

1. LET CENSOR BOARD CERTIFY 'PADMAVATI': SUPREME COURT



✚ The Supreme Court dismissed plea to stay the release of the movie *Padmavati* and initiate criminal prosecution against its director.

✚ A three-judge Bench said the Supreme Court cannot stop a statutory body like the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) from doing its statutory duty of certifying a film by “prematurely” ordering a stay on its

release.

- ✚ Referring to the repeated pleas filed before it for stay of the movie even before the CBFC has certified it, the bench said, “All this happens because people do not read the Cinematograph Act and rules. “It also said “Five members see a movie. Once they see it, they discuss it among themselves and suggest cuts. Before they do anything, they give the film-makers an opportunity to be heard to convince them not to cut the scenes in question, in case of any grievance, there is the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal”
- ✚ The court, in its order, said the film is yet to be certified by the CBFC and that “our interference will tantamount to pre-judging the matter.”

2. THE BIG FISH THAT INSPIRED A BEACH CLEANING DRIVE

Photo of a load of plastics in the gut of a shark that washed ashore galvanised 300 youth to act



✚ It's the fish that launched many beach cleaners. The image of plastic all twisted up in the belly of a dead shark that washed ashore has become a catalyst for a massive beach cleaning movement in the fishing villages of north Chennai.

✚ 300 youngsters clean up the shores and fishing hamlets every weekend. So far, they have removed two tonnes of plastics and thermocol, 5000 bottles and one tonne of old

plastic-wired fishing nets.

- ✚ Apart from the waste disposed of by fishermen including thermocol waste from ice boxes, plastics that clog stormwater drains and other waterways also find their way into the sea and estuaries. When river mouths are clogged, fish breeding comes down

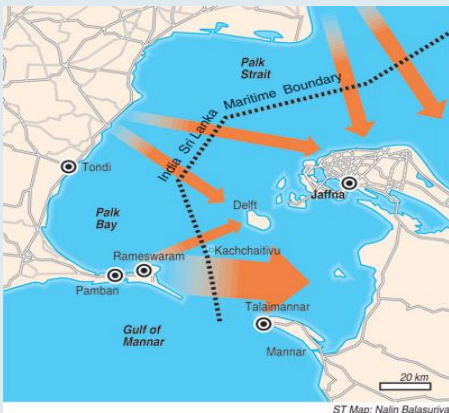
3. NOTHING ILLEGAL IN MEETINGS: TAMILNADU GOVERNOR

In the two-page release, the Raj Bhavan rejected criticisms that the Governor had a political agenda and was acting at the behest of the Central government, given the current political context in which Tamil Nadu finds itself. “This part of the criticism is absolutely wrong and false and based on the figment of imagination,” the release said.

Guided by Constitution

- ✚ Insisting that the Governor’s actions would be guided by the Constitution sans political consideration, the release said, “There was no attempt to short-circuit the official channels or force a meeting” and everything was done according to norms. The meeting with Coimbatore officials gave the Governor a good idea of the status of various welfare and developmental schemes in the district.
- ✚ In fact, the meetings helped him “in getting first-hand knowledge of the developmental needs and problems faced by people at the grass root level,” the release said.
- ✚ “Mr. Purohit will continue such efforts in Tamil Nadu also to fulfil his responsibilities as envisaged in the oath he has taken to devote himself in the service and well-being of the people of Tamil Nadu,” it stated, and went on to claim that his actions were appreciated by many Ministers of the State government.

4. ‘MARK MARITIME BORDER TO CURB MID-SEA CONFLICTS’



✚ Fishermen along the Nagapattinam-Karaikal coast say they find themselves in a peculiar situation, unable to locate the approximate point of the maritime border, due to which they end up in the custody of the Sri Lankan Navy.

✚ As per the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, every State has the right to establish the breadth of its territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles, measured from baselines. The distance between Kodiakarai coast in Nagapattinam district and Kankesanthurai in Sri Lanka being much lesser, the fishermen on the Indian side say they are quite at

a disadvantage, citing the arrest of 20 fishermen and confiscation of two boats by the Sri Lankan Navy over the last fortnight on the charge of trespassing.

- ✚ At a meeting conducted by the Fisheries department on Monday to create awareness on fishing within territorial waters, representatives of fishermen associations in Nagapattinam district **urged the Central government to demarcate and physically mark the maritime boundary using floating aids to safeguard fishermen from attacks by the Sri Lankan Navy.**

5. AN APP TO GET TIGER NUMBERS RIGHT



✚ Field data collection for **tiger enumeration in the country is set to go digital** in order to reduce human error and provide more reliable estimates. In the forthcoming All-India Tiger Estimation, to be taken up in December-January, the authorities plan to eliminate the process of manual recording of signs of the carnivore and other habitat details.

✚ Instead, an app named **M-STRiPES** (Monitoring System For Tigers-Intensive Protection and Ecological Status) developed by the **Wildlife Institute of India**,

Dehradun, will be used for the first time. Though the app has already been in place in some national parks, its usage and application has been made mandatory only now, for the fourth All-India Tiger Estimation.

- ✚ The use of the app would ensure a more robust estimate, all these years, data pertaining to carnivore signs, pellets and status of habitat was manually recorded in the prescribed format on a paper by the field staff, but this exercise was prone to errors. With the availability of M-STRiPES, human error will be eliminated.
- ✚ It is a free app that will be made available to staff participating in the tiger census exercise, and they will feed in their observation during the carnivore sign survey and transect marking. Details such as pellet density, vegetation status and human disturbance, if any, will also be recorded.
- ✚ Use of the app in habitat monitoring is not new. Bandipur had Hejje or Pugmark, an Android-based app, while BRT started with Huli. The GIS-based app will give real-time data on forest habitats besides providing live update of monitoring and patrolling activities. But the nationwide introduction of M-STRiPES paves the way for greater standardisation and elimination of inconsistencies in data interpretation.

Counted every four years

The national tiger estimates are conducted once in four years, with the first conducted in 2006. That exercise pegged the tiger count at 1,411, with the statistical lower limit pegged at 1,165 and the upper limit, 1,657. In 2010, the count changed to 1,706, with 1,520 being the lower limit and 1,909 the upper limit.

The Western Ghat landscape, comprising Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Goa, accounted for 776 tigers in 2014, with the **Bandipur-Nagarahole-Mudumalai-Wayanad complex** harbouring 570 tigers — reckoned to be the **world's single largest tiger population in a landscape**.

The last nationwide assessment, held in 2014, pegged the tiger figures across the country at 2,226. Karnataka alone was home to 400 tigers, a bulk of them in Bandipur and Nagarahole.

6. IN ICJ, IT'S DOWN TO THE WIRE FOR INDIA, U.K.

It is the first time in the history of the United Nations that the candidacy of a permanent member of the UN Security Council is challenged in the way it has been by India

As the UN General Assembly and the Security Council assemble for separate meetings in New York to hold the 12th round of voting to break the stalemate between India's Dalveer Bhandari and Britain's Christopher Greenwood for re-election to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), it will be a test of the depth and durability of New Delhi's international partnerships.

The winning candidate needs to get a majority in both the General Assembly (GA) and the Security Council (SC), but 11 rounds of voting so far ended with India winning in the former and the U.K. winning in the latter.

Historical challenge

- ✚ It is the first time in UN history that the candidacy of a permanent member of the Security Council is challenged in the way it has been by India, and all five permanent members, the P5, appear to have rallied behind Mr. Greenwood, though actual voting choices will remain secret.
- ✚ In the last round of voting at the SC, the U.K. got nine votes against five for India, with one abstention. Japan, which appeared to be at the forefront of a move to counter Chinese designs in Asia recently, is also said to have joined hands with China, the U.S. and Russia in support of the U.K.
- ✚ It has been learnt that India sought U.S. support on the issue at the "highest level" in the recent past, but it was not clear if such discussions took place.
- ✚ The U.K. has already indicated to members of the SC that it plans to invoke a clause that has never been used to suspend voting on Monday and move to a conference mechanism of the GA and the SC if the first round of voting does not yield a clear outcome. The conference mechanism involves three members of the GA and three of the SC jointly selecting the winner. India has told member countries that this would amount to bypassing the desire of an overwhelming majority. But if the U.K. wants to suspend voting after the first round on Monday and invokes the conference option, there is no way to stop it, as per rules. India is gearing up for a three-pronged battle at the UN.
- ✚ The first is the headcount in the GA. India has ended up at 121 in the last round and is trying to push it up. If India gets two-thirds, at 128, "morally no judge can continue in the fray.
- ✚ The second battle line is in the SC, which will vote simultaneously. India hopes that its votes will increase from five. More than six members of the SC have been assuring India their votes, but the count indicates that not all of them are keeping their promise. India's Permanent Mission in New York worked through the weekend, reaching out to SC members. The 10 non-permanent members of the SC are Bolivia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine and Uruguay.

Conference mechanism

The third line of battle is if the U.K. presses for conference, which will also have to be approved by the SC. In this case, the voting will be public, and members who are now playing a double game will not be able to do that. They will have to publicly take a position on whether or not they support the U.K.'s demand for suspension of voting. Though the U.K. has nine votes in favour of its candidate, it is unclear if it has those nine votes to stall the voting process itself in an open voting. The U.K.'s strategy will depend on its own assessment of how it stands on this count. If it is confident that it can get the majority of the SC to support publicly its demand for a suspension of voting, it will exercise the option of conference. This will be a moment for reckoning for India also, as it will show the extent of the support it gets from various countries.

If the SC votes in favour of a conference mechanism, then the question of how the six members of the new mechanism, comprising three from the GA and three from the SC, will be selected will come up.

7. RIGID ALLIANCES WILL BE AVOIDED: INDIA

- ✚ A week after joining the first official-level meeting of the new quadrilateral grouping in the Asia Pacific region, India stressed that it will avoid rigid geopolitical alliances.
- ✚ India's expanding commitments internationally and in view of the global uncertainties, India will have an "open-minded approach" to international politics.
- ✚ It is important to recognize that India is in a period of major transition, where many of the assumptions that guided her thinking in the past are no longer valid. This calls for a more open minded approach in international politics where there are less fixed points and more flexible combinations. India's earlier mindset of broadening the options in a structured work must give way to the understanding that rigidity of positions and alliances no longer hold and India herself is one of the poles.

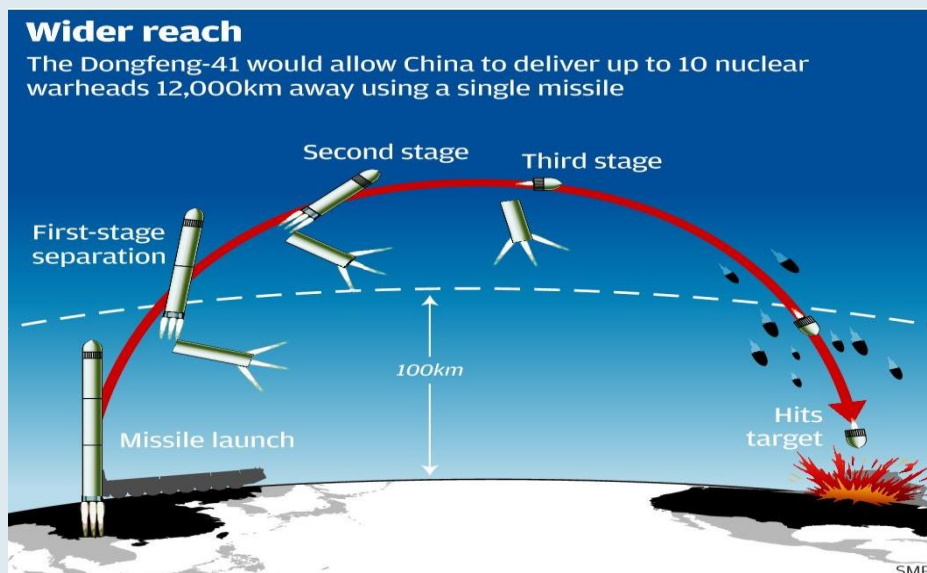
8. U.S. DECLARES NORTH KOREA A STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM

The announcement was made by Mr. Trump during his Cabinet meeting.

- ✚ U.S. President Donald declared North Korea a state sponsor of terrorism, a move that allows the Trump administration to impose additional sanctions on Pyongyang over its nuclear and missile programmes.
- ✚ North Korea had been removed from the list of state sponsor of terrorism under the George W Bush administration.
- ✚ The announcement was made by Mr. Trump during his Cabinet meeting.

9. CHINA'S INDIGENOUS LONG-RANGE MISSILE COULD BE INDUCTED IN 2018

The Dongfeng-41 was recently tested for the eighth time



China's next-generation multi-nuclear warhead intercontinental ballistic missile with a proclaimed ability to hit targets "anywhere in the world" may be inducted into the PLA early next year. The new missile the **Dongfeng-41** — also has a speed of more than Mach 10 and can use decoy devices and chaff to pierce its way through the enemy's missile warning and defence systems.

The missile which underwent another test, the eighth since it was first announced in 2012 — could be in the People Liberation Army's line-up as early as the first half of 2018.

Three-stage missile

The Dongfeng-41 is a three-stage solid-fuel missile with a range of at least 12,000 km, meaning it could strike anywhere in the world from a mainland site and it can carry up to 10 nuclear warheads, each of which can target separately.

10. INFRA STATUS FOR LOGISTICS SECTOR

The Centre has granted **infrastructure status to the logistics sector**, allowing it to avail loans at competitive terms that come along with the status. The need for integrated logistics sector development has been felt for quite some time in view of the fact that the logistics cost in India is very high compared to developed countries.

High logistics cost reduces the competitiveness of Indian goods both in domestic as well as export markets. Development of logistics would give a boost to both domestic and external demand thereby encouraging manufacturing and 'job creation and this will, in turn, be instrumental in improving country's GDP.



Longer maturity period

- ✚ Number one, infrastructure industries get longer maturity loans compared to typical manufacturing sector. They are also eligible for slightly higher equity ratios while applying for the loans. The third is that the external commercial borrowing guidelines say that the infrastructure sector has certain advantages and flexibility, and they can also do refinancing with specialised lenders like IDFC, IIFCL, etc.
- ✚ The inclusion of the logistics sector in the Harmonised Master List of Infrastructure Sub-sectors was discussed at the 14th Institutional Mechanism (IM) where it was approved by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.
- ✚ According to the definition that has been included, 'logistics infrastructure' means and includes multi-modal logistics park comprising inland container depot (ICD) with minimum investment of Rs.50 crore and minimum area of 10 acre, cold chain facility with minimum investment of Rs.15 crore and minimum area of 20,000 square feet, and/or warehousing facility with investment of minimum Rs.25 crore and minimum area of 1 lakh square feet.
- ✚ It will enable the logistics sector to avail infrastructure lending at easier terms with enhanced limits, access to larger amounts of funds as external commercial borrowings (ECB), access to longer tenor funds from insurance companies and pension funds and be eligible to borrow from India Infrastructure Financing Company Limited (IIFCL).

11. FMCG COMPANIES TOLD TO ALTER PRICES ON GOODS POST GST CUT

The government has written to all major fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies urging them to immediately revise the maximum retail price on all their products that have seen a reduction in tax rates as decided by the Goods and Services Tax Council.

Warning to firms

- ✚ The letter comes a couple of days after Finance Secretary warned FMCG companies that they could attract anti-profiteering action if their retailers failed to pass on the newer prices to consumers.
- ✚ The Cabinet, last week, also approved the creation of the National Anti-profiteering Authority, which is tasked with ensuring that the benefits of GST, where applicable, are passed on to the consumers.

- ✚ Chairperson of Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC), has addressed a letter to all the major Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies pointing out the need to immediately revise the MRP on all the products in which the reduction of GST has been announced by the Council.
- ✚ The GST Council, in its 23rd Meeting had slashed the tax rates on about 200 goods, including 178 that fell in the highest tax bracket of 28%. A large number of other goods saw their tax rates reduced from 18%, 12%, and even 5%.
- ✚ The benefit of reduction in the GST rate has to be passed on by the suppliers to the consumers by way of commensurate reduction in prices. The reduction in GST rates is also expected to encourage domestic demand and investment.

12. GLOBAL MEET: TECH DISRUPTION TO BE FOCUS

World Congress on Information Technology will make India debut in February

- ✚ The World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT), a premier global forum that is to be held for the first time in India, at Hyderabad, will focus on the technology-led disruption taking place in the industry. In doing so, it would also take a peek into the road ahead.
- ✚ With '**Amplify Digital: Disrupt the Core**' as the theme, the 22nd edition of the conference would showcase latest trends, technologies, use cases and strategic discussions on building the digital future. It is being organised alongside Nasscom's India Leadership Forum, which is also coming to the City of Pearls for the first time.
- ✚ One of the Congress's objectives would be to create awareness of the shift in technology and serve as a forum for people to experience the changes.

13. GOOGLE GLASS RETURNS FROM THE DEAD AS TOOL TO HELP KIDS WITH AUTISM

Users look through the private screen on their smart glasses and see emojis on either side of their partner's face.

- ✚ Those who declared Google Glass a failure perhaps spoke too soon as it is now resurfacing as a tool to help children with autism improve their social skills.
- ✚ A company has developed a system for autism that runs on Google Glass, including the newly released Glass Enterprise Edition.



Brain Power, the developer of neuroscience-based augmented reality, launched the “Empower Me” system earlier this month.

- ✚ The Empower Me system is a digital coach that runs on smartglasses, to empower children and adults with autism to teach themselves social and cognitive skills.
- ✚ The company said that it is using the Google Glass as a platform because tablets or phones require looking down. But the wearable platforms help people keep heads-up and hands—free during social interactions.
- ✚ Autism spectrum disorder is characterised by impaired social interaction, communication and sensory sensitivities.
- ✚ The system features a suite of apps. One such app, Emotion Charades, teaches the user to identify emotions, and understand them.
- ✚ Users look through the private screen on their smartglasses and see emojis on either side of their partner’s face.
- ✚ They select which one they think matches the facial expression with a spoken command or a subtle head tilt. A software detects emotions and voice commands using Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the head tilt via accelerometer data.
- ✚ Besides aiding emotional understanding, Empower Me also features apps designed to target attention to social cues, including the ability to focus on face and eye regions when it is desirable to do so.