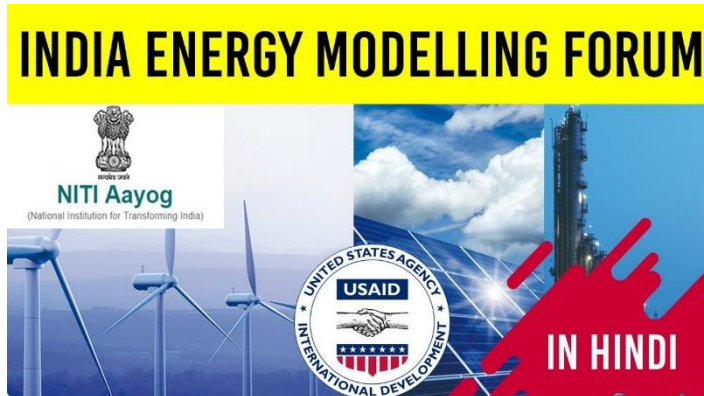


Current Affairs=16-07-2020

NITI Aayog & USAID Co-chaired Sustainable Growth Pillar Meeting; India Energy Modeling Forum Launched



A joint working group meeting of the Sustainable Growth (SG) Pillar was co-chaired by NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The meeting on SG Pillar will boost the India-US Strategic Energy Partnership.

ii. During the meet, an India Energy Modeling Forum (IEMF) was launched which will provide a platform to examine important energy and environmental related issues, and facilitate exchange of ideas.

iii. Notably, in the initial stage, NITI Aayog will coordinate the activities of the forum and finalize its governing structure.

About United States Agency for International Development (USAID):

Headquarter– Washington, D.C., United States (US)

Administrator– John Barsa

About NITI Aayog:

Chairman– Narendra Modi

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)– Amitabh Kant

15th India-EU (Virtual) Summit held virtually; co-chaired by Narendra



Modi, Charles Michel & Ursula von der Leyen

On 15th July 2020, the 15th summit between India and the European Union (EU) was held virtually where India was represented by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, the EU was represented by **Charles**

Michel, President of the European Council, and **Ursula von der Leyen**, President of the European Commission.

ii. During the meet India and the European Union were stated as “natural partners” and encouraged cultural exchanges and educational cooperation between India and the EU.

- India, EU adopted declaration on Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy
- India-EU endorsed Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025
- High-level dialogue set up Piyush Goyal and Phil Hogan to address trade issues
- COVID-19: India, EU to enhance cooperation on health security, pandemic crisis response

Static Points:

-India to have G20 (Group of 20) Presidency in 2022 and its membership in the UN Security Council in 2021-2022.

-The fifth International Conference on Chemical Management to be held in Bonn, Germany in 2021.

-The **27** nation EU is India's **largest trading partner for goods** with trade exceeding 100 billion dollars, while India is the E.U.'s ninth biggest trading partner.

There is an upcoming planned investment of €550 million in the Pune (Maharashtra) and Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) Metro Rail Projects by European Investment Bank (EIB) in Luxembourg

Govt to Increase Public Health Expenditure to 2.5% of GDP by 2025

In a meeting with the 15th Finance Commission the Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan highlighted that the government aims to gradually increase the public health expenditure to 2.5% of Gross Domestic Product(GDP) by 2025.

Statements made by Harsh Vardan

i. The National Health Policy 2017 anticipates to raise public health spending to 2.5% of GDP by 2025.

ii. The policy recommends that the state govt must spend nearly 8% of their total budget on the health sector by 2020.

To establish 1.5 lakh health and wellness centres by 2022

i. The government under the Aayushman Bharat programme proposes to establish 1.5 lakh health and wellness centres by 2022. Of this about 19,000 have been already established.

ii. These centres will enhance healthcare facilities in the rural and Urban areas.

4% Health and Education Cess

Government has announced 4% health and education cess on personal income tax and corporation tax. Earlier it was 3%.

India & Bhutan Opens New Trade Route to Improve Trade and Connectivity



India and Bhutan opened a new trade route between Jaigaon in West Bengal and Ahlay, Pasakha in Bhutan to establish easy connectivity and to increase trade between India and Bhutan amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jaigaon-Ahlay route:

i. The movement of industrial raw materials and goods from India to Pasakha Industrial Estate increases the

traffic in the Jaigaon-Phuentsholing route.

ii. To reduce the issues regarding the traffic, the temporary access for the movement of vehicles carrying goods and commodities from India into Bhutan is provided.

iii. This trade route is expected to increase the bilateral trade and commerce between India and Bhutan.

Trade between India and Bhutan:

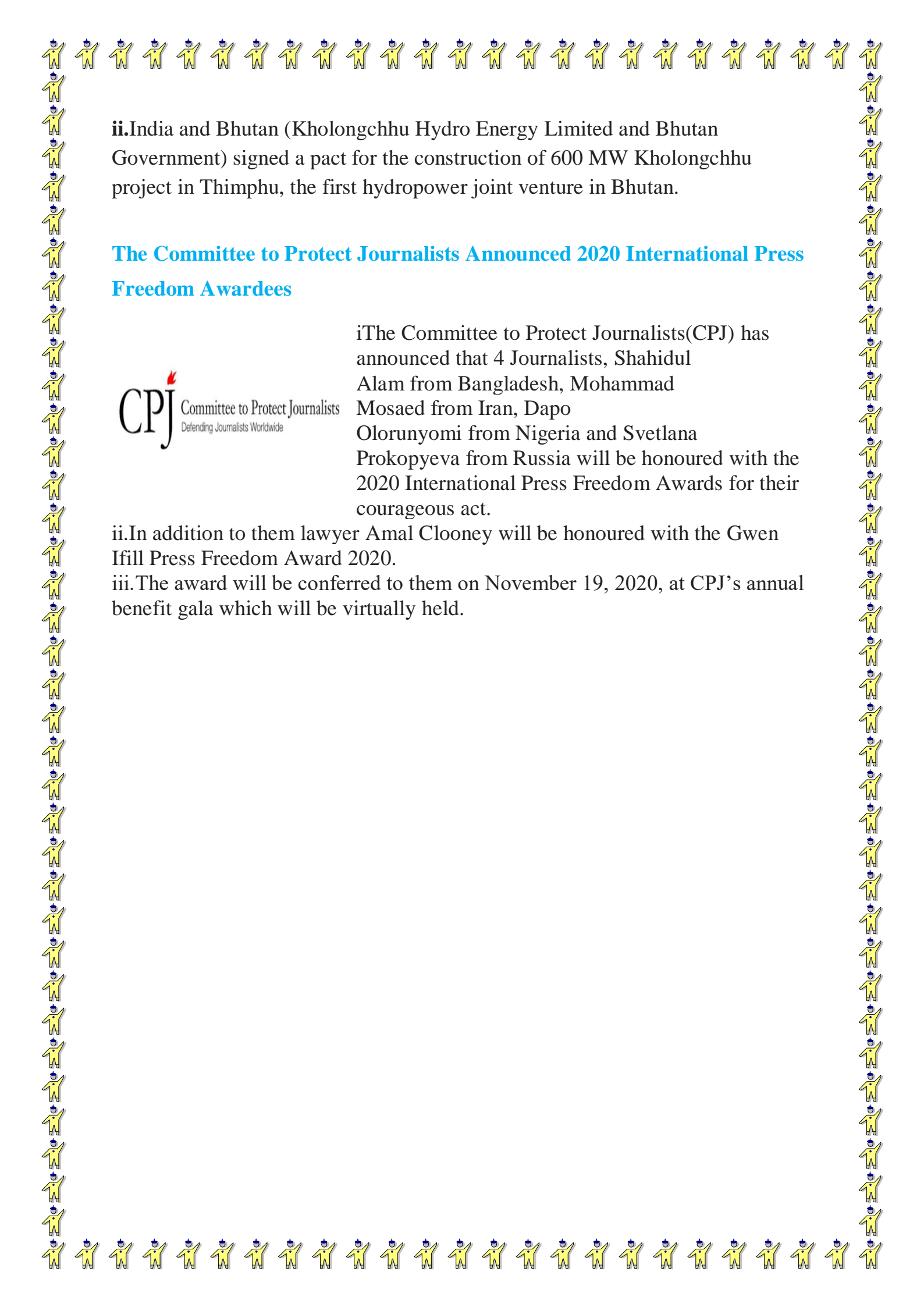
i. Bhutan's largest trading partner is India and the bilateral trade stood at Rs.9227 crores in 2018.

ii. Bhutan imports mineral products, machinery and mechanical appliances, electrical equipments, base metals, vehicles, vegetable products, plastics and articles from India

iii. India imports electricity, portland cement, dolomite, timber and wood products, potatoes, cardamom and fruit products from Bhutan.

Relation Between India & Bhutan:

i. The treaty of friendship and cooperation, the framework of the bilateral relation between India and Bhutan was revised in February 2007.



ii. India and Bhutan (Kholongchhu Hydro Energy Limited and Bhutan Government) signed a pact for the construction of 600 MW Kholongchhu project in Thimphu, the first hydropower joint venture in Bhutan.

The Committee to Protect Journalists Announced 2020 International Press Freedom Awardees



iThe Committee to Protect Journalists(CPJ) has announced that 4 Journalists, Shahidul Alam from Bangladesh, Mohammad Mosaed from Iran, Dapo Olorunyomi from Nigeria and Svetlana Prokopyeva from Russia will be honoured with the 2020 International Press Freedom Awards for their courageous act.

ii. In addition to them lawyer Amal Clooney will be honoured with the Gwen Ifill Press Freedom Award 2020.

iii. The award will be conferred to them on November 19, 2020, at CPJ's annual benefit gala which will be virtually held.