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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

PIB,NOV21,2022

Under Rozgar Mela, PM to distribute about 71,000 appointment letters to newly inducted recruits on 22nd November

PM to also launch Karmayogi Prarambh module - online orientation course for all new appointees

Under Rozgar Mela, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will distribute about 71,000 appointment letters to newly inducted recruits on 22nd November at 10:30 AM via video conferencing. Prime Minister will also address these appointees on the occasion. The Rozgar Mela is a step towards fulfilment of the commitment of the Prime Minister to accord highest priority to employment generation. The Rozgar Mela is expected to act as a catalyst in further employment generation and provide meaningful opportunities to the youth for their empowerment and participation in national development directly. Earlier in October, appointment letters were handed over to 75,000 newly inducted appointees under Rozgar Mela.

The physical copies of the appointment letters to the new appointees will be handed over at 45 locations across the country (except Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh). In addition to the categories of posts filled earlier, posts of teachers, lecturers, nurses, nursing officers, doctors, pharmacists, Radiographers and other technical and paramedical posts are also being filled. A significant number of posts are being filled by the Ministry of Home Affairs in various Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF).

Prime Minister will also launch the Karmayogi Prarambh module. The module is an online orientation course for all new appointees in various Government departments. It will include code of conduct for Government servants, workplace ethics & integrity, human resource policies and other benefits and allowances that will help them to get acclimatized to the policies and transition smoothly into the new roles. They will also get an opportunity to explore other courses on igotkarmayogi.gov.in platform to enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies.

PIB,NOV21,2022

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh to inaugurate the 25th National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG) to be held in Katra, Jammu & Kashmir on 26th November, 2022

26th November is celebrated as the Constitution Day to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India; Dr. Jitendra Singh will administer reading of the Preamble to the Constitution with all participants in the Inaugural Session. Theme of the two-day Conference is “Bringing Citizens, Industry and Government closer”. The National Awards for e-Governance (NAeG) will be presented under 5 categories of the NAeG Scheme - 2022 to 18 e-Governance initiatives

The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) and Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, in association with the State Government of Jammu & Kashmir will organize the 25th National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG) on 26th – 27th November, 2022 in Katra, Jammu & Kashmir. The theme of this Conference is “Bringing Citizens, Industry and Government closer”. The Conference will be inaugurated by the Chief Guest Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Minister of State in the Prime Minister’s Office, Minister of State of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space, Government of India.

26th November is celebrated as the Constitution Day to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India. As part of the celebrations Union Minister, Dr. Jitendra Singh will administer reading of the Preamble to the Constitution with all participants on 26th November, 2022 in the Inaugural Session of the 25th NCeG. The National Awards for e-Governance (NAeG) will be presented under 5 categories of the NAeG Scheme - 2022 to 18 e-Governance initiatives at Central, State and District levels, Academic & Research Institutions and Public Sector Undertaking. This includes 9 Gold and 9 Silver Awards. The Valedictory Session will be presided over by Shri Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor, Jammu & Kashmir on 27th November, 2022 in the 25th NCeG. Chief Minister of Haryana will be attending the Valedictory Session which will witness Launch of digital J&K initiatives and Signing of MoUs by the J& K Government.

Digital innovation will play an important part in the next decade for governance to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. This will necessitate conversations around topics and technologies which would shape Digital Governance in the future to enhance the delivery of Government services to citizens. This conference will be a platform for discussion on some of these technologies by inviting distinguished speakers to share their knowledge and insights on the subject.

Discussions will be held on ten sub-themes in Plenary sessions during the Conference:

1. Digital Governance Across Whole-of-the-Government;
2. Digital Economy Strengthening Start-up Ecosystem & Employment Generation;
3. Modern laws to promote national growth and to secure citizen's rights;
4. Transparent and Real-time Grievance Management System;
5. 21st Century Digital Infrastructure for next-generation services and security in cyberspace;
6. Shifting the gear on emerging technologies from exploration to population scale solutions;
7. The role of e-Governance in bridging the digital divide;
8. Digital Governance for Enhancing Ease of Doing Business and Ease of Living;
9. J&K State: Digital Transformation in Jammu & Kashmir; and
10. e-Governance Initiatives in J&K

The Conference would provide considerable momentum to the e-Governance initiatives across the country, providing opportunities for civil servants and industry captains to showcase their successful interventions in e-Governance in improving end-to-end service delivery.

Delegates from Central Ministries/Departments and 28 States and 8 Union Territories have confirmed their participation in the Conference. Over 1000 delegates are expected to attend this Conference in Jammu. An Exhibition will also be organized during the event to showcase India's achievements in the field of e-Governance, along with a Wall of Fame/ photo exhibition on the award winners.

Senior Secretaries from the Government of India including Shri V. Srinivas, Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances; Shri Alkesh Kumar Sharma, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology; Shri Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, Shri Amar Nath, Additional Secretary, DARPG and

Ms Prerna Puri, Commissioner/Secretary, IT, Government of Jammu & Kashmir would also address the Conference. Vote of Thanks will be given by Shri NBS Rajput, Joint Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances.

PIB,NOV22,2022

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh says, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given India a "sustainable" model of governance, which has defied the principle of diminishing returns as the dividends increase with each passing year: Taking part in the "Capital Dialogue" programme of News-X Tv Channel in Delhi, Dr Jitendra Singh said, over the last 20 years, Modi's governance model has grown stronger with every new challenge. Transparency, Accountability and Citizen-centricity became the hallmark of the Modi's Governance Model: Dr Jitendra Singh The Minister says, with the integration of R&D, Academia and Industry, it is safe to say that a Space Revolution led by ISRO along with the Private Sector and Start-ups is on the horizon.

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 today said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given India a "sustainable" model of governance, which has defied the principle of diminishing returns as the dividends increase with each passing year.

Taking part in the "Capital Dialogue" programme of News-X Tv Channel in Delhi, Dr Jitendra Singh said, over the last 20 years, Modi's governance model has grown stronger with every new challenge.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, soon after Modi took over as Chief Minister of Gujarat, his first challenge was to overcome and build afresh the devastating earthquake in Bhuj and as he completes 20 years as head of government, the latest challenge confronted by him was the COVID pandemic sweeping across the nation of 140 crore people. The Minister said, each of these challenges were handled by providing new ideas, his long hours of introspection about how to innovate new ideas and his intimate connection with the ground which enables him to convert every challenge into an opportunity. On questions about his governance model, Dr Jitendra Singh said, ever since Modi took charge in May, 2014, his first mantra was "Maximum Governance, Minimum Government" and after nearly nine years now, it is "Whole of Government" approach through integration of schemes and ideas, rather than working in silos.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, transparency, accountability and citizen-centricity became the hallmark of Modi's Governance Model. He said, within three months after taking charge at the Centre, one of the first major decisions was to introduce self-attestation and do away with the practice of getting documents attested by gazetted officer, thus reposing faith in youth of India, which constitutes 70% below the age of 40 years. Similarly, Narendra Modi had suggested the abolition of interviews during Independence Day address from the ramparts of Red Fort on 15th August 2015 and the same was implemented by DoPT from 1st January 2016 that paved the way for level playing field for all the candidates. This government has done away with over 1500 rules which have become obsolete and were hindrance to governance. The Minister said that all the reforms are not only governance reforms but they are also huge social reforms having long-term impact on society.

Dr Jitendra Singh referred to the India's Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, which the Modi government amended after 30 years in 2018 to introduce a number of new provisions including criminalizing the act of giving bribe also in addition to taking bribe and at the same time putting in place an effective deterrence for such actions by individuals as well as corporate entities. He said, free and unrestricted access to information is an antidote to corruption and added that use of technology and e-governance have proved to be powerful tools specially in removing corruption in the delivery of public service.

In reply to questions, Dr Jitendra Singh said, a number of revolutionary pension reforms were introduced in the last eight years including relaxation in the provision of Family Pension for divorced daughters and Divyangs, introduction of Face Recognition Technology through mobile app for ease in submitting Life Certificate by elderly pensioners, steps like extension of Family Pension to differently abled child of a deceased Government employee/Pensioner or giving a major hike in the Family Pension emoluments for Divyang children of a deceased government servant/pensioner are not only pension reforms but these are social reforms having wide socio-economic implications.

Dr Jitendra Singh, who is also looking after the Department of Space received a volley of questions from the audience on a wide range of issues. He pointed out that Space sector in India functioned under veil of secrecy, and here again it was Modi, who unlocked the sector for private participation two years ago and results are quite obvious, as Space reforms have unleashed innovative potentials of Start-Ups and within a short span of time, from a couple of Space Start-ups three -four years back, today we have 102 start-ups working in cutting-edge areas of space debris management, nano-satellite, launch vehicle, ground systems, research etc. The Minister said, with the integration of R&D, Academia and Industry with equal stake, it is safe to say that a Space Revolution led by ISRO along with the Private Sector and Start-ups is on the horizon.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, the ambitious dream for India that Dr Vikram Sarabhai, the first Chairman of ISRO and the founding father of India's Space Programme saw sitting in his primitive scientific set up has covered glorious path and the whole world is looking at India as an inspirational place today, as it is helping budding countries in capacity building and satellite building including nanosatellites. The Minister said, during the eight years of the Government led by Prime Minister Modi, the youth talent of India, which was waiting to be explored, got new outlets to give full play to their potential with a fiery zeal. He said, India was always having the huge talent pool and passion to dream big, but finally it was Modi who gave them a perfect outlet.

Referring to applications of Space Technology to different sectors like Railways, Highways, Agriculture, Water Mapping, Smart Cities, Telemedicine and Robotic Surgery, which brought 'ease of living' for common man, Dr Jitendra Singh said, similar applications of Atomic Energy in areas like Nuclear Agriculture and Crop Improvement, Agri-Technologies for plant and soil health and Radiation technologies for food preservation, radiation-based technologies for augmenting crop growth and water conservation are perfect examples of developmental mandate of Space and Atomic Energy Sectors from their traditional roles of Satellite launch and production of clean energy.

STATESMAN,NOV24,2022

Polls and consequences

During every election, some small fries are caught ferrying cash, liquor etc. but effective action like disqualification of the candidate or deregistration of the political party is never taken against parties and candidates at whose behest the electoral laws are broken. Also, all political parties, when in power, have tried their best to hide the identities of their donors, so that allegations of quid-pro-quo cannot be proved against the Government.

DEVENDRA SAKSENA

A former Chief Election Commissioner had described elections as ‘the dance of democracy,’ but unfortunately, money and muscle power seem to be calling the tune for elections. The increasing use of illicit funds during elections could be gauged from a Press Note titled “Record seizures made during ongoing Assembly Elections in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh,” issued by the Election Commission on 10 November 2022, which states that seizures of Rs 71.88 crore had been made ‘in just a few days of the announcement of elections.’

This seizure was almost three times of the seizure (Rs 27.21 crore) during the entire 2017 Gujarat Assembly Elections. Similarly, seizures of Rs.50.28 crore had been made in Himachal Pradesh, which were almost five and a half times the seizure (Rs 9.03 crore), during the 2017 elections.

Significantly, 1.10 lakh litres of alcohol were seized in Gujarat, making a mockery of prohibition laws. Further, the DRI seized Rs 64 crore of smuggled toys and accessories, meant for illegal use during the Gujarat Elections. This is not unusual; in the recent by-elections in Munugode Assembly Constituency (Telangana) cash amounting to Rs 6.60 crore along with thousands of litres of liquor, and precious metals worth Rs. 1.78 crore were seized.

We have the infamous example of Dr. J Jayalalitha’s erstwhile constituency, RK Nagar in Chennai, where a bye-election was cancelled in April 2017, after Income-tax sleuths seized cash of Rs.5 crore from an associate of the Tamil Nadu Health Minister, as also distribution plans for another Rs 89 crore. Similarly, during the 2019 Lok Sabha Elections, a sum of Rs 12 crore was seized by the Income-tax Department from a close relative of a politician in Vellore, prompting the Election Commission to cancel the election. An earlier instance is that of the Aravakurichi and Thanjavur constituencies, where the Election Commission rescinded the poll notification after it found “large scale distribution of money and gifts to electors by candidates and political parties.”

The use of cash, liquor, and other inducements to bribe voters has been increasing from election to election. Many independent studies by social scientists have confirmed that well-heeled candidates spend much more than the legal limit; a recent study by Prof. Ashwani Kumar of Tata Institute of Social Sciences and two others have postulated that leading candidates in the 2017 Gujarat Assembly Elections spent more than ten times the official limit.

Studies by Vidhi Centre and Jindal Global Law School, also flag excessive use of money power in elections. Limiting election expenditure is difficult because the election law is full of loopholes. Currently, individuals and corporate entities can contribute unlimited funds to political parties. Also, political parties can spend unlimited amounts for propagating their agenda, even during elections.

Moreover, a candidate can rebut the presumption that third-party expenditure incurred in campaigning in his favour had been done with his authorisation. During every election, some small fries are caught ferrying cash, liquor, etc. but effective action like disqualification of the candidate or deregistration of the political party is never taken against parties and candidates at whose behest the electoral laws are broken. Also, all political parties, when in power, have tried their best to hide the identities of their donors, so that allegations of quid-pro-quo cannot be proved against the Government. Despite the Government's sanctimonious protestations, Electoral Bonds, which are bearer instruments of limited validity, appear to be the latest stratagem to hide the identities of donors. Amongst other electoral reforms, the institutions of General Observers, and Expenditure Observers (EOs) were created by TN Seshan, to curb malpractices during elections. Both observers are still appointed in all constituencies, but over time, empire-building by the IAS and some deft manoeuvring by the Government, have whittled down the role of the EO, who has to rely totally on State Government machinery, which has its own interests to safeguard.

No wonder, there are hardly any instances where an EO had detected excess expenditure and worthwhile action was taken on the EO's findings. With money playing such an important role in elections, a poor man has as little chance of being elected to a State Assembly as of the meek inheriting the earth. Statistics bear this out; 89 per cent of Lok Sabha MPs are crorepatis with an average worth of Rs.21 crore. The percentage of crorepatis has increased in each election; 58 per cent of our MPs were crorepatis in 2009, which shot up to 83 per cent in 2014. State legislatures mirror the Lok Sabha in this respect; 39 of the 40 MLAs of the recently constituted Goa Assembly are crorepatis. Other State legislatures have a similar, but slightly lower percentage of crorepatis.

Criminality amongst MPs is alarming; 233 Lok Sabha MPs (43 per cent) face criminal charges, with nearly 29 per cent being charged with serious crimes like rape, murder, attempt to murder, or crimes against women. One BJP MP faces terror charges and a Congress MP has 240 criminal cases against him. Disturbingly, the number of MPs charged with serious crimes has risen by 109 per cent since 2009.

In a development that may not augur well for democracy, Parliament is sitting for fewer and fewer days, with more and more time being wasted by disruptions. Between 1952 and 1972 the Lok Sabha sat, on an average, for 120 days in a year, which came down to 63 in the Fifteenth Lok Sabha (2009-2014) and 66 in the Sixteenth Lok Sabha (2014-2019). The Seventeenth Lok Sabha sat for 149 days till the Winter Session of 2019, with the last seven sessions of the Lok Sabha being curtailed. Question hour functioned for 47 per cent of the scheduled time in Rajya Sabha and 34 per cent in Lok Sabha.

Productivity, i.e., the number of hours the Lok Sabha actually functioned compared to the number of hours officially earmarked for work was more than 100 per cent till the Twelfth Lok Sabha, declining to 91 per cent in the Thirteenth Lok Sabha, 87 per cent in the Fourteenth Lok Sabha, touching a nadir of 61 per cent in the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, before improving slightly for the Sixteenth Lok Sabha, which had the dubious distinction of sitting for the second lowest time, compared to any other full-term Lok Sabha. State Legislatures fare even worse in terms of the number of days worked; most State legislatures work only for 30 to 40 days in a year, with some honourable exceptions like the Kerala Legislative Assembly which sits for an average of 150 days in a year.

Compared to legislative bodies in other parts of the world, our legislators are an underworked lot; the British Parliament sits for an average of 150 days, while the US Congress clocks more than 100 days each year. The attendance of members during crucial discussions is not up to the mark; PM Modi recently warned his party MPs for their laxity. Hence, many laws are enacted without adequate discussion.

Such laws are often not acceptable to the public; the highly contentious Farming Acts passed without sufficient debate, led to protracted protests and had to be repealed within fifteen months. Unfortunately, the Farming Acts were repealed without discussion, depriving citizens of a chance to know why these Acts, touted as a panacea for farming sector ills, had suddenly lost their glitter. Adjudicating on an amendment to the Negotiable Instruments Act, that had led to a pendency of 60 lakh cases, an earlier Chief Justice of India observed that this large volume of litigation had arisen because the consequences of the amendment had not been adequately considered.

Similarly, the imposition of prohibition in many States has led to the preoccupation of the police with prohibition offences, as also a flood of litigation in lower courts. While releasing the Good Governance Index in December 2021, the then Vice-President Naidu had observed that good governance needed good legislatures to oversee the performance of the executive. This is a pious hope, easier expressed than realized.

Rather, the prophecy of C Rajagopalachari seems to be coming true: “We all ought to know that Swaraj will not at once or, I think, even for a long time to come, be better government or greater happiness for the people. Elections and their corruption, injustice, and the power and tyranny of wealth, and the inefficiency of administration, will make a hell of life as soon as freedom is given to us. Men will look regretfully back to the old regime of comparative justice, and efficient, peaceful, more or less honest administration. The only thing gained will be that as a race we will be saved from dishonour and subordination” (Jail Diary, 1920).

STATESMAN,NOV24,2022

‘Hold your mouth’, Attorney General to SC during EC appointment hearing

SC made observations during the hearing on a batch of pleas seeking a collegium-like system for the appointment of the ECs and CEC.

Attorney General (AG) R. Venkataramani, representing the Centre, on Thursday told a five-judge Supreme Court bench to “hold its mouth”, as he faced a volley of questions in connection with the process adopted on the appointment of Arun Goel as an Election Commissioner (EC).As the hearing commenced, the bench headed by Justice K.M. Joseph and comprising Justices Ajay Rastogi, Aniruddha Bose, Hrishikesh Roy and C.T. Ravikumar, shot a volley of questions at the AG in connection with Goel’s appointment process, and specifically repeated a question on how did the Law Minister filter the names from the database of Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), which were to be considered for the appointment.It also carefully examined the original file of Goel’s appointment as an EC, which was placed before the court and asked the AG that it is keen to understand how the Law Minister picks up the names from the database.

However, at a juncture when the judges were asking questions, the AG asked the court to “hold its mouth” and requested it to look into the matter in the larger perspective. “Please hold your mouth for a while. I request to look into the issue in entirety,” the AG told the bench. “We don’t have anything against an individual. This man, infact, is excellent in terms of academics. But we are concerned with the structure of the appointment.” The bench further added that there were four names, which were recommended and it wants to understand that out of the vast reservoir of names, how were these 4 names shortlisted. Clarifying that it is questioning the merit of the EC but the process, the bench queried the AG: “Someone who was about to be superannuated in December. He is the youngest among the four names who were recommended. Is that a criteria?”

The AG told the bench that there is a certain basis for shortlisting, such as seniority, retirement, tenure, and emphasized the process of appointing the EC and Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) has worked well so far and there is no arbitrariness in the process. The AG said all the ECs were appointed through a quick process. The bench further questioned the AG on what is the foundation of this process (shortlisting for names from the data of DoPT). Justice Joseph categorically asked the AG: “How did the Law Minister zero in on these four names?” To this, the AG said that he had already explained the process but the bench was not convinced. The top court made these observations during the hearing on a batch of pleas seeking a collegium-like system for the appointment of the ECs and chief election commissioner (CEC). The Supreme Court on Wednesday told the Centre that it wants to see the files relating to Goel’s appointment and emphasized that it wants to see by what mechanism, “he was picked up”, and “there is no danger to produce it (files)”.

TELEGRAPH,NOV24,2022

One step back

EWS quotas stigmatise caste-based reservations

T.M. Krishna

The Supreme Court’s verdict on reservations for the economically weaker sections has triggered many conversations on the real purpose of affirmative action. Legal experts have expressed their disappointment and fear that this may skew the philosophy behind reservations. But, except for a few political parties such as the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi, others have been circumspect or confused in their response. Many among the privileged middle-class have come out in support of this measure. Their mind is directed towards the poor, caste-privileged families and

their suffering. Soon enough, the emotional false equivalence between two sets of have-nots is put in place. Behind this open or lukewarm support in society and among the judges — those who upheld and dissented the amendment — lies a psychological bent of mind. A culturally instilled perception that makes one wary of caste-based reservations and a strong feeling that they deprive people with caste privilege of what is due to them. An extension of this is the infamous ‘merit’ argument.

The problem begins with our inability to understand what it means to be oppressed and discriminated against. To be born in a social order that, from your birth, informs you of your nothingness. The discriminated are reduced to lifeless mechanical bodies that provide services for the socio-culturally privileged. The emotional being is erased. Who we are, our emotional landscape, perception of society, and where and how we see ourselves in this world need to be nurtured. If the person is brought up with signals, both obvious and implied, that constantly reiterate his/her irrelevance, seed hopelessness and force resignation, then life is a timeline of degrees of drudgery, which is internally justified as an acceptable reality. The mind does not know any form of self-affirmation or actuation of self-will.

It is from this nadir that people from the margins hope to escape and find joy. Hence, education and opportunity are not just methods of getting a better economic life. They are also mechanisms to enable unfettered personal happiness. While we celebrate the Global Happiness Index as a beautiful way of measuring social well-being, we refuse to recognise the very same happiness as the foundation of any socio-economic initiative. Reservations are meant to provide access and facilities, but this is intrinsically coupled with gifting those who have been denied the fundamental right to happiness. Education and employment are not words of economy; they describe learning, building of social relationships based on equality and respect, being able to wonder at the natural world and gaining self-worth. This is, essentially, the meaning of ‘dignity’, as used in the Preamble to the Constitution.

This is why our understanding of the ‘creamy layer’ needs nuance. Economic status alone cannot determine whether an individual belongs to the creamy layer or not. Other aspects, such as social position, education and employment — factors both material and abstract — play a decisive role. There are also deep-rooted cultural changes that need to occur, which may take many generations.

Let me give you a simple example. Let us say the child from a marginalised family begins to go to school but, one day, adamantly refuses to get up. The probability of the parents not insisting is high because the experience of a child resisting going to school has never happened before. While the significance of school going is socially internalised, the need for regularity, order and a different kind of discipline is not understood.

In a household of socio-cultural privilege, the parents will make sure that the child goes despite protests because the school-going habit has been passed down through generations. This is exactly why lower middle-class brahmins will somehow ensure that their children get school education. The acquisition of wealth alone will not solve this problem. We need a society that is conducive to and supportive of such cultural changes. Instead, if we constantly remind the child and the parents that they must feel fortunate to have access to a school, education will not do what it is meant to. This is what Bezwada Wilson of the Safai Karmachari Andolan implied when he said, “The school was not a happy place for me.”

Even if a person with caste privilege lacks financial resources, he has an emotional strength and imagination that comes from his social and cultural capital. It is undeniable that society is designed in a manner that support for the poor among the caste privileged comes far more easily. Believing that everything can be reduced to one’s income is a fallacious argument. If we shift the frame from caste to sex or gender, we will never make that case. The status of a poor trans-person is not equivalent to that of a male, nor is the social respect a poor homosexual receives the same as that of a heterosexual male. It is this kind of socio-cultural inequality that reservation addresses. A disparity rooted in social imbalance deeply affects a person’s ability to live with grace and assertion.

Am I being insensitive to the plight of the economically backward among the caste privileged? No doubt various mechanisms are required to bridge the gap here and these have to be strengthened and widened. But the question before us is whether these initiatives fall under the intentionality behind reservations. As I have argued, reservation is not an economic support system. It is about social, emotional and intellectual upliftment of those whom society structurally discards. The other argument often made by the caste privileged is that the genesis for social oppression is economic aggrandisement. That social markers, cultural exclusions and religious dictums are put in place because of the greed of a certain section of society. But if we are to take into account human beings’ innate nature to slot and control, it is more likely that the right to wealth was given only to those who ticked certain social boxes and did not disrupt the smooth functioning of the powerful. Societies are based on caste, race, ethnicity, sex, gender and colour, and these markers determine who can acquire and to what extent, not the other way round.

Allowing reservations for EWS gives legitimacy to the stigma around castebased reservations. It is the first step in reducing all our social identities to money and allowing us to continue trampling upon the socially marginalised.

T.M. Krishna is a leading Indian musician and a prominent public intellectual

INDIAN EXPRESS,NOV26,2022

Judiciary taking steps to ensure timely justice for all: PM Narendra Modi at Constitution Day event

The day has been celebrated as Constitution Day since 2015 to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India by the Constituent Assembly in 1949. Prime Minister Narendra Modi took part in the Constitution Day celebrations in the Supreme Court on Saturday and said that the entire world was looking at India which was witnessing rapid development and economic growth. “We the People in the Preamble of the Constitution is a commitment, pledge and belief that has made India the Mother of Democracy,” the PM said, news agency PTI reported. He also stated that the Judiciary is taking a lot of steps such as e-initiatives to ensure timely justice for all.”

During the programme, Modi also launched new initiatives under the e-court project, which provides services to litigants, lawyers and the judiciary through information and communication technology-enabled courts. The initiatives launched by Prime Minister Modi included ‘virtual justice clock’, ‘JustIS’ mobile app 2.0, digital court and ‘S3WaaS’ websites. Earlier in the day, he paid homage to “those greats who gave us our Constitution” and reiterated his commitment to fulfilling their vision for the nation. The Prime Minister also said that fulfilling fundamental duties should be the first priority of citizens to take the nation to greater heights as it marches ahead towards the centenary of its Independence. Quoting Mahatma Gandhi, Modi said that fundamental rights were those responsibilities that should be fulfilled by citizens with utmost dedication and true integrity. “Be it an individual or institutions, our duties are our first priority. The Amrit Kaal is the era of duties for us,” the PM said.

“Today, the world is looking at us with great expectations. Today, this country is moving ahead with full potential, taking pride in all its diversities and our biggest strength behind this is our Constitution. Today, the country is being empowered with the power of Pro-People. Laws are being simplified for the common man. This nectar period of freedom is the ‘duty period’ for the country. Be it individuals or institutions... Our responsibilities are our first pledge,” the PM added. Mentioning that new opportunities are coming up before India, the PM said: “Crossing all hurdles, it’s going ahead. A week from now, India

will get the G20 presidency. It's big! As Team India, all of us should enhance India's prestige before the world and bring its contribution before them. It's our collective duty," news agency ANI reported.

Stating that there was a need to strengthen India's identity as the 'Mother of Democracy', Modi said: "The spirit of our constitution is 'Youth Centric'. Today, on Constitution Day, I would also make a request to the country's judiciary that debate and discussion should be increased in order to increase the understanding of the constitution among the youth." Modi also remembered the victims of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks that took place in 2008 as India was celebrating the adoption of the Constitution. Meanwhile, as India celebrated the Constitution Day (Samvidhan Divas) on Saturday, several senior politicians took to social media to extend their greetings to fellow citizens and pay tributes to all those involved in the making of the Constitution.

November 26 has been celebrated as Constitution Day since 2015 to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India by the Constituent Assembly in 1949. In a tweet in Hindi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said: "Constitution is the life force of Indian democracy which not only gives equal rights to every citizen, but also gives them an opportunity to move forward by protecting those rights. I bow down to all the great personalities who contributed to the making of the Constitution and wish the countrymen a very Happy Constitution Day."

Extending best wishes to all countrymen, BJP president J P Nadda said that the Constitution is the basis of unity, integrity and progressiveness of India's democracy. "Today, in Amritkal, our country is moving fast in the direction of 'Ek Bharat – Shreshtha Bharat' with the resolve to imbibe 'Panch Prana'," he added. Quoting Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said "the Constitution is not a mere lawyers' document, but a means of living and its spirit remains the same always." He further said: "We remember the valuable contribution of all the great leaders of the Constituent Assembly. Best wishes to all the countrymen on Constitution Day." Claiming that the Constitution of India is "under attack today", the Congress party said: "While the ruling government is out crushing the soul of our democracy, we pledge to stand strong against the assault on our Constitution and uphold its values." Pointing out that the Constitution is the pride of the country's democracy, Delhi Chief Minister and AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal said: "Our Constitution is the identity of the rights of us Indians. Best wishes to all the countrymen on Constitution Day." "Protecting the Constitution of the country, we will give our whole life to fulfil the dreams of Babasaheb and to make India the No. 1 country in the world," he added. Meanwhile, Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju urged the citizens to "take a pledge to commit ourselves to the

fundamental values of our democratic nation and honour the principles of Justice, Liberty, Equality & Fraternity enshrined in our Constitution.”While speaking at an event held on the Supreme Court lawns on the eve of Constitution Day, Rijiju had pitched for fraternal ties between the two pillars of democracy, saying they are like brothers and should not fight each other.

According to news agency PTI, he said the central government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has never undermined the authority of the judiciary and will always ensure its independence remains untouched and is promoted. Pointing out that India’s forward march in Amrit Kaal is on the firm ground of values enshrined in the Constitution, Union Minister of Textiles, Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, and Food and Public Distribution, Piyush Goyal said: “This day, let us remember and salute its makers for their steadfastness and foresight that gave us this living document in 1949.”

Union Health Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya urged the citizens to pledge to work towards building India of the dreams of the Constitution makers and “rededicate ourselves to the values enshrined in our Constitution for the progress & prosperity of the country.”Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also extended his hearty greeting to the people of his state on the occasion of Constitution Day.

BJP national secretary Y Satya Kumar requested the people of India to “strive not only to be vigilant about our rights but also follow our fundamental duties in order to live the true spirit of the constitution. My salute to Dr Ambedkar for giving us such a forward looking constitution. Jai Samvidhan!”Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik also paid tributes to the visionaries who framed the Constitution of India and said: “On Constitution Day, [let’s] reaffirm our commitment to uphold the ideals enshrined in the Constitution in letter and spirit and perform the fundamental duties diligently (sic).”To commemorate the occasion, the National Film Archive of India (NFAI) shared a poster of the 2000 film Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar that starred Mammooty, for which the Malayalam actor won the National Film Award for Best Actor. Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Shantanu Thakur, Telangana BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar and Congress leader Nitin Agarwal were among those who extended their greetings on the Constitution Day.

INDIAN EXPRESS,NOV26,2022

This Constitution day, celebrating the document, the common man and the trustworthy relationship therein

Om Birla writes: The framers of the document had realised that no matter how well written and how detailed, it would have little meaning if it failed to establish a symbiotic bond with the institutions and the people. It helped succeed in framing a Constitution whose acceptability has only grown. It is time to salute the common citizen of the country who has established an unbreakable bond with it.

Om Birla

After more than 200 years of colonial rule, India became free at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947. The hard-earned independence was an outcome of a long-drawn freedom struggle. At the time of independence, we inherited an impoverished country that had been for millennia preceding the pre-colonial era a global economic and cultural powerhouse. The turbulent period at the time of independence posed serious challenges before the framers of our Constitution. Doubts were expressed about the longevity of the experiment, on the desirability of adopting democratic ideals of governance, particularly on granting universal adult franchise to a nation steeped in illiteracy, poverty and the lack of exposure to modern democratic systems and institutions.

However, our Constitution framers remained undeterred by sceptics because of their deep understanding of our democratic ethos that has evolved over two millennia. The strength of our democratic structures is firmly hardwired into our socio-political tapestry. The members of the Constituent Assembly were deeply cognisant of the traditional but robust participatory forms of governance in our village republics that had survived the ravages of invasions, the exploitation of a feudal order and the rise and fall of empires. But, most importantly, what guided the framers of our Constitution over everything else was their complete trust in the democratic sensibilities of the common Indian citizen. India can justifiably claim to be the “mother of democracy”.

The experience of living in a democratic polity for the last seven decades is testimony to the fact that the faith the Constituent Assembly had placed in the nation in such trying circumstances to stay the course of a democratic governance model has not been belied. The ideals and principles that form the bedrock of our Constitution continue to illuminate our path as a confident nation marches on into Amrit Kaal.

It was through the untiring efforts of the Constituent Assembly presided by Rajendra Prasad and the drafting committee chaired by Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar that the Constitution was bequeathed to us. It was wholeheartedly adopted and continues to be held as a sacred document seven decades later. This is no mean achievement in a world, particularly among the newly liberated nations of the time, where life spans of constitutions have often been short.

The Constitution of India in letter and spirit has always stood for the dignity and welfare of all citizens. All organs of the state have contributed over the decades in strengthening the foundations of constitutional democracy in India. The way the Constitution has been understood and interpreted by governments and all organs of state, the free press, political parties and the common citizens have ensured India's relentless march towards the eradication of hunger, illiteracy, poverty and underdevelopment; towards strengthening inclusivity, accountability and transparency; and in the celebration of unity in diversity and political stability. In a nutshell, the Constitution has facilitated our journey to become a modern welfare state which actively promotes a sustainable, equitable and just quality of life for all its citizens.

Perhaps one of the most significant features of the Constitution is that it is a living document with an inviolable core that shelters the foundational values of our nation and civilisation and which, at the same time, provides for and supports a flexible superstructure that lends itself to adaptation in response to the demands of public interest in a rapidly changing world. The inherent flexibility in the Constitution has enabled Parliament to enact relevant people-centric constitutional amendments from time to time, but also provided opportunities to the higher judiciary to interpret the provisions of the Constitution constructively. While the core "basic structure" of the Constitution has served as an anchor, the manoeuvrability and dynamism implicit in the framework has helped propel the nation to power ahead as a leader among the comity of nations.

With the completion of 75 years of our independence, we can justifiably take pride in our journey as a nation and our achievements in diverse fields. It is also a time to reaffirm our faith in our people and our Constitution as we enter Amrit Kaal and renew and rededicate our commitment to remain steadfast in achieving our dream of a new self-reliant, strong, united and humane nation in the next 25 years. The 'Panch Pran' of Amrit Kaal will undoubtedly help us in realising the ideals that the Constitution has espoused. The political leaders at the time of the freedom struggle had framed a Constitution which sought to place the common man as the central protagonist of our national life, the political sovereign. The welfare and dignity of the common man is at the heart of our Constitution which we shall be able to secure for her by taking the Panch Pran and working wholeheartedly for its realisation. It will only be then that our democratic ethos will find its full efflorescence, and the dreams

and fruits of the sacrifices of countless freedom fighters will be realised. Only then we shall be able to re-establish India as a foremost global nation. The Constitution empowers the people as much as the people empower the Constitution. The framers had realised that no matter how well written and how detailed, it would have little meaning if it failed to establish a symbiotic bond with the institutions and the people. It was the foresight, intellect and ingenuity of the great men in the Constituent Assembly that helped succeed in framing a Constitution whose acceptability has only grown with each passing generation. It is also a time to salute the common citizen of the country who has established an unbreakable bond with the letter and spirit of the Constitution and has at every difficult juncture of our journey renewed her faith and commitment to the lofty ideals of our Constitution.

INDIAN EXPRESS, NOV 26, 2022

Constitution Day: What Dr Ambedkar said about fundamental rights, minorities' protection, and 'ancient polity of India'

Samvidhan Diwas: Dr BR Ambedkar addressed several criticisms of the Draft Constitution in a speech to the Constituent Assembly. Here are his responses on four issues.

Yashee

On this day 73 years ago, the Constitution of India was adopted, coming into effect on January 26, 1950. Since 2015, the day has been observed as Constitution Day, or 'Samvidhan Diwas'. The Constituent Assembly took two years, 11 months and 17 days to draft the Constitution for Independent India. During this period, it held 11 sessions covering 165 days, and its members submitted around 7,600 amendments to the draft Constitution. It was for good reasons that the drafting of India's Constitution was such a mammoth exercise — it was to determine how a newly independent, newly dismembered nation would define and govern itself. As the exercise went on, many questions were raised about the Constitution, including over its approach to federalism, to the protection of minorities' rights, and over the fact that it had borrowed heavily from other Constitutions around the world.

Dr BR Ambedkar, the Constitution's chief architect, addressed the criticism in his speech on November 4, 1948, when introducing the Draft Constitution in the Constituent Assembly. Here are his responses on four issues: on the draft Constitution being 'unoriginal', over its treatment of minorities, over it not representing the "ancient polity of India"; and on its approach to fundamental rights. To this, Dr Ambedkar asked "whether there can be anything new in a Constitution framed at this hour

in the history of the world.”“More than hundred years have rolled over when the first written Constitution was drafted. What the scope of a Constitution should be has long been settled... Given these facts, all Constitutions in their main provisions must look similar. The only new things, if there can be any, in a Constitution framed so late in the day are the variations made to remove the faults and to accommodate it to the needs of the country. The charge of producing a blind copy of the Constitutions of other countries is based, I am sure, on an inadequate study of the Constitution... I am sure that those who have studied other Constitutions and who are prepared to consider the matter dispassionately will agree that the Drafting Committee in performing its duty has not been guilty of such blind and slavish imitation as it is represented to be,” Ambedkar said.

Dr Ambedkar said, “Another criticism against the Draft Constitution is that no part of it represents the ancient polity of India. It is said that the new Constitution should have been drafted on the ancient Hindu model of a State and that instead of incorporating Western theories the new Constitution should have been raised and built upon village Panchayats and District Panchayats. There are others who have taken a more extreme view. They do not want any Central or Provincial Governments. They just want India to contain so many village Governments. The love of the intellectual Indians for the village community is of course infinite if not pathetic.”

Dr Ambedkar went on to say that this love of village communities seemed founded largely on “the fulsome praise bestowed upon it by Metcalfe [Sir Charles Metcalfe], who described them as little republics having nearly everything that they want within themselves”. “The existence of these village communities each one forming a separate little State in itself has according to Metcalfe contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India, through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great portion of the freedom and independence. No doubt the village communities have lasted where nothing else lasts. But those who take pride in the village communities do not care to consider what little part they have played in the affairs and the destiny of the country; and why?” he said. The survival of the village communities was no matter for pride, Dr Ambedkar felt.

“That they have survived through all vicissitudes may be a fact. But mere survival has no value. The question is on what plane they have survived. Surely on a low, on a selfish level. I hold that these village republics have been the ruination of India. I am therefore surprised that those who condemn Provincialism and communalism should come forward as champions of the

village. What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism? I am glad that the Draft Constitution has discarded the village and adopted the individual as its unit,” he said.

The chairman of the Drafting Committee said that while in introducing safeguards for minorities, the Committee merely followed the “decisions of the Constituent Assembly”, “speaking for myself, I have no doubt that the Constituent Assembly has done wisely in providing such safeguards for minorities as it has done.”“In this country both the minorities and the majorities have followed a wrong path. It is wrong for the majority to deny the existence of minorities. It is equally wrong for the minorities to perpetuate themselves. A solution must be found which will serve a double purpose... To diehards who have developed a kind of fanaticism against minority protection I would like to say two things. One is that minorities are an explosive force which, if it erupts, can blow up the whole fabric of the State. The history of Europe bears ample and appalling testimony to this fact. The other is that the minorities in India have agreed to place their existence in the hands of the majority.”Giving the example of Ireland, he said, “In the history of negotiations for preventing the partition of Ireland, Redmond said to Carson “ask for any safeguard you like for the Protestant minority but let us have a United Ireland. “Carson’s reply was “Damn your safeguards, we don’t want to be ruled by you.” No minority in India has taken this stand. They have loyally accepted the rule of the majority which is basically a communal majority and not a political majority. It is for the majority to realize its duty not to discriminate against minorities,” he said.

On fundamental rights

Dr Ambedkar said that fundamental rights could not mean absolute rights.

“The most criticized part of the Draft Constitution is that which relates to Fundamental Rights. It is said that Article 13 which defines fundamental rights is riddled with so many exceptions that the exceptions have eaten up the rights altogether. It is condemned as a kind of deception. In the opinion of the critics fundamental rights are not fundamental rights unless they are also absolute rights,” he said.

He then went on to distinguish between fundamental and non-fundamental rights.“The real distinction between the two is that non-fundamental rights are created by agreement between parties while fundamental rights are the gift of the law. Because fundamental rights are the gift of the State it does not follow that the State cannot qualify them,” he said.He also said that

while critics have claimed that fundamental rights in America are absolute, even in that country, they are limited by Supreme Court judgments, whereas in India, the limitations had been included in the Draft Constitution itself.

“What the Draft Constitution has done is that instead of formulating fundamental rights in absolute terms and depending upon our Supreme Court to come to the rescue of Parliament by inventing the doctrine of police power [as in the US], it permits the State directly to impose limitations upon the fundamental rights,” Dr Ambedkar said.

STATESMAN,NOV26,2022

“For timely justice, our judiciary is taking a lot of steps...”: PM Modi

During the Constitution Day celebrations programme in the Supreme Court, the Prime Minister also launched various new initiatives under the e-court project. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that for timely justice, the Indian judiciary is taking a lot of steps such as e-initiatives launched today to ensure ease of justice for all.

During the Constitution Day celebrations programme in the Supreme Court, the Prime Minister also launched various new initiatives under the e-court project. The project is an effort to provide services to litigants, lawyers and the judiciary through ICT enablement of courts. The initiatives launched by the Prime Minister include Virtual Justice Clock, JustIS mobile App 2.0, Digital court and S3WaaS Websites.

The day has been celebrated as Constitution Day since 2015, to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India by the Constituent Assembly in 1949. “Our country as the “mother of democracy”, is strengthening our constitutional beliefs. With the strength of Pro-People Policies, we are empowering the poor, marginalised and women with simplified laws. The eyes of the entire world are on India. Rapid development, rapid economic growth... the world is applauding India,” said PM Modi while addressing the event. The Prime Minister further said that our biggest strength is our Constitution. “We the people” in our constitution aren’t just three words but is a belief.”

“For timely justice, our judiciary is taking a lot of steps... including the e-initiatives that were launched today, ensuring ease of justice for all,” PM Modi. He said that everyone should enhance India’s prestige before the world and bring its contribution before them. “New opportunities are coming up before India. Crossing all hurdles, it’s going ahead. A week from now, India

will get the G20 presidency. It's big! As Team India, all of us should enhance India's prestige before the world and bring its contribution before them. It's our collective duty," he said.

The Prime Minister said, "I congratulate all of you for the e-initiatives and ensuring access to justice. Mahatma Gandhi used to say that our rights are our duties. In this "Amrit Kaal", the countrymen have to fulfil their duties."

He said that the spirit of India's Constitution is youth-centric and the development of the country is on the shoulders of the youth.

"Our constitution is open, futuristic and known for its progressive views. The spirit of our constitution is youth-centric. The development of our country is on the shoulders of the youth. From sports to startups, from information technology to digital payments, Yuvashakti is contributing to India's progress," said PM Modi. The Prime Minister also urged youths to take part in debates and discussions on Constitution to understand the constitution better. "To make the youth understand the constitution better, I urge them to participate more in discussions and debates regarding the constitution. The youth must know of the constituent assembly debates. It will strengthen India," he added. He said that the constituent assembly included 15 women. "From Durgabai Deshmukh to Hansa Mehta to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, all were instrumental in empowering the women of India," he said. PM Modi said that the vision for Amrit Kaal is a judicial system in which there is easy and speedy justice for all.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

PIB,NOV21,2022

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh lauds the role of Department of Pension for creation of 25 lakh Digital Life Certificates (DLCs) for Central Government pensioners in 20 days of Nation-wide campaign

Briefing Media in Delhi, the Minister was happy to note that out of 25 lakh DLCs, 2,20 lakhs have been created through Face authentication, thus providing a huge relief specially to the aged and infirm elderly population. The campaign was conducted from Srinagar in the North to Nagercoil (Kanyakumari District) in the South and from Guwahati in the East to Ahmedabad in the West. Objective of this campaign is to promote the use of Face Authentication technology and DLC thereby ensuring transparency and “Ease of Usage”: 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 lauded the Department of Pension & Pensioners’ Welfare for creation of 25 lakh Digital Life Certificates (DLCs) for Central Government pensioners in 20 days of nation-wide campaign.

Briefing the media in New Delhi, Dr Jitendra Singh informed that Department of Pension organized special awareness camps from 1st to 19th November, 2022 in different cities all over India from Srinagar in the North to Nagercoil (Kanyakumari District) in the South and from Guwahati in the East to Ahmedabad in the West. He said, out of 25 lakh DLCs, 2,20 lakhs have been created through Face authentication by latest Face Recognition Technology, thus providing a huge relief, specially to the aged and infirm elderly population.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, the objective of this nation-wide campaign is to promote the use of Face Authentication technology and DLC thereby ensuring transparency and “Ease of Usage”. He said, all the registered Pensioners’ Associations, Pension Disbursing Banks, Ministries of Government of India and CGHS Centers had been directed to promote the Digital Life Certificate/Face Authentication Technique for giving Life Certificate by organizing special camps for ‘Ease of Living’ of pensioners, thus setting an example of "whole of government" approach.

Dr Jitendra Singh informed that the specific cities covered so far are Delhi, Noida, Chandigarh, Mohali, Jammu, Srinagar, Nagpur, Pune, Allahabad, Jalandhar, Gwalior, Thrisur, Madurai, Nagercoil, Varodara, Ahmedabad, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Ambarnath (Mumbai), Bhubhneswar, Balaasore, Cuttack, Thirvanthapuram, & Jaipur. He said, in the following two weeks this department will conduct 14 more DLC awareness camps in different parts of the country. The campaign was widely appreciated by the pensioners residing in different parts of country, the Minister added.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, submission of Life Certificates is an important activity to be carried out by pensioners every year in the month of November (with special provision for pensioners aged 80 years and above to submit their Life Certificates in the month of October) to ensure continuity of their pension. He said, in the traditional mode, pensioners had to present themselves before the Pension Disbursing Authority for physical submission of their Life Certificate which entailed waiting at the bank branches in queues for this purpose. This was found inconvenient for the old, ailing and infirm pensioners and further, there was no mechanism for the pensioners to get a status regarding updation of their Life Certificates in the records of the Pension Disbursing Authority, the Minister added.

Dr Jitendra Singh took pride in stating that Department of Pension was the first in India to develop a Face Recognition Technology system based on Aadhaar database in association with Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to give Life Certificate from any Android based smart phone to overcome the challenge of certain pensioners not being able to give DLC due to fading bio-metrics. As per this facility, the identity of a person is established through face recognition technique and DLC gets generated. He added that this breakthrough technology, launched in November 2021, reduced the dependence of pensioners on external biometric devices and made the process more accessible and affordable to masses by leveraging smartphone-based technology. The Minister said, this was a milestone achievement in ensuring 'Ease of Living' for the elderly. The nation-wide campaign was conducted by the officials of DoPPW with the help of State Bank of India (SBI) & Punjab National Bank (PNB), who sponsored the campaign sites. The campaign saw the active participation of registered Central Government Pensioner Associations, the representatives of Indian Post & Payment Bank (IPPB), Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), National Informatics Centre (NIC) as well as Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA) in every city.

Dr Jitendra Singh also congratulated the banks for their wholehearted participation in the campaign. He said, SBI and in certain cities the Punjab National Bank joined hands with the Department and provided the Camp venues in different cities. Different officials of DoPPW have been nominated at different cities to oversee the progress of the Campaign.

Secretary, Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare and DARPG, V. Srinivas said on the occasion that to enhance 'Ease of Living' for Central Government pensioners, DoPPW has been promoting Digital Life Certificate i.e. Jeevan Pramaan extensively. He said, initially submission of DLCs using biometrics was commenced and thereafter the Department roped in the 50 registered Pensioners' Associations in different cities to promote DLCs.

Mr Srinivas informed that the Department further associated the Indian Post & Payment Bank (IPPB) to include DLC among one of the door-step services provided through the agency of its Gramin Dak Sevaks, numbering more than 1,90,000. Pension disbursing Banks were also asked to adopt the methodology of video based KYV method of Life Certification and a consortium of 12 Banks asked to provide door-step service for DLC. In order to prevent super senior pensioners aged 80 years and above, DoPPW issued orders permitting this age group to give their LC from October 1 itself in order to provide them an exclusive window and avoid rush at various pension disbursing bank branches. Indian Embassies/Consulates were advised to assist Pensioners living overseas who can now also give a DLC by receiving an OTP on their email.

Based on the feedback received of the Face Authentication App developed for this purpose, NIC was quick to respond and incorporate the same. For example, the life certificate could be opened in the App after receiving an OTP and downloading the same. But because of feedback received from pensioners, the Life Certificate can be accessed immediately after keying in the OTP. The State Bank of India officials at all locations came out in full strength to promote the campaign and their officials were seen enthusiastically participated even on holidays. Similarly, the participation by the Registered Pensioners' Associations was exemplary and their representatives helped in spreading awareness about the Face Authentication technique of LC.

PIB,NOV22,2022

As part of the Prime Minister's commitment to accord highest priority towards employment generation, Rozgar Melas organized at 45 locations across the country

Minister of State for Law and Justice Prof. S P Singh Baghel attends Rozgar Mela at Vasant Kunj, Delhi

As part of the Prime Minister's commitment to accord highest priority towards employment generation, Rozgar Melas were organized at 45 locations across the country today. On this occasion, the Prime Minister distributed Offer of Appointment (OOA) to 71,000 newly inducted recruits through Video Conferencing.

Minister of State for Law and Justice Prof. S P Singh Baghel, who attended the Rozgar Mela organized in the Shaurya Officers' Institute, CRPF, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi, addressed the gathering and explained the initiatives of the Government under the leadership of the Prime Minister for the welfare of the youth.



A total of 224 qualified candidates were present at the Institute. Appointment letters were provided to the candidates by Prof. S P Singh Baghel. Minister of State for Law and Justice Prof. S P Singh Baghel congratulated the candidates and advised them that this was a great opportunity for them to serve the nation during the glorious period and to keep up their preparations

for higher positions also. The employers were mainly from sectors like Defence, Finance, Education, Health, Railways, Home, Power, Water Resources, etc.

After the Prime Minister's address, Minister of State for Law and Justice Prof. S P Singh Baghel distributed physical copies of OOAs to some of the candidates. He also interacted with the candidates. The new appointees will join the government and serve the nation. They will play a significant role in nation building and witness India@47. This event is the second in the series (the first one was held on 22nd October 2022 at 50 locations) to provide 10 lakh appointments during the next one year as envisioned by the Prime Minister.

ECONOMIC TIMES,NOV24,2022

India's unemployment rate eases to 7.2% in July-September 2022: NSO survey

India's unemployment rate for people aged 15 years and above in urban areas eased to 7.2 percent in the fiscal second quarter ending September 30 from 9.8 percent a year earlier, indicating a sustained economic recovery following the coronavirus pandemic that had rendered millions jobless. Data from the National Statistical Office's 16th Periodic Labour Force Survey showed that the unemployment rate among females (aged 15 years and above) in urban areas slowed to 9.4 percent in July-September from 11.6 percent a year ago. In April-June, it was 9.5 percent.

The unemployment rate among males in urban areas eased to 6.6 percent in the fiscal second quarter from 9.3 per cent in July-September 2021. It was 7.1 per cent in April-June 2022. However, the comparison is with July-September 2021, when the rates had spiked primarily due to the staggering impact of Covid-related restrictions in the country. Unemployment rate is defined as the percentage of unemployed persons among the labour force. The unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above in April-June 2022 was 7.6 per cent in urban areas, the data showed. Labour force participation rate in CWS (Current Weekly Status) in urban areas for persons aged 15 years and above increased to 47.9 percent in the July-September quarter from 46.9 percent in the same period a year ago. It was 47.5 per cent in April-June 2022.

Labour force refers to the part of the population that supplies or offers to supply labour for pursuing economic activities for the production of goods and services and, therefore, includes both employed and unemployed persons. NSO launched PLFS in April 2017. On the basis of PLFS, a quarterly bulletin is brought out giving estimates of labour force indicators namely unemployment rate, Worker Population Ratio (WPR), Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), distribution of workers by

broad status in employment and industry of work in CWS. The estimates of unemployed persons in CWS give an average picture of unemployment in a short period of seven days during the survey period.

In the CWS approach, a person is considered unemployed if he/she did not work even for one hour on any day during the week but sought or was available for work at least for one hour on any day during the period. Labour force, according to CWS, is the number of persons either employed or unemployed on average in a week preceding the date of the survey. LFPR is defined as the percentage of the population in the labour force. WPR (in per cent) in CWS in urban areas for persons aged 15 years and above stood at 44.5 per cent in July-September, 2022, up from 42.3 per cent in the same period a year ago. It was 43.9 per cent in April-June, 2022. Fifteen Quarterly Bulletins of PLFS corresponding to the quarter ending December 2018 to the quarter ending June 2022 have already been released. The present Quarterly Bulletin is the sixteenth in the series for the quarter of July-September 2022.

ECONOMIC TIMES, NOV 24, 2022

Centre likely to raise wage threshold for EPFO's flagship retirement saving scheme

The government is likely to soon revise the wage ceiling for the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's (EPFO) flagship retirement saving scheme. This will increase the mandatory contribution by both employees and employers, helping workers save more for their retirement. The increase will also bring more workers under the EPFO's social security coverage.

Currently, the wage ceiling for the EPFO's Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) scheme is Rs 15,000 per month, which was last revised in 2014 from Rs 6,500 per month. The scheme is available only to enterprises that have more than 20 workers. An expert committee will be set up shortly to determine a higher wage ceiling, which will be indexed to inflation and reviewed periodically for coverage under EPFO, a person aware of the development told ET.

Money Matters



An expert committee to determine wage ceiling for EPFO

It would be indexed to inflation; would be reviewed periodically

Currently, it is ₹15,000 per month; could go up to ₹21,000

Will enhance PF kitty and expand coverage of EPFO

Initial EPFO proposal was to do away with all thresholds

Employers resisted as it would add to the wage and compliance cost

According to the person quoted above, the EPFO wage ceiling could even be aligned with the higher Rs 21,000 per month wage ceiling under the Employees' State Insurance Corporation. This will bring parity between the two social security schemes of the government run by the labour ministry and ease the compliance burden on establishments.

The ceiling serves two purposes. One, organised sector workers earning less than Rs 15,000 a month have to compulsorily become members of the EPF. Two, both employer and employee have to mandatorily make EPF contributions at the rate of 12% on the prescribed Rs 15,000 maximum wage. The employee can pay at a higher rate but the employer is not under any obligation to pay at such a higher rate. Internal estimates show approximately 7.5 million more workers will come under the ambit of EPFO, which currently manages social security deposits of 68 million workers, if it is enhanced to Rs 21,000 per month. EPFO subscribers get pension as well as insurance benefits under the scheme, over and above the provident fund benefits.

The move may, however, increase the annual wage cost for employers who will need to make matching EPF contributions on a higher wage and cover more employees. Employers have, therefore, suggested that the government assess its impact fully before changing the core structure of the EPFO. “The impact of any change in threshold may be analysed from the perspective of small-scale industries as they do not have deep pockets,” Sougata Roy Choudhury of CII said. EPFO had earlier this year envisaged doing away with employee threshold and wage ceiling under the scheme so that not just formal workers, but even self-employed people could enroll under the social security scheme.

However, the proposal met with stiff opposition from employers who felt it would add to their wage and compliance costs. Following this, the government decided to retain the original structure of EPFO with periodic revisions to the wage ceiling to widen the EPFO coverage.

MINT, NOV 26, 2022

Deepak Parekh and the case for optimism over India’s economic future

HDFC Chairman Deepak Parekh’s source of optimism is the expected fivefold rise in India’s middle class and doubling of income per head by 2031.

The India story may come back if policymaking becomes sound, and policy uncertainty and flip-flops are reduced.

HDFC Chairman Deepak Parekh made observations about India’s economy on Monday that merit attention. Speaking at the World Congress for Accountants in Mumbai, Parekh said that India is not decoupled from the world, and will face some

slowdown therefore, but that has not dulled his excitement over the economy's prospects: "I do believe India can grow from a \$3.4 trillion economy to a \$7.5 trillion one within the next five years. For India, it is the pace of growth that is exciting".

The economy's size may hit the \$7.5 trillion mark in five, six, seven or eight years, as the government also likes to say, but that's not the main thing here. The point is that India's economy continues to excite observers; there's no let-up in the interest level. This contrasts sharply with the unanimously dire outlook for advanced countries like the US and the UK which may not be able to escape economic difficulties and pain from the macroeconomic and geopolitical dynamics playing out, as well as the erosion of confidence in economies that no longer look as promising as they did until recently – like China and Turkey. When was the last time the US economy had interest rates at 5%? How will the Chinese economy cope with Beijing's bizarre and authoritarian covid protocols and the Biden administration's trade assault?

That India's promise remains intact despite all the shifts taking place all around is, of course, both a good and bad thing. Good because it shows faith in the economy's potential and resilience remains unscarred by the multiple challenges – both legacy bottlenecks such as weak capacities for policy making and implementation and newer ones thrown up by shocks such as covid and the shifting geopolitics. Bad because it can lead to complacency – as Mint SnapView has been highlighting ().

What's needed is to strike the right balance between optimism and bleak projections. Yes, India was slowing down even before the covid outbreak. The scarring by the pandemic added to the complications. The war in Europe isn't helping. Most importantly, the cumulative record of successive governments for disappointing policy decisions that hobble the economy remains largely unaddressed. Inflation will be a challenge for a few more quarters. The unemployment challenge remains intractable. And yet, the overall business mood isn't as bleak as the noisy public narrative suggests.

What's the case for optimism?

The aspiration used to be of 9-10 per cent Gross domestic product (GDP) growth. Even the most optimistic have given up on that hope now. But 6.5 to 7 per cent GDP growth, if sustained over years, will no longer be seen as disappointing, given the changed global context. For it reflects the economy's inherent resilience in the midst of a global economic tumult. Remember, growth, unless accompanied by acute deepening of inequalities, reduces poverty and grows the middle class. The speed of this change can be slow or fast depending on the quality of growth, which is why it is important to ensure the right kind of policies are put in place for quickening the pace.

Parekh said that the source of his optimism is the expected rise in India's middle class – fivefold to 25 million by 2031 from the present 5 million – alongside the expected rise in income per head from \$2,300 to \$5,200. He is right to feel kicked about the policies encouraging start-ups, roll-out of 5G services, and Gati Shakti, a national plan for infrastructure projects. As also the strides in digitalisation and financial inclusion. Indians, not too financially literate, are nevertheless taking to digital payments, outpacing the Chinese and even some developed countries, something Mint SnapView has been pointing out.

This structural shift will lower costs, and broaden and deepen linkages in the economy, resulting in rising efficiencies and productivities, opening up new opportunities for business and livelihoods. Plus, the use of digital payments is shifting business and trade from cash, creating trails, improving traceability by tax collectors. The impact is beginning to show in tax collections, as Mint SnapView has argued. Thus, providing the government funds required for development and growth-enhancing spending heads. Then, the global shift in consumption patterns is opening up opportunities India is well-placed to leverage, provided manufacturing and trade policies are corrected. Such as the electric vehicles segment. Led by the Tata Motors subsidiary, Tata Passenger Electric Mobility, which has earmarked ₹15,000 crore over the next three years, Suzuki Motor Corp (₹10,445 crore till 2026) and Hyundai Motor India (₹4,000 crore till 2028), car makers and ancillary suppliers have announced cumulatively investments of ₹70,630 crore over the next five years.

Finally, India benefits from shifting geopolitics and especially the heightened risk to global supply chains from their monopolisation by China. India wants to attract companies looking to diversify away from China, including in high-end manufacturing but especially in labour-intensive, low-skill manufacturing as a way of addressing India's chronic problem of under-employment of labour. The India story may come back if policymaking becomes sound, and policy uncertainty and flip-flops are reduced. In fact, to demonstrate some of this will be the best way to end the over-pessimism in the narrative currently.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

PIB,NOV21,2022

India takes over as Council Chair of Global Partnership on AI (GPAI)

MoS Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar represents India at the Summit

“India along with member states will work hard to build an AI framework that will be good for the citizens, with guardrails to prevent misuse”: Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar

National Data Governance Framework Policy with Indian Data Management Office will catalyse the next Gen AI startups:
MoS

India today assumed the Chair of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), an international initiative to support responsible and human-centric development and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

This comes close on the heels of India taking over the presidency of G20, a league of world’s largest economies at Bali, Indonesia. The Minister of State for Electronics & Information Technology and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar represented India virtually at the GPAI meeting held in Tokyo for the symbolic takeover from France, which is the outgoing Council Chair.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar said, “We will work in close cooperation with member states to put in place a framework around which the power of Artificial Intelligence can be exploited for the good of the citizens and consumers across the globe- and ensure that there are adequate guardrails to prevent misuse and user harm.”

Highlighting that AI is a kinetic enabler for taking forward current investments in technology and innovation, the Minister said that India is building an ecosystem of modern cyber laws and framework that is driven by three boundary conditions of openness, safety and trust and accountability.

With National Programme on AI in place and a National Data Governance Framework Policy and one of world's largest publicly accessible data sets programme in the works, the Minister reiterated India's commitment to efficient use of AI for catalyzing innovation ecosystem around AI, that can create good, trusted applications for our citizens and the world at large.

The NDGFP aims to ensure equitable access to non-personal data and focus on improving the institutional framework for government data sharing, promoting principles around privacy and security by design, and encouraging the use of anonymization tool. It also aims to standardise the government's data collection and management. The NDGFP along with the envisaged Indian Data Management Office IDMO shall catalyse the next Gen AI and Data-led research and startup ecosystem. The datasets programmes where anonymised non-personal data will be available for the entire AI ecosystem, also aims to boost the startup ecosystem.

AI is expected to add USD \$967 Bn to Indian economy by 2035 and USD 450–500 billion to India's GDP by 2025, accounting for 10% of the country's USD 5 trillion GDP target. GPAI is a congregation of 25 member countries, including the US, the UK, EU, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, and Singapore. India had in 2020 joined the group as a founding member. It is a first-of-its-type initiative for evolving better understanding of challenges and opportunities around AI. It works in collaboration with partners and international organisations, leading experts from industry, civil society, governments, and academia to collaborate to promote responsible evolution of AI and guide the responsible development and use of AI, grounded in human rights, inclusion, diversity, innovation, and economic growth. Japanese State Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications, Mr. Tsuge Yoshifumi, Japanese Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Mr. Makoto Nagamine, and French Minister for Digital Transition and Telecommunications, Mr. Jean-Noël Barrot, were among others who took part in the programme.

TRIBUNE, NOV 26, 2022

PSLV-C54 successfully places earth observation satellite into orbit

The 44.4 metre tall rocket lifts off at a prefixed time at 11.56am from Satish Dhawan Space Centre at this spaceport at the end of a 25.30-hour countdown

A Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle of ISRO on Saturday successfully injected the earth observation satellite (Oceansat) into a sun-synchronous orbit, Indian Space Research Organisation said on Saturday.

The 44.4 metre tall rocket lifted off at a prefixed time at 11.56am from Satish Dhawan Space Centre at this spaceport at the end of a 25.30-hour countdown. After reaching the intended orbit 17 minutes after PSLV-C54 lifted off, the Earth Observation Satellite or the Oceansat successfully separated from the rocket and was placed into orbit, ISRO chairman S Somanath said.

Scientists would perform lowering of the rocket to place the other co-passenger satellites into a different orbit which is expected to take place in a two-hour duration. The Earth Observation Satellite-6 is the third-generation satellite in the Oceansat series. This is to provide continuity services of Oceansat-2 spacecraft with enhanced payload specifications as well as application areas.

MINT,NOV26,2022

India's economy can readily ride out a global slowdown

Bhaskar Dutta

Western sanctions on Russia have worsened the global economy and hurt even the West while India's exposure to the rest of world's fortunes is too small for us to worry much

In January this year, the world economy was just about poised to recover from the ravages of the coronavirus pandemic. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February put to an end all hopes of a global recovery. The Chinese government's policy of stringent lockdowns to contain continuing outbreaks of covid was like rubbing salt on a wound. Global output contracted in the second quarter of the year due to downturns in Russia and China as well as virtually stagnant output in the US. Rapidly deteriorating growth prospects throughout Europe have ignited a debate about the possibility of a global recession during 2022 and 2023. With no signs of a ceasefire, Western nations have continued in their efforts to cripple the Russian economy by levying a broad range of sanctions. But these measures have had negative effects on their own economies too. Economic heavyweights such as Germany are heavily dependent on Russian energy exports because Russia produces nearly a fifth of global natural gas and a significant amount of oil too. Its energy exports provide the power required by European industries. Russia is also an important producer of several metals. It supplies a tenth of the world's production of aluminium and nickel. It is also an important supplier of other raw materials. Further, the closure of Russian airspace has hindered high-value air freight traffic. All these have caused large scale disruptions in global supply chains. Europe's relatively advanced economies have slowed down because of shortages in energy and industrial raw materials.

All countries importing grains have also experienced large inflationary pressures because Ukraine is a major exporter. The level of inflation has more than doubled in Eurozone, shooting up from less than 3% to well over 6%. A similar scenario was witnessed in the US. Very high rates of inflation have caused central banks to implement a synchronized wave of large bouts of monetary tightening to curb prices. This should succeed in dampening inflationary pressures over the course of 2023. However, the cost is likely to be a significantly sharper reduction in rates of growth than would have occurred otherwise. Global growth is projected to slow from an estimated 6.1% in 2021 to 3.6% in 2022 and 2023. This is 0.8 and 0.2 percentage points lower for 2022 and 2023 than projected in January. Beyond 2023, global growth is forecast to decline to about 3.3% over the medium term. How will the global slowdown in output affect the Indian economy? By all accounts, India will be the world's fastest-growing large country. Most pundits estimate that India will grow at around 6% during 2022-23. Of course, the Indian economy is not completely isolated from the world's. In fact, the current estimate of 6% is significantly lower than earlier estimates of 8% or more, the difference being the negative effects of the global slowdown. It could have been much worse. Fortunately, the sectoral composition of the Indian economy has helped in reducing the impact of global supply-chain disruptions. The services sector dominates the Indian economy by far, contributing over 50% of gross value added, while the manufacturing sector contributes less than 20%. Since disruptions of the global supply chain affect the manufacturing sector significantly more than they affect other sectors, the overall impact on the economy has been lower.

What could have been disastrous for our economy was the huge increase in energy costs following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. India is particularly vulnerable to oil shocks, since it imports over three-fourths of its energy requirements. Luckily, India has been able to strike a deal with Russia and has started importing large quantities of oil from Russia at reasonable prices. In this case, Western sanctions on Russia have actually helped India since Russia was hard pressed to find large customers other than China. At any rate, oil imports from Russia now account for a fifth of overall Indian oil imports. There may be attempts from Western countries to place restrictions on these imports since a price cap has been imposed on Russian oil as part of the overall sanctions. So far, India has resisted all such attempts. One consequence of the global slowdown, of course, is a reduction in demand for Indian exports. There has been a fall in exports of several items, including engineering goods, petroleum products, gems and jewellery, and textiles. Luckily, the impact on the overall rate of growth has not been disastrous so far, since exports constitute less than a fifth of our economy. Potentially more dangerous is that India may be importing inflation because of high prices abroad of a whole range of goods that India does import. This, combined with domestic pressures, has resulted in very high rates of inflation. The Reserve Bank of India has been forced to raise interest

rates to contain the price rise and this may turn out to be a big constraint on future growth. In times of global distress, it is natural to argue that the partial decoupling of the Indian economy from the world economy is a blessing, since it ensures that the domestic economy is insulated from the world economy. However, it should be kept in mind that this also prevents us from capturing much of the benefit when the world economy is booming.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

PIB,NOV21,2022

Cites Cop-19: Huge Relief to Handicraft Exporters of India

Highlights:

Rules for export of Dalbergia sissoo based products eased, exports to get a boost.

Rules for export eased at India's behest.

The 19th meeting of the Conference of Parties to Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (CITES) is being held in the scenic city of Panama from 14th to 25th of November 2022.

Shisham (Dalbergia sissoo) is included in Appendix II of the convention, thereby requiring to follow CITES regulations for the trade of the species. As of now every consignment of weight above 10 kg requires CITES permit. Due to this restriction exports of furniture and handicrafts made of Dalbergia sissoo from India has been continuously falling from an estimated 1000 crore Indian Rupees (~129 million USD) per annum before the listing, to 500-600 crore Indian Rupees (~64 to 77 million USD) per annum after the listing. The decrease in exports of Dalbergia sissoo products has affected the livelihoods of around 50,000 artisans who work with the species.

On India's initiative a proposal to clarify the quantity of Shisham (Dalbergia sissoo) items such as furniture and artefacts was considered in the current meeting. After sustained deliberations by Indian representatives, it was agreed upon that any number of Dalbergia sissoo timber-based items can be exported as a single consignment in a shipment without CITES permits if the weight of each individual item of this consignment is less than 10 kg. Further, it was agreed that for net weight of each item only timber will be considered and any other item used in the product like metal etc. will be ignored. This is a great relief for the Indian artisans and furniture industry.

Background:

It may be recalled that in its 17th meeting of Conference of Parties (CoP) at Johannesburg, South Africa in 2016, included all species of Genus Dalbergia in Appendix II of the convention, thereby requiring to follow CITES regulations for the trade of the species. In India, the species Dalbergia sissoo (North Indian Rosewood or Shisham) is found in abundance and is not treated as an endangered species. During the discussion it was duly acknowledged by the parties that Dalbergia sissoo was not at all a threatened species. However, concerns were expressed regarding the challenges in distinguishing different species of Dalbergia in their finished forms. The countries expressed that there was an urgent need for developing advanced technological tools for distinguishing the finished wood of Dalbergia, especially at the Customs point. Considering this aspect and in the absence of a clear technology for distinguishing the finished wood, the CoP did not agree to de-list the Species from CITES Appendix:II. However, the relief given in terms of weight of each item will solve the problem of Indian artisan communities to a great extent and will give a tremendous boost to exports of articles produced by them.

PIB,NOV22,2022

India jumps 2 spots higher, and now ranks 8th as per Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI, 2023)

- India amongst top 5 best performing countries on Climate Change.
- Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI 2023) puts India at best among G-20 countries.
- India improves 2 ranks in CCPI 2023, which was released in COP 27, assessing 59 countries and the European Union on climate change policies and actions.

India has been ranked amongst top 5 countries in the world, and the best among the G20 countries, based on its Climate Change performance. India jumps 2 spots higher, and is now ranked 8th as per Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI, 2023) published by German Watch, New Climate Institute and Climate Action Network International based in Germany. The latest report of CCPI, released at COP 27 in November 2022, shows Denmark, Sweden, Chile and Morocco as the only four small countries that were ranked above India as 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th respectively. The first, second and third ranks were not awarded to any country. In effect therefore, India's rank is the best amongst all large economies.

The CCPI aims to enhance transparency in international climate politics and enables comparison of climate protection efforts and progress made by individual countries. Published annually since 2005, the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) is an independent monitoring tool for tracking the climate protection performance of 59 countries and the EU. Every year, the CCPI sets off important public and political debates within the countries assessed. The climate protection performance of these 59 countries, which together account for 92% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, is assessed in four categories: GHG Emissions (40% of overall score), Renewable Energy (20% of overall score), Energy Use (20% of overall score) and Climate Policy (20% of overall score). India earned a high rating in the GHG Emissions and Energy Use categories, while a medium for Climate Policy and Renewable Energy. The aggressive policies of India towards rapid deployment of renewables and robust framework for energy efficiency programs have shown considerable impact. As per the CCPI report, India is on track to meet its 2030 emissions targets (compatible with a well-below-2°C scenario). The ranking given by CCPI places India as the only G-20 country in the top 10 rank. It may be mentioned here that India will now be assuming G-20 Presidency and it will be an opportune time to show the World, about its climate mitigation policies such as deployment of renewable sources of energy and other energy transition programmes. Union Minister for Power and New and Renewable Energy, Shri R. K. Singh highlighted that India's CCPI ranking is testimony to the leadership shown by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi towards addressing the global climate change despite pandemic and tough economic times. The top 5 rank globally reflects that India is implementing Energy transition programmes such as renewable capacity installation at much faster rate than anywhere in the world. He also highlighted various demand side flagship programs such as UJALA, PAT Scheme and Standards and Labelling Programme that have contributed significantly to this notable achievement.

TELEGRAPH, NOV 24, 2022

The clock's ticking

Climate change is the defining issue of the century but is clearly on the back-burner

Mahesh Rangarajan It is not often that the secretary-general of the United Nations, arguably the world's most visible diplomat and peace-maker, tells it like he sees it. At COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, António Guterres did just that. The planet is fast

approaching tipping points in terms of greenhouse emissions and their consequences. Climate change is the defining issue of the century but is clearly on the back-burner.

He was spot on vis-à-vis the projections. The figure of 1.5 degree Celsius rise in global temperatures is the limit needed for net-zero emissions by the mid-point of the 21st century. There is now little chance of this being achieved. Significant increase in methane has now been added to the specific evidence of the rise in carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions. These three chemical compounds will combine to push global temperatures up faster.

The proximate reasons for the inaction or slow action are not far to seek. Two years ago, Joseph Biden's election and the announcement of John Kerry as his envoy for climate change had raised hopes of an American initiative. Despite the pulls and pressures of domestic politics, the financial package and executive action approved by the outgoing Congress is the most far-reaching in history. Yet, there is a major hurdle ahead as climate-change deniers hold centre ground in the House of Representatives with its new Republican majority. At the global level, the war in Ukraine and the post sanctions crisis in Europe have put fossil fuels and nuclear power back on the agenda even in Germany, a leader in the shift towards renewables. The squeeze on Russian energy has led to higher prices from the oil-exporting countries in the Gulf and Southeast Asia. In the short run at least, energy transitions are on the back-burner, as Guterres hinted.

The larger issue that has been a stumbling block since the UN Convention of 1994 remains so. The gap between the rich world and most of the developing countries is yawning. Per capita comparisons may skew the picture for India, China, Indonesia or Brazil. But that apart, many sub-Saharan countries have very low use of nitrogenous fertiliser, let alone gas and oil. The brave promise of 100-billion-dollar-a-year aid from the developed countries was tiny. Yet, it has not been met even in one calendar year. Looking back at a somewhat longer time frame, it is evident that global environmental cooperation sought to take wings just when the great powers were losing interest in multilateral fora.

The first ever conference on human environment in 1972 was marred by the Cold War, with only two heads of government, those of Sweden and India, in attendance at Stockholm. The end of the 1980s saw new, science-based concerns about the decline of biological diversity and global climate change evoke wide spread concern. All eyes in Rio de Janeiro were on the

former president, George Bush, a veteran diplomat and senior leader. The United States of America did sign the agreement on biodiversity, but has dragged its feet on climate change ever since. Ronald Reagan's sustained attack on environmental regulation (1980-89) at home was matched by the undermining of the UN system, with funds for global environmental monitoring programmes being a casualty. It is true that in the post-1945 world, the US accounted for 40% of the global gross domestic product but it makes up far less than that figure today. But the average American still uses as much energy in a month as an Indian in a year as per the World Resources Institute.

But history holds out hope. The end of the Cold War was made possible by Reagan and Gorbachev, both eyeing a place in the history books. The long years of work by scientists and peace activists helped create a wider realisation that there would be no winners in a nuclear war. The climate crises may not be as explosive but is no less a challenge to the continuation of civilisation. It is a chimera to believe that the rich world will be spared the human and ecological costs of climate change. Guterres's counsel is timely. But time may not be at hand.

Mahesh Rangarajan teaches History and Environmental Studies at Ashoka University

PIB,NOV24,2022

Union Minister of Environment Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav addresses the special meeting of UN Country Team (UNCT) on CoP 27

The Union Minister of Environment Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav addressed the special United Nations Country Team (UNCT) on the key themes and takeaways from CoP 27 at UN House, today. The meeting was followed by the inauguration of the Climate Change Photo Exhibition with the Swiss Embassy at the UN House in New Delhi.

Shri Bhupender Yadav at the Special meeting of UNCT

Shri Bhupender Yadav inaugurating the Climate Change Photo Exhibition

Mr Shombi Sharp, United Nations Resident Coordinator in India, congratulated the Government of India on its vitally important contributions made at the recently concluded CoP 27 at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. He remarked that India's bold leadership on the climate agenda, and the innovative solutions increasingly emerging from government and private sector partners in India, are a beacon to the world for a more sustainable, just and equitable global future. In his address to the special UNCT meeting, Shri Bhupender Yadav said:

“Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be amongst you all in this special meeting with UN Country team which focuses on key takeaways and outcomes from recently concluded COP 27. I have just returned from COP27 and I am sure you would have followed its proceedings and read its outcomes. It was an implementation COP with a headline outcome on funding arrangements including a dedicated loss and damage fund. Today, I would like to hear your views on your approach to operationalize the COP27 outcomes in India, in keeping with our National Development Priorities. At COP26 in Glasgow, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi shared his vision of LiFE – Lifestyles for Environment as a key approach to promoting sustainability and combating climate change. Since then, much work has been done to translate this vision into a plan of action. Mission LiFE was conceptualized to take forward this message to the global community.

The UNSG has reinforced the importance of Mission LiFE, by participating in its launch event on 20th October at Kevadia, with PM Shri Narendra Modi. I am glad to share that the cover decision of COP-27, called Sharm el-Sheikh implementation plan, notes the importance of transition to sustainable lifestyles and sustainable patterns of consumption and production for efforts to combat climate change. India seeks to involve a billion people in this global mass movement of Mission LiFE. We made a start, with several LiFE related events at the India Pavilion during COP27. I appreciate the involvement of UNEP and UNDP in these events. One immediate task ahead is to create a LiFE compendium of global best practices on sustainable lifestyles. This will be a comprehensive repository containing best practices from around the world. I understand that UN INDIA is already working with NITI Aayog and MoEFCC in this regard. There could be many other ways to roll out the COP27 decision on transition to sustainable lifestyles. For example, UN India could consider organising a global conference

on Mission LiFE during India's G20 Presidency. Many UN agencies are implementing agencies under GEF and some are also accredited entities under GCF. We are now preparing a shelf of projects for the GEF 8 cycle. I expect that outcomes of COP27 on sustainable lifestyles, climate action in agriculture, mitigation work program and just transition would be factored in appropriately, in the upcoming projects.

COP27 has established a 4-year work program on climate action in agriculture and food security. Agriculture, the mainstay of livelihoods of millions of smallholder farmers, will be hard hit from climate change. We look at the agriculture sector primarily as a sector for adaptation and building climate resilience. We should not burden our smallholder farmers and pastoralists with mitigation responsibilities.

FAO, in particular, may note that India has kept mitigation in agriculture out of its NDCs. COP27 has also established a work program on just transition. For most developing countries, just transition cannot be equated with decarbonisation, but with low-carbon development. Developing countries retain the right to choose their energy mix and in achieving the SDGs. Just transition is not just an issue for individual countries, it is also about a global just transition. Developed countries taking the lead in climate action is therefore a very important aspect of the global just transition.

At COP27, there was an agreement to set up a loss and damage fund as part of wider funding arrangements for addressing, averting and minimizing loss and damage. The contours of this fund, including its contributors and beneficiaries, would be worked out later in the course of the coming year. India is voluntarily providing support as part of wider south-south cooperation. India bears no responsibility for the climate crisis, but stands in solidarity with the global south on loss and damage issues. UN agencies anchor many environment conventions and treaties. I would insist that the UN system remains steadfast in the protection of foundational principles of each of these conventions and treaties in its work in different countries.

For India, the principles of equity and CBDR-RC in the light of national circumstances remains, paramount. I urge you to ensure that these foundational principles are respected when you prepare projects for implementation in India. Red-tapism is the bane of all bureaucracies and I am afraid it does not spare the UN system either. Many reporting requirements under the multilateral environment conventions and treaties are funded through GEF projects. I am given to understand that three critical

projects on fulfilling reporting requirements under the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement have not yet taken off, even one year after its approval by GEF. Such delays are strictly avoidable. The concerned UN agency may kindly take note, and I request that these projects may definitely be launched in the coming month.

With these thoughts, I thank you for organising this interaction and I look forward to hearing your views.”

CURRENT EVENTS

PIB,NOV21,2022

Rashtrapati Bhavan will be open for public viewing for five days a week from December 1

Rashtrapati Bhavan will be open for public viewing for five days in a week from December 1, 2022. The Rashtrapati Bhavan tour will be available on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday (except on Gazetted Holidays) in five time slots i.e. 1000-1100h, 1100-1200h, 1200-1300h, 1400-1500h and 1500-1600h.

Apart from Rashtrapati Bhavan tour, people can visit Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum Complex six days in a week from Tuesday to Sunday (except on Gazetted Holidays.)Every Saturday, people can also witness the Change of Guard Ceremony at the Forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan from 0800 hrs to 0900 hrs. The Ceremony will not take place on Saturday if it is a Gazetted Holiday or if it is so notified by Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Visitors can book their slots online at the website <http://rashtrapatisachivalaya.gov.in/rbtour>.

PIB,NOV24,2022

PM to address closing ceremony of the year long celebrations of 400th Birth Anniversary of Lachit Barphukan on 25th November

Lachit Barphukan was General of the Royal Army of the Ahom Kingdom, who inflicted crushing defeat on Mughals in Battle of Saraighat in 1671

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the closing ceremony of the year long celebrations of 400th Birth Anniversary of Lachit Barphukan on 25th November, 2022 at 11 AM in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

It has been the constant endeavour of the Prime Minister to honour the unsung heroes in a befitting manner. In line with this, the country is celebrating 2022 as the 400th birth anniversary year of Lachit Barphukan. The celebrations were inaugurated in February this year by the then Hon'ble President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind in Guwahati.

Lachit Barphukan (24th November, 1622 — 25th April, 1672) was the famous General of the Royal Army of the Ahom Kingdom of Assam who defeated the Mughals and successfully halted the ever expanding ambitions of the Mughals under Aurangzeb. Lachit Barphukan inspired the Assamese soldiers in the Battle of Saraighat fought in 1671, and delivered a crushing and humiliating defeat on the Mughals. The heroic fight of Lachit Barphukan and his army remains one of the most inspiring military feats of resistance in the history of our country.

PIB,NOV27,2022

English rendering of PM's address in the 95th Episode of 'Mann Ki Baat' on 27.11.2022

My dear countrymen, Namaskar.

I extend a warm welcome to you all in 'Mann Ki Baat', once again. This programme is the 95th episode. We are fast moving towards the century of 'Mann Ki Baat'. This programme is another medium for me to connect with a 130 crore countrymen. Before every episode, reading letters from villages and cities, listening to audio messages from children to elders; it is like a spiritual experience for me.

Friends, I want to start today's program referring to a unique gift. There is a weaver brother in Rajanna Sircilla district of Telangana - YeldhiHariprasad Garu. He has sent me this G-20 logo woven with his own hands. I was surprised to see this wonderful gift. Hariprasad ji is such an expert in his art that he attracts everyone's attention. Hariprasad ji has also sent me a letter along with this hand-woven G-20 logo. In this he has written that it is a matter of great pride for India to host the G-20 summit next year. Amid the joy of this achievement of the country, he has prepared this logo of G-20 with his own hands. He has inherited this wonderful talent of weaving from his father and today he is engaged in it with full passion.

Friends, a few days ago I had the privilege of launching the G-20 logo and the website of the Presidency of India. This logo was chosen through a public contest. When I received this gift sent by Hariprasad Garu, another thought came to my mind. I was very happy to see how connected even a person sitting in a district of Telangana could feel with a summit like G-20. Today, many people like Hariprasad Garu have sent letters to me saying that their hearts have swelled with pride at the country hosting such a big summit. I will also mention to you the message of Subba Rao Chillara ji from Pune and Tushar Jagmohan from Kolkata. They have highly appreciated India's pro-active efforts regarding G-20.

Friends, the G-20 has a partnership comprising two-thirds of the world's population, three-fourths of world trade, and 85% of world GDP. You can imagine - India is going to preside over such a big group, such a powerful group, 3 days from now i.e. from the 1st of December. What a great opportunity has come for India, for every Indian! This becomes even more special because India was awarded this responsibility during Azadi Ka Amrit Kaal .

Friends, the Presidency of G-20 has arrived as a big opportunity for us. We have to make full use of this opportunity and focus on Global Good, world welfare. Whether it is peace or unity, sensitivity towards the environment, or sustainable development, India has solutions to challenges related to these. The theme that we have given “One Earth, One Family, One Future” shows our commitment to Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. We always say -

Om Sarvesham Swastirbhavatu.

Sarvesham Shanti Bhavatu.

Sarvesham Purnambhavatu.

Sarvesham Mangalambhavatu.

Om Shanti: Shanti: Shanti: ||

That is, there should be welfare of all, peace to all, fulfillment to all and well being for all. In the coming days, many programs related to G-20 will be organized in different parts of the country. During this period, people from different parts of the world

will get a chance to visit your states. I am sure that you will bring the diverse and distinctive colors of your culture to the world and you also have to remember that the people coming to the G-20, even if they come now as delegates, are tourists of the future. I urge all of you, especially my young friends on one more thing. Like Hariprasad Garu, you too must join the G-20 in one way or the other. The Indian logo of G-20 can be made, can be printed, in a very cool way, in a stylish way, on clothes. I would also urge schools, colleges and universities to create opportunities for discussions, debates and competitions related to G-20 in their respective places. If you go to the G20.in website, you will find many things there according to your interest.

My dear countrymen, on the 18th of November, the whole country witnessed new history being made in the space sector. On this day, India sent its first such rocket into space, which was designed and prepared by the private sector of India. The name of this rocket is – 'Vikram-S'. As soon as this first rocket of the indigenous Space Start-up made a historic flight from Sriharikota, the heart of every Indian swelled with pride.

Friends, 'Vikram-S' Rocket is equipped with many features. It is also lighter than other rockets, and also cheaper. Its development cost is much less than the cost incurred by other countries involved in space missions. In space technology, World class standard at a low cost, has now become the hallmark of India. Another modern technology has been used in making this rocket. You will be surprised to know that some crucial parts of this rocket have been made through 3D Printing. Surely, the name 'Prarambh' given to the launch mission of 'Vikram-S', suits it perfectly. This marks the dawn of a new era for the private space sector in India. This is the beginning of a new era full of self-confidence for the country. You can imagine the children who once made paper airplanes and used to fly them with their hands are now getting a chance to make airplanes in India itself. You can imagine those children who once used to draw shapes in the sky, looking at the moon and stars, are now getting a chance to make rockets in India itself. After space was opened to the private sector, these dreams of the youth are also coming true. As if these youth making rockets are saying, Sky is not the limit.

Friends, India is sharing its success in the space sector with its neighbouring countries as well. Just yesterday, India launched a satellite, which has been jointly developed by India and Bhutan. This satellite will send pictures of very good resolution

which will help Bhutan in the management of its natural resources. The launching of this satellite is a reflection of the strong Indo-Bhutan relations.

Friends, you must have noticed that in the last few episodes of 'Mann Ki Baat', we discussed a lot on Space, Tech, Innovation. There are two special reasons for this: one is that our youth are doing wonderful work in this field. They are thinking Big and Achieving Big. Now they are not going to be satisfied with small achievements. Secondly, in this exciting journey of innovation and value creation, they are also encouraging their other young colleagues and start-ups.

Friends, when we are talking about innovations related to technology, how can we forget drones? India is also moving fast in the field of drones. A few days ago we saw how apples were transported through drones in Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh. Kinnaur is a remote district of Himachal and there is heavy snowfall in this season. With this much snowfall, Kinnaur's connectivity with the rest of the state becomes very difficult for weeks. In such a situation, the transportation of apples from there is equally difficult. Now with the help of Drone Technology, delicious Kinnauri apples of Himachal will start reaching people more quickly. This will reduce the expenditure of our farmer brothers and sisters - apples will reach the market on time, there will be less wastage of apples.

Friends, Today our countrymen are making things possible with their innovations, which could not even be imagined earlier. Who would not be happy to see this? In recent years, our country has undertaken a long journey of achievements. I have full faith that we Indians and especially our young generation are not going to stop now.

Dear countrymen, I am going to play a small clip for you.....

All of you must have heard this song sometime or the other. After all, this is Babu's favorite song, but if I tell you that the singers who have sung it are from Greece, you will definitely be surprised! And this will also fill you with pride. This song has been sung by the singer from Greece - 'Konstantinos Kalaitzis'. He had sung it during the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Gandhiji. But today I am discussing him for some other reason. He has a great passion for India and Indian music. He has so much affection for India, that in the last 42 (forty two) years he has come to India almost every year. He has

studied about the origin of Indian music, different Indian musical systems, different types of ragas, talas and rasas as well as different gharanas. He has studied the contribution of many great personalities of Indian music; he has also closely understood the different aspects of classical dances of India. Now he has put together all these experiences related to India very beautifully in a book. There are about 760 pictures in his book named Indian Music. Most of these photographs have been taken by he himself. Such enthusiasm and fascination for Indian culture in other countries is really heartening.

Friends, a few weeks ago another news came which is going to fill us with pride. You will be pleased to know that in the last 8 years the export of musical instruments from India has increased three and a half times. Talking about Electrical Musical Instruments; their export has increased 60 times. This shows that the craze for Indian culture and music is increasing all over the world. The biggest buyers of Indian Musical Instruments are developed countries like USA, Germany, France, Japan and UK. It is a matter of fortune for all of us that our country has such a rich heritage of Music, Dance and Art.

Friends, we all know the great sage poet Bhartrihari for his 'Niti Shatak'. In one of the verses he says that one's attachment to art, music and literature is the real identity of humanity. In fact, our culture takes it above Humanity, to Divinity. In the Vedas, Samaveda has been called the source of our diverse music. Be it the Veena of Maa Saraswati, the flute of Bhagwan Krishna, or the Damru of Bholenath, our Gods and Goddesses are also attached with music. We Indians find music in everything. Be it the murmur of a river, the raindrops, the chirping of birds or the resonating sound of the wind, music is present everywhere in our civilization. This music relaxes not only the body, but also gives joy to the mind. Music also connects our society. If Bhangra and Lavani have a sense of fervor and joy, Rabindra Sangeet lifts our souls. Tribals across the country have different musical traditions. They inspire us to live in harmony with each other and with nature.

Friends, Our forms of music have not only enriched our culture, but have also left an indelible mark on the music of the world. The fame of Indian music has spread to every corner of the world. Let me play to you one more audio clip.

You must be thinking that bhajan kirtan is being performed in some temple in the neighbourhood. But these notes have reached you from Guyana, a South American country thousands of miles away from India. In the 19th and 20th centuries, a large number of people from here went to Guyana. They also took many traditions of India with them from here. For example,

as we celebrate Holi in India, in Guyana also the colors of Holi come alive with zest. Where there are colors of Holi, there is also the music of Phagwa that is Phagua. In Phagwa of Guyana there is a special tradition of singing wedding songs associated with Bhagwan Rama and Bhagwan Krishna. These songs are called Chautal. They are sung on the similar type of tune and at a high pitch as we do here. Not only this, Chautal Competitions are also held in Guyana. Similarly, many Indians, especially people from eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, had gone to Fiji too. They used to sing traditional bhajan-kirtans, mainly couplets from the Ramcharitmanas. They also formed many Mandalis associated with bhajan-kirtan in Fiji. Even today there are more than two thousand Bhajan-Kirtan Mandalis in Fiji by the name of Ramayana Mandali. Today they can be seen in every village and locality. I have given only a few examples here. If you see in the whole world, then this list of lovers of Indian music is very long.

My dear countrymen, we all always take pride in the fact that our country is home to the oldest traditions in the world. Therefore, it is also our responsibility to preserve our traditions and traditional knowledge, to promote it and to take it forward as much as possible. One such commendable effort is being made by some friends of our northeastern state of Nagaland. I liked this effort very much, so I thought, I'd share it with the listeners of 'Mann Ki Baat'.

Friends, the lifestyle of the Naga community in Nagaland, their art-culture and music attracts everyone. It is an important part of the glorious heritage of our country. The life of the people of Nagaland and their skills are also very important for a sustainable life style. In order to save these traditions and skills and pass them on to the next generation, the people there have formed an organization, that's name is 'Lidi-Cro-U'. ' The organization has undertaken the work of reviving beautiful facets of Naga culture which were on the verge of being lost. For example, Naga folk music is a very rich genre in itself. This organization has started the work of launching Naga Music Albums. So far, three such albums have been launched. These people also organize workshops related to folk music and folk dance. Youth are also given training for all these. Not only this, the youth are also trained in the traditional Nagaland style of apparel making, tailoring and weaving. Many types of products are made from bamboo in the Northeast. The youth of the new generation are also taught to make bamboo products. With this, these youth not only get connected with their culture, but also create new employment opportunities for them. People at Lidi-Cro-U try to make more and more people know about Naga folk-culture.

Friends, there will be such cultural styles and traditions in your region too. You too can make such efforts in your respective areas. If you are aware of any such unique effort being made somewhere, then you must share that information with me as well.

My dear countrymen, we it has been said here -

Vidyadhanam Sarva Dhanam Pradhanam

That is, if someone is donating knowledge, then he is doing the noblest work in the interest of the society. Even a small lamp lit in the field of education can illuminate the whole society. It gives me great pleasure to see that many such efforts are being made across the country today. Bansa is a village in Hardoi, 70-80 kilometres away from Lucknow, the capital of UP. I have come to know about Jatin Lalit Singh ji of this village, who is engaged in kindling the flame of education. Jatin ji had started a 'Community Library and Resource Centre' here two years ago., His centre has more than 3000 books related to Hindi and English literature, computer, law and preparing for many government exams. In this library, the choice of the children has also been taken full care of. Whether it is comic books or educational toys present here, children are very fond of them. Small children come here to learn new things while playing. Be it offline or online education, about 40 volunteers are busy guiding the students at this center. Everyday about 80 students of the village come to study in this library.

Friends, Sanjay Kashyap ji of Jharkhand is also giving new wings to the dreams of poor children. In his student life, Sanjay ji had to face the paucity of good books. In such a situation, he decided that, he would not let the future of the children of his region be dark, due to lack of books. Because of this mission, today he has become the 'Library Man' for children in many districts of Jharkhand. When Sanjay ji had started working, he had got the first library built at his native place. Wherever he was transferred during his job, he would get involved in the mission of opening a library for the education of poor and tribal children. While doing this, he has opened libraries for children in many districts of Jharkhand. His mission to open a library is taking the form of a social movement today. Be it Sanjay ji or Jatin ji, I especially appreciate them for their myriad such efforts.

My dear countrymen, the world of medical science has made a lot of progress with the help of research and innovation as well as state-of-the-art technology and equipment, but some diseases, even today, remain a big challenge for us. One such disease is - Muscular Dystrophy! It is mainly a genetic disease that can occur at any age, in which the muscles of the body begin to weaken. It becomes difficult for the patient to do even his small tasks of daily life. The treatment and care of such patients require great sense of service. We have such a centre at Solan in Himachal Pradesh, which has become a new ray of hope for the patients of Muscular Dystrophy. The name of this centre is 'Manav Mandir'; it is being run by the Indian Association of Muscular Dystrophy. Manav Mandir is a wonderful example of human service true to its name. OPD and admission services for the patients started here three-four years ago. Manav Mandir also has the facility of beds for about 50 patients. Along with Physiotherapy, Electrotherapy, and Hydrotherapy, diseases are also treated here with the help of Yoga-Pranayama.

Friends, through all kinds of hi-tech facilities, this centre also tries to bring a positive change in the lives of the patients. A challenge associated with Muscular Dystrophy is also a lack of awareness about it. That's why, this centre organizes awareness camps for patients not only in Himachal Pradesh but across the country. The most encouraging thing is that the management of this organization is mainly done by people suffering from this disease, like social worker, Urmila Baldi ji, President of Indian Association Of Muscular Dystrophy Sister Sanjana Goyal ji, and other members of this association. Shriman Vipul Goyal ji, who played an important role in the formation, is playing a very important role for this institution. Efforts are also on to develop Manav Mandir as a hospital and research centre. With this, patients will be able to get better treatment here. I heartily appreciate all the people trying in this direction, as well as wish the best for recovery of all the people suffering from Muscular Dystrophy.

My dear countrymen, the creative and social endeavours of the countrymen that we discussed in today's 'Mann Ki Baat' are examples of the country's energy and enthusiasm. Today every countryman is trying to do something different for the country in one field or the other, at every level. In today's discussion itself, we saw that in an international event like G-20, one of our weaver companions understood his responsibility and came forward to fulfil it. Similarly, some are making efforts for the environment, others are working for water; many people are doing extraordinary work... from education, medicine and science technology to culture-traditions. This is because, today every citizen of ours is realising one's duties. When such a

sense of duty rises within the citizens of a nation, its golden future is automatically ensured, and, in the golden future of the country itself, also lies for all of us, a golden future.

I once again salute the countrymen for their efforts. We will meet again next month and will definitely talk about many more such encouraging topics. Do keep sending your suggestions and ideas. Many thanks to all of you!

PIB,NOV27,2022

Saras sales touch record high at the 41st India International Trade Fair, did a business of over Rs. 6 crores

More than 300 craftsmen from 26 States exhibited their products in SARAS Aajeevika Mela

Saras Aajeevika Mela 2022 concluded today, breaking all its old records with a business turnover of more than Rupees 6 crores in last 14 days. The finest handicraft and handloom products from the remote areas of Rural India were displayed at the SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2022, organised by the Ministry of Rural Development and National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) at the 41st India International Trade Fair (IITF) at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. More than 300 craftsmen participated and showcased their products through around 150 stalls in the exhibition. Around 300 women from self-help groups from 26 States displayed handicraft, handloom and natural food items from different rural areas across the country in these stalls. Huge number of people visited Saras Aajeevika Mela during the trade fair in Pragati Maidan. Saras remained the favourite choice of the visitors due to decorated stalls, spectacular theme pavilion and cultural programs in the evening. The famous SARAS Aajeevika Mela, focusing on the theme of ‘tradition, art, craft and culture’ is one of the most prestigious government initiatives, that not just offers best of the cultural heritage, but also tells the story of rural women donning the hat of an entrepreneur at a national level platform.

A wide range of products from over 26 States were exhibited for sale at the SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2022. The SARAS Aajeevika Mela showcased the best of its collection in handloom sarees, dress materials, accessories and organic handicraft products from different states across India. Each stall, each product and each of the participating rural SHG women had a story to share. SARAS offered the listed products at the exhibition.

Handicraft: Bamboo art and water hyacinth products from Assam; Madhubani paintings and Sikki craft from Bihar; Candles, Soap, Wooden name plates from Chhattisgarh; Wooden toys, decorative items from Goa and Gujarat; Metal art, Terracotta item, Artifacts from Haryana; artificial flower art from North East; Jewellery from Karnataka; Footwear from Maharashtra; Sabai handicrafts, Brass item, Golden grass products from Odisha; Bangles from Bihar; Jute Hand bags from West Bengal were some of the showcased items.

Handloom: Silk saree, cotton saree, handloom cloth, cotton suit from Odisha, Bihar and Chhattisgarh; bedsheets from Uttar Pradesh; Kantha Stich sarees and dress materials from West Bengal; exclusive sarees of Telangana and Kerala; Woollen and Pashmina shawls of Jammu & Kashmir; dress materials, woollen shawls and jackets from Uttarakhand, woollen shawls from Himachal Pradesh; hand crafted jutties and mojerries, leather items of Rajasthan, leather lamp sheds, painting and wood craft of Andhra Pradesh.

Food items: Natural food items, gram-flour, rice, cashew nut, organic pulses from Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, spices and coffee from Kerala, tea leaves from Sikkim, organic vegetables and spices from Uttarakhand; medicinal herbs, rice and honey from Uttar Pradesh and mahua ladoo from Chhattisgarh etc. The SARAS Aajeevika Mela helped in spreading the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of 'Vocal for Local, Local to Global'

About SARAS Aajeevika Mela:

SARAS Mela is an initiative by the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission [DAY-NRLM], Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Govt. of India to bring the rural women SHG members formed under DAY NRLM, under one platform to showcase their skills, sell and build linkages with potential market players at fair price.

PIB, NOV 27, 2022

Vice President of India to confer Shilp Guru and National Awards to the Master Craftspersons on Monday, 28th November, 2022

Shri Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Textiles, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Commerce & Industry to preside over the function. Shilp Guru and National Awards aim to give recognition to outstanding craftspersons in the handicrafts sector

The Union Ministry of Textiles will be organizing Shilp Guru and National Awards to master craftspersons for the year 2017, 2018 and 2019 on Monday, 28th November 2022.

The Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar will be the Chief Guest of the award ceremony. The Union Minister of Textiles, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Commerce & Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal will preside over the function. Smt. Darshana Vikram Jardosh, Minister of State for Railways and Textiles will be the Guest of Honour at the event. The Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) has been implementing the scheme of National Awards for master craftspersons since 1965 and Shilp Guru Awards was introduced in 2002. These Awards are being conferred every year to legendary master craftspersons of handicrafts whose work and dedication have contributed not only to the preservation of rich and diverse craft heritage of the country but also to the resurgence of handicraft sector as a whole. The main objective is to give recognition to outstanding craftspersons in the handicrafts sector. The awardees represent almost all states and UTs of the country, as well as different craft styles of different locations.

Due to pandemic, the awards for the last three years are being conferred together.

The Handicrafts Sector plays a significant & important role in the country's economy. It provides employment to a vast segment of craftsperson in rural & semi urban areas and generates substantial foreign exchange for the country, while preserving its cultural heritage. The Handicrafts sector continues to contribute substantially to employment generation & exports.