

10th July 2021

BRICS countries agree to STI led Innovation Cooperation Action Plan proposed by India

All BRICS countries have agreed to the STI-led BRICS Innovation Cooperation Action Plan (2021-24) proposed by India during 12th Meeting of BRICS S&T Steering Committee.

Indian had proposed the plan to facilitate sharing of experiences of each other's innovation ecosystem and networking of innovators and entrepreneurs.

The Details of the Action Plan would be worked out by BRICS Science, Technology Innovation Entrepreneurship partnership (STIEP) Working Group. It was agreed that the proposal may be forwarded to BRICS STIEP working group through the respective country's STI focal point.

Department of Science and Technology (DST), India, hosted the 12th Meeting of BRICS S&T Steering Committee on 8th July, 2021. Scientific ministries and agencies of all BRICS countries participated in it.

Delhi HC calls for Uniform Civil Code, asks Centre to take action

Underlining the need for a Uniform Civil Code, the Delhi High Court has said that youth belonging to different communities, tribes, castes or religions who solemnise their marriage "ought not be forced to struggle with issues" arising due to conflicts in various personal laws, especially in relation to marriage and divorce.

In an order released Friday, Justice Prathiba M Singh said: "The hope expressed in Article 44 of the Constitution that the State shall secure for its citizens Uniform Civil Code ought not to remain a mere hope. The Supreme Court had in 1985 directed that the judgment in Ms Jordan Diengdeh be placed before the Ministry of Law to take appropriate steps. However, more than three decades have passed since then and it is unclear as to what steps have been taken in this regard till date."

The High Court directed that its judgment be communicated to the Secretary of Ministry of Law & Justice "for necessary action as deemed appropriate".

Oxfam: 11 people die of hunger each minute around the globe

Anti-poverty organisation Oxfam said that 11 people die of hunger each minute and that the number facing famine-like conditions around the globe has increased six times over the last year.

In a report titled "The Hunger Virus Multiplies," Oxfam said that the death toll from famine outpaces that of COVID-19, which kills around seven people per minute.

“The statistics are staggering, but we must remember that these figures are made up of individual people facing unimaginable suffering. Even one person is too many,” said Oxfam America’s President and CEO Abby Maxman.

The humanitarian group also said that 155 million people around the world are now living in crisis levels of food insecurity or worse — some 20 million more than last year. Around two thirds of them face hunger because their country is in military conflict.

“Today, unrelenting conflict on top of the COVID-19 economic fallout, and a worsening climate crisis, has pushed more than 520,000 people to the brink of starvation,” added Maxman.

“Instead of battling the pandemic, warring parties fought each other, too often landing the last blow to millions already battered by weather disasters and economic shocks.”

Despite the pandemic, Oxfam said that global military spending increased by \$51 billion during the pandemic — an amount that exceeds by at least six times what the U.N. needs to stop hunger.

The report listed a number of countries as “the worst hunger hotspots” including Afghanistan, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen — all embroiled in conflict.

Zaila Avant-garde becomes first African American to win Scripps National Spelling Bee

Whether dribbling a basketball or identifying obscure Latin or Greek roots, Zaila Avant-garde doesn’t show much stress. Now she has become the first African American winner in the 96-year history of the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

The 14-year-old basketball prodigy from Harvey, Louisiana, breezed to the championship on 8th July night. The only previous Black winner was also the only champ from outside the United States: Jody-Anne Maxwell of Jamaica in 1998.

Zaila twirled and leaped with excitement after spelling the winning word “murraya,” a genus of tropical Asiatic and Australian trees.