

CIVIL SERVICE DIGEST (CSD-Daily)

Dec 14, 2018

President Ram Nath Kovind successful state visit to Myanmar



- India and Myanmar discussed all major aspects of bilateral relations which included political, defence and security, trade, development cooperation and people to people contact.
- This visit assumes importance as a peaceful and prosperous Myanmar is important for the development of India's North Eastern states and security of the larger region.
- Myanmar also assured India of giving serious consideration to India's security concerns in the region.

- Connectivity and people to people contact remained high on agenda as Myanmar extended visa on arrival facility for Indian travellers to Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandlay airports.
- Both the countries are also working to conclude a **Motor vehicle agreement** at the earliest so that **new bus services between Mandlay and Imphal** may be started.
- During his address 5th Enterprise India, President exhorted the Myanmar business community to Look West and utilize the opportunities present in the world's fastest growing economy of India.
- Appreciating Myanmar leadership's commitment for their business friendly policies, Mr Kovind offered to share India's experience in this field.
- India and Myanmar also signed two agreements in for **training of Myanmar judicial officers in India** and in the **field of science and technology**.

Brijendra Pal Singh nominated as new president of FTII

- The Information and Broadcasting Ministry nominated Brijendra Pal Singh as the new president of Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) Society and Chairman of Governing Council.
- Mr Singh is the current Vice Chairman of the FTII Governing Council. The position was vacant after actor Anupam Kher decided to step down in October this year.

New RBI Governor to steer first central board meet on Dec 14



- The central board of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will meet under **new Governor Shaktikanta Das** on Friday.
- One of the **key agenda for the board meeting** is likely to be the **governance issue** -- the role of the central board in the decision making of the RBI.
- The meeting will likely to review the progress in some of the decisions taken in the last meet on November 19.
- Our Mumbai correspondent reports that among other issues, present scenario in Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector may also figure.

- Soon after taking reins of the RBI, Mr Das said, he will try to uphold the **autonomy, credibility and the integrity of the great institution** and take every stakeholder, including the government, along in a consultative manner.
- The new Governor also said he will take measures which the economy requires in a timely manner.

Dissolution of Parliament by President unconstitutional: Lankan SC



- Sri Lanka's Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that dissolution of Parliament by President Sirisena is unconstitutional.
- The seven-member judge bench unanimously said in the judgment that it was illegal to dissolve the parliament before its four and half year term limit.
- The apex court had reserved its judgement after concluding the hearing last week. The court had earlier stayed the dissolution of Parliament.

- United National Party (UNP) led by ousted Prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe welcomed the judgement and called for his reinstatement.
- Our Colombo correspondent reports that it is not clear whether today's ruling will immediately end the political crisis in the island nation as President Maithripala Sirisena has asserted that he will not reappoint Wickremesinghe as Prime Minister.
- Parliament had passed a motion yesterday expressing confidence in Wickremesinghe to function as the Prime Minister.
- A lower court had restrained new government of Mahinda Rajapaksa from functioning last week after he lost the vote of confidence in the parliament.

Sweden moves to ban outdoor smoking



- Sweden is banning outdoor smoking in certain public places including playgrounds and train station platforms.

- The Swedish Parliament extended the smoking ban as of July 1, 2019.
- Smoking in outdoor restaurants and entrances to booths for smokers will also be banned.
- Smoking is currently allowed only in designated smoking areas in most workplaces and public places.
- According to the new law, the goal is to make the Scandinavian country smoke-free by 2025.

Govt, ADB sign 60 mln loan pact to reduce floods, riverbank erosion in Assam

- The Centre and the Asian Development Bank, ADB signed a 60 Million dollar Loan Agreement in New Delhi to continue financing riverbank protection works, renovation of flood embankments, and community-based flood risk management activities in critically flood-prone areas along the Brahmaputra River in Assam.
- The Tranche 2 loan is part of the 120 million dollar multi-tranche financing facility for the **Assam Integrated Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Investment Program** approved by the ADB Board in October 2010.
- The Program is aimed at increasing the reliability and effectiveness of flood and riverbank erosion risk management systems in flood-prone areas of Assam, strengthening the disaster preparedness of the communities, and developing institutional capacity and knowledge base for flood forecasting.
- Mr. Yokoyama said that the Project 2 under the Program will fund a combination of structural and nonstructural measures in the three sub

project areas of Palasbari-Gumi, Kaziranga, and Dibrugarh along the Brahmaputra river which include 20 kilometre of riverbank protection works and upgrading of 13 kilometre of flood embankments. \

- The Project will continue to support the institutional capacity development of the autonomous body anchored to the Assam Water Resources Department, named Flood and River Erosion Management Agency of Assam (FREMAA), and Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), as the executing and implementing agencies for this Project.

Ministry of Tourism formulates guidelines for approval, reapproval of OTA

- The Ministry of Tourism have formulated the guidelines for approval and reapproval of Online Travel Aggregators, OTA to ensure adequate safeguards against deficiency of service, alternate arrangements and punitive deterrence.
- The guidelines will be rolled out online by the end of this month.
- The Ministry will grant recognition as an approved OTA for five years, based on the inspection report and recommendations of a committee and approval of the chairman of The Hotel & Restaurant Approval & Classification Committee.
- Re-approval, thereafter, shall also be granted for five years after inspection conducted by a Committee of the same constitution.
- The ministry said in order to engage with the OTAs constructively, it is imperative that a system is put in place with qualitative benchmarks to accredit them.

- An OTA is an intermediary or an agent, selling travel products and services such as the airlines, car rental, cruise lines, Hotels or Accommodation, railways and vacation packages on behalf of suppliers using the internet as a medium.
- They establish an online market place and earn profits on the discounts commonly referred to as commission offered by the suppliers.