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Sr.No	Subject	Page No.
1	Polity and Governance	3-28
2	Economic and Social Development	29-39
3	Science and Technology	40-47
4	Environment and Climate	48-56
5	Current Events	57-60

## POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

PIB,OCT17,2022

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurates the Wellness Centre set up by WWE fame "The Great Khali" alias Dalip Singh Rana near Karnal in Haryana

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ministry of Science and Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ministry of Earth Science; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh today inaugurated the Wellness Centre set up by WWE fame "The Great Khali" alias Dalip Singh Rana near Karnal in Haryana. The Centre has been named as "The Great Khali" Academy.

Spread over 10 acres of prime land, the campus has, among other things, a Fitness Centre, gymnasium, sports complex, wrestling enclave and restaurant, which will mainly cater to the youth. The restaurant has been named as "The Great Khali" Dhaba and is a part of the overall comprehensive complex. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Jitendra Singh said, Khali's wellness centre is a tribute to Prime Minister Modi's flagship schemes of "Fit India" and "Khelo India" initiatives. Fit India Mission encourages people to become part of Fit India Movement by inculcating at least 30-60 minutes of physical activity every day.

Appreciating the Great Khali's decision to set up the Centre, Dr Jitendra Singh said, it is laudable that he has chosen to give back to the society what he had received. The Minister said, Khali had earned international glory for India through his wrestling profession and was one of the highest paid performers in the world, but in spite of all this, he has chosen to come back to India and spend the money and resources earned by him for the benefit of the next generation. Khali's gesture, said Dr Jitendra Singh, should also inspire and motivate others to spend in philanthropy and in investment which would contribute to the task of nation building.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, Great Khali brought glory to India after he made his professional wrestling debut in 2000. Before embarking on his professional wrestling career, he was an Assistant Sub-Inspector of Punjab Police. Dr Jitendra Singh lauded the efforts and initiatives of Khali and praised him for the noble cause of opening the wellness centre. The Minister said, the philanthropy of the great wrestler will inspire others also to take up such pro-people measures. The Great Khali informed the Minister that there is a lot of enthusiasm among youth for physical activity and he has decided to provide them a platform for it.

PIB, OCT 18, 2022

NHA joined hands with NABH to expedite implementation of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)

National Health Authority (NHA) and National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH) - a constituent board of Quality Council of India (QCI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate in the areas of capacity building, dissemination of information, promotion of QCI (NABH) accreditation & ABDM standards, technical support, stakeholder advocacy and for creating overall awareness for different initiatives of NABH and NHA by leveraging the reach and presence of each other.

NABH has an extensive and efficient quality framework and accreditation system for healthcare facilities. As per this MoU, NABH shall encourage and provide assistance in onboarding their accredited/certified facilities on ABDM's Health Facility Registry (HFR) and onboarding of the doctors, nurses etc. working in these facilities on the Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR).

Speaking about the objective of this collaboration, Dr. R. S. Sharma, CEO, NHA said – “With the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), we have embarked on this ambitious journey to create a digital platform for bringing all stakeholders of the healthcare ecosystem together. We aim to leverage the strong presence of NABH among the health facilities and healthcare professionals from the public as well as private sector to reach out and sensitize them about the core functions, benefits and potential of ABDM and drive the adoption of ABDM on a large scale.”

Speaking on the occasion, Prof (Dr.) Mahesh Verma, Chairman, NABH said - "NABH is totally committed to objective of taking quality healthcare to the last man in the line. This collaboration with NHA will help and motivate even small healthcare organizations in tier 2 & tier 3 cities to get the benefit of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission. It will spread the mission of providing quality healthcare to the masses and help India become a global leader in healthcare domain”.

Further, NHA and NABH shall mutually develop accreditation standards and ratings for healthcare facilities to incorporate ABDM related standards for encouraging rapid adoption and uptake of digital health information systems.

PIB,OCT18,2022

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh launches Single Integrated Pensioners' Portal aimed at “Ease of Living” for the Central Government Pensioners

State Bank of India becomes the first pension disbursing Bank to integrate its Pension Seva Portal with BHAVISHYA in record time. Dr Jitendra Singh also inaugurates an exhibition of all the 17 Pension Disbursing Banks which show-cased their digital initiatives and products for retiring employees to help them exercise choice of a Pension Disbursing Bank. The Minister confers Anubhav Awards on 15 awardees for year 2019-20, 20-21 & 21-22 for sharing experiences and giving suggestions for improvement in governance. Dr Jitendra Singh also inaugurates Pre-Retirement Counselling for about 900 officials about to retire in next One year; 47 PRC Workshops have already been conducted so far

Union Minister of State (IC) Ministry of Science and Technology; Minister of State (IC) Ministry of Earth Science; MoS of Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions Dr Jitendra Singh today launched Single Integrated Pensioners' Portal developed in collaboration with State Bank of India and aimed at “Ease of Living” for the Central Government Pensioners. All the remaining 16 Pension disbursing banks shall now begin their integration with BHAVISHYA.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, Bhavishya 9.0 version was being released today with its integration with the Pension Disbursing Banks.

BHAVISHYA, a Portal for Pension Payment and Tracking System, said the Minister, is being integrated with Pension Seva portal of SBI and will enable Pensioners to get all information and services at one place with single login. On completion of all phases of this integration the retirees can choose a Bank and Branch for opening an online Pension Account, check their monthly pension slips, Form 16, Status of Life Certificate as well as change their Pension Disbursing Bank through BHAVISHYA.

Dr Jitendra Singh informed that BHAVISHYA has recently been rated as the 3rd best portal among all Government of India service portals by National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA). The Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW) therefore chose this End-to-End digitized portal for the integration with BHAVISHYA as the base portal which shall finally become a single window for all Central Government Pensioners. The following portals have now been merged with BHAVISHYA window: CPENGRAMS, ANUBHAV, ANUDAAN, SANKALP & Pension DASHBOARD.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, the 'Bhavishya' platform was made mandatory for all central government departments since 01.01.2017 and this system is at present being successfully implemented in the main Secretariat of 97 Ministries/Departments including 815 Attached Offices, along with 7,902 DDOs on board. He also informed that as on date, more than 1, 74,000 cases have been processed on BHAVISHYA i.e. PPOs issued which includes more than 1 lakh e-PPOs. The Minister on arrival inaugurated a Pension Disbursing Bank Exhibition in which all the 17 Pension Disbursing Banks participated to display their digital initiatives and products meant for retiring government officials. This was a first of its kind initiative organized by Department of Pension in order to enable retiring employees to take an informed decision while opening a Pension account.

Dr Jitendra Singh conferred Anubhav Awards on 15 awardees for year 2019-20, 20-21 & 21-22. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Anubhav Award Ceremony for previous 2 years could not be held. The Anubhav portal was launched by Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare at the behest of the Prime Minister in 2015. The portal provides an opportunity for retiring Government employee to share their experience of working in the Government and give suggestions for improvement in governance. The Anubhav Awards ceremony was started from 2016 as an annual feature to encourage retiring government employees to share their government experience on their retirement.

Dr Jitendra Singh also inaugurated Pre-Retirement Counselling for about 900 officials about to retire in next One year. An exhibition was put up by all Pension disbursing banks to showcase their products and services to all participants who are about to retire in One year. The Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare organizes Pre-Retirement Counselling (PRC) workshop for the benefits of retiring employees of the Government of India as a welfare measure. The workshop with retiring employees focused on (i) Online filing of Pension papers by retiring employees on BHAVISHYA (ii) Retirement benefits (iii) DLC & Face Authentication technology and (iv) Income Tax Rules effecting retiring employees.

PIB,OCT19,2022

On the occasion of Dhanteras, PM to participate in 'Griha Pravesham' of more than 4.5 Lakh beneficiaries of PMAY-G in Madhya Pradesh on 22nd October. Around 29 Lakh houses have been completed in MP at a cost of more than Rs. 35,000 Crore under the scheme

On the occasion of Dhanteras, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will participate in 'Griha Pravesham' of about 4.51 Lakh beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana - Gramin in Satna, Madhya Pradesh on 22nd October at 4 PM via video conferencing. Prime Minister will also address the gathering on the occasion. It has been a constant endeavour of the Prime Minister to provide each citizen of the country with a house of her own with all basic amenities. This marks yet another step in this direction. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, about 38 Lakh houses have been sanctioned so far in Madhya Pradesh and construction of about 29 Lakh houses have been completed at a cost of more than Rs. 35,000 Crore.

TELEGRAPH,OCT20,2022

Enduring myths

Battling the 'foreign' origin of India's Muslims

In a recent article, Pratap Bhanu Mehta offered a very persuasive argument that Hinduism should not be envisaged as a product of colonial knowledge (<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/why-its-wrong-to-say-that-Hinduism-is-a-product-of-colonialism-8203006/>). Mehta recognises the decisive role of British colonialism in producing a deeply problematic imagination of India's past. Yet, he does not subscribe to the view that Hinduism is an artificial entity that did not exist in precolonial period. He argues that this kind of intellectual laziness is not capable of dealing with the serious

challenges posed by the Hindutva project. Mehta's thesis, in my view, cannot entirely be reduced to the 'Hinduism versus Hindutva' debate. His revisionist approach encourages us to revisit a few critical and uncomfortable historical issues associated with Islam and Muslims. The 'foreign origin of Islam' is a very relevant question in this regard. Hindutva politics evokes this issue to claim that there is an inevitable civilisational conflict between Islam and Hinduism. This conflict, the argument goes, can only be resolved if Muslim communities in India take responsibility for the acts and wrongdoings of medieval Muslim invaders. In other words, Muslims have to accept the supremacy of Hindutva's explanation of India's past, present and future.

Interestingly, the opponents of Hindutva employ a particular kind of historical reductionism to engage with such politically-motivated formulations. The scope of the divide and rule politics of the British is expanded to discard the claims made by colonial historians. At the same time, a neat, clean and harmonious imagination of medieval India is produced and sustained to reject Hindutva as an intellectually inferior and historically irrelevant political project. A revised version of this selfclaimed secular imagination evolved in the 1990s, especially after the demolition of the Babri Masjid. In order to refute the everyday demonisation of Muslims, a section of historians began to celebrate Muslim rule and Muslim rulers, including Aurangzeb.

This aggressive representation of Muslim rulers as secular figures has contributed significantly to the Hindutva project. A new war of symbols began in the public domain even before the advent of Hindutva's political-electoral success. Rana Pratap, Shivaji and Padmini emerged as Hindu icons, while Akbar, Aurangzeb and Alauddin Khilji eventually became symbols of Muslim pride.

It is true that the colonial history constructed a puzzling picture of India's past. The periodisation of Indian history into ancient (Hindu/Buddhist dominated), medieval (Muslim dominated) and modern (British dominated) periods has conditioned us to imagine India as a land of conflict and trouble. It is also true that the Hindutva project has relied heavily on colonial historiography to shape its politics. Yet, one should not overstretch the role of colonial knowledge while engaging with contemporary concerns and anxieties.

Let us discuss the debate on the 'foreign origin' of Islam. According to Hindutva groups, Islam is an alien religion because it did not originate on Indian soil. For this reason, they claim Muslims cannot follow the pure and unadulterated Indian culture and ethos. V.D. Savarkar's famous *punya bhumi* argument is often used to justify this assertion. We must note that this is actually a political question that revolves around a particular kind of postcolonial, map-centred imagination of inside and



outside. The official map of the republic of India is seen as a permanent historical marker to define the tangible boundaries of Hindu faith. This schema helps them declare Islam and Christianity as alien religions.

Hindutva's obsession with boundaries and maps has its own limitation. A map becomes politically relevant when it is recognised as a cultural icon. This is only possible in a modern context where maps are circulated in a variety of ways for different purposes. It is easy for a 21st-century individual to visualise India's map as a reliable source to think of the internal and external borders of India and its faith communities. However, this would not be possible in a precolonial context. Individuals and communities did not have access to the map of the region or, for that matter, to the state/empire they belonged to. They, of course, had a sense of 'boundary', but it was qualitatively different from our modern perceptions. This was also true about their religion. They did not have printed copies of religious texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and the Quran. Similarly, the printed images of holy religious places or key religious figures were also not available to them. Religion was an amalgamation of a set of beliefs, rituals and practices. They were conscious of the distinctiveness of their faith and the operative status of caste relations. Yet, they did not have resources to envisage Hinduism and Islam as world civilisations.

For instance, a Muslim individual in 15th-century Banaras might be fully aware of the direction of Mecca. For him/her, Mecca was certainly outside of his/her geographical location. However, there wasn't any possibility to treat this imagination of outside as a criterion to define his/her Islamic belief as an alien religion. The political philosopher, Sudipta Kaviraj, uses the expression, 'fuzzy community', to explain this phenomenon. Colonialism affected the self-perception of fuzzy communities and eventually transformed them into 'enumerated communities' — as Hindus and Muslims. This historical explanation exposes the inherent weaknesses in Hindutva's conflict of civilisations thesis. Mehta, however, does not want us to stop here. Instead, he pushes us to historicise the postcolonial political experiences in a more profound manner.

The existence of Pakistan on the map of South Asia, we must note, substantiates the old debate on Muslim separatism. Hindutva's claims that Muslims in India must always prove their patriotism and loyalty stems from this separatist imagination. The scope of this argument has been expanded in the last few years. Every aspect of Muslim social life is seen primarily as an anti-India/anti-Hindu act. Hindu-Muslim identities are very well defined as antagonistic entities and the principles of democratic accommodation are under threat.

However, there is another, and in a way more creative, way to look at the Hindutva critique. The decline of what is often called the ‘Nehruvian consensus’ has paved the way to revisit some of the most fundamental questions of our political life. The Muslim presence in India, in this sense, is perhaps the most important issue in this regard. Hindutva groups have a very well-defined position on Muslim presence. The opponents of Hindutva, however, are clueless and confused. They have realised that addressing Muslims merely as a religious minority is not going to work in a Hindutva-dominated political environment. At the same time, they are not enthusiastic about offering any alternative possibility to establish inclusiveness as a political virtue.

Precisely for this reason, we need to assert a basic premise: Muslim presence in contemporary India must be separated from the foreign origin of Islam thesis. Of course, Islam did not originate in India; yet, it travelled to this land in a variety of ways as an idea when the notion of boundaries and borders was not imagined in the modern, nation-state framework. The postcolonial Muslim political identity, on the other hand, originated in India as a rejection of the European-style political system based on ‘one nation, one religion, one culture’. Muslim presence is not merely related to those individuals and communities that recognise themselves as Muslim; instead, it is a defining feature of India’s political existence as a democratic republic.

TELEGRAPH, OCT 20, 2022

A perfect legislator

Jawaharlal Nehru reached out to both his electorate and his fellow parliamentarians

Kabeer Shrivastava

India’s foundational laws were passed in the two decades that Jawaharlal Nehru was an elected lawmaker. While most Nehruvian legislations were consistent with his stated ideologies, some veered from them and revealed the evolution of Nehru’s legislative thinking from that of a freedom fighter to that of a prime minister. Three such legislations deserve critical scrutiny.

The first amendment to the Constitution came within months of its original adaptation. It inserted a restriction to free speech that could harm “friendly relations with foreign states”. In the same amendment, the right to free ownership of property was trammelled too, portending the end of the centuries-old zamindari system. The abolition of zamindari was the stated intention of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress leadership since the mid 1930s and it fit perfectly in line with Nehru’s Fabian socialism, but it added another restriction to free speech, which did not toe Nehru’s ideology as a freedom fighter. He did not stop there. The Press (Objectionable Matter) Act, 1951 and the Cinematograph Act, 1952 — it provided for the pre-release censoring of movies — came swiftly after.

The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 shines a counter perspective on the first prime minister, a man often accused by the right-wing of being a minority appeaser. The 1931 census comprehensively identified scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and listed them in the Government of India Act, 1935 as “Depressed Classes”. Upon its adaptation, the Constitution merged the list into itself and provided for positive discrimination (reservation) for all those listed castes; but a 1950 and a 1956 Order added a catch: you had to profess Hinduism or Sikhism to benefit from it. Muslims were conspicuously left out.

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 is another legislation that belies basic constitutional promises. It originated in the ordinance promulgated to suppress the Quit India Movement in 1942 for which Nehru himself was imprisoned for three years. But once in power, he found it necessary to give the law a place in India’s liberal constitutional order.

Do these legislative compromises indicate Nehru’s ideological promiscuity? I argue not. Nehru was leading a young, massive, impoverished nation in the post-colonial world, raring to forge its own identity by lending itself to democracy with universal franchise — a political system that had never been tried in India before. All the while, the ghosts of Partition hung about like a dense winter smog. In Nehru’s mind, restricting the right to life was necessary to keep Assam in the Union, restricting S.P. Mookerjee’s freedom of speech — he was unremittingly calling for war with Pakistan — was necessary to avoid war and bloodbath, restricting the benefit of reservations to Hindus and Sikhs was necessary for his bigger audience. Each of these legislations could be assailed on various legal tenets, such as proportionality; but what they cannot be assailed for is Nehru’s intent and method.

Did he need these for electoral wins? Unlikely. The reform of Hindu personal laws is instructive in this respect. To outlaw polygamy, allow inter-caste marriage and give Hindu women inheritance rights were Ambedkar's ideas, but he did not live long enough to see them to fruition. The then president, Rajendra Prasad, resisted it on the grounds that these forms interfered with personal faith of the Hindus. But Nehru, in the penultimate year of his first term, would not have any of it. He pushed the laws through. In a testament to his popularity, the very people whose personal laws he had apparently 'interfered with' returned him to power with an even bigger mandate.

Nehru's legislations were not perfect, but he was a nearly perfect legislator. He reached out to both his electorate and his fellow parliamentarians. His cabinet was not a rubber stamp (in fact, it included members of the Opposition). He allowed the ideas of modernity to inform legislations, but he knew his constitutional limits. His precedence of consultative methods in lawmaking proved to be the safety valve that ensconced India in a firm democratic hold long after Nehru was gone. Nehru's method is his legacy.

TRIBUNE, OCT 20, 2022

New Congress chief

Kharge at the helm, but Gandhis unlikely to loosen grip

After almost two-and-a-half decades, the Congress has finally got a non-Gandhi chief — 80-year-old Rajya Sabha member Mallikarjun Kharge. However, the presidential election was tainted by the allegations levelled by rival candidate Shashi Tharoor's team that 'extremely serious irregularities' took place on voting day in Uttar Pradesh, the state with the highest number of PCC delegates. The apparent failure of the Congress' central election authority to ensure a free and fair poll underscores the mess that pervades the party.

Rumblings of discontent and discord were visible when the Congress was unable to pick a consensus candidate for the top post. Unanimity has been the norm in the 137-year-old party's history, with presidential contests being a rarity. The current controversy, though, is not without precedent; the high-profile battles have mostly been acrimonious. With the Congress' national footprint dwindling and its position as the premier Opposition party in jeopardy, it was imperative to hold the election in a smooth and transparent manner so as to usher in a much-needed change of guard. The party has faltered on this front,

thus souring Kharge's landslide victory. The Congress leadership needs to thoroughly probe the poll-related allegations; brushing aside doubts and apprehensions about intra-party democracy will only increase unrest among the rank and file.

Kharge has already stated that he would have no shame in taking the advice and support of the Gandhi family in running the party's affairs. Though a non-Gandhi leader is now at the helm, the Gandhis are unlikely to loosen their stranglehold on the grand old party. How the Kharge-led party performs in the Gujarat and Himachal Assembly elections later this year will have a bearing on its prospects in the 2024 General Election, besides impacting its equations with other Opposition parties and their efforts to stitch up a credible anti-BJP alliance. It will be a huge challenge for Kharge to exercise complete control over the Congress and dispel the notion that he is a mere figurehead, a potential scapegoat for the party's future electoral losses.

PIB,OCT20,2022

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan launches National Curriculum Framework for the Foundational Stage and the pilot project of Balvatika 49 Kendriya Vidyalayas across the country

Initiatives launched today will help equip our young ones with cognitive & linguistic competencies of the 21st century- Shri Dharmendra Pradhan

Union Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Shri Dharmendra Pradhan today launched the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage and the pilot project of Balvatika 49 Kendriya Vidyalayas across the country. Smt. Annapurna Devi, MoS for Education; Dr. Subhash Sarkar, MoS for Education along with Secretary, School Education, Smt Anita Karwal; Secretary, Youth Affairs and Sports Shri Sanjay Kumar; Director, NCERT, Shri Dinesh Saklani; Members of the Steering and Mandate Committee of NCF and senior officials of Ministry of Education were present on the occasion. Chairman, Members of the Steering and Mandate Committee of NCF, Shri K. Kasturirangan also attended the event virtually.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Pradhan said that today is a landmark day towards fulfilling objectives of NEP. The 'yagya' and churning that India witnessed in the last 8 years has started to bear 'Amrit'. He further said that Foundational, Preparatory, Middle & Secondary are the four stages of NCF for school education. Developing the foundational framework was one of the most important and challenging aspect under NEP 2020, as it has a huge bearing on shaping the future of our country, he added.

He complimented everyone who has contributed to the development of National Curriculum Framework for foundation stage. This new framework will help equip our young ones with cognitive & linguistic competencies of the 21st century, he said. The Minister urged NCERT to place this NCF in public domain, take it to SCERTs and to all stakeholders involved in early childhood care and development. While speaking on the occasion, Dr Kasturirangan, Chairperson of National Steering Committee to develop NCF said that the Foundational stage NCF was the first integrated NCF of the country for ages 3-8 years and is set to transform quality of education through holistic approach.

The National Education Policy 2020 -- that is NEP 2020 -- is transforming education in India. It has set our education system on a path to delivering the highest quality education for all, with equity and inclusion. Amongst the most transformative aspects of NEP 2020 is the new 5+3+3+4 curricular structure which integrates Early Childhood Care and Education for all children of ages 3 to 8. Early childhood lays the foundation for life-long learning and development - it is a key determinant of the quality of overall life. This framework is expected to deliver the highest quality Foundational Education, across all types of institutions in the country.

As articulated in NEP 2020, National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage, uses 'play,' at the core of the conceptual, operational, and transactional approaches to curriculum organization, pedagogy, time and content organization, and the overall experience of the child. Children learn best through play, hence learning envisaged by the National Curriculum Framework will provide stimulating experiences for the child's development in all dimensions – cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and will also enable the achievement of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for all our children.

The NCF has an institutional focus, the importance of the home environment cannot be overemphasized - including family, extended family, neighbours, and others in the close community - all of whom have a very significant impact on the child, particularly in this age cohort of 3-8 years. Hence, this NCF will deal with the role of teachers as well as parents and communities in enabling and enhancing the developmental outcomes that are sought during this stage.

Balvatika Classes for students in the age groups of 3+, 4+ and 5+ years of age is being introduced in a set of 49 Kendriya Vidyalayas. Since more than 85% of a child's cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of 6, providing appropriate care to stimulate their brain and support their physical and emotional development is essential for every child. All these engagements are aimed at achieving the three developmental goals of maintaining good health and well-being, becoming effective communicators; and · becoming involved learners.

INDIAN EXPRESS,OCT22,2022

Religions-20: A pioneering initiative in G-20 to build a God-centric value system

Ram Madhav writes: The R-20 will move from Muslim-majority Indonesia this year to Hindu-majority India next year and Catholic-majority Brazil in 2024. This process can help the three world religions, evolve a universal value system and also become equal partners

Ram Madhav

Did God exist? This question bothered the West for centuries. One of the earliest arguments for the existence of God, which Immanuel Kant called “ontology”, was given by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm, in 1078 AD. “Id quo maius cogitari nequit”, Anselm argued, meaning “there must be that (thing), the greater than which cannot be conceived”. Since God cannot be conceived to be non-existent, he is deemed existent, was Anselm’s ontological argument. This idea of an “inconceivable” God had led to conflicts over His interpretation, with various Semitic religions drawing daggers at each other. Crusades followed, tempting Napoleon to famously quip that “religious wars are basically people killing each other over who has the better imaginary friend”. It led to the rise of Deism which insisted on having God, but not religion, and atheism which rejected both God and religion. Receiving French mathematician Pierre-Simon Laplace’s work, Napoleon asks, “They tell me you have written this large book on the system of the universe, and have never even mentioned its Creator”. Laplace defiantly replies, “Je n’avais pas besoin de cette hypothèse-la” (I had no need for that hypothesis).

But the deists and Enlightenment thinkers wanted a universal God. Spinoza, the 17th-century Dutch philosopher, equated God with nature, proclaiming “deus sive natura” (God or Nature). Voltaire, the French philosopher, despite being critical of the Catholic church, declared: “Si Dieu n’existait pas, il faudrait L’inventer” (If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him). “I shall always ask you if, when you have lent your money to someone in your society, you want neither your debtor, nor your attorney, nor your judge to believe in God,” he indignantly asked. God was reason and ethics for the Enlightenment deists. But the medieval understanding of an inconceivable God, often jealous, continued. Managers of those medieval beliefs became merchants of death. God needed to be rescued. A new enlightenment became the need of the hour. “The need for spiritual guidance has never been greater. It is imperative that we double our efforts to spread the message of good neighbourliness based on our common humanity, a message shared by all faith traditions,” the United Nations said recently.

Can this enlightenment come from the eastern religious beliefs that offer universalism of divinity, respect for diversity and spirit of dialogue and accommodation as an ontology? “God is not inconceivable; He is omnipresent; there is not One God; there is Only God” — they say. Two important Muslim organisations, coming from two corners of Asia, want to take the lead in this effort by launching the R-20 (Religions-20) forum on the sidelines of the G-20 summit. Indonesia is the chair of the G20 in 2022 and the leaders’ summit will take place in November in Bali. The Indonesian government has chosen “Recover Together, Recover Stronger” as the theme.

The keen interest taken by Joko Widodo, the President of Indonesia, has led to the inclusion of R-20 in the agenda as the G-20 Forum of Religions this year. Global issues like health, economy, climate and technology, besides issues like war, hatred and disharmony have, for a long time, been considered the concern of the political leadership. That religious and cultural leaders too can play a complementary role has not been fully appreciated. Politicians, technocrats and professionals are the new popes and power; economy and technology have become demigods. It is in this context that the Indonesian government’s initiative to bring religious and cultural leaderships into active discourse acquires significance. The two organisations taking the lead in this endeavour are — the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) of Indonesia and the Muslim World League (MWL) of Saudi Arabia.

The God/religion dichotomy is not fully resolved in the Western world with religions still competing with each other leading to theories like the clash of civilisations. The leadership of the Enlightenment era (16-17th century) had largely addressed this issue within the domain of Christianity. A similar enlightenment is dawning on the world’s second-largest religion, Islam. Countries such as Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, and organisations like the NU and MWL, are at the forefront of this development.

The NU, the largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia with over 90 million members, has been spearheading what it describes as Eastern Humanitarian Islam. Under the leadership of its dynamic chairman, Yahya Cholil Staquf, it has been working towards rejecting radicalism and exclusivism and bringing humanitarian values to the centre stage. The NU rejects concepts like kafir and insists on putting the love of country ahead of the love of religion.



The MWL, under the leadership of Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, is also actively seeking to promote a more humanitarian version of the Islamic worldview that rejects narrow and fundamentalist interpretations. The invisible hand of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman behind this progressive initiative cannot be missed. The MWL, despite the criticism it has endured in the last six decades, takes a strong stand against extremism today, emphasising that “Islam understands the existence of religions as a universal design that must be celebrated, since difference, diversity and multiplicity are characteristics of human nature”. At an interfaith forum conducted earlier this year at Riyadh, Al-Issa called for building a universal consensus on “common principles of human values, values of moderation and harmony, tolerance and peace, and rational intellectual frameworks to immunise against the dangers of extremist ideology and behaviour”. The R-20 will be historic if it succeeds in building a God-centric value system in place of the current religion-centric one. Religion-centrism is no longer limited to the West today. Hatred, exclusivism and cancel culture have entered the eastern religions also as a reaction, diminishing the beauty of their universalist doctrines.

The R-20 will move from Muslim-majority Indonesia this year to Hindu-majority India next year and Catholic-majority Brazil in 2024. This process can help the three world religions, together with Buddhism and other important religions, evolve a universal value system and also become equal partners with the political, economic and technological leadership of the world in defining the destiny of mankind in the 21st century.

The writer is member, board of governors, India Foundation

INDIAN EXPRESS, OCT22, 2022

Not Hindi or English, the real language question is status of vernacular

Pratap Bhanu Mehta writes: It is treated as language of past not future, of popular culture but not high knowledge

Pratap Bhanu Mehta

India’s linguistic diversity poses two different challenges. The first is the imposition of Hindi as the primary language across the country. This aspiration is resisted by different states. India has historically done well, and did not meet the fate of Sri Lanka, by creating linguistic states, by working out a three-language formula, and by a political culture that, with the exception of old Lohiaites and the BJP, has not pressed hard on the question of a single language. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s

remarks on English in a recent campaign rally, the controversy over medical education in Hindi and the parliamentary report on promoting Hindi, will give new life to this politics. But there is another subtler issue that gets overshadowed by the question of “Hindi imposition” — the status of vernacular languages. The anomaly of the Indian language experiment is not the political accommodation given to so many languages. It is that the accommodation comes with a hierarchy. English has been the language of power, at the frontiers of knowledge and access to privilege. The vernacular had become increasingly confined to identity, culture, and a marker of second-class status. The challenge of Hindi, for example, is not that it might be imposed on the South. That is easy to deal with.

The challenge of Hindi is that inhabiting the world of Hindi is seen as closing off access to the frontiers of knowledge, not just in science but in civic knowledge, like higher echelons of law. It is also treated as a marker of parochialism and inferior status. The problem may be less acute with other languages like Tamil, Kannada or Bengali, but it exists. The anomaly of the India experiment is not diversity: It is the claim that the language of self, identity and culture be different from the language of knowledge, privilege and access. This is the experiment India is conducting on a large scale. Is it a sustainable one? Arguably, behind the success of the BJP in North India is not the desire to impose Hindi. It is the untapped resentment of a Hindi culture that often is made conscious of its own second-class status in global hierarchies. Millions of vernacular speakers feel disenfranchised in the worlds of knowledge and prestige.

State failure compounds this problem. India’s two-language formula produces a superficial bilingualism. We may speak two or three languages. But most of us cannot operate at the frontiers of knowledge in two languages. And the teaching of the third language is totally wasted. There is so much hand-wringing about the Nehruvian state sidelining Indian culture. But the real issue was not that Sanskrit was sidelined. It was that it is taught in a way that even after years in our school system, those who had passed the exam had no competence in it.

Our translation missions are so meagre that except for literature, they do not grow the language by translating knowledge into it. So the division of the function of languages has also become a division of persons, between those whose fluency in English is greater than their fluency in a vernacular, and those who might know English but struggle with it. There was also a generation that was taught in a vernacular language very well. They found it easy to switch to English later. Now the education system does not prepare you for either trajectory, not at least on a mass scale, leaving the Hindi speaker relatively stranded.

Pratap Bhanu Mehta writes |Why it's wrong to say that Hinduism is a product of colonialism

It is not an accident that parents are demanding English education. Many Dalits have valorised English as a sign of emancipation. Many states that had decided to postpone the teaching of English till later classes had to reverse course. The demand for English has exploded and no one opposes it. But here again, there is a state failure where access to English is uneven, and does not ensure a level playing field.

But the “teach everyone English” movement has not solved the problem of the linguistically stranded. These are groups who are fluent in the vernacular but find their prospects limited by not knowing English; or there are groups whose access to English is not of enough quality to give them a competitive advantage. And then there is the subtle way in which our identity gets stranded. English is now an Indian language. To exorcise it by tagging it as foreign would be a gross mistake. But it cannot be the case that the need for English relegates the vernacular. The vernacular is treated as the language of the past not the future (and custodians of these languages confirm this by obsessing over the history of the language, not its future). They are the languages of popular culture but not high knowledge, the languages of self and emotion, not participants in a universal rationality.

So the language question does not go away, even if you agree on two propositions. First, that Hindi should not be imposed, and second, that English should not be treated as a foreign language or a marker of colonialism. What is the status of the vernacular? Does the drive for English permanently relegate it to second-class status? In non-Hindi speaking states, this problem was sublimated in part by giving the language a political identity in opposition to Hindi. But can these languages be inhabited fully, without disadvantage, in the universe of knowledge, remains an open question.

The discussion of the language issue ought to be pedagogical rather than political. It will be, for instance, important for doctors to have English to easily access a continually evolving world of research; just translating a few textbooks into vernaculars will not solve the challenge. But it is equally true that the ability to communicate fluently in vernacular languages will be a great asset. And it is also possibly true that for those who did not get an English education, continuing vernacular education should be a medium of expanding their opportunities. The problem is that our education system will not do the homework to make any language strategy work fully. The scepticism of teaching medicine or engineering in the vernaculars (and not just Hindi) is that our knowledge eco system is not prepared for it; the scepticism of English is that it has left so many people behind.

The genius of India is that it has, historically, not locked itself into binaries over language choice. With creative pedagogies, we can reclaim that heritage. But raising the political pitch on language serves neither the cause of knowledge or national unity.

The writer is contributing editor at The Indian Express

PIB,OCT21,2022

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh says, over 30 lakh Civil Servants in the country will be exposed to emerging technologies like A-I, Machine Learning, Blockchain etc for effective governance and service delivery at the grassroot by 2023

The Minister delivers valedictory address at the two-day workshop on “Emerging Technology for Good Governance” for heads of Central Training Institutions (CTIs) and State level Administrative Training Institutions (ATIs) at IIPA, New Delhi



Indian growth story under Prime Minister Modi has been driven largely by technology adoption in governance like Aadhar, DBT, UPI & JAM trinity: Dr Jitendra Singh. Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh said here today that by the year 2023, over 30 lakh govt officials in the country will be trained and exposed to emerging technologies like "Artificial Intelligence" (AI), Machine Learning, Blockchain etc for effective governance and service delivery at the grassroot. Delivering the valedictory address at the two-day workshop on "Emerging Technology for Good Governance" for heads of Central Training Institutions (CTIs) and State level Administrative Training Institutions (ATIs) at IIPA, Dr Jitendra Singh said through CTIs, ATIs and iGOT-MK (Integrated Government Online Training-Mission

Karmayogi) the modern technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), will be disseminated to 30 lakhs Central and State govt officials.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, there are 25 Central Training Institutions, 33 State level Administrative Training Institutions and other civil service training institutions along with Capacity Building Commission along with the Wadhvani Institute of Technology and Policy (WITP) will jointly achieve this noble mission. Dr Jitendra Singh said, Artificial Intelligence (A-I) and Machine Learning can detect frauds in GST and Income Tax returns, Blockchain for securing Records and Certificates and Data driven Decision Making through use of Analytics and said civil servants will soon use these techniques in day-to-day work and administration.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, the Indian growth story under Prime Minister Modi has been driven largely by technology adoption in governance, be the use of Aadhaar for Vaccine rollout and vaccine delivery through Drones in difficult areas or the JAM (short for Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile) trinity to link Jan Dhan accounts, mobile numbers and Aadhaar cards of Indians to plug the leakages of government subsidies through DBT and Unified Payments Interface (UPI). The Minister said, one must remain open to new developments in the S&T sector and be always on a look out for new science that can improve our work and outcomes.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, Prime Minister Modi has introduced innovation in governance and made it technology-driven and quoted his remarks at the Second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress-2022 in Hyderabad on 11TH November, 2022, wherein he said, “Technology and talent are two pillars of the country's journey for development” and the PM emphasised on the importance of technology as an agent of inclusion in the country.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, it is rather evident that in times of uncertainty and changing governance issues, technology is and will be our go-to resource and emphasised that for a nation as big and diverse as India, the adoption of technology is rather mandatory to ensure far reach of governance. The Minister elaborated that the government though plays a delicate balancing role between using and promoting technologies, it becomes crucial that decision makers at the forefront – Civil Servants - truly realise the potentials and fallacies of emerging technologies such as AI, ML and Data analytics. He however, clarified that the civil servants are not expected to become scientists or developers in any of the domains but rather to understand how, why, and where to use these technologies. Dr Jitendra Singh said, the course on emerging technology that you all have been undertaking is designed with similar perspective and the eight domains you have undertaken are what is considered emerging

technologies of present The course covers following key technologies- Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Deep Learning, Computer Vision, Natural Language Processing, Internet of Things, Augmented Reality & Virtual Reality, Data Analytics, Drones and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and Blockchain.

Dr Jitendra Singh pointed out that the country and its citizens are evolving fast when it comes to technology education. Kids in schools are taught coding and robotics and with every wave of workforce the level of technology is only going higher. The ‘Samaaz’ and ‘Bazaar’ thus are already upgrading and if the ‘Sarkar’, which plays the enabler role for both, has to be on the same level to enable effective governance delivery, the Minister concluded.

PIB,OCT22,2022

English rendering of PM’s address at launch of Rozgar Mela after distributing appointment letters to 75000 candidates

The young sons and daughters of the country, all other dignitaries present here and ladies and gentlemen! First of all, many congratulations to all the countrymen on the occasion of Dhanteras! May Lord Dhanvantari keep you healthy, may the blessings of Maa Lakshmi be with you all! I pray to God for these wishes. I am fortunate that I have just returned from Kedarnath-Badrinath. As a result, I got a bit late, and therefore, I ask for your forgiveness.

Friends,

Today is an important occasion for the youth power of India. A new link in the form of ‘Rozgar Mela’ (recruitment drive) is being anchored to the ongoing campaign for employment and self-employment in the country for the last eight years. This link is ‘Rozgar Mela’. Keeping in mind the 75 years of independence, the central government is giving appointment letters to 75,000 youth today under a programme. Appointment letters have also been given to lakhs of youth in the past eight years, but this time we decided that a tradition of giving appointment letters in one go should be started so that a collective temperament of completing projects in a time-bound way develops in all the departments. Therefore, the Indian government has started ‘Rozgar Mela’.

Lakhs of youths will be given appointment letters by the Indian government from time to time in the next few months. I am happy that many NDA-ruled and BJP-ruled states along with the Union Territories are also going to organise similar drives. The administration of Jammu and Kashmir, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman-Diu and Andaman-Nicobar is also going to give

appointment letters to thousands of youth by conducting similar programs in the coming days. I congratulate the young colleagues who have received appointment letters today.

Friends,

All of you are joining the Indian government at a time when the country has entered the ‘Amrit Kaal’ of independence. We are walking on the path of ‘AatmaNirbhar Bharat’ (self-reliant India) for fulfilling the resolve of a developed India. Our innovators, entrepreneurs, farmers and those involved in the services and manufacturing sectors have an important role to play in this regard. In short, a developed India is possible only with the efforts of everyone. The spirit of ‘Sabka Prayas’ (everyone’s efforts) can be awakened only when basic facilities are available to every Indian quickly, and government processes are also swift. Completing the process of lakhs of recruitments by giving appointment letters in a few months is evident of a big change in the government system in the last 7-8 years. We have also seen the situation which existed 8-10 years ago when even a small government job entailed several months. Dust used to gather on government files on their way from one table to another. But now the situation as well as the work culture is changing in the country.

Friends,

It has taken 7-8 years of hard work and a huge resolve of the ‘karma yogis’ for the recent promptness and efficiency in the central government departments. Otherwise, you would recall the problems if one had to apply for government jobs earlier. Various certificates were demanded and one had to stand in a queue outside the political leaders’ house to get those certificates attested. One needed officers’ recommendations before meeting the political leaders. We liberated the youth from all these problems in the initial years of the government itself. We allowed self-attestation, whereby the youth could certify their certificates themselves. The second big step that we took was the elimination of interview rounds in Group C and Group D recruitments of the Central Government. Millions of youth have also benefited immensely after the interview process was discontinued.

Friends,

Today India is the fifth largest economy in the world. We have jumped from No.10 to No.5 within seven-eight years. It is true that the situation in the world is not conducive and many big economies are struggling. Many problems, including inflation and employment, are at its peak in many countries of the world. Neither India nor the world feels that the side effects of the



biggest crisis in 100 years will disappear in 100 days. The crisis is huge and it is worldwide and its impact is being felt all over. But in spite of this, India is consistently trying to save itself from this worldwide crisis and minimize its impact by taking new initiatives and some calculated risks as well. It is a testing period, but so far we have survived due to your blessings and cooperation. It has been made possible because we have removed those shortcomings in the last eight years which used to create obstacles in the country's economy.

Friends,

We are creating such an environment in this country so that agriculture, private sector, small and medium scale industries are strengthened. These are the largest employment generating sectors in the country. Today we are laying greater emphasis on skill development of youth. A huge campaign is underway to train the youth according to the needs of the industries of the country under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana. So far more than 1.25 crore youth have been trained under the Skill India campaign. Skill development centers have been set up across the country in this regard. Hundreds of new institutions of higher education have also been established by the central government in these eight years. We have opened up the space sector for the youth and have simplified the drone policy so that there are more opportunities for the youth across the country.

Friends,

People's limited access to the banking system was the biggest impediment to the creation of a large number of jobs and self-employment in the country. We have removed this obstacle as well. Mudra Yojana has expanded entrepreneurship in villages and small towns of the country. So far, loans worth Rs 20 lakh crore have been given under this scheme. Such a big program related to self-employment has never been implemented in the country before. Out of all the friends who have got this loan, there are more than 7.5 crore people who have started their business for the first time. And importantly, about 70 percent of the beneficiaries of Mudra Yojana are our daughters, mothers and sisters. Apart from this, another statistic is very important. In the last few years, eight crore women have joined the self-help groups, to whom the Government of India is giving financial help. These crores of women are now selling their products across the country and increasing their income. Yesterday, I was interacting with our mothers and sisters associated with the self-help groups in Badrinath. They told me that each of their self-help groups made a profit of 2.5 lakh rupees following the visit of the people to Badrinath.

Friends,

Another example of a large number of employment generation in villages is our Khadi and Village Industries. The turnover of the Khadi and Village Industries has crossed Rs one lakh crore for the first time in the country. More than one crore jobs have been created in Khadi and Village Industries in the last few years. Importantly, our sisters have a large stake in it.

Friends,

The Start-Up India campaign has established the potential of the youth of the country all over the world. Where there were a few hundred start-ups in the country till 2014, today this number has increased to more than 80,000. Many companies worth thousands of crores of rupees have been created during this period by our young colleagues. Today lakhs of youth are working in these thousands of start-ups of the country. Today crores of people are working in the MSMEs and small industries, in which a large number of youth have joined in recent years. About 1.5 crore jobs which were threatened during the Corona crisis were saved after the central government provided more than Rs 3 lakh crore to MSMEs. The Government of India is also providing employment to seven crore people across the country through MNREGA which is laying greater emphasis on asset creation. The Digital India campaign has also created lakhs of digital entrepreneurs across the country. Lakhs of youth have got employment in more than 5 lakh common service centers in the country. With the expansion of 5G, employment opportunities in the digital sector are going to increase further.

Friends,

The country's most ambitious mission in the 21st century is Make-in-India 'AatmaNirbhar Bharat'. Today the country is moving from being an importer to exporter in many respects. There are many sectors in which India is moving towards becoming a global hub today. The export of mobile phones worth one billion dollars every month shows our new potential. When India breaks all its previous export records, it is a proof that new employment opportunities are also being created at the ground level. Today, exports are growing rapidly in many sectors from vehicles to metro and train coaches and defence equipment. This is possible because factories are growing in India. The growth of factories is also leading to the increase in the number of people working in them.

Friends,

Manufacturing and tourism are two such sectors, which create the maximum number of employment. Today the central government is working on these sectors also in a very comprehensive manner. Processes are also being simplified for

companies from all over the world to come to India, set up their units in India and meet the world's demand. The government has also started the production-linked PLI schemes to give incentives. Incentives will be based on the production. This is the policy of India. Its better results are already visible in many sectors today. The EPFO data over the past few years also shows the rise in employment due to the government's policies. According to the data released two days ago, about 17 lakh people have joined EPFO in the month of August this year. That is, they have become a part of the country's formal economy. Of these people, there are about eight lakh people who belong to the age group of 18 to 25 years.

Friends,

Infrastructure construction also creates opportunities for employment. This has also been recognized across the world that this sector gives an impetus to employment. Thousands of kilometers of National Highways have been constructed across the country in the last eight years. The doubling of the railway lines, gauge conversion and electrification in the railways has been happening across the country. New airports are being built, railway stations are being modernized and new waterways are being built. A major campaign of optical fiber networks is going on across the country. Millions of wellness centers are being built. More than three crore houses have also been built under the PM Awas Yojana. I am going to speak in detail on this issue when I will hand over the keys of houses to 4.5 lakh brothers and sisters of Madhya Pradesh later this evening on the occasion of Dhanteras. I request you to listen to my speech in the evening.

Friends,

The Government of India has targeted to spend more than 100 lakh crore rupees on infrastructure. The development work on such a large scale is creating lakhs of employment opportunities for the youth at the local level. All these projects for modern infrastructure are also giving new energy to the tourism sector. The places of historical importance, faith and spirituality are also being developed across the country. All these efforts are creating employment and giving opportunities to the youth even in remote areas. Overall, the central government is working on many fronts simultaneously to create more and more jobs in the country.

Friends,

We consider the youth population of the country as our biggest strength. Our youth are the drivers of building a developed India in the 'Amrit Kaal' of independence. I would especially like to remind those who have received the appointment letters

today to remember your path of duty when you join the office. You are being appointed to serve the public. In 21st century India, government service is not a facility, but a commitment to serve the country's people by working within the time limit. It is a golden opportunity. No matter how difficult the situations and circumstances, we will continue to discharge our duties within the time limit. I am sure you will keep the spirit of service paramount while keeping this resolution in mind. Remember, your dream has begun from today which will be fulfilled only with developed India. Very best wishes to all of you for a new beginning of life in the form of the appointment letters and I believe that together we will leave no stone unturned in fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of common human beings of the country! Today is the holy festival of Dhanteras. There is a great importance of this festival in our country. Diwali is also in a few days. In fact, it is a festive period. Having these letters in your hands will make your festivals more fervent, and will also align you with a resolution which will be realized when India will celebrate 100 years of its independence. These 25 years of 'Amrit Kaal' and 25 years of your life are very important. Let us together take the country to new heights. I wish you the very best. Thanks a lot.

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

PIB,OCT17,2022

PM inaugurates PM Kisan Samman Sammelan 2022, releases PM-KISAN Funds worth Rs 16,000 crore

“More and more Startups in Agriculture sector augur well for the sector and rural economy”

Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shri Narendra Singh Tomar says Modi Government has fulfilled all promises made to famers since 2014 Centre and States working closely to rectify the list of eligible farmers by removing bogus beneficiaries - Shri Tomar

The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the PM Kisan Samman Sammelan 2022 at Indian Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi today. The Prime Minister also inaugurated 600 Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samruddhi Kendras (PMKSK) under the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilisers. Furthermore, the Prime Minister also launched Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Urvarak Pariyojana - One Nation One Fertiliser. During the event, the Prime Minister also released the 12th instalment amount of Rs. 16,000 crores under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) through Direct Benefit Transfer. The Prime Minister also inaugurated the Agri Startup Conclave and Exhibition. During the event, the PM also launched ‘Indian Edge’, an e-magazine on fertiliser. Shri Modi took a walkthrough of Theme Pavilion of Startup Exhibition and inspected the products on display. Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister started by acknowledging the presence of Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan and Jai Anusandhan in one premise, and said that we can see the live form of this mantra here today. He further elaborated that Kisan Sammelan is a means to make the lives of farmers easier, boost their capability and promote advanced agricultural techniques. In his address at the “PM Kisan Samman Sammelan 2022”, the Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar said the Modi government has fulfilled all promises made to famers since 2014.

Shri Tomar said, PM-KISAN is the world’s biggest direct benefit scheme and is an outcome of the continued commitment of Shri Modi that received accolades for its scale, transparency and seamless transfer of funds. Shri Tomar recalled, once a Prime Minister of India very famously remarked that of every rupee spent by the government, only 15 paise reached the intended beneficiary. But, today, every single penny of annual grant of Rs 6,000 directly reaches to farmer through DBT without any middlemen or any commission or cut money, the Minister remarked. He said, PM Kisan Samman is being implemented with

full transparency aided by appropriate technology. The Minister also informed that the Centre and States are working closely to rectify the list of eligible farmers by removing the bogus beneficiaries.

Shri Tomar told a gathering of over 17,000 farmers present at Pusa Mela Ground and about one crore farmers who joined the event virtually across the country that Kisan Samman fund was never demanded by the farmers, but it was with a commitment of the Prime Minister to double the income of farmers and strengthen their financial well being that the scheme was devised. The Minister said, the Samman grant of Rs 6000 to farmers and many other schemes of Modi Government are outside the other schemes meant for the welfare of poor, youth and women in the country.

Shri Tomar expressed happiness that today's event brought farmers and Agri Start-ups on same platform. He said, apart from one crore farmers, who joined the event virtually, 732 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), 75 ICAR Institutes, 75 State Agricultural Universities, 600 PM Kisan Centres, 50,000 Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies, and 2 Lakh Community Service Centers (CSCs) attended the event in virtual mode.

Referring to inauguration of the Agri Startup Conclave and Exhibition by Shri Modi, the Agriculture Minister said that our farmers are skilled and innovative, but they don't have any platform to showcase their talents. He said, innovative and educated youth of our country are working on various initiatives like innovation of Precision Farming, Post-Harvest & Value Add Solutions, Allied Agriculture, Waste to Wealth, Mechanization for Small Farmers, Supply Chain Management & Agri-Logistic and working on both farming or non-farming sector.

Shri Tomar also informed that around 1500 start-ups are participating in the two-day Kisan Sammelan and 300 start-ups are showcasing their farm related innovations to increase production and productivity, reduce post-harvest losses and augment income, besides creating new job opportunities. The Minister also underlined that while only 80-100 startups were working in Agriculture sector in 2014, the number has grown to 2000 now and likely to touch the figure of 10,000 by 2025 due to enabling tech milieu provided by the Modi Government. Shri Tomar said, with inauguration of 600 Prime Minister Kisan

Smurudhi Kendra (PMKSK), the fertilizer retail shops will now be converted into one stop shop. He said, these centres will not only provide inputs to the farmers but also resolve their other types of problems. He said PMKSK will cater to the needs of the farmers in the country and provide agri-inputs (fertilizers, seeds, implements etc); testing that will provide facilities for soil, seeds and fertilizers; create awareness among farmers, provide information regarding various Government schemes and ensure regular capacity building of retailers at block/ district level outlets.

Speaking about One Nation One Fertilizer (ONOF) scheme, Shri Tomar said that now all type of fertilizers whether it is DAP, NPK or Urea, will be sold under one brand name "Bharat" to standardize fertiliser brands across the nation irrespective of the company that manufactures it.

TRIBUNE,OCT20,2022

Less poor but hungrier

Two reports underline country's complex problems

India was ranked 102 among 117 countries on the Global Hunger Index 2019, but it has slipped five positions, to 107 out of 121 countries, in the latest report, released last week. This was followed by good tidings offered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which revealed that since its last report of 2019, 14.4 crore Indians had been lifted out of poverty. But the numbers don't quite square up — how could India fall five rungs on the hunger index if 14.4 crore of its people were lifted out of poverty in the same time frame? The hunger index methodology was criticised by India but the UNDP Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report — which shows that overall, India lifted 41.5 crore people out of poverty between 2005-06 and 2019-21 — comes as welcome news.

An examination of the reports provides clues to understanding the contradictions. UNDP's MPI report does not consider the effects of the Covid pandemic on poverty in India — this is so because 71% of the data from the National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21) used in MPI was collected before the pandemic. The World Bank's Poverty and Shared Prosperity report, released earlier this month, estimated that out of seven crore people who fell into extreme poverty across the world in 2020, Indians accounted for 5.6 crore. The government has not published data on poverty since 2011-12, and the World Bank used survey reports of an independent research group. Also, UNDP's methodology goes beyond mere finances and includes factors such as health, nutrition, access to clean water, electricity and education, and quality of work to provide a bigger picture of

the state of poverty; significantly, India had done relatively well in health and access to clean water and electricity before the pandemic struck, leading to a better MPI score.

Though the government has tried to pick holes in the methodology, the fact is that it has had to provide additional foodgrains — flour or rice, and whole chana — to 80 crore people since March 2020 to help them deal with the economic devastation caused by the pandemic. Also, as experts point out, good nutrition depends not on quantity but on quality. While there may be reasons to quibble over terms such as ‘hunger’ or ‘nutrition’, the upshot of the reports is that India still has the world’s largest number of poor and the highest number of malnourished children.

ECONOMIC TIMES,OCT22,2022

India rate-setter wants RBI to focus on softening core inflation

India’s central bank must stay focused on moderating components of inflation that are not directly influenced by food or fuel, and work on dampening overall price expectations, said a rate-setter usually known for his dovish views. “As far as monetary policy is concerned, moderation in the core inflation should be the priority,” Shashanka Bhide, an external member of the Reserve Bank of India’s monetary policy committee, said in an emailed interview Friday, referring to the gauge that strips out volatile food and energy prices. “It is important that the inflation expectations are anchored closer to the policy target.”

While the debate on India’s inflation centers around the headline consumer price inflation, it is the core measure that has troubled policymakers for years. Despite raising its main policy rate by 190 basis points this year, the RBI failed in its mandate to keep the retail number within its targeted 2%-6% range for nine straight months. More worryingly, the core measure has stayed above 6% for at least a year.

“The food and fuel inflation are driven by the supply conditions and inelastic demand,” Bhide said. “They may be more responsive to other policy measures. But it is also necessary to weaken their impact on the price conditions in the other sectors.” He said the September headline inflation print of 7.4%, a five-month high, wasn’t “entirely a surprise,” adding that price gains should slow to less than 6% by end of March.

The six-member MPC “should be looking at positive real rates over the medium term” but policymakers also “need to be cognizant of the growth trends,” said Bhide. Unlike his colleague in the panel Jayanth Rama Varma, who favored the peak



interest rate to be around 6%, Bhide didn't want to be specific about his terminal rate expectation. Food and vegetable prices constitute nearly half of the CPI basket. Fuel prices, another important component for the economy and fiscal health, have shot up due to the ongoing war in Ukraine and the ensuing global supply chain disruptions. While some food price relief could be expected in the coming days due to fresh winter crop, "the commodities to watch would be rice and vegetables at this time," said Bhide, who earned a PhD in agricultural economics from the Iowa State University. "The concern is also one of sustained price pressures in the case of critical inputs such as energy."

Here are some more excerpts from the interview:

The external economic environment has become less favorable and achieving growth on the back of domestic demand will require moderation in expectations of inflation," he said. Global economic conditions such as sharp monetary policy tightening by most central banks, prolonged Russia-Ukraine war with consequences to energy supplies and prices are "significant sources of uncertainty," that will have implications for "capital flows, balance of payments and inflation as well as growth". "To the extent that monetary policy tightening globally has an impact on domestic inflation and growth, it would be a concern. However, it would not be the sole consideration". Growth remained the main concern in 2021, and the MPC did not want to act on rates despite indications of inflationary pressures both domestic and imported. However, after the war shock, prioritizing inflation in policy became important. "I do not think it would have been necessary to act earlier".

PIB, OCT 21, 2022

"Quality, quantity and continuity" are the core principle for success of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) – Vice President

VP urges media and people's representatives to work for the success of JJM by creating awareness and ensuring people's participation. Vice President, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar launches Jal Jeevan Survekshan (JJS) Toolkit – 2023 and JJS-2023 Dashboard

he Vice President, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar today described "quality, quantity and continuity" as the core principles for the success of Jal Jeevan Mission and called for ensuring a strong and credible accountability mechanism in implementation of this people centric program.

Speaking after launching Jal Jeevan Survekshan (JJS) Toolkit – 2023 and JJS-2023 Dashboard at Upa-Rashtrapati Nivas today, he hoped that these initiatives by the Ministry of Jal Shakti will prove to be an important medium to ensure transparency and accountability in the scheme. The toolkit has been developed by the Ministry of Jal Shakti to help the States/ UTs understand the assessment criteria and the overarching purpose of the Survekshan is to incentivize the States/ District functionaries to strive for better performance and improve water service delivery in rural households.

On this occasion, the Vice President appreciated the progress made by Jal Jeevan Mission over the last three years and expressed confidence that every rural household will have tap water connection soon. Terming access to safe drinking water and sanitation as critical to inclusive growth, Shri Dhankhar said that programs like Swachh Bharat Mission and Jal Jeevan Mission are fulfilling the Gandhian dreams of ‘Antyodaya’ i.e. uplift of the last man. Stressing the need to focus on our Fundamental Duties, Shri Dhankhar asked all public representatives at local, regional and national level to ensure the success of this program through community participation and by providing constructive feedback on the scheme.

The Vice President also urged the media to focus more on such people centric programs by highlighting the achievements of better performing districts, NGOs and officials. “Such recognition will go a long way in motivating all stakeholders,” he added. Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri Sunil Kumar Gupta, Secretary to the Vice President, Smt. Vini Mahajan Secretary, DDWS, Shri Vikas Sheel Additional Secretary and Mission Director (NJJM), DDWS, Shri Manoj Kumar Sahoo, Joint Secretary, Shri Pradeep Singh, Director, Jal Jeevan Mission and others attended the event.

ECONOMIC TIMES, OCT 22, 2022

Inflation to ease, economic activity to witness growth: 10 key takeaways from Finance Ministry's economic review for September 2022  
The finance ministry released Monthly Economic Review for September on Saturday where India's economic activity has been termed 'impressive' amid concerns of surging inflation and Rupee hitting all-time lows. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman assured that the upcoming budget for FY24 will focus on two key challenges: Economic growth and rising inflation.

However, the economic review for September 2022 noted that "the country should be able to meet these challenges and keep the economy growing steadily". The first half of FY23 recorded less growth and stability concerns as compared to that of the

world at large. As measured by PMI composite index, economic activity level was higher for India at 56.7 compared to 51.0 for the world during April-Sept 2022. Retail inflation for India during the last six months stood at 7.2 per cent, lower than the world inflation of 8.0 per cent, as represented by the median inflation of major economies. It has remained stable all through the period of April-September at near 7 per cent, stated the release. The wholesale inflation came down to 12.4 per cent, and retail inflation is a notch above 7 per cent in Q2 of FY 2022-23. The gap between wholesale and retail inflation has narrowed, which indicates that the magnitude of pass-through of input costs on retail inflation affecting consumers is likely to be lower in the future.

The RBI repo rate hikes and declining global commodity prices have helped to restrain inflation. Furthermore, the government's measures, including excise and import duty reductions, levying of export duties and curbs, and building of buffer stocks, have helped restrain inflation from the supply side. Except further weather extremities, retail food inflation is expected to decline in the coming months, leading to lower headline retail inflation. Rupee, which has been hitting all-time lows, depreciated by 5.4 per cent against the US\$. However, the depreciation is less than that of 8.9 per cent of six major currencies in the DXY Index.

The real economic growth for India in 2022-23 is expected to be 6.8 per cent, the second highest in G20. At 6.1 per cent for 2023-24, it will be the highest in G-20. Global energy prices and supplies remain sources of concern. Geopolitical conflicts may yet intensify reigniting supply chain pressures that have eased recently. If such case, inflation may yet see a resurgence rather than a decline in 2023, stated the release.

The growth narrative in the first half of FY23 featured the uninterrupted thrust government provided to its capital expenditure. Rising capital expenditure levels were also supported by stronger revenue generation following an improvement in tax compliance, higher corporate profitability, and growing economic activity.

Increasing revenue generation has further kept the fiscal deficit until August aligned with its budgeted level, which otherwise could have gone awry with high capital expenditure, higher fertilizer and food subsidies and excise tax cuts to rein in inflation.

PMI Manufacturing continued to be in the expansionary zone in September 2022. The expansion was driven by new business growth, demand resilience, and expanded operating capacities. In addition, business sentiment also rose as input cost inflation fell to a 23-months low on the back of declining prices of industrial metals, leading to an increase in profits of the private

corporate sector. The contact-based services sector has shown considerable promise to support growth by ventilating the pent-up demand for much of the April-September period.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows during April-July, surged to US\$ 18.8 billion from US\$ 13.1 billion in 2021-22. Despite the hikes in the rates by Fed, FPI outflows declined in H1 of FY23 as compared to the preceding half year (H2 of FY22), as foreign portfolio investors became net buyers in Q2 of FY 2022-23 with a net investment of US\$ 3.3 billion.

PIONEER,OCT23,2022

PMAY has become major medium for ushering in socio-economic change: PM Modi

The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (PMAY) has become a "major medium for bringing in socio-economic change" in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday. He was speaking after conducting, virtually, the 'grih pravesh' ceremony of 4.51 lakh beneficiaries of the scheme in Madhya Pradesh's Satna district by pressing a remote button. Earlier governments did not do anything for the poor except coining the slogan of a poverty removal and delayed all such schemes, he alleged. These governments had no time for providing basic amenities to people, he said. The houses under PMAY have all facilities like electricity, water connection, toilet and gas connection, and will give strength to beneficiaries to fulfil their dreams, the prime minister said. Criticising those indulging in distributing freebies, Modi said taxpayers will be happy to see that people are getting houses of their own under the PMAY. People, however, become unhappy due to the 'Revdi' culture in the country, he said. Under the PM Swamitva Yojna, people in villages are getting certificates (of property ownership) and getting loans from the banks, he said. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was present among others in Satna during the event.

TRIBUNE,OCT23,2022

Facing the 'aftermath'

Covid has left a trail of a battered economy, high inflation, rising unemployment and increasing inequality. It is time to put aside our petty vote-bank politics and unite to face these major challenges. Also at great risk is the internal and external security situation of our country

Gurbachan Jagat

As the world transits out of the pandemic and its more immediate medical and health fallout, we all stand to face the ‘aftermath’ — which appears to take on economic, political and social facets. The pandemic, by virtue of the many lockdowns, phased closings and re-openings, work from home, furloughs, etc, created disruptions which had deep repercussions for the economic, social and psychological aspects of human life. We were brought face to face with our mortality, our limitations — physical, scientific, mental and financial. These disruptions, coupled with the limitations of resources and ability, resulted in stressing pre-existing faultlines, which always exist in the political, economic and social spheres of human civilisation. The collective impact of both fiscal and monetary policies by the governments and central banks of USA, Europe and other developed and developing economies flooded the financial system with liquidity, which has resulted in severely high inflation rates. The war between Ukraine and Russia has only added to this problem. Consequently, the tightening actions by these central banks (increasing lending rates) is leading to severe stress in developing economies and we already have defaults in Sri Lanka, Russia and Belarus (though war sanctions led to the latter two defaults). According to a recent article in The Guardian, already about 60 per cent of low-income countries and about 25 per cent of emerging markets are either in debt distress or at high risk of it. The dollar has soared on the world’s currency markets. Since 90 per cent of the emerging market debt is denominated in dollars, a stronger US currency makes repayments punitively expensive. Borrowing costs for highly indebted countries have shot up with bond yields going up sharply.

This brings me to our country, which is all set to become the most populated. A nation which has just celebrated its 75th year of Independence and in this short span has found its place in the top five or six economies of the world, yet a nation which sadly remains a low-income country with a vast majority of its population living at mere subsistence levels. As per government records, 80 crore people were given handouts of rice and pulses for survival. How will we deal with the ‘aftermath’? Even if we were to ignore the statistics by international agencies about our hunger index or economic disparity, the stark reality stares us in the face daily. The pandemic has only increased it, both unemployment and inflation. In the last few days, I’ve been seeing photographs of thousands of young men camping on railway platforms across UP presumably heading for Lucknow or other cities to compete for jobs advertised by the UP government. I do not know about the number of vacancies announced, but the response of those seeking jobs is overwhelming. The photographs remind you of those taken a couple of years back after the lockdown when lakhs of migrant labourers left the cities for their villages... on foot, cycle, truck, train. The present scenes look like a reverse migration to cities in search of employment. Where were all these youth in the last few years, obviously unemployed or employed on manual labour under MNREGA. The race for government jobs amongst the rural

youth proves that the agriculture sector cannot absorb them. Even otherwise, it has been hit hard over the decades as landholdings have shrunk to negligible levels and government policy at best has been indifferent.

Unemployment on such a large scale, a sliding rupee, high inflation, increasing disparity and overall havoc wrought by Covid have all resulted in threatening the internal and external security situation of our country. Internally, we are seeing an uptick in normal crimes viz. murders, robberies, kidnappings, rape, etc. I'm not going to quote any figures. I've served in the police and other administrative positions and learnt how misleading these can be. For a judgment on the law and order situation, the correct index is the question: do the people of the area feel secure or not? Going by this yardstick, people in urban areas, especially in metropolitan cities in North and North-East India, do not feel secure at all. Kidnappings, rape, snatchings leave a deep psychological impact. We never get to know how many of the accused were convicted — a miserably low percentile, I'm sure.

Another recent phenomenon is the rise of gangs in rural and urban areas. One read of the gangs in New York, Chicago and Soho and those of Paris, even Mumbai, but gangs operating in rural and urban India? They move about openly armed with automatic weapons and communication systems. They announce their kills on the Internet and also issue threats from abroad and from here. Arrests are regularly announced, arms recovered, but a fresh lot appears. It seems that the vast recruiting grounds of the unemployed are the source and added to it is the glamour being attached. Folk singers sing paens to their achievements and a new culture of a violent cult has evolved. Additionally, the drug culture has evolved, regarding both users and smugglers. Where there used to be liquor, opium, marijuana, now coke, heroin, pharmaceutical drugs of a certain kind reign supreme. The rural areas, the urban poor and the gentry are all users.

The smuggling syndicates are huge and indulge in humongous operations. Containers of drugs are routinely found on the Gujarat and Maharashtra coasts — who are the shadowy figures behind this? Earlier, we used to know the names of the important smugglers, financiers, couriers, etc; now, nothing is there in the public sphere. The harm they are doing to the health of the youth, our economy and internal security is immense. These gangs and smugglers are intricately involved with those operating against our internal security. They have the contacts and the conduits — foreign agencies supply them with drugs and in return get help in creating unrest in India. This is the reason why we have to be vigilant at our borders and now with drones, the skies have to be watched also.

We have had separatist movements in the North-East, Punjab and J&K. Although the North-East states are quiet for now, but below the surface there is restlessness. Against the Centre's wishes, the Mizoram government has allowed thousands of Rohingya refugees to come into the state. Smuggling is rife in most of the states bordering Myanmar and Bangladesh. Because of various constraints, our border forces are not as effective as they can be. Efforts are on to create disturbance in Punjab again and the instigators seem to be coming from abroad... both masterminds and money. Foreign governments do not appear to be in a hurry to help. It requires urgent action at the highest political and diplomatic levels. In J&K, the Valley and the contiguous areas of Rajouri, Poonch and Doda continue to be restive. Targeted killings of Pandits, non-locals and police and security forces are taking place even in Srinagar. The inflexible policy of only the stick does not seem to be yielding full results. In the meantime, armed forces, PMF and police resources remain committed to this work. I remember during Kargil, all the Army battalions were withdrawn from the Valley overnight to help the war effort and were gradually replaced by RR. This is why I'm on the side of those who advocate that the Army be freed from internal security duties. As it is, things are in a flux with changes visualised in the structure of the armed forces and also in the recruitment of jawans. In the face of danger looming at the LoC and LAC, it would be prudent to plan first for these problems.

The land border and coastal forces need to be strengthened, especially in the areas where we are very vulnerable. In light of the fresh commitment to aggressive behaviour by China and the impetus to Pakistan-US ties, we have to be alert to anticipate events even as the Russian-Ukraine war continues, along with its impact on world economies, energy and oil prices. We will have to watch our flanks. To sum up, Covid has left a trail of a battered economy, high inflation, rising unemployment and increasing inequality. It is time to put aside our petty vote-bank politics and unite to face these major challenges.

— The writer is ex-chairman of UPSC, former Manipur Governor and served as J&K DGP

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

PIB,OCT17,2022

MoS Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar flags off first SemiconIndia FutureDesign Roadshow in Gandhinagar

Felicitates Gujarat Industrialists & HNIs as they pledge Rs. 1500 Crore to catalyse Gujarat's Startup ecosystem

ISRO tested and qualified NavIC Receiver Chipsets unveiled

'The time to be a Semicon India Future Design startup is now': Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar

The Union Minister of State for Electronics & Information Technology and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar has flagged off the first SemiconIndia FutureDesign roadshow, in Gandhinagar, Gujarat today. As part of the efforts to give a boost to the semiconductor design industry in India, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology had launched a series of SemiconIndia FutureDesign roadshows across the country.

Reposing faith in PM Shri Narendra Modi ji's pitch for AtmaNirbhar Bharat & IndiaTechade, Gujarati Industrialists & HNIs pledged Rs. 1500 Crore for Catalyzing the Gujarat's Startup ecosystem. The Minister felicitated them for their inspiring initiative and for setting an example for others to follow.

While addressing a gathering of students, startups and innovators, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar said that the Roadshows have been planned with an aim to inspire the Startups, next-gen innovators and industry leaders to invest in Semiconductor Design and also help us create a robust Semiconductor ecosystem in the country, as envisioned by Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi. "We intend to take the Semicon India program to every student, every college and make as many young Indians excited by and participate in the Semicon India journey," he said as various industry leaders, both Global and Indian, joined him in making pitch to young students, Startups and entrepreneurs to grab the SemiconIndia FutureDesign opportunity. The time to be a Semicon India future design startup is now, he pitched to the audience. Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar also launched the



ISRO tested and qualified NavIC Receiver Chipsets, ready to be deployed in commercial market, at the event. Several industry leaders, both Indian and global, were also present on the occasion.

“The bedrock of AtmaNirbhar Bharat is AtmaNirbhar State which is driven by AtmaNirbhar cities and Atmanirbhar villages. We will create AtmaNirbhar Surat, AtmaNirbhar Ahmedabad, AtmaNirbhar Rajkot, and many more.”, said Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar. MoS Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar has played the role of a catalyst by taking PM’s vision to all the stakeholders in the startup ecosystem of Gujarat. He has visited all the regions of Gujarat engaging with Startups, innovators, investors and industry leaders galvanising support for the startup & innovation sector in the state.

INDIAN EXPRESS, OCT 17, 2022

Securing India’s cyberspace from quantum techniques

Arjun Gargeyas and Sameer Patil write: The world is moving towards an era in which the applications of quantum physics in strategic domains will soon become a reality, increasing cybersecurity risks. India needs a holistic approach with a focus on post-quantum cybersecurity to tackle these challenges

Arjun Gargeyas , Sameer Patil

Last month, there were reports that the Indian Army is developing cryptographic techniques to make its networks resistant to attacks by systems with quantum capabilities. The Army has collaborated with industry and academia to build secure communications and cryptography applications. This step builds on last year’s initiative to establish a quantum computing laboratory at the military engineering institute in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh. With traditional encryption models at risk and increasing military applications of quantum technology, the deployment of “quantum-resistant” systems has become the need of the hour. This requires upgrading current encryption standards that can be broken by quantum cryptography. Current protocols like the RSA will quickly become outdated. This means that quantum cyberattacks can potentially breach any hardened target, opening a significant vulnerability for existing digital infrastructure. Hack proofing these systems will require considerable investments.

This is a challenge that India will have to proactively deal with as cyber risks arising from quantum computing are accentuated by the lead taken by some nations in this sector. For example, the US National Quantum Initiative Act has already allocated

\$1.2 billion for research in defence-related quantum technology. Particularly worrying for India is the fact that China now hosts two of the world's fastest quantum computers. India is getting there slowly but steadily. In February 2022, a joint team of the Defence Research and Development Organisation and IIT-Delhi successfully demonstrated a QKD link between two cities in UP — Prayagraj and Vindhyachal — located 100 kilometres apart. China's quantum advances expand the spectre of quantum cyberattacks against India's digital infrastructure, which already faces a barrage of attacks from Chinese state-sponsored hackers. India's dependence on foreign, particularly Chinese hardware, is an additional vulnerability. The question then arises: How to make India's cyberspace resilient?

In 2019, the Centre declared quantum technology a “mission of national importance”. The Union Budget 2020-21 had proposed to spend Rs 8,000 crore on the newly launched National Mission on Quantum Technologies and Applications. This has to be complemented by a strong focus on securing cyberspace from quantum attacks. Currently, India has very few capabilities in developing advanced systems capable of withstanding quantum cyberattacks. India must consider procuring the United States National Security Agency's (NSA) Suite B Cryptography Quantum-Resistant Suite as its official encryption mechanism. The NSA is developing new algorithms for their cypher suite that are resistant to quantum cyberattacks. This can then facilitate India's official transition to quantum-resistant algorithms.

The Indian defence establishment can consider emulating the cryptographic standards set by the US's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) which has developed a series of encryption tools to handle quantum computer attacks. It has developed a series of four algorithms to frame a post-quantum cryptographic standard. After adopting these technical steps, India must start its national initiatives to develop quantum-resistant systems. For this, the government can fund and encourage existing open-source projects related to post-quantum cryptography along with active participation in the Open Quantum Safe project — a global initiative started in 2016 for prototyping and integrating quantum-resistant cryptographic algorithms.

Two, the country should start implementing and developing capabilities in quantum-resistant communications, specifically for critical strategic sectors. QKDs over long distances, especially connecting military outposts for sensitive communications, can be prioritised to ensure secure communications whilst protecting key intelligence from potential quantum cyberattacks. Eventually, this can help establish a nationwide communication network integrated with quantum cryptographic systems, thereby protecting cyberspace from any cross-border quantum cyber offensive.

Finally, diplomatic partnerships with other “techno-democracies” — countries with top technology sectors, advanced economies, and a commitment to liberal democracy — can help India pool resources and mitigate emerging quantum cyber threats. The world is moving towards an era in which the applications of quantum physics in strategic domains will soon become a reality, increasing cybersecurity risks. India needs a holistic approach to tackle these challenges. At the heart of this approach should be the focus on post-quantum cybersecurity.

Gargeyas is a Research Analyst, High Tech Geopolitics programme at the Takshashila Institution. Patil is a Senior Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation

PIB,OCT18,2022

First 11 awardees of WISER programme to promote participation of women in international R&D and industry projects facilitated

The first 11 awardees of the Women Involvement in Science and Engineering Research (WISER) programme were felicitated in the presence of the German Ambassador to India & Bhutan and the Vice Chancellor of the Jawaharlal Nehru University today.

The ten (10) women researchers from India and one (1) from Germany holding regular/long-term research positions in academia, research institutions, or industry selected under the WISER-2022 programme will receive financial assistance to participate and collaborate in ongoing R&D & industry projects. They will not need to apply for fresh project grants in partnering countries. The German Ambassador to India & Bhutan, H.E. Dr. Philipp Ackermann, appreciated the women researchers' efforts in niche science & technology areas and said that their contribution would strengthen Indo-German collaborations in S&T.

“Initiation of a programme like WISER would motivate women researchers to excel and take up leadership positions in Science & Technology,” said Vice Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University Prof. Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit. Adviser & Head, International Cooperation, DST & Co-Chair, IGSTC Governing Body Shri S.K. Varshney, said that it would help enhance parity for gender equality and strengthen excellence in Science & Technology. The programme, with a three-year tenure period or till completion of the project, is open to all the areas of STEM and allows the researchers to work on international projects while continuing to stay in India. It will cover one visit per year for a short stay up to 1 month.

Women researchers are still underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) for various reasons. The situation has improved to a certain extent over the last few years, but an imbalance remains, and IGSTC, a bilateral institution established by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Government of Germany to promote Science and Technology collaboration, is trying to address the imbalance. IGSTC Women Involvement in Science and Engineering Research (WISER) intends to build scientific capacity, retain and promote women researchers in India/Germany by utilising complementary expertise in science, technology, innovation, and research partnerships.

STATESMAN,OCT20,2022

India drops in Global median fixed broadband speed rankings

According to the September Speedtest Global Index, Kosovo registered the highest increase in rank, gaining 42 spots globally

According to a survey released on Wednesday, India's median mobile and fixed broadband speed rankings fell one point each from 117 to 118 and 78 to 79, respectively, in September. However, according to a survey by network intelligence and connectivity insights provider Ookla, median mobile download speeds in India slightly increased from 13.52 Mbps in August to 13.87 Mbps in September. "Overall, fixed median download speeds in India saw a slight increase from 48.29 in August to 48.59 Mbps in September," the platform said in a statement. According to the September Global Speedtest Index, Norway maintained its position as the top country for overall global median mobile speeds, while Kosovo saw the most improvement, moving up 42 spots globally.

With Chile at the top of the list for overall worldwide fixed median speeds, Madagascar experienced the most ranking improvement, rising 14 ranks. On a monthly basis, Ookla's Speedtest Global Index ranks fixed and mobile broadband speeds from all around the world. The Global Index uses information from the hundreds of millions of tests that actual users conduct using Speedtest each month to gauge their Internet speed.

TELEGRAPH,OCT22,2022

IIT-Madras and NASA researchers study microbes on space station

A key finding is that a microbe that resides on the ISS, was found to be beneficial to various other microorganisms but hampered the growth of a fungus

The Indian Institute of Technology-Madras and NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) researchers have studied the interactions between microbes in the International Space Station (ISS), the institute said on Friday.

A key finding is that a microbe that resides on the ISS, was found to be beneficial to various other microorganisms but hampered the growth of a fungus. The study would help devise strategies for the disinfection of space stations to minimise any potential impact of microbes on the health of astronauts. "Crews, during spaceflight, may have altered immunity and limited access to terrestrial medical facilities. Therefore, studying the microbes inhabiting the space station becomes important to understand the risks associated with short-term and long-term space travel on the health of astronauts," the IIT-Madras said in a press release. The present study was inspired by the earlier observations of the dominance of *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, a bacteria, on the surfaces of the ISS.

This pathogen has been known to cause pneumonia and other nosocomial (hospital-acquired) infections. The researchers were broadly interested in understanding how this bacteria affects the growth of other microbes in the vicinity and the possible implications it could have. The researchers analysed the microbial sample data taken across three space flights at seven locations on the ISS. The study found that *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, a major microbe that resides on the ISS, is beneficial to various other microbes also present on the ISS, especially the bacteria from the *Pantoea* genus.

However, it was found that its presence was hampering the growth of *Aspergillus* fungus. This computational observation was further tested through laboratory experiments, and it was found that the presence of *K. pneumoniae* was indeed detrimental to the growth of the *Aspergillus* fungus.

Dr Karthik Raman, associate professor at the Bhupat & Jyoti Mehta School of Biosciences and a core member of the Robert Bosch Centre for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence (RBCDSAI), IIT Madras, collaborated with Dr Kasthuri Venkateswaran, senior research scientist at JPL. The work has been peer-reviewed and published in the esteemed international journal *Microbiome*.

STATESMAN, OCT 23, 2022

In historic flight, Indian rocket puts 'OneWeb' satellites into orbit

The 43.5 metre tall and weighing 644 ton LVM3 M2 rocket, carrying 36 satellites weighing totally 5,796 kg or about 5.7 ton, blasted off from the second launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at 12.07 a.m.

VENKATACHARI JAGANNATHAN

In a historic maiden commercial flight, an Indian heavy-lift rocket GSLV MkIII – renamed for this mission as LVM3 M2, successfully orbited satellites of UK-based OneWeb.

The 43.5 metre tall and weighing 644 ton LVM3 M2 rocket, carrying 36 satellites weighing totally 5,796 kg or about 5.7 ton, blasted off from the second launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at 12.07 a.m.

About 20 minutes into its flight, the LVM3 began slinging the satellites of Network Access Associated Ltd (OneWeb) into low earth orbit (LEO).

After the separation of 16 satellites, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman S.Somanath said: "The satellite separation is a slow process. The remaining satellites will be separated and the data will come later." Somanath also the Secretary of Department of Space was confident that all 36 satellites will be separated as originally planned. According to D.Radhakrishnan, CMD of NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL), ISRO's commercial arm, the rocket mission is a complex one. "The GSLV MkIII has made a remarkable entry into the commercial satellite launch market," Radhakrishnan said.

He also said that this is the beginning of many more business associations with OneWeb. Once all the satellites get separated, the total number of foreign satellites launched by India will be 381. Another set of 36 satellites from OneWeb is planned to be put into orbit in January 2023. The UK company has contracted with NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL) to pay over Rs.1,000 crore for both launches.

OneWeb is a joint venture between India Bharti Global and the UK government. The satellite company plans to have a constellation of about 650 satellites in low earth orbit (LEO) to offer communication services.

According to ISRO, the OneWeb Constellation operates in an LEO Polar Orbit. The satellites are arranged in 12 rings (Orbital planes) with 49 satellites in each plane. The orbital planes are inclined to be near polar (87.9 degrees) and at 1,200 km above the Earth.

Each satellite completes a full trip around the earth every 109 minutes. The earth is rotating underneath satellites, so they will always be flying over new locations on the ground. The constellation will have 648 satellites.

The LVM3 is a three-stage rocket with the first stage fired with liquid fuel, the two strap-on motors powered by solid fuel, the second by liquid fuel and the third is the cryogenic engine. The ISRO's heavy-lift rocket has a carrying capacity of 10 ton to the LEO and four-ton to the Geo Transfer Orbit (GTO).

Normally the GSLV rocket is used for launching India's geostationary communication satellites. And hence it was named as GeoSynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV). The GSLV MkIII refers to the third generation rocket. As the rocket that flew on Sunday morning was for orbiting the satellites in LEO, the ISRO has renamed GSLV MkIII as LVM3 (Launch Vehicle MkIII). The rocket mission has several firsts for the Indian space sector. It is the first commercial launch of GSLV MkIII and for the first time, an Indian rocket will be ferrying a payload of about six tonnes.

Similarly, OneWeb is using an Indian rocket to put its satellites into orbit for the first time. Also, it is the first commercial launch of GSLV MkIII contracted by NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL), the commercial arm of ISRO, and for the first time, a renamed GSLV MkIII is being used for launching satellites in LEO.

## ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

PIB,OCT17,2022

CAQM actively monitoring paddy residue burning events for NCR and Adjoining Areas

Total fire counts have come down from 3431 to 1695 as compared to the corresponding period of last year. CAQM held meetings with Chief Secretaries, Agriculture Secretaries, Environment Secretaries and Member Secretaries of NCR Pollution Control Boards to bring down the fire counts during the current harvesting season. CAQM reviewed the position regarding effective implementation of State specific Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Stubble Burning

Review with DCs/DMs focused inter-alia on Crop Residue Management (CRM) machinery utilization, IEC activities and enforcement measures. CAQM advises DCs/ DMs to ensure verification of all reported fire incidences within 48 hours and take strict action against the violators

Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) is regularly reviewing the position with Chief Secretaries of Punjab, NCR State Governments, Agriculture/ Environment Secretaries and Pollution Control Boards (PCBs) to contain the problems arising out of farm fire incidents in the National Capital Region (NCR) and Punjab. The review meetings were also held recently with 23 District Collectors / District Magistrates (DMs) of Punjab, 22 DMs/ DCs of Haryana, and 8 DMs/ DCs of NCR Districts of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) regarding the preparedness and implementation of action plan for Prevention and Control of Paddy Straw Burning in 2022. During the review meetings, the DCs/ DMs briefed about their preparedness and informed that they have conducted meetings at their levels as well as with the nodal officers and will ensure that there is a substantial reduction in the number of stubble burning cases in their respective districts. Further, the DCs elaborated the steps taken regarding utilization of available machinery, IEC activities especially in all hotspot villages, extending assistance to the ex-situ projects in their districts, interaction with the farmer communities and further informed that they are keeping strict vigil on the burning incidences. Haryana, Punjab and U.P. assured that with effective implementation of action plan, utilization of the CRM machinery, effective public campaign and strict enforcement, they would ensure substantial reduction in crop burning incidents this year.

It was noted that about 31,700 Custom Hiring Centers and cooperatives have been set up in Punjab, Haryana and UP (NCR) and more than 2 lakh CRM Machinery is available for utilization in Punjab, Haryana and NCR Districts of U.P. The need to



intensify IEC activities like educational campaigns, awareness camps and publicity through print, electronic and social media was emphasized. The State Governments were advised that the monitoring/enforcement mechanism as envisaged in the plan of action at the State level/ District level/ Sub-divisional level/ Cluster and Village level must be effectively utilized.

The Commission has been actively monitoring paddy residue burning events for a month now i.e. from 15th September 2022 onwards in the states of Punjab, Haryana and 8 NCR Districts of U.P. The current year has so far seen a reduction from 3431 to 1695 fire counts as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

The total farm fire incidents reported in Punjab are 1444 as against 2375 incidents in 2021, in Haryana are 244 as compared to 1026 in the previous year, and in U.P. (NCR) are 05 as against 30 fire incidents during the corresponding period of 2021. In NCT of Delhi, 02 fire incidents have been reported this year. No fire incident has been reported from the two NCR Districts of Rajasthan. During the current harvesting season, the first paddy residue burning incident was reported on 15th September in Punjab, on 18th September in Haryana, on 30th September in the NCR Districts of Uttar Pradesh and on 05th October in Delhi.

STATESMAN, OCT20, 2022

India moving fast to reduce carbon emissions, carbon footprint per head is 1.5 tonne: PM Modi

Prime Minister Modi and United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres launched Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) at the Statue of Unity in Gujarat. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said India's carbon footprint is 1.5 tonne per head, compared to the world's four tonne per head as the country is moving fast to reduce carbon emissions by installing renewable energy systems and other options.

Prime Minister Modi and United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres launched Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) at the Statue of Unity in Gujarat. Giving brief idea about the Mission LiFE, the Prime Minister said it is mass movement towards protecting and preserving environment by bringing changes in daily life style. Citing an example, he said a person drives car for five km to reach gym, by doing so, he is adding to the carbon emission, instead if he runs up to the gym, it will help in protecting the climate."

“If we will protect nature, nature will protect us,” the Prime Minister said. “Few years ago, the country decided to switch over to LED bulbs and installed 160 crore bulbs in year leading to reduction in carbon emission by 10 million tonne. This benefit is going to last for years to come,” he said. Addressing the gathering, Guterres said, “G-20 has resources and power to end the war against nature. It can lead the world towards sustainable living.” He also said that the G-20 countries account for 80 per cent of global greenhouses that emit gas, but at the same time it also contributes to world’s 80 per cent GDP.

ECONOMIC TIMES, OCT 20, 2022

India suffered income loss of \$159 bn in key sectors due to extreme heat in 2021: Report

India suffered an income loss of USD 159 billion, 5.4 per cent of its gross domestic product, in the service, manufacturing, agriculture, and construction sectors due to extreme heat in 2021, according to a new report. Heat exposure in the country led to the loss of 167 billion potential labour hours, a 39 per cent increase from 1990-1999, said the Climate Transparency Report 2022 compiled by an international partnership of organisations. Labour productivity in India is projected to decline by five per cent from the 1986-2006 reference period if global temperatures increase by 1.5 degrees Celsius, it said. The decline in labour productivity will be 2.1 times more if the global temperatures increase by 2.5 degrees Celsius, and 2.7 times at a three degree Celsius scenario.

Between 2016-2021, extreme events such as cyclones, flash floods, floods, and landslides caused damage to crops in over 36 million hectares, a USD 3.75 billion loss for farmers in the country, the report said. The annual damage from river flooding in the country is likely to increase by around 49 per cent at 1.5 degree Celsius of warming. The damage from cyclones will increase by 5.7 per cent. “The annual expected damage from tropical cyclones and river flooding at three degrees Celsius is 4.6 to 5.1 times that from 1.5 degrees Celsius,” the report read.

“Precipitation is projected to increase by six per cent from the reference period of 1986-2006, at 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming. Under a three degrees Celsius warming scenario, precipitation will increase by three times the precipitation anticipated at 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming,” it said. The rainfall pattern in India has changed in the past 30 years, impacting many economic activities such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries. “Snowfall in India is expected to decrease under 1.5 degrees Celsius scenario by 13 per cent when compared with the reference period's snowfall levels. At three degrees Celsius of warming, the decrease is expected to be 2.4 times the 1.5 degrees Celsius scenario,” the report said.

Earth's global surface temperature has increased by around 1.1 degrees Celsius compared with the average in 1850-1900. To address climate change, countries adopted the Paris Agreement in 2015 to limit global temperature rise in this century to well below two degrees Celsius, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels. Suruchi Bhadwal, director for earth science and climate change at The Energy and Resources Institute, said, "Extreme weather events in our regions have shown that the effects of climate change are increasing, and more and more people are being affected."

"The need to transform our energy systems is obvious, which will also require the support of rich countries whose per capita emissions are much higher than India's," she said. The impacts of climate change are already being experienced with an increase in the extreme weather events with more and more people and infrastructure affected, Bhadwal said. "The need to transform our energy systems is obvious, requiring support for technology/best practice development, deployment at scales," she said.

TELEGRAPH, OCT 22, 2022

Pioneering thoughts

Radhakamal Mukerjee: an ecological pioneer

Ramachandra Guha

In 1922, a professor at Lucknow University named Radhakamal Mukerjee published a book called Principles of Comparative Economics. Reading the book one hundred years later, I was struck by the attention it paid to the impact of the natural environment on the social and economic life of Indian villages. Mukerjee was perhaps the first Indian scholar to recognise the vital importance of common property resources to the sustenance of peasant agriculture. While cultivated land was owned by individuals or families, canals were traditionally held and managed by the village, as were woods and grasslands. Thus, as Mukerjee wrote, "where private ownership might confer a privilege against the rest of the community, their use has never been allowed to be exclusive." In the precolonial Indian village, it was the collective ownership and use of irrigation channels that was most significant. The management of irrigation, observed Mukerjee, "compels men to give up an anti-social individualism, or suffer in consequence... it forces men to enter into closer economic relations with other men...". Thus, "in the Indian village communities there are minute communal relations of the supply of water to prevent the mutual rights of the

cultivators. To prevent a tyrannical use of property, India has sought to establish a kind of communal ownership of tanks and the distributory channels of irrigation — the most important instruments of agricultural production.”

Mukerjee argued that these indigenous systems of common property management had been undermined by British colonial rule. A State forest department had taken over the wooded areas, working them for commercial purposes and criminalising villagers who sought to use them for subsistence. The tanks and canals had also been placed under a government department, with officials appointed by the State put in charge of their upkeep. This change, wrote Mukerjee, “has brought about a complete loss of initiative of the people as regards... public works, which were formerly maintained by the indigenous machinery, but which have fallen into desuetude and disrepair in the absence of all responsibility and all authority, customary or positive”.

Radhakamal Mukerjee is a largely forgotten figure today. Yet his writings speak directly to the environmental crisis that India and the world now confront. Consider an essay of 1930, published in the *Sociological Review* and titled “An Ecological Approach to Sociology”. This argued that conventional social science “has been concerned almost entirely with... the effects of man upon man, disregarding often enough the trees and animals, land and water”. An “undue prominence has been given in history and economics,” remarked Mukerjee, “to these purely human influences.” On the other hand, the works of geographers and ecologists “clearly emphasize the importance of the physical environment in its relation to society, and especially in its effects upon occupation and family life”. Thus, as Mukerjee now told his fellow social scientists, “an important section of plant and animal ecology deals with the disturbances which human and animal populations bring about in the natural ordering of the array of different plants and animals formed in a given region at a particular time.” Speaking of his native country, Mukerjee wrote of how “overgrazing and trampling by man’s domestic stocks result in the complete destruction of the vegetable cover and the appearance of perennial or seasonal weeds in the river-plains of India.”

Humans had an unprecedented ability to modify and reshape the order of nature. Their methods of forest clearance, farming, stock-raising, and the import of exotics had, in India and elsewhere, set up “a train of primary or secondary sequences in which an entire series of plant species and communities are implicated”. These disturbances, if not unchecked, could lead to the disappearance of important, even vital, plant and animal species to a decline in soil fertility, to deforestation, desertification and drought, thereby imperiling the possibilities of human life flourishing in the region. The ideas that animate Mukerjee’s essay, of the interdependence of humans and the natural world, of the web of life and how dangerous it can be to wantonly

tamper with it, are now commonplace among environmental scholars and activists. But back in the 1930s, they were precocious and even pioneering. Radhakamal Mukerjee was advocating an ethic of restraint and responsibility that ran counter to the ethos of a rapidly urbanising and industrialising society, which recognised no natural constraints to its growth and expansion.

In 1934, Radhakamal Mukerjee published an article in the *Indian Journal of Economics*, seeking to alert his fellow scholars to the constraints that ecology placed on forms of livelihood. Here he argued that trifling with nature's laws could have dangerous consequences for economic activity. This article carried the telling title, "The Broken Balance of Population, Land and Water". It focused on the denudation of forests and grasslands in the Indo-Gangetic Plains which had led to the formation of extensive areas of ravine, unfit for cultivation or habitation, and also made rainfall scarce as well as more erratic. The resultant shortages of water and fodder had told particularly severely on the cattle, which were now smaller and weaker, yielding less milk and less willing to work in the fields. "It is not improbable," wrote Mukerjee, "that in some distant future the Ganges valley may share the fate of the Indus valley, where once there was smiling plenty. The traces of ancient river beds and sand-buried cities extended over a vast space in the desert country east of the Indus testify to the gradual dessication of a once fertile region."

Unlike the academics of today, Radhakamal Mukerjee was not a narrow specialist. He was unbound by disciplinary constraints, his writings ranging widely over history and philosophy as well as economics and sociology. Unlike other Indian economists, he also had a keen interest in the natural sciences, in particular the then emerging field of ecology. A list of publications compiled after Mukerjee's death lists forty-seven books written by him on an extraordinarily wide range of subjects, from his first book, *The Foundations of Indian Economics* (1916) through *Regional Sociology* (1926) on to *The Changing Face of Bengal* (1938) and *Social Ecology* (1940), and then further to *The Indian Working Class* (1945), *The Social Function of Art* (1948), *The Social Structure of Values* (1949) and *The Dynamics of Morals* (1951), and still further to *A History of Indian Civilization* (two volumes, 1956), *The Philosophy of Social Science* (1960), and *The Flowering of Indian Art* (1964).

A lot of what Mukerjee wrote was superficial and ephemeral. No one now remembers, for example, his contributions to Indian art history. He is scarcely read any more by professional economists or by professional sociologists either. However, in the field of human ecology, he was a true pioneer, and much of what he wrote on or around this subject is of enduring worth.

Radhakamal Mukerjee's studies had inculcated in him a deep knowledge of, as well as a profound respect for, the intricacies of the web of life. He was an environmentalist before the birth of environmentalism, an 'environmental sociologist' and 'ecological economist' long before those branches of scholarly enquiry had been thought of or invented. Mukerjee once remarked that "the laws of economics or sociology have to subserve the more comprehensive laws of the balance of life." Scholars needed to pay more attention to nature for intellectual reasons; while citizens needed to pay more attention to natural limits for reasons of sheer survival. The times he lived in emphasised rapid economic growth with no regard for ecological constraints; yet, going against the grain, Mukerjee argued that humans would be better advised to "some extent imitate Nature's extraordinarily slow methods". As he wrote, "though man often tears asunder the fabric through ignorance or selfishness, social progress no doubt consists in consciously weaving the forces of nature and society into finer and finer patterns of correlation and solidarity. It is the knowledge of and respect for the intricacy of the web of life which will guide man to its highest destiny." In a book of 1938, Mukerjee remarked that "applied human ecology is the only guarantee of a permanent civilisation." The scholar himself looked forward to the day when "ecological adjustment [would] be raised from an instinctive to an ethical plane". He urged his fellow humans to forge an "alliance with the entire range of ecological forces," to curb their "quick and [far] reaching exploitative activities by importing new values — the thought for tomorrow, the sacrifice for inhabitants of the region yet unborn." Offered more than eighty years ago, these warnings bear recalling and heeding today.

PIB,OCT21,2022

Union Minister for Environment Forest and Climate change participated in Ministerial Meeting of Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) COP 27 is rightfully called the "COP of Implementation": Shri Yadav All countries requested to join the movement for Mission LiFE launched by PM Modi

Mission LiFE, Lifestyle for the Environment, a pro-people and pro-planet effort: Shri Yadav Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav participated in the virtual Ministerial Meeting of the Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) titled 'Preparations for COP 27 on Climate Change – Expectations and Challenges' on Friday 21st October 2022.

The Union Minister highlighted the challenges arising out of climate change being faced in the year gone by. He pointed out that the unmistakable imprint of global warming can be seen in the numerous extreme weather events and natural disasters in several regions of all continents. He impressed upon the urgency of climate action on the participating countries.

Shri. Yadav spoke up in support of the Egyptian Presidency for COP27, as a LMDC friend and partner-nation. He appreciated that COP 27 is rightfully christened the “COP of Implementation.” He particularly welcomed this stating that the widening gap between the pledges made at COP26 by the developed countries and the actions taken in response was more than evident to the World at large. Mr. Yadav expressed his disappointment about the developed countries having turned back to enhanced use of fossil fuel, and urged that the cumulative emissions of every country or carbon budget partaken, must be within their fair and equitable share. The Union Minister encouraged the LMDC colleagues to step forward at COP27, to support the Egyptian Presidency, prepare a plan of action in respect of adaptation and loss and damage, the two issues at the centre of all developing nations’ attention. He also expressed regret on the ever-unfulfilled goal of mobilization of USD 100 billion per year. He said that the developed countries must be asked to show the roadmap on achieving this. On the matter of climate finance, he also clearly stated that the definition of climate finance must be determined. The Union Minister emphatically stated that the Work Programme on Enhanced Ambition in Mitigation and Implementation, cannot be allowed to change the goals of the Paris Agreement. Instead, under the Work Programme best practices, new technologies and new modes of collaboration for technology transfer and the capacity building may be discussed.

He referred to the implementation mechanisms under the Paris Agreement such as the global stocktake, the second periodic review, the provision of updating Parties nationally determined contributions and submission of Parties’ long-term low emissions development strategies, must be allowed to play their due role. He stated that these are important agenda, with a futuristic perspective and must be dealt with in a balanced way, based in Equity and CBDR-RC, and these founding principles of climate change need to be elaborated more clearly, in the decisions of COP 27. Shri. Yadav, requested all countries to join the movement for L.I. F. E, Lifestyle for the Environment, a pro-people and pro-planet effort, that seeks to shift the world from mindless and wasteful consumption to mindful and deliberate utilization of natural resources. He informed the LMDC that the LiFE Mission was launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 20th October, 2022. The Prime Minister was joined by the UN Secretary General, Mr. António Guterres at the launch. The Ministerial meeting was hosted by the Plurinational State of Bolivia ahead of the upcoming 27th Climate Change Conference of Parties, to be held in Sharm el-

Sheikh, Egypt from November 6 to November 18, 2022. A joint-ministerial statement was endorsed by the LMDC Ministers during the meeting. LMDC comprises of around 18 developing countries from Asia and other regions.



## CURRENT EVENTS

PIB,OCT17,2022

Prime Minister Inaugurates 600 Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samruddhi Kendras

Launches Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Urvarak Pariyojana - One Nation One Fertiliser

Dr Mansukh Mandaviya says PM has always worked with 'Total Approach' for Agriculture sector

India become world's first country which started commercial production of Nano Urea: Dr Mansukh Mandaviya

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated PM Kisan Samman Sammelan 2022 at Indian Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi today. The Prime Minister also inaugurated 600 Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samruddhi Kendras (PMKSK) under the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilisers. Furthermore, the Prime Minister also launched Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Urvarak Pariyojana - One Nation One Fertiliser. During the event, the Prime Minister also released the 12th instalment amount of Rs. 16,000 crores under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) through Direct Benefit Transfer. The Prime Minister also inaugurated the Agri Startup Conclave and Exhibition. During the event, the Prime Minister also launched 'Indian Edge', an e-magazine on fertiliser. Shri Modi took a walkthrough of Theme Pavilion of Startup Exhibition and inspected the products on display.

Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister started by acknowledging the presence of Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan and Jai Anusandhan in one premise, and said that we can see the live form of this mantra here today. He further elaborated that Kisan Sammelan is a means to make the lives of farmers easier, boost their capability and promote advanced agricultural techniques.

"More than 600 Pradhan Mantri Samruddhi Kendra have been inaugurated today", Shri Modi said. He further elaborated that these Kendras are not merely sales centres for fertiliser but a mechanism for establishing a deep bond with the farmers of the country. Regarding the fresh instalment of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN), the Prime Minister said that the money reaches the accounts of the farmers directly without involving any middleman. "Another instalment of Rs 16,000 crore has also been released to crores of farmer families as PM Kisan Samman Nidhi", Shri Modi added and expressed happiness that this instalment is reaching the farmers just before Diwali. The Prime Minister also said that today, Pradhan

Mantri Bhartiya Jan Urvarak Pariyojana - One Nation One Fertiliser has also been launched which is a scheme of ensuring affordable quality fertiliser of Bharat brand to the farmers.

Highlighting the steps that have immensely benefited the hardworking farmers, the Prime Minister remarked that India is rapidly moving towards self-sufficiency in liquid nano urea production. Shri Modi pointed out, “Nano Urea is a medium to produce more with less cost.” Stating its benefits, the Prime Minister said that a sack full of urea can now be replaced by a single bottle of nano urea. He further added that the transportation costs of urea would go down significantly.

The Prime Minister mentioned two new measures in the fertiliser reform story of India. Firstly, a campaign is being initiated today to develop more than 3.25 lakh fertiliser shops across the country as Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samruddhi Kendras. These will be centres where farmers can buy not only fertilisers and seeds but also implement soil testing and avail useful information about farming techniques. Secondly, with One Nation, One Fertiliser, the farmer is going to get rid of all kinds of confusion about the quality of the fertiliser and its availability. “Now the urea sold in the country will be of the same name, same brand and same quality and this brand is Bharat! Now urea will be available only under ‘Bharat’ brand name in the entire country”, Shri Modi remarked. He further added that it will result in reducing the cost of fertilisers and increase their availability.

while addressing the gathering, Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya said that PM’s presence on this occasion reflects his commitment for farmers. He also said under PM’s able leadership new initiatives are being taken. Dr Mandaviya said that PM has always worked with ‘Total Approach’ for farming sector and that several initiatives have been taken to strengthen farmers by government. Union Minister further said that whether its adoption of new technology in Agriculture, encouraging ‘Smart Technology’ or providing better marketplace for farmers’ produce, much has been achieved under PM’s leadership. Dr Mansukh Mandaviya further added that Research in Agriculture has also been encouraged and due to this, India became world’s first country which started commercial production of Nano Urea. The Minister said that 600 Kisan Samruddhi Kendras will strengthen farmers in many ways.

The Minister also informed that the Pradhanmantri Kisan Samruddhi Kendra (PMKSK) will cater to the needs of the farmers in the country and provide agri-inputs (fertilizers, seeds, implements) including testing facilities for soil, seeds and fertilizers. These Kendras will also help create awareness among the farmers. The event brings together more than 13,500 farmers from across the country and around 1500 Agri Startups. More than 1 crore farmers from various institutions are expected to attend the event virtually. The Sammelan will also witness the participation of researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders.

The Prime Minister inaugurated 600 Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samruddhi Kendras (PMKSK) under the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilisers. Under the scheme, the retail fertiliser shops in the country will be converted into PMKSK in a phased manner. PMKSK will cater to a wide variety of needs of the farmers and provide agri-inputs (fertilisers, seeds, implements), testing facilities for soil, seeds, and fertilisers; generate awareness among farmers; provide information regarding various government schemes and ensure regular capacity building of retailers at block/district level outlets. More than 3.3 lakh retail fertiliser shops are planned to be converted into PMKSK. The Prime Minister also launched Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Urvarak Pariyojana - One Nation One Fertiliser. Under the scheme, Prime Minister launched Bharat Urea Bags, which will help companies market fertilisers under the single brand name 'Bharat'.

PIB, OCT 20, 2022

PM to launch Rozgar Mela – recruitment drive for 10 lakh personnel – on 22 October

75,000 new appointees to be appointed in first tranche

Appointment letters to be handed over to the newly inducted recruits

Selection process simplified and Tech enabled to expedite recruitment process

Programme showcases continuous commitment of the Government towards providing job opportunities for the youth and ensuring citizen welfare

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will launch Rozgar Mela – the recruitment drive for 10 lakh personnel – on 22nd October at 11 AM via video conferencing. During the ceremony, appointment letters will be handed over to 75,000 newly inducted appointees. Prime Minister will also address these appointees on the occasion. This will be a significant step forward towards fulfilling the continuous commitment of the Prime Minister to providing job opportunities for the youth and ensuring welfare of citizens. As per the directions of the Prime Minister, all Ministries and Departments are working towards filling up existing vacancies against sanctioned posts in Mission Mode. The new recruits, selected from across the country, will join 38 Ministries/Departments of Government of India. The appointees will join the government at various levels viz. Group – A, Group – B (Gazetted), Group – B (Non-Gazetted) and Group – C. The posts on which appointments are being made include Central Armed Force Personnel, Sub Inspector, Constable, LDC, Steno, PA, Income Tax Inspectors, MTS, among others.

These recruitments are being done in Mission Mode by Ministries and Departments either by themselves or through Recruiting agencies such as UPSC, SSC, Railway Recruitment Board. For expeditious recruitment, selection processes have been simplified and made tech enabled.

PIB,OCT22,2022

7th Ayurveda Day to be celebrated at a grand scale on 23rd October, 2022

6 Week long events were conducted with the aim of Jan Sandesh, Jan Bhagidari and Jan Aandolan

The 7th Ayurveda Day is going to be celebrated worldwide on 23rd October 2022 at a grand scale. Dhanawantari Jayanti has been celebrated since 2016 as Ayurveda Day to promote our most ancient and well documented system of medicine. The main event will be held at Vigyan Bhawan, in New Delhi and various programs will be organized across the country with support of other ministries as a whole government approach. This year Indian missions/Embassies will also organize programs in their respective countries. The main event will be marked by the presence of the Chief Guest Minister of Tribal Affairs Shri Arjun Munda, presided by Minister of Ayush, Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Shri Sarabananda Sonowal, MoS External affairs and culture Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi, MoS for Ayush and WCD , Secretary, Ministry of Ayush Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha and other dignitaries. This year's Ayurveda Day is being celebrated with the theme "Har Din Har Ghar Ayurveda" so as to propagate benefits of Ayurveda to larger and grass root community. Keeping in view the theme, activities were conducted under 3-Js i.e. Jan Sandesh, Jan Bhagidari and Jan Aandolan and six weeklong events from 12th September 2022 to 23rd October 2022. Ayurveda Day 2022 celebration was executed as a whole government approach. With active support of Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Woman and Child Development, Ministry of Consumer affairs, food & public distribution and other Ministries. Ministry of External Affairs with support of its mission/embassies has taken Ayurveda Day 2022 to global stage. All the Ayush institutions/Councils have actively participated in organizing various programs in last six weeks. They also organised press conferences and shared preparations plan for observing Ayurveda day with their respective regional media.