

The Factories Act (Amendment) Bill 2016



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Lead Essay

The Factories Act (Amendment) Bill 2016

Factories Act is a labour legislation that has existed since 1881 and was initially enforced to keep a check on condition of Industrial workers. Its prime objective was to protect the workers employed in factories against industrial and occupational hazards. It focused on regulating the working hours, weekly off, provisions regarding women and children. It imposes upon the owners and occupiers obligations to protect the workers. It was amended in 1911, 1923, 1935 and 1987. But the important amendments were made in 1948, which included safety of working place & machinery, health provision working hours, weekly off, paid leave, etc. It came into force on 1.4.1949 and is applicable to whole of India including Jammu and Kashmir. It applies to factories covered under the Factories Act, 1948. The industries in which ten (10) or more than ten workers are employed on any day of the preceding twelve months and are engaged in manufacturing process being carried out with the aid of power or twenty or more than twenty workers are employed in manufacturing process being carried out without the aid of power, are covered under the provisions of this Act. The last amendment to the Factories Act, 1948 was made in the year 1987, wherein a separate Chapter was inserted relating to hazardous process. However, a comprehensive Factories (Amendment) Bill, 2014 including the amendments of sections 64 and 65 of the Act, was introduced in Lok Sabha on 7th August, 2014. The said Bill was referred to the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour for examination and report, which presented its Report on the said Bill on 22nd December, 2014 to Parliament, which is under examination¹. In 2016, The Factories (Amendment) Bill, 2016 was introduced in Lok Sabha on August 10, 2016 by the Minister for Labour and Employment on the ground that consideration and passing of the 2014 Bill in Parliament may take some more time, with a view to boost the manufacturing sector and to facilitate ease of doing business so as to enhance employment opportunities.

Historical Background

The history of Factory Act is more than 100 years old. The process of modern industrialization came to India almost a century after its beginning in Great Britain. The first cotton textile factory was set up at Bombay as early as 1854. The pace was accelerated by 1870 a large number of factories were setup at Bombay, Nagpur, Kanpur & Madras. The first Iron & Steelwork started at Bihar in 1873. Jute spinning mill were started at Rishra in 1855. By 1881, there were 5000 power looms at work in Bengal. In 1870, Bally Paper mills were setup at Hoogly and several tanning and leather factories were also setup at Kanpur which led to factory establishment existence in India. This brought problems such as employment of women & children at tender age, excessive hours of work, hazardous and insanitary working conditions. Great need for protective labour legislations to fight the conditions of workers (especially women & children) was felt as early as 1850, but nothing was done by British Government (By this a series of Factories Act was already passed in Great Britain). Occasional notes of dissatisfaction were raised by philanthropist, which were led by Sorabjee Shahpurjee. In 1878, Sasipad Bannerjee laid the foundation of Bara Bazar organization for the welfare of jute mill workers. There is also a record of a strike in Nagpur Empress Mill in 1877. Textile mills in India began competing with those many in Lancashire (Great Britain). As a result mill owners at Lancashire were worried. They alleged that inferior labour standards prevailed in Indian mills resulted in lower production cost & hence increased the competitive power of Indian Textile Mills. So they demanded in order to preserve competitive power increase the cost of production of mills by raising the labour standards. Thus protective labour legislation was embodied in Factory Act 1881. Thus joint efforts of philanthropist, social workers in India and Lancashire manufacturers in Great Britain resulted in Factory Act 1881 (though with different considerations).

During the pre-independence period government followed a policy of reform and controlling the matters related to labour conditions in the colonial days. The Royal Commission on Labour was set by government in 1928. The commission focused on various terms. They are as follows: to enquire into and report on the existing of labour in industrial undertakings and plantations in British India on the health, efficiency, and the standard of living of the workers and on the relations between employers and to make recommendations.

Under the 1934 Factory Act, Provincial Government had power to apply the Act to the establishments where power was used and where more than ten persons were employed. It also reduced the hours of work and aimed towards improving the working condition in factories. It also included provisions for adequate inspection and enforcement of the Act. The Factories Act, 1934 was amended and then the Factory Act of 1948 was passed. The Factory Act 1948 includes welfare, health,

¹http://164.100.47.4/BillsTexts/LSBillTexts/Asintroduced/216_2016_LS_Eng.pdf

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cleanliness, overtime payments and other such measures. The Factories Act was to ensure proper, safe and healthy working conditions in the factories, so that the workers may feel interest and devote their time and labour in the working process of the factory without being afraid of bodily strain and without fear and danger of accidents.

The Act of 1948 was again amended in 1976. By this time a very large number of chemical factories emerged involving the manufacture and handling of hazardous and toxic chemicals. This gave rise to more problems of safety and health. By the time the Government could assess the possible impact of the problem and foresee the possibilities of major disasters, the world's worst tragedy shocked Bhopal wiping out in hours thousands of innocent, ignorant, lives and rendering many more incapacitated. Based on this another act, Factories (Amendment) Act, 1987 was passed. After that, government proposed the Amendment of 2014 and most recently government is proposing the Amendment of 2016 which will increase the overtime hours of work up to 125 in a quarter on the ground of fulfilling the demand from industries.

Present Scenario and Discourse of overtime laws:

The Factories Act (Amendment) Bill, 2016, which amends the Factories Act, 1948 amends provisions related to overtime hours of work. Apart from other changes, the bill increases the overtime limit for industrial workers in three different levels. First, the Act permits the state government to make rules related to the regulation of overtime hours of work in some specific condition up to 50 hours for a quarter. The special conditions include urgent repairs, preparatory or complementary work which must necessarily be carried on outside the limits laid down for the general working of the factory, work which is necessarily so intermittent that intervals during which they do not work while on duty, any work which for technical reasons must be carried on continuously, making or supplying articles of prime necessity which must be made or supplied every day, a manufacturing process which cannot be carried on except during fixed seasons, a manufacturing process, which cannot be carried on except at times dependent on the irregular action of natural forces, work engaged in engine-rooms of boiler-houses or in attending to power-plant or transmission machinery, engaged in the loading or unloading of railway wagons or lorries or trucks and in any work, which is notified by the State Government in the Official Gazette as a work of national importance. The 2016 Bill raises this limit from 50 hours to 100 hours. Secondly, the Act enables the state government to permit adult workers in a factory to work overtime hours if the factory has an exceptional workload. Further the total number of hours of overtime work in a quarter must not exceed 75. The Bill permits the central or state government to raise this limit to 115 hours. Thirdly, The Bill introduces a provision, which permits the central or state government to extend the overtime from 115-hour limit to 125 hours on the basis of public interest.

The Factories Act, 1948 has been enacted to consolidate and amend the law regulating the workers working in the factories. Since the aim and objectives of the Act is to safeguard the interest of workers and protect them from exploitation, the Act prescribes certain standards with regard to safety, welfare and working hours of workers, apart from other provisions. However, the Amendment of the Act in 2016 is contradictory to the key idea for which the Act actually exists.

The Factories Act came into existence with the primary objective of raising the labour standard and protecting them from exploitation. But the increase of over time limit is contradictory and instead of improving the working conditions of labour it would even lead to some intense health and social problems among the labour class. Although the Factories Act was initially enacted by the British Government to protect the interests of British employers as Indian textile goods offered stiff competition to British textiles in the export market and hence in order to make Indian labour costlier the Factories Act was first introduced in 1881. Thus India received the first stipulation of eight hours of work, the abolition of child labour, and the restriction of women in night employment, and the introduction of overtime wages for work beyond eight hours. Although the real motivation of this measure was undoubtedly protectionist, the impact of this measure was clearly welfarist². Since then the Factories Act was amended many times but the amendment after the independent India was enacted as an Act to protect the interest of the labour class in independent India. But the proposed amendment is inconsistent to the motive of the Act for which it exists.

Moreover, the Section 64, sub-section -3 of the Act mentions that the total hours of work including overtime should not exceed 10 hours in a day and 60 hours in a week. So, if the normal working time is 48 hours in a week then, it will be 12 hours of overtime in a week assuming 60 hours of total time including overtime, which will make 48 hours of overtime in a

²http://ncib.in/pdf/ncib_pdf/Labour%20Act.pdf

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month and 144 hours in a quarter [(12*4)*3=144]. However, the 2016 Bill has increased the limit (maximum) up to 125 hours in a quarter. But neither the Act nor the Bill mentions which overtime limit to consider for fixing working time for workers.

In section 65 after sub-section (3) of the Act and before the Explanation, a proviso will be inserted, namely, "Provided that the Central Government or the State Government or the Chief Inspector with the prior approval of the State Government, as the case may be, may, by order, further extend the total number of hours of overtime work in any quarter up to one hundred and twenty-five in the public interest.". However, neither the Act, nor the Bill defines the "public interest".

The ILO Hours of Work (Industry) Convention (No. 1) of 1919 introduced a maximum standard of working time of 48 hours per week and eight hours per day as an international norm. In several exceptional cases, working time is allowed to exceed these limits, as long as daily working time remains not higher than ten hours, and weekly working time not higher than 56 hours³. But any of the ILO convention related to hours of work does not prescribe any requirements as to policies or measures concerning hours of work, nor do they mention any such policies or measures. Nevertheless, certain guidance as to the formulation and implementation of policies on hours of work can be drawn from the Reduction of Hours of Work Recommendation, 1962 (No. 116) and India ratified the recommendation.

Recommendation No. 116 was designed to supplement and facilitate the implementation of existing international instruments by indicating practical measures for the progressive reduction of hours of work, taking into account the differences in economic and social conditions in the various countries, as well as the variety of national practices for the regulation of hours and other conditions of work; by outlining in broad terms methods by which such practical measures might be applied; and by indicating the standard of the 40-hour week, as set out in the Forty-Hour Week Convention, 1935 (No. 47), as a social standard to be reached by stages if necessary, and setting a maximum limit for normal hours of work, pursuant to the Hours of Work (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 1)⁴. The reduction of hours of work is not considered as the overall objective. It is viewed rather as a tool for achieving two major goals: (i) creating additional workplaces; and (ii) achieving a balance between the work and family lives of employees.⁵ But the present amendment of doubling over time in Factories Act 1948 is completely contradictory to the ILO recommendation of 1962.

Moreover in other countries like United States, although there is no overtime limit, but the normal hours of work is 40 hours a week according to the Fair Labour Standard Act (FLSA)⁶. In United Kingdom, according to the Working Time Regulation 1998 Act, the total hours of work including the overtime in a week should not exceed 48 hours⁷. In Brazil, according to section 59 of the Consolidation of Labour Laws the overtime should not exceed two hours in a day and according to section 41 of labour law in China, it should not exceed three hours a day.

Piloting the bill, Labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya said the changes in the law would enable workers to "work more and earn more".⁸ The purpose of earning livelihood is to fulfill the necessities of life and having basic standard of living. Livelihood is the means to achieve the end in terms of a comfortable life for the worker and his/her family. Only the achieved states are in themselves valuable, not the opportunities, which are valued only as means to the end of reaching valuable states. But the earning from the overtime work will affect the health and social life of the workers. Doubling the over time, which is in excess of normal working hours of eight to nine hours is certainly not justifiable from the perspective of health of the workers. Moreover, working overtime could result in increased consumption of alcohol, tobacco, obesity and depression, which might result in a major social issue. It will also have an effect on the family life and social obligation of the workers. According to ILO report on Decent and Safe work published in 2002, the cardiovascular diseases are one of the prime causes of work-related death. And first and important factor of these diseases is night work and long hours of work⁹.

³http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/travail/documents/publication/wcms_170708.pdf

⁴ ibid

⁵ ibid

⁶ <https://www.dol.gov/whd/flsa/>

⁷ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1998/1833/made/data.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.firstpost.com/business/lok-sabha-passes-bill-to-double-overtime-hours-for-factory-workers-2947942.html>

⁹ <http://www.ibram.org.br/sites/700/784/00001030.pdf>

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Karoshi is a Japanese word meaning death from overwork. This term has been used since the 1970s. In 1978 there was a report on 17 *karoshi* cases at the 51st annual meeting of the Japan Association of Industrial Health. *Karoshi* is not a pure medical term but a sociomedical term that refers to fatalities or associated work disability due to cardiovascular attacks (such as brain strokes, myocardial infarction or acute cardiac failure) aggravated by a heavy workload and long working hours. The phenomenon was first identified in Japan, and the word is now adopted internationally. *Karoshi* has become an important social problem in Japan.¹⁰ However, Article 36 of the Japanese Labor law mentions the overtime limit of 5 hours per day, 45 hours quarter and 360 hours per years.

The labour ministry defended the Bill on the ground that it will facilitate an increase in employment generation in the manufacturing sector. But increasing overtime will in no way reduce the unemployment rate. It will further deteriorate the unemployment situation. The urgency of increasing overtime only proves the urgency of bringing higher level of dynamism to increase production at the cost of standard of living of the labourers whether employed or unemployed.

Conclusion:

An analysis of the Factories Act (Amendment) Bill 2016 suggests that the provisions mentioned in the Bill are far away from the reason for which the original Act came into existence. By amending the Act, the Government is actually altering the uniqueness of the Act which is the protection of the workers in the country. Increasing overtime could raise earnings for some workers but it would come at the cost of health and standard of living the workers. Moreover, increasing overtime is not even a sign of industrial development as it will not necessarily add to the productivity of the factory as after a point in time diminishing returns to scale appears in productivity of labourers. In this context, the government should take into consideration the criticism and feedback from trade unions, the labour community and civil society and as a first step it should look at giving more benefits to daily wagers and action need to be taken against companies that do not pay the stipulated wages for working overtime.

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¹⁰http://www.ilo.org/safework/info/publications/WCMS_211571/lang--en/index.htm

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Headlines

Need for outcome-based education in India

(The Hans India, February 14, 2017)

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) can revolutionise homes around the world and our way of living along with it. Robotics can completely transform factory operations. Self-driven cars can make driving a thing of the past.

Read More: <http://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/Education-&-Careers/2017-02-14/Need-for-outcome-based-education-in-India-/280651>

Date Accessed: 20.02.2017

Economy

Bad loan crisis continues: 56.4 per cent rise in NPAs of banks

(George Mathew, *The Indian Express*, February 20, 2017)

Bad loans have now shot up by 135 per cent from Rs 261,843 crore in the last two years, despite the Reserve Bank of India announcing a host of restructuring schemes. Bad loans now constitute 11 per cent of the gross advances of PSU banks, while total NPAs, including those for public and private banks, were Rs 697,409 crore as of December 2016, according to figures compiled by Care Ratings for The Indian Express.

Read More: <http://indianexpress.com/article/business/banking-and-finance/bad-loan-crisis-continues-56-4-per-cent-rise-in-npas-of-banks-rbi-4533685/>

Date Accessed: 20.02.2017

Delhi govt likely to clear proposal to revise minimum wages soon

(Hindustan Times, February 16, 2017)

The Arvind Kejriwal cabinet is likely to clear the proposal to revise minimum wages in the city by the month end. A special committee constituted by the Delhi labour department, with approval from the Lieutenant Governor, is expected to submit its report to the department in a day or two. This is the second attempt by the AAP government within months to revise minimum wages after the then L-G turned down its previous decision to revise wages by about 50% on procedural grounds. Labour minister Gopal Rai said the proposal will be put before the Cabinet for clearance soon after.

Read More <http://www.hindustantimes.com/delhi/delhi-govt-likely-to-clear-proposal-to-revise-minimum-wages-soon/story-G4dIrCfTiwkvfgpzUiqHrI.html>

Date Accessed: 20/02/2017

Panel set to fix minimum wages

(The Times of India, February 17, 2017)

The committee to decide on minimum wages, set up by former lieutenant governor Najeeb Jung, is almost ready with its proposal and the Delhi government expects that it will be able to send the file for clearance to LG Anil Bajjal within 10 days. The original proposal was returned by Jung in September 2016, during the height of the Centre-state tussle, saying that the committee that came up with the proposed changes was itself unconstitutional as it was formed without his prior consent.

Read More: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/panel-set-to-fix-minimum-wages/articleshow/57194388.cms>

Date Accessed: 20/02/2017

West Bengal: Minimum wage for BLF workers hiked, owners protest

(The Indian Express, February 13, 2017)

The Bengal labour department has raised the daily minimum wages for workers of bought-leaf-factories (BLFs), units that buy tea leaves from small tea growers. The daily minimum wage for a worker of a BLF in civic bodies, development authorities and industrial townships, also referred to as zone A, has been fixed at `290.23, while the rate is `256.5 in other areas, referred to as zone B. There are over 130 BLFs which have around 40,000 workers, officials said and they buy from around 30,000 small tea growers, accounting for nearly a third of north Bengal's tea production. Earlier, the minimum wage was `143 for both zones.

Read More <http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/kolkata/west-bengal-minimum-wage-for-blf-workers-hiked-owners-protest-4521293/>

Date Accessed: 20/02/2017

The Confusion Over Coal, Power Tells Us India Hasn't Outgrown the Need For Planning

(The Wire, Armin Rosencranz & Rajnish Wadehra, February 18, 2017)

As India moves from a planned to a market-driven economy, the energy industry faces several challenges. Our study of these challenges suggests that the biggest hurdle is the old bureaucratic mindset of running a socialist economy. Today, 42% of India's total power generating capacity is privately owned – and this is rising. The erstwhile Planning Commission has been replaced by

Economy

Niti Aayog, which works like a think tank, and does not do the old job of allocating resources and coordinating between ministries. Niti Aayog needs to lay down policy prerogatives and general directions for the ministries of power, coal, renewables as well as oil and natural gas. So far there has been no such direction. A national electricity plan has been drafted by the Central Electricity Authority since it is required to be made every five years under the Electricity Act of 2003. It draws its priorities from the outdated 2005 energy policy.

Read More: <https://thewire.in/109678/coal-energy-power-india/>

Date Accessed: 20/02/2017

What the Ola, Uber Strike Tells Us About the Nature of ‘Informal’ Exploitation

(The Wire, Akriti Bhatia, February 18, 2017)

Who said that the theories of classical political economy have become outdated? In fact, as the recent Ola and Uber driver strikes show us, the theory of surplus value has never before been so animate and sophisticated. To put it in crude terms, the difference between a worker’s wage and the value she produces through her labour power is ‘surplus value’. In the classical theory of surplus value, it is generally seen as a measure of exploitation. For the past week, thousands of Uber and Ola drivers have been demanding better benefits, accident insurance, relaxation in working hours and higher pay. How did things get to this point, considering how benign and wonderful the ‘uberification’ of the economy seemed to many barely a year ago?

Read More: <https://thewire.in/110022/factory-workers-uber-drivers-nature-exploitation-changed/>

Date Accessed: 20/02/2017

The Modi Government’s Policy of Increasing Oil Taxes Is Proving Costly for the Indian Economy

(The Wire, Hemindra Hazari, February 17, 2017)

Historically, India’s net oil subsidy was nothing but a myth after factoring in taxes on petroleum products. But in the last two years, as oil prices declined internationally, the government went further and shifted to an oppressive regime of punitive oil taxes. In earlier years, economists linked to the capital market were vociferous in their condemnation of oil subsidies and advocated ‘market pricing’ of this key resource, as subsidies, they argued, distorted the market. Even at that time, their argument ignored the glaring fact of taxes on petroleum products. However, it is even more remarkable that for the past two years the same economists populating policy-making, credit rating agencies and capital markets appear to have lost their voices when the Indian government violated market prices in the opposite direction, sharply raising the rate of petroleum taxes. This was done despite the demand slowdown in the economy. Heavy petroleum taxes have no doubt helped to meet fiscal deficit commitments and satisfy global investors. But they have also helped suppress an already faltering consumer demand.

Read More: <https://thewire.in/109891/oil-cost-indian-economy/>

Date Accessed: 20/02/2017

The last resort: Several changes in government have involved a swish getaway for legislators

(The Scroll, Ipsita Chakravarty, February 20, 2017)

Going by the last few weeks, it would seem that politics has a new address in India. The dust of the streets, the hard benches of the Vidhan Sabha have been eschewed. These days, the action has shifted to sprawling mansions, surrounded by backwaters on three sides or forests where the rhino roams. Political dramas, reaching a certain crisis point, evidently have to move to more scenic locales. It’s politics of the last resort, if you will.

Read More: <https://scroll.in/article/829781/the-last-resort-several-changes-in-government-have-involved-a-swish-getaway-for-legislators>

Date Accessed: 20/02/2017

Governance & Development

POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

Nagaland: Chief Minister steps down after protests against reservation for women in civic polls

(*The Scroll.in*, February 20, 2017)

Nagaland Chief Minister TR Zeliang on Sunday announced that he had decided to step down from his office, ANI reported. Zeliang further said a “new consensus leader” would be selected by his party, the Nagaland People’s Front, on Monday. Protesting tribal groups have been asking for Zeliang’s resignation since his government decided to reserve 33% seats for women in civic polls.

Read More: <https://scroll.in/latest/829783/nagaland-chief-minister-steps-down-after-protests-against-reservation-for-women-in-civic-polls>

Date Accessed: 20/02/2017

Election Commission pushes to make electoral bribery cognizable offence

(*Ritika Chopra, The Indian Express*, February 20, 2017)

Chief Election Commissioner (EC) Nasim Zaidi has written to Home Minister Rajnath Singh reiterating EC’s long-standing demand to make electoral bribery a cognizable offence under the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). A cognizable offence is one for which police has the authority to make an arrest without a warrant. Currently, bribing voters, in cash or kind, is a non-cognizable offence under sections 171B/171E of the IPC which attracts only up to one-year imprisonment or fine or both as punishment. EC had first demanded an amendment to the CrPC to make it a cognizable offence in 2012. The Indian Express has learnt that the Home Ministry has drawn up a draft amendment Bill in consultation with the Law Ministry, but it hasn’t been sent for Cabinet approval.

Read More: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/election-commission-pushes-to-make-electoral-bribery-cognizable-offence-4533663/>

Date Accessed: 20.02.2017

CONNECTIVITY

Maharashtra hopes its new expressway will bring investment – but it has a lot of convincing to do

(*Mridula Chari, Scroll*, February 20, 2017)

Maharashtra is building the project of its dreams – an eight-lane super expressway that will run between Mumbai and Nagpur and will require 10,000 hectares of land. It would ordinarily take several years to acquire land for such a project, particularly as the amended Land Acquisition Act requires the government to both rehabilitate and resettle landowners.

Read More: <https://scroll.in/article/826785/maharashtra-hopes-its-new-expressway-will-bring-investment-but-it-has-a-lot-of-convincing-to-do>

Date Accessed: 20.02.2017

HEALTH

Move to Replace MCI with National Medical Panel

(*The Tribune*, February 19, 2017)

The government has begun inter-ministerial consultations on the most awaited reform in the medical education sector, the revamp of the Medical Council of India. The Health Ministry has circulated a Cabinet note on the draft National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill-2016, which proposes to establish the commission as a replacement to the MCI.

Read more: <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/move-to-replace-mci-with-national-medical-panel/366693.html>

Date Accessed: 20.02.2017

Governance & Development

More Women Are Delivering In Hospitals, So Why Are So Many Still Dying In Childbirth?

(Devanik Saha & Video Volunteers, *IndiaSpend*, February 20, 2017)

The number of institutional deliveries rose by 15% over the decade ending 2014, mostly aided by the JSY, according to this 2016 report by the think tank Brookings India, based on National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data. Deliveries in government hospitals rose by 22%, fell by 8% in private hospitals and home-births dropped by 16%. But 167 women are still dying per 100,000 live births, as per latest government data. This is despite a 70% fall in MMR over a quarter of a century.

Read More: <http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/more-women-are-delivering-in-hospitals-so-why-are-so-many-still-dying-in-childbirth-42573>

Date Accessed: 20.02.2017

TECHNOLOGY

How mobile technology is transforming lives in rural India

(Melissa Jun Rowley, *TechCrunch*, February 20, 2017)

Deep in a rural village in India outside the city of Jhansi, children play on dirt roads where goats and cows roam. The humble and colorful homes have mud floors, and women collect drinking water from wells.

Read More: <https://techcrunch.com/2017/02/19/how-mobile-technology-is-transforming-lives-in-rural-india/>

Date Accessed: 20.02.2017

ENVIRONMENT

The 20th century saw a 23-fold increase in natural resources used for building

(Fridolin Krausmann & Heinz Schandl, *Down to Earth*, February 20, 2017)

Continuing the massive expansion of natural resource consumption would not only require vast quantities of new raw materials, it would also result in considerable environmental impact. It would require massive changes in land use for quarrying sand and gravel, and more energy for extraction, transport and processing. And, if we do not change course, more raw material use now means more waste later.

All of this will be accompanied by a large rise in carbon dioxide emissions, making it much harder to achieve the climate goals agreed in Paris. Cement production alone, for example, is responsible for about 5% of global carbon emissions.

Read More: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/the-20th-century-saw-a-23-fold-increase-in-natural-resources-used-for-building-57142>

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LAW AND JUSTICE

Quota Benefit after Adoption by SC Man Valid: High Court

(*The Tribune*, February 19, 2017)

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has made it clear that a person cannot be prevented from taking the benefit of a Scheduled Caste certificate issued to him by a competent authority on the basis of adoption by a person belonging to a reserved category. The ruling came in case of a "Brahmin" child adopted by a person belonging to a reserved category after his mother's death. For reaching the conclusion, Justice Jaishree Thakur distinguished his case from the judgment rendered in Valsamma Paul's case.

Read more: <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/quota-benefit-after-adoption-by-sc-man-valid-high-court/366703.html>

Date Accessed: 20.02.2017

Society

GENDER

Gender Budget: Maternity scheme cut brings low allocation in focus

(Shalini Nair, *Indian Express*, February 20, 2017)

The Women and Child Development ministry's move to restrict financial assistance under the maternity benefit scheme to only one live birth has brought in focus the issue of inadequate Budget allocation for welfare schemes for women. This year, Budget allocation for Women and Child Development Ministry is a mere 1 per cent of the total outlay and gender budgeting across ministries remains at 5 per cent of the total outlay, the same as it was ten years ago. Gender budgeting was introduced in India in 2005 in recognition of the fact that policies meant for the general population may not necessarily benefit women unless reviewed under the gender lens.

Read More: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/gender-budget-maternity-scheme-cut-brings-low-allocation-in-focus-4533661/>

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India and World

INDIA IN THE WORLD

Speak in our own voice

(Sahasini Haidar, *The Hindu*, February 20, 2017)

Today, India and China square off or have conflicts on what can be called three-and-a-half fronts. The land front, where they have fought one war in 1962; the maritime front, where the U.S. and its allies want India to take part in joint patrols to confront China's naval ambitions; India's neighbourhood, particularly Pakistan, where Chinese investment is altering bilateral equations; and the Tibetan front, which could be considered a half-front.

Read More: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/speak-in-our-own-voice/article17330034.ece>

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EUROPE

EU's Trump Challenge

(Vivek Katju, *The Tribune*, February 20, 2017)

Clearly many European leaders find Trump's throw-in-your-face 'America First' brashness to be uncultured and offensive. Style apart, on substance too, the positions that Trump is adopting on issues such as immigration and refugee entry, trade, financial contributions to common defence and Russia, among others have generated hostility in Europe. Trump considers German Chancellor Angela Merkel's decision to allow refugees to enter Europe and into Germany to be "catastrophic".

Read more: <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/eu-s-trump-challenge/366472.html>

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Opinions/ Books

OPINIONS

Stifling Academic Spirit

(Apoorvanand, *The Tribune*, February 19, 2017)

The suspension of Rajshri Ranawat, who teaches English at the Jay Narayan Vyas University, Jodhpur should be a matter of national concern. Not only for the academic community but for society as a whole. For, neither has she been penalised for any financial irregularity, nor for dereliction of duties as a teacher. The university has started this process of punishment to her for having convened a national seminar and giving platform to an eminent scholar like Nivedita Menon. Menon allegedly made derogatory remarks against the soldiers of the Indian Army, questioned the claim of India over Kashmir and insulted the integrity of the Indian nation by showing its map upside down.

Read more: <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/stifling-academic-spirit/366473.html>

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