the one effort that, Smriti Irani believes, will stand as lasting testimony to her efficiency as Union HRD minister. She has, therefore, declared that the New Education Policy (NEP)—slated to decide the fate of at least 600 million students in the country—will be drafted in no more than eight months.

It is within this span that she plans to have “extensive democratic consultations”, across lakhs of gram panchayats, blocks, zones and states, to facilitate the formulation of the policy. With a huge backlog in the process and no more than a month for the draft policy to be released in December, Irani has spared no effort to make the process seem ostensibly democratic. November, therefore, saw a sudden surge in the number of consultations as updated on the ministry's website.

Senior ministry officials concede that the consultations are only an attempt to justify decisions that are taken by a handful of bureaucrats and politicians. The ministry, they say, is in no way accountable to those from whom it has received these suggestions. “When RTI questions are received about their suggestions,” an official says, “replies simply state that the suggestion has been taken note of.”

Although a lot of noise has been generated about the “bottom-up” approach of consultations, officials who are part of them say that the entire process has proved to be farcical. Even as the drafting committee no longer has the time to consider or incorporate further recommendations, the “democratic consultations” continue to take place well into November, simply to show greater participation.

Read More: <http://www.outlookindia.com/article/a-free-lesson-in-ineptitude/295956>

Date Accessed: 03.12.2015

Governance & Development

URBAN

Tamil Nadu Rains: A Mega Disaster Waiting to Happen

(Govind Vijaykumar, *The Asian Age*, December 3, 2015)

While the IMD has forecast more rains in Chennai in the next three days, environment experts attending the Paris climate change summit have said that the crisis is a 'full blown consequence' of global warming.

"The global average temperature has increased by less than 1 degree. Think what will happen if temperature increases by 2 degrees," said Chandra Bhushan, Deputy Director General of Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment (CSE). But not all of the destruction Chennai has witnessed can be blamed on Mother Nature increasing temperature by a degree.

Much of the city's ill-planned infrastructure boom has been built upon ticking weather bombs. An entire airport has been constructed atop the Adyar river's unpredictable flood plains, the Koyembedu bus terminus - servicing hundreds of inter-state buses each day sits on top of another flood-prone area, its mass transit system rests atop the Buckingham Canal and the Pallikaranai marshlands and a dozen special economic zones housing automobile and IT firms are basically rushed settlements disturbing drainage systems.

Read More: <http://www.asianage.com/india/tamil-nadu-rains-it-was-mega-disaster-waiting-happen-564>

Date Accessed: 03.12.2015

ENVIRONMENT

Delhi Air Crisis: Norway May Classify New Delhi Posting a 'Hardship'

(Vidya Krishnan, *The Hindu*, December 3, 2015)

At least one European country is considering classifying New Delhi as a "hardship" posting on account of the increasing air-pollution level in the city. As the capital reeled under a thick blanket of smog on Tuesday, the Delhi Pollution Control Board recorded levels of particulate matter at least 16 times higher than what is considered safe. The Norwegian embassy is considering a hardship allowance for those posted in Delhi, due to the air pollution. "Hardship allowance is a global concept, and dependent on many factors that also include air pollution. Every country is categorized for hardship based on political, social, environmental and other parameters, and only one factor does not determine this level. However, it is at present discussed whether air pollution should be given additional weight when hardship classification is determined," said the embassy's press officer.

The Central Pollution Control Board defines an air quality index reading of 0-50 as "good", 51-100 as "satisfactory", 301-400 as "very poor" and 401-500 as "severe". For the past week, Delhi has recorded around 500 units and the air quality has been categorized as "hazardous".

Read More: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/norway-may-classify-new-delhi-posting-a-hardship/article7942186.ece?homepage=true>

Date Accessed: 03.12.2015

AGRICULTURE

Livestock, Forestry and Fisheries Save the Day for Agri Sector

(Sanjeeb Mukherjee, *Business Standard*, December 1, 2015)

The agriculture and allied sector recorded a growth of 2.2% in second quarter of 2015-16. Good production in the livestock, forestry and fisheries sector seems to have saved the day for the entire agriculture sector. The agriculture and allied sector grew at 2.1 per cent in the second quarter of 2014-15 and it was expected to perform poorly this year mainly due to droughts in several parts of the country.

Governance & Development

"Surprising on the upside, agriculture GVA growth was the highest since September 2014 at 2.2 per cent... the downside in agriculture appears to have been cushioned by the 'allied-agri' sector," Shubhada Rao, chief economist, YES Bank said in note.

Read more: http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/livestock-forestry-and-fisheries-save-the-day-for-agri-sector-115120100055_1.html

Date Accessed: 2.12.2015

LAW AND JUSTICE

The Nuclear Liability Law Has Passed Its First Legal Test but There Will be Others

(Ritwika Sharma and Yashaswini Mittal, *The Wire*, 2 December, 2015)

Thorny issues pertaining to the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (CLND Act) were brought back into prominence recently when the High Court of Kerala pronounced upon the constitutional validity of the law in *Thomas Mannully v. Union of India*. The CLND Act, passed in 2010 with the twin purposes of imposing no-fault liability on nuclear operators and ensuring prompt compensation to victims of a nuclear incident, has consistently been in the eye of a storm. While upholding the validity of the CLND Act, the high court has not sufficiently justified why it has dismissed the petitioners argument. The petitioners had argued that the procedure for appointing adjudicatory authorities for nuclear plants under the CLND Act gives untrammelled powers to the Central government.

Read More: <http://thewire.in/2015/12/02/the-nuclear-liability-law-has-passed-its-first-legal-test-but-there-will-be-others-16519/>

Accessed on: 2.12.2015

Heinous Offenders Can be Sent to Jail in Excess of 14 Years

(Amit Anand Choudhary & Dhananjay Mahapatra, *The Times of India*, December 3, 2015)

The Supreme Court on Thursday put a question mark on attempts by NGOs and social activists for release of hardened criminals after 14 years in jail, popularly believed to be the span of a life-term, and said the state governments couldn't release a convict if the courts awarded a term much in excess of that period while considering the nature of the crime and its perpetrators.

The majority judgment, authored by Justice Kalifulla, took a dig at the assiduous attempts by NGOs and social activists in pitching for early release of even hardened criminals. It said the courts have the onerous duty of balancing human rights of convicts with security of the society, which today stood endangered by anti-social elements enjoying political patronage.

The court said law-abiding citizens were cowering with criminals having a field day. It said: "Even those who propagate for lessening the gravity of imposition of severe punishment are unmindful of such consequences and are only keen to indulge in propagation of rescuing the convicts from being meted out with appropriate punishment."

"We are at a loss to understand as to for what reason or purpose such propagation is carried on and what benefit the society at large is going to derive," the court said.

Read More: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Heinous-offenders-can-be-sent-to-jail-in-excess-of-14-years/articleshow/50020492.cms>

Date Accessed: 03.12.2015

Gujarat's Courts Need 287 Years To Clear Pending Cases

(Himadri Ghosh, *India Spend*, December 02, 2015)

"India's lower courts, burdened by more than 25 million pending cases, need at least 12 years to clear the backlog. The disposal rate varies from state to state, with a monthly average of 43 cases." The case back log is highest in Gujarat, "Going by the current rate of clearance, it will take the state's lower courts 287 years to decide pending cases."

Read more: <http://www.indiaspend.com/special-reports/gujarats-courts-need-287-years-to-clear-pending-cases-72726>

Date Accessed: 4.12.2015

India and World

INDIA IN THE WORLD

Millions of Children Are at Risk Because of the Nepal Blockade, UNICEF Warns

(Rishi Iyengar, *Time*, November 30, 2015)

The ongoing blockade of Nepal's border with India, which has now stretched for months and created shortages of essential goods like fuel, food and medicines, may soon put millions of infants at risk of disease or even death.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) says that the lack of essential medicines and vaccines, as well as the onset of winter as Nepal continues to recover from last year's devastating earthquake, will adversely affect over three million children under the age of five.

"The risks of hypothermia and malnutrition, and the shortfall in life-saving medicines and vaccines, could be a potentially deadly combination for children this winter," UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake said. "They could now be facing a new disaster – without adequate food, protection from the cold, or healthcare."

Read More: <http://time.com/4130341/nepal-blockade-vaccine-shortage-children-unicef/>

Date Accessed: 03.12.2015

India Could Send an All-party Delegation to Nepal to Broker Peace

(*Hindustan Times*, December 04, 2015)

"The government on Thursday sought to send an all-party delegation to Nepal in a bid to reach out to its neighbour and address the growing anti-India sentiment there. The Rajya Sabha will also hold a short-duration discussion soon over the situation in Nepal."

Read more: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/india-could-send-an-all-party-delegation-to-nepal-to-broker-peace/story-wnaMmVwDPgvoWQaICglVeN.html>

Date Accessed: 4.12.2015

EAST AND SOUTH EAST ASIA

China's Fitful Economic Reforms

(*The New York Times*, December 1, 2015)

On Monday, the I.M.F. elevated the renminbi to the status of a global reserve currency — deeming it available for wide use in trade and finance and suitable for safekeeping of other countries' foreign-exchange reserves. This was a prize China had long sought, in return for financial market and currency reforms that the I.M.F. had requested. But while the elevation of the renminbi is a validation of China's recent reform efforts, the government has a long way to go on the path to a market economy.

Read more: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/02/opinion/chinas-fitful-economic-reforms.html?emc=edit_ty_20151201&nl=opinion&nid=71538857&r=0

Date Accessed: 3.12.2015

Opinions/ Books

OPINIONS

2 World Wars are Converging – the War on Nature and the War of Resentment

(Chandran Nair, *The Huffington Post*, December 2, 2015)

As we enter the latter half of the 21st century's second decade, the hope that the world was entering an era of great promise and convergence has been shredded by two poorly recognized "world wars." They are the "war on nature" and the "wars of resentment."

We too often focus on the Middle East as the confluence of instability and historical grievance, but the region is merely an extreme manifestation of a worldwide trend. Throughout the developing world, feelings of past injustice and humiliation are being brought back to the fore. Regional and international tensions grow as social groups try to reverse past humiliation, establish equal economic opportunities or settle scores.

The "war on nature" and the "wars of resentment" are interlocked. Environmental change can create new conflicts and worsen existing ones. However, the link between these two "wars" runs deeper. They are connected by a common thread: the negative effects of an elite minority trying to control access to resources. This is both the reason for our warming climate and the long-term historical cause of many of the grievances that motivate today's conflicts.

Read More: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chandran-nair/2-world-wars-nature-resentment_b_8685124.html?utm_hp_ref=india&ir=India&adsSiteOverride=in

Date Accessed: 03.12.2015

The Free Market Way to Help the Poor

(Lee Ohanian, *The Hoover Institution*, December 1, 2015)

Inequality is not an issue that policy should address. Some have argued that policy should redistribute income away from the highest earners. This view is counterproductive, as it does not sufficiently recognize that our top earners create enormous surpluses for society. Bill Gates at Microsoft, Steve Jobs at Apple, Fred Smith at FedEx, Sam Walton of Wal-Mart, and many others who started new businesses have directly and indirectly created millions of new jobs, created new industries, and transformed our society. And these individuals have received only a tiny fraction of the economic value that they have created. Society, however, should care about creating economic opportunities for the lowest earners.

Read more: <http://www.hoover.org/research/free-market-way-help-poor>

Date Accessed: 3.12.2015

Goal Difference

(*The Economist*, December 2, 2015)

To prevent planetary doom, global mean surface temperature must not rise more than 2°C above that of pre-industrial times. The prince reminded listeners of the fact in his speech. That figure, 2°C, has become a touchstone. Stay beneath it, the feeling is, and all will be well. Some findings suggest even 2°C is too much. Other people argue that the limit is meaningless because it will surely be breached, and that more effort should go into adapting to a hotter world. Either way, once promulgated, the idea of a 2°C limit has taken on a life of its own.

Read more: <http://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21679431-limiting-global-warming-2-c-above-pre-industrial-levels-more-political>

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