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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

PIB,SEP27,2022

POSHAN Abhiyan 2022: Various activities such as T3 camps (test, treat, talk), IFA distribution, seminars, Ayush for anemia, webinars, quiz being conducted throughout the country

Recipe competition, Traditional food practices and awareness rallies also being organised

A total of 12.77 lakh activities conducted during Poshan Pakhwada, 2022; 5,03,411 activities on Anemia prevention, 7,18,149 activities on Ayush for anaemia during pregnancy and 56,168 webinar based activities on role of Ayush to address anemia held. Government includes staple food fortification from Central Ministries for schemes/programs in multiple States as part of its comprehensive strategy to tackle anemia

During the ongoing Poshan Maah 2022, for anemia prevention and treatment in children, adolescent girls pregnant and lactating mothers, various activities such as T3 camps (test, treat, talk), IFA distribution, seminars, Ayush for anemia, webinars, quiz and recipe competition, traditional food practices, awareness rallies are being conducted throughout the country. Anemia is a condition in which the number of red blood cells (RBCs), and consequently their oxygen-carrying capacity, is insufficient to meet the body's physiological requirements.

Dietary habits play a critical role in the development of iron deficiency and subsequent development of iron deficiency anemia. While iron deficiency anemia is the most common form and is relatively easy to treat through dietary changes. Food based approaches to increase iron intake through dietary modification/ fortification / diversification and provision of hygienic environment are important sustainable strategies for preventing Iron Deficient Anemia in the general population.

As part of its comprehensive strategy to tackle anemia, Government of India has included staple food fortification from Central Ministries for schemes/programs in multiple States. As a part of Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) strategy under Jan Andolan, around 6,278 Anemia camps, 1,853 Outreach activities in urban slums, 855 Quiz competitions for students, and 1,63,436 activities were carried out on anemia during Poshan Pakhwada, 2022 in March. It is worth mentioning, that Ministry of WCD in convergence with the Ministry of Ayush conducted a total of 12.77 lakh activities during Poshan Pakhwada, 2022 which included 5,03,411 activities on Anemia prevention, 7,18,149 activities on Ayush for

anemia during pregnancy and 56,168 webinar based activities on role of Ayush to address anemia. Besides, during Poshan Maah 2021, 27,55,905 activities on Ayush for anaemia during pregnancy and 63,013 anemia camp based activities were conducted.

POSHAN Abhiyaan is a programmatic approach in addressing the life cycle issues of malnutrition. Reduction of anemia is one of the important objectives of the POSHAN Abhiyaan in convergence with key Ministries/ Departments, mainly Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoH&FW). A range of efforts are underway to improve the integration of nutrition interventions into the existing health platforms through various strategic measures.

Under POSHAN Abhiyaan, efforts are also being made to strengthen processes for community engagement, empowerment of beneficiaries and behavioural change towards better nutrition for which the Abhiyaan provides a platform for organizing Community Based Events (CBEs) in Anganwadi Centres. Under Community Based Events, messages related to public health for improvement of nutrition and to reduce illness, prevention of anemia, importance of nutritious food, diet diversity etc. are being conducted. Many States/UTs have developed indigenous best practices like use of iron utensils for cooking to reduce iron deficiency, integrating Ayurveda products and formulations with supplementary nutrition etc.

PIB,SEP28,2022

Ministry of Home Affairs declares Popular Front of India (PFI) and its affiliates as ‘Unlawful Association’

The Popular Front of India (PFI) and its associates or affiliates or fronts have been found to be involved in serious offences, including terrorism and its financing, targeted gruesome killings, disregarding the constitutional set up of the country, disturbing public order etc. which are prejudicial to the integrity, security and sovereignty of the country.

Therefore, the Ministry of Home Affairs found it necessary to curb the nefarious activities of the organization and has hence declared the Popular Front of India (PFI) along with its associates or affiliates or fronts including Rehab India Foundation (RIF), Campus Front of India (CFI), All India Imams Council (AIIC), National Confederation of Human Rights Organization (NCHRO), National Women’s Front, Junior Front, Empower India Foundation and Rehab Foundation, Kerala as an “unlawful association” under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

PIB,SEP28,2022

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh asks State Governments to facilitate the Central Deputation of IAS and other All India Services officers. The Minister addresses the Annual Conference of Principal Secretaries of States/UTs looking after Personnel, General Administration and Administrative Reforms. Dr Jitendra Singh solicited the co-operation of the State Governments in completing all reviews of service records of Members of the Service pending with them expeditiously, under intimation to DoP&T. 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 asked State Governments to facilitate the Central Deputation of IAS and other All India Services officers.

Addressing the Annual Conference of Principal Secretaries of States/UTs looking after Personnel, General Administration and Administrative Reforms, the Minister said, Central Deputation is part of the federal structure in our country and urged the State Governments to cooperate with the Central Government to address the concerns in this regard. He said, an All-India Service officer is an important interface of the Government, both within the State as well as the Centre. Dr Jitendra Singh said, there is already a laid down structure for Cadre Management of All India Services and the same needs to be followed in letter and spirit. A particular aspect in this regard is the deployment of the All-India Service officers at Centre, the Minister added.

Dr Jitendra Singh underlined that the Central Government, with the sole objective of weeding out the deadwood in order to maintain a high standard of efficiency and initiative in the State/Centre, carries out intensive review of service records of Members of the Services which has been provided under Rule 16(3) of AIS (DCRB) Rules, 1958. The Minister solicited the co-operation of the State Governments in completing all such reviews pending with them expeditiously, under intimation to DoP&T.

Dr Jitendra Singh informed that during the current year, the Central Government has successfully allotted 180 IAS officers through Civil Services Examination and around 434 vacancies have been determined for recruitment through induction from State Services that are to be filled up soon. The Minister said, he would also request the State Governments to follow the guidelines relating to effective service and vigilance management of All India Services officers circulated by the Central Government from time to time. Dr Jitendra Singh said that after the Covid Pandemic, this Conference is a revival of the tradition of Annual Conferences with State Secretaries in charge of personnel matters to discuss and engage on matters of mutual concern and interest.

Dwelling on the training aspect, Dr Jitendra Singh said, to get the best out of a government officer, he or she should be adequately trained and the Central Government has prepared effective training modules for training its officers. He said, the Central Government has also devised a module for State Government officials, particularly those working at cutting edge level and urged the State Governments to take full advantage of the same. The Minister said, the officers of All India Services form the backbone of Indian administration and it is important that concerted efforts are put in by the Government of India and by the State Governments, to achieve the objectives of good governance by effective implementation of governmental policies and programs. He said, there is need to have a platform where interaction at regular intervals between this Department and other stakeholders continues to take place.

The Government of India and the Government of States are the biggest employers of the country. A Government job is the dream job for every citizen, cutting across all sections of the society. The people look up to the Government job not only because it provides the best facilities, salary package and job security but also because the selection process is open to all and is merit based. Dr Jitendra Singh said, “I am happy to inform you that the Central Government has taken initiative to fill all the vacant posts under it in a mission mode and expressed hope that the State Governments too would be undertaking similar exercise. While getting a government job remains a dream for every aspirant, the aspect of doing the job with integrity and devotion and living up to the expectations of the public attains equal significance, particularly in today’s scenario.

Dr Jitendra Singh congratulated Secretary, DOP&T and her team for their effort to make this interactive meeting a regular event and added that he would support such continued interaction with the representatives of the State Govt. by DOPT.

INDIAN EXPRESS, SEP29, 2022

Democracy in Kashmir: Indira’s failure, Vajpayee’s success

Radha Kumar writes: As a new party — Ghulam Nabi Azad’s Democratic Azad Party — is born in Jammu and Kashmir, Modi-led Centre must learn from the past. Only a free and fair election can revive peace-building in the former state

Radha Kumar

Ghulam Nabi Azad’s re-entry into Jammu and Kashmir’s politics with the launch of a new party has once again put the focus on the long-overdue elections in the former state. May 2022 marked the completion of four years since the elected government

fell. Since then, the erstwhile state has been under direct administration by the Union. Though the Narendra Modi administration has repeatedly promised assembly elections, it appears that the earliest time for holding them might be spring 2023.

To understand the impact that elections might have on the former state, it is important to note how the context has changed over the past four years. While Jammu and Kashmir was under President's Rule, the Union parliament divided the state. The new Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir was given an assembly with curtailed powers, along the lines of the Delhi assembly. The reorganisation act was immediately challenged in the Supreme Court by the Valley's chief political parties as well as engaged citizens like myself. Our petitions are still to be heard.

In the meantime, the Modi administration made far-reaching alterations to Jammu and Kashmir's polity. It replaced the state subject certificates with domicile certificates that opened up property and voting rights to a large number of temporary as well as long-time residents, it altered land laws and affected forest rights, it allocated mining rights to industry from outside the former state, it removed the right to free education up to the post-graduate level, it dissolved the Jammu and Kashmir administrative service, and it made anyone even remotely related to a militant liable to dismissal. Its latest act was to redo the delimitation of electoral constituencies, as ordered by the reorganisation act. After the delimitation commission submitted its report in May this year, the Jammu and Kashmir administration began to revise the voters' list, announcing the possible addition of as many as two and a half million new voters. Given the absence of a recent census — the 2020 census exercise was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and has yet to resume — it is difficult to understand how the figure was arrived at.

Like the delimitation commission's bizarre exercise, which took radically divergent population yardsticks for Jammu province and the Kashmir Valley without offering any justification, the revision of the voters' list has given rise to further suspicion of the Modi administration's intent — from seeking demographic change to manipulating the voters' list — to install a BJP-led or compliant administration in the former state.

The suspicion is not baseless. According to BJP members, the party formed a coalition with the Mufti Mohammad Sayeed-led People's Democratic Party (PDP) to gain insider knowledge of the latter. Having gained what they sought, they withdrew from the alliance, unseating his daughter Mehbooba Mufti's administration. Twenty-one months later, they engineered a split

in the PDP leading to the founding of Apni Party, which was the latest entrant to Jammu and Kashmir's politics until the advent of Azad's risibly named Democratic Azad Party (DAP).

The next assembly elections, whenever they are held, will see a larger number of political parties in the fray than ever before. But the extent to which parties like the Apni Party or DAP will impact the electorate is doubtful. In the Valley, the vast majority of seats are likely to go to the National Conference (NC) and PDP, both of which have strenuously opposed the Modi administration's actions since 2019. Though the removal of special status is popular in Jammu, the BJP might not do as well as they did the last time, since Jammu too has suffered as a result of the new domicile certificates, land laws and industrial policies. New voters, such as refugees from Pakistan, a large proportion of whom live in Jammu, might swell BJP votes but most likely only in and around Jammu city which would have gone to the BJP anyway. The probable shortfall in BJP seats might be taken up by DAP or ultranationalist Jammu parties, but it might equally well be divided between these and the NC or PDP. Unless the elections are blatantly rigged, the prospect of a BJP-led or supported administration being elected is dim at best. The spectre of rigging already hangs over the next election, with allegations of gerrymandering by the delimitation commission and over the prospective voters' list. Yet the need for a free and fair assembly election — preferably one that allows civil society observers, as has happened in the past — has never been greater. The memory of the partially-rigged 1987 election is fresh in the Valley. The alienation from Delhi that the people of the Valley felt following two cross-border wars and a series of political blunders by the Indira Gandhi administration is even stronger today, this time due to the actions of the Modi administration from 2019 onwards.

Despite an overweening security grid that has brought down the number of armed attacks by local as well as cross-border groups, support for insurgency has grown in the Valley and targeted attacks on Pandits, panchayat officials and the police continue. The administration might fear that a return to democracy, likely to loosen heavy security restrictions, will lead to an increase in violence. The answer to that lies in India's own experience. Atal Bihari Vajpayee ensured free and fair elections in 2002 at a time when the insurgency was at its height. Jammu and Kashmir paid a high cost in terms of lives lost in attacks on candidates and campaigners. But the elections were followed by new policies of non-interference in state governance, along with peace negotiations with armed groups as well as Pakistan, which were continued by Vajpayee's successor, Manmohan Singh. Together, they soon led to a sharp fall in attacks and casualties and the restoration of a functioning government. The peace-building years of 2002-2012 also laid the foundation for India to use the UN's Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to target Pakistan-based terrorists.

A free and fair election in 2023 can revive peace-building in the former state. The strongest confidence-building measure would be to restore statehood prior to elections and shelve the delimitation commission's recommendations. Since the former requires repeal of the reorganisation act, shelving the latter will be easy. It was constituted under the act and should vanish along with it. The belief that installing a compliant administration would pacify the Valley was held by Indira Gandhi too. She failed. Her failure, and Vajpayee's success, are lessons worth remembering by the current administration.

Radha Kumar is author of *Paradise at War: A Political History of Jammu and Kashmir* and a former interlocutor for the state
TELEGRAPH, OCT1, 2022

Potent weapon

The rigid imagination of satyagraha

Hilal Ahmed

Satyagraha is one of the highly misused, distorted and misrepresented political metaphors in the Indian context. Governments, political parties, social movements, non-governmental organisations and even the corporate world are obsessed with it. There is a strong assumption that satyagraha is a 'tolerable' technique to assert powerlessness in a peaceful manner, simply to register one's victimhood and relative marginalisation.

This uncontested acceptability of satyagraha is inextricably linked to a particular image of Gandhi. He is invoked as an old, ever-compromising, exhausted, and non-assertive personality who rationalises satyagraha as a weapon of the weak. The popular Hindi saying, 'Majburi ka naam Mahatma Gandhi', hence, gets justified.

This rigid imagination of satyagraha is highly problematic. It goes against the central premise of Gandhian praxis, which is based on profound philosophical thinking and deep adherence to social and political transformation. Gandhi's satyagraha is a radical programme of political action based entirely on the purity of individual commitment. The retrieval of Gandhi's own explanation of satyagraha, in this sense, is very relevant to commemorate him as an original, creative and courageous political thinker.

Gandhi, we must note, is a difficult practitioner of political ideas. He always takes unthinkable positions on social and political issues while celebrating his inconsistencies. According to him, “I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent... When anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine... do well to choose the latter of the two on the same subject” (Harijan, April 29, 1933). This crucial advice becomes more complicated when Gandhi categorically gives priority to his acts and actions over his writings. He says: “My writings should be cremated with my body. What I have done will endure, not what I have said and written” (Harijan, May 1, 1937). These provocative statements also underscore Gandhi’s carefulness. He avoids any generalisation of concepts, such as swarajya and satyagraha, even though they were central to all his experiments and practices.

We must, therefore, avoid attempts to recover any ‘real’ Gandhian meaning of satyagraha. Instead, we need to do two things. First, we must read Gandhi the way he would like to be read; and, second, his writings must be recognised as a specific form of political action. This possible re-reading of Gandhi, in my view, might help us discover a different explanation of satyagraha. It is worth noting that Gandhi used the term, ‘passive resistance’, in describing his initial struggle in South Africa. However, after some time, he found this expression to be rather misleading. This led to the search for an appropriate term. According to Gandhi, his relative, Maganlal Gandhi, suggested the word, ‘sadagraha’ (firmness in a good cause). Gandhi liked the word, but he did not find it linguistically appropriate. He amended it and eventually it became ‘satyagraha’.

Gandhi, however, does not stop here. One finds at least three fundamental differences between passive resistance and satyagraha in his writings. First, passive resistance is a strategic move taken by a political group to achieve a larger objective. Satyagraha is not practised as a strategy. Rather, it is an individual quest for exploring an internal ‘truth’. Gandhi writes: “The very nature of Satyagraha is such that the fruit of the movement is contained in the movement itself. Satyagraha is based on self-help, self-sacrifice and faith in God” (Satyagraha in South Africa, 1928, p. 172).

Second, passive resistance is a weapon of the weak because it is based on a hierarchical, competitive, and an ever-conflicting relationship between the weak and the powerful in a given situation. Satyagraha, on the other hand, is the weapon of the strongest. It excludes the use of violence in any shape or form to achieve harmony and peaceful coexistence. Gandhi reminds us: “a Satyagrahi must never forget the distinction between evil and the evil-doer. He must not harbor ill-will or bitterness against the latter. He may not even employ needlessly offensive language against the evil person, however unrelieved his evil

might be... For it is an article of faith with every Satyagrahi that there is none so fallen in this world but can be converted by love” (Young India, August 8, 1929).

Finally, passive resistance is based on a possibility that once power is achieved by the weaker group, it might not hesitate to practise brute force as per the contextual requirement. Satyagraha strongly adheres to the idea of the love force. It is expected from a satyagrahi to have complete faith in the doctrine, ‘Truth is God.’ Gandhi argues: “... Such a universal force necessarily makes no distinction between kinsmen and strangers, young and old, man and woman, friend and foe... Love does not burn others, it burns itself. Therefore, a Satyagrahi... will joyfully suffer even unto death” (Young India, February 27, 1930). This rather idealistic picture of satyagraha as a self-sacrificing technique based on the love force also underlines a very different notion of radical politics. A careful reading of Gandhi’s writings on this subject introduces a few basic preconditions which he identifies for an impactful satyagraha.

Satyagraha in the ‘last instance’: Gandhi makes it very clear that as a political technique satyagraha should not be practised hurriedly. In the Gandhian schema, satyagraha requires careful consideration and thinking. According to him, “Satyagraha is never adopted abruptly and never till all other and milder methods have been tried” (Young India, January 14, 1926).

Satyagraha as self-realisation: Gandhi does not define satyagraha as a kind of political correctness. For him, the objective of satyagraha is not only to question the external exploitative structures but also to make an individual judgment on one’s own belief system and commitment. Gandhi makes a powerful claim: “a person who claims to be a Satyagrahi always tries by close and prayerful self-introspection and self-analysis to find out... whether he is not himself capable of those ‘very evils’ against which he is out to lead a crusade” (Young India, August 8, 1929).

Satyagraha and public opinion: Gandhi recognises the importance of favourable public opinion. He is fully aware of the fact that satyagraha as a technique would become meaningful only if it is supported by strong public opinion. For him, “... a Satyagrahi... must first mobilize public opinion against the evil which he is out to eradicate... when public opinion is sufficiently roused against a social abuse even the tallest will not dare to practice or openly to lend support to it. An awakened and intelligent public opinion is the most potent weapon of a Satyagrahi” (Young India, August 8, 1929).

This Gandhian reading makes it clear that the official programmes sponsored by the governments to publicise good governance or the fashionable candlelight marches led by Opposition parties/ self-claimed liberals asserting victimhood

cannot be called satyagraha. There is an element of ‘passive resistance’ in these acts which is often highlighted as a Gandhian technique. This intentional overlapping of passive resistance and satyagraha works in favour of the political class. It becomes easier for the political class to establish Gandhi as an old, useless symbol. Hence, satyagraha emerges as a weapon of the weak, something which Gandhi categorically opposed and rejected.

Gandhi offers us an outline of a radical theory of satyagraha, highlighting its capacity as a political method in different contexts. And he also warns us about the possibilities of its conceivable misuse.

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TELEHRAPH,OCT2,2022

The right choice

Shashi Tharoor for Congress president

Mukul Kesavan

Shashi Tharoor for president. The last time I heard that said was 1974 when Tharoor was campaigning to become the president of the College Union Society at St. Stephen’s. He was eighteen, he wore preposterous mutton-chop whiskers, spoke exactly as he does now, and it was widely believed that he was a shoo-in. And so it proved. I have a black-and-white photograph of Tharoor being chaired by jubilant supporters as they triumphantly marched down the college’s main corridor, holding him aloft. Tharoor was the kind of student who, in an American context, would have been voted ‘the most likely to succeed’ by his peers. Given middle-class definitions of success in the mid-Seventies, Tharoor’s career fulfilled that early promise. Instead of the Indian Administrative Service, he set his sights on a global bureaucracy and nearly became the secretary-general of the United Nations. When desi fiction in English boomed in the aftermath of *Midnight’s Children’s* critical success, Tharoor rode that wave too with his contemporary take on the Mahabharata, *The Great Indian Novel*. So far, so conventional. Tharoor was doing exactly what a precocious, high-performing, English-speaking desi was meant to do. I remember coming across his book on Indira Gandhi’s foreign policy in *Bahri Sons* in Khan Market sometime in the mid-Eighties and thinking, ‘well, that was quick’. His short book on Nehru, his novels riffing on Bombay cinema and communal violence, were all of a piece with the preoccupations of the turn-of-the-century anglophone desi. It was his political turn in 2009 that made his career

trajectory interesting. There had been several instances of English-speaking politicians taking to parliamentary politics. Most of them, though, chose the Rajya-Sabha route to Parliament. Tharoor's standing in contemporary Indian politics has a great deal to do with the fact that he has won three successive Lok Sabha elections from his constituency in Thiruvananthapuram.

You might argue that Mani Shankar Aiyar was a kind of proto-Tharoor, with his preternatural fluency, his prior civil service career, his Lok Sabha seat, and his trick of annoying the Congress high command when he let his English run away with him, but the differences between the two men are more important than the similarities. Tharoor is sometimes indiscreet, but he's never intemperate in the way Aiyar often was. In fact, the grouse progressives have with Tharoor is that he is, if anything, too civil to the Bharatiya Janata Party. One way of understanding Tharoor as a politician is to see him as an uber Boris Johnson (or to see Boris Johnson as a second-order Tharoor). Both men have a 'look-at-me' charisma, they make great play with their hair, they are the very opposite of the anonymous politician, they can produce copy on virtually anything and they are both constantly underestimated as politicians because their narcissism tricks people into thinking that they're unserious men. The problem with this comparison is that while Tharoor can out-Johnson Johnson on every metric, his political arena is India not Britain. It isn't hard to see that Tharoor is made for the Oxford Union but the question is, is he a plausible leader of the Indian National Congress?

The case against Tharoor virtually writes itself. He's too angrez to be a successful retail politician in a modern India where Hindi is a prerequisite for pan-Indian presence. He is too savarna to lead the Opposition against the BJP in this post-Mandal era. He has never held a major portfolio as a minister and he has never run a state government. Finally, the scandals that have attended his political career (the IPL allegations, the death of his wife, Sunanda Pushkar) are sometimes flagged as disqualifying. What is the best case for Tharoor? For one, the fact that across India, large swathes of people know who Shashi Tharoor is. Name recognition is an invaluable quality in a politician and Tharoor has reservoirs of it. At a pan-Indian level, the Congress's other hopefuls are as candles to Tharoor's sun. This has something to do with his enormous social media presence, the fact that cameras love him, and the effortlessness with which he can command television time.

Besides, Hindi may not be Tharoor's first language (we know which language that is) but it is one of his many languages. When he first ran for Parliament in 2009, he was widely mocked as an outsider, dismissed as a deracinated carpetbagger whose Malayalam was so rudimentary that he wouldn't stand a chance. Given that he has won his seat three times, the last time by nearly a hundred thousand votes, it's a reasonable assumption that his vernacular skills are up to the task of winning

elections. He speaks both Hindi and Bengali and no one should bet against Tharoor turbocharging his Hindi into eloquence if the leadership of the Congress becomes a real prospect. The idea that language is an insuperable obstacle for someone who speaks five languages is silly. Also, if there is anyone who can make English politically sexy in India, it's Tharoor.

More interestingly, Tharoor has gone to some lengths to establish his Hindu credentials. He has written a book actually called *Why I Am A Hindu*, he has trimmed on the Sabarimala question to stay on the right side of orthodox believers and he never loses an opportunity to underline the fact that he is a vegetarian believer. In Modi's India, he has secured his flanks by staking out what passes as the mainstream of Indian politics. He has combined this with being India's best-known polemicist against the iniquities of colonialism. With his Oxford Union video and his book, *An Era of Darkness*, Tharoor has set up shop as scourge of the raj. The net result of this is that Tharoor has reinvented himself as a plausibly Hindu patriot and he has done this with much greater finesse than Arvind Kejriwal and his followers. It's important to recognise that Tharoor is campaigning to run the Congress, not the country. His prospects in a general election against Modi make for an excellent parlour game but they have little bearing on his suitability for the present task. And that is to take charge of a political party that has become defunct in the hands of its dynasts and restore to it some semblance of life. His principal opponent, Mallikarjun Kharge, is a formidable politician. A veteran of Karnataka politics, he has also been the leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha for a whole parliamentary term. For the Congress to make a Dalit its president would be a powerful symbolic move. But he is also 80 years old and a Gandhi family loyalist, scarcely the best qualifications to lead the Congress into the future.

On the face of it, Kharge is the clear favourite. He has the party's grandees on his side, even the G-23, the group of disgruntled Congressmen, which had earlier called for organisational reform. The truth is that in any unrigged pan-Indian electoral college that we can imagine, Tharoor would handily best Kharge. If, despite the organisation men, Tharoor pulls off an unlikely victory, the Congress will seem less like a shambling zombie than it currently does. This won't be a tremendous transformation but it'll beat being dead. If he doesn't, the Congress will return to its dynastic afterlife and Tharoor will go back to being the former president of the College Union Society, St. Stephen's College.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

PIB,SEP26,2022

National launch of JALDOOT App

Union Minister of Rural Development and Panchayati, Shri Giriraj Singh will launch the App tomorrow

Ministry of Rural Development developed “JALDOOT App” to be used across the country, to capture the water level of selected wells in a village. Ministry of Rural Development has developed “JALDOOT App” that will be used across the country to capture the water level of selected wells in a village. Union Minister of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Shri Giriraj Singh will launch the “JALDOOT App” at a function in New Delhi tomorrow. The Jaldoot app will enable Gram Rojgar Sahayak (GRS) to measure the water level of selected wells twice a year (pre-monsoon and post-monsoon). In every village, adequate number of measurement locations (2-3) shall need to be selected. These will be representative of the ground water level in that village.

The app will facilitate panchayats with robust data, which can be further used for better planning of works. The ground water data could be utilised as part of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) and Mahatma Gandhi NREGA planning exercises. Further, the data can also be used for different kinds of research and other purposes.

The country has taken many steps for improvement of water management both in the rural and urban areas, through watershed development, afforestation, water body development and renovation, rainwater harvesting and so on. However, withdrawal of ground water, as also utilization of surface water sources has reached critical levels in many parts of the country, resulting in significant depletion of water levels causing distress to the community, including farmers. Therefore measurement and observation of the levels of water tables across the country has become necessary. The other attendees at the Jaldoot app launch function tomorrow will include Union Minister of State for Rural Development and Steel, Shri Faggan Singh Kulaste; Union Minister of State for Rural Development, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti and Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj, Shri Kapil Moreshwar Patil, Secretary Department of Rural Development, Shri Nagendra Nath Sinha; Secretary, Department of Land Resources, Shri Ajay Tirkey; Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Shri Sunil Kumar and senior officers from the Ministry. Representatives from all States/UTs will join the programme through Video-Conferencing.

PIB,SEP27,2022

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh distributes sewing machines to slum dweller women at Sardar Patel Camp near Mother Teresa Crescent, New Delhi to mark the Seva Pakhwada; Also visits Old Age Home and interacts with senior citizens. Minister says, various activities like organizing blood donation camps, free health check-up camps, free medical implants to Divyangjan, free Covid booster doses and distribution of ration kits are happening during Seva Pakhwada from 17th September to 2nd October across the country. Dr Jitendra Singh urged managers of the Sardar Patel Sewing Centre to help these women to hone their skills in making affordable and sturdy cloth bags as an alternate to single use plastic and promised to procure all their finished products by Kendriya Bhandar. The Minister also interacts with about 30 old age home senior citizens at Sandhya Home for Senior Citizen's at Netaji Nagar and promised to construct a Guest Room for the visiting relatives of senior citizens and to organize regular medical camps at old age home.

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 distributed sewing machines to slum dweller women at Sardar Patel Camp near Mother Teresa Crescent, New Delhi to mark the Seva Pakhwada.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Jitendra Singh said, Union Ministries and BJP ruled States are celebrating the birthday of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi by organising Seva Pakhwada from 17th September to 2nd October across the country. During the service fortnight, Union and State Ministers and party workers are rendering their services in various activities like organizing blood donation camps, free health check-up camps, distribution of ration kits, free medical implants to Divyangjan, free Covid booster doses. The Minister also informed that during the Seva Pakhwada, TB patients are also being adopted for a year by Union Ministers and BJP leaders to take care of daily needs to accomplish PM Modi's vision of TB-free India by 2025. Earlier, Dr Jitendra Singh interacted with each of the beneficiaries of sewing machines and expressed happiness that many girls and women are skilled in sewing, but were lacking the machines to make both ends meet. He said, this step will not only empower them, but will also help to achieve atma-nirbharta (self-sufficiency) in economic terms. The Minister urged managers of the Sardar Patel Sewing Centre to help these women to hone their skills in making affordable and sturdy cloth bags as an alternate to single use plastic and promised to procure all their finished products by Kendriya Bhandar

Dr Jitendra Singh said during the Seva Pakhwada, we have celebrated the birthday of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya on 25th September, known for his philosophy of Antyodaya that means the "rise of the last person". The Minister said that pakhwada

will end Gandhi Jayanti on 2nd October, whose vision was of "wiping every tear from every eye".Dr Jitendra Singh also distributed healthy food kits containing one litre juice, chyavanprash pack, biscuits, chana dal, Dalia, mixed dal, Horlicks to about 125 poor women on the occasion.

In another event, Dr Jitendra Singh interacted with about 30 old age home senior citizens at Sandhya Home for Senior Citizen's at Netaji Nagar. Most of the senior citizens including 10 women are retired government servants and teachers and they expressed satisfaction over the facilities and arrangements at the care home. Listening to their grievances, Dr Jitendra Singh promised to construct a Guest Room for the visiting relatives of senior citizens and to organize regular medical camps at old age home. He also agreed to provide extra nursing care for some of the senior citizens. All of them were given healthy food kits from Kendriya Bhandar, Delhi.

PIB,SEP27,2022

Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is being signed amongst Deptt. of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Government of India, and Amazon Internet Private Limited

A Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is being signed amongst Deptt. of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Government of India, Sector Skill Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPwD) and Amazon Internet Private Limited on 28.09.2022 at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre at 1:45 pm. The main objective of this MoU is to jointly provide skill training and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. It also envisages mobilisation of PwDs for skill training by the DEPwD, designing of job roles for e-commerce sector by SCPwD and providing skill training and hiring of PwDs. DEPwD will be represented by Shri Kishor B. Surwade, Deputy Director General, SCPwD by Shri Ravindra Singh, CEO, Amazon Internet Private Limited by Shri Akhil Saxena, Vice President, Operations APAC/MENA/LATAM.

Such initiatives of all the parties would create better opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) by imparting job specific, practical and e-commerce skills in the supply chain sector to enhance their sustainable employability in the job market as well as to enable them to become entrepreneurs. The MoU will be signed in the gracious presence of Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment, Dr. Virendra Kumar.

PIB,SEP28,2022

Centre extends Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY) for another three months (October 2022-December 2022). Free good grains at 5 kg per person per month for all the beneficiaries of NFSA will be continued till December, 2022. PMGKAY has so far had an estimated subsidy of Rs 3.45 lakh crore in six phases

Phase VII of PMGKAY from Oct to Dec entails an estimated subsidy of Rs. 44,762 Crore

The total outgo of foodgrains in Phase VII is expected to 122 LMT

Decision will ensure that poor and vulnerable sections of society are supported for the forthcoming major festivals

In pursuance of the pro-people announcement made by Hon'ble Prime Minister in 2021 and successful implementation of additional food security under PMGKAY, the Union Cabinet has approved the extension for the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY-Phase VII) for a further period of 3 months i.e. October to December 2022. At a time when the world is battling with the effects of Covid on its decline and insecurity due to various reasons, India has been successfully maintaining food security for its vulnerable sections while taking necessary steps to keep availability and affordability for common man.

Recognising that people have gone through a difficult period of pandemic, Govt has decided to extend PMGKAY for a period of three months so that poor and vulnerable sections of society are supported for the forthcoming major festivals like Navratri, Dussehra, Milad-un-nabi, Deepawali, Chhath pooja, Gurunanak dev Jayanti, Christmas, etc. which they can celebrate with great gaiety and community for festivities. With a view to ensuring this, Govt. has approved this extension of PMGKAY for three months, so that they continue to enjoy the benefits of easy availability of foodgrains without any financial distress.

Under this welfare scheme, 5 kg of food grain per person per month is provided free of cost for all the beneficiaries covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) [Antodaya Anna Yojana & Priority Households] including those covered under Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). Financial implication for the Government of India has been about Rs. 3.45 Lakh Crore upto Phase-VI of PMGKAY. With the additional expenditure of about Rs. 44,762 Crore for Phase-VII of this scheme, the overall expenditure of PMGKAY will be about Rs. 3.91 lakh crore for all the phases. The total outgo in terms of food grains for PMGKAY Phase VII is likely to be about 122 LMT. The aggregate allocation of food grain for phases I- VII is about 1121 LMT.

So far, PMGKAY has been in operation for 25 months as under

Phase I and II (8 months) : April'20 to Nov.'20

Phase-III to V (11 months) : May'21 to March'22

Phase-VI (6 months) : April'22 to Sept.'22

PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY), started during difficult time of COVID-19 crisis, has provided food security to the poor, needy and the vulnerable households/beneficiaries so that they do not suffer on account of non-availability of adequate foodgrains. Effectively it has doubled the quantity of monthly foodgrains entitlements being normally delivered to beneficiaries. Going by the experience of earlier phases, the performance of PMGKAY-VII is expected to be on the same high level as achieved before.

PIB,SEP30,2022

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh says, the government job mind-set impediment to Start-Up culture

The Minister inaugurates the first-of-its-kind Start-ups Expo in Jammu covering areas of Agriculture, Aroma, Dairy, Pharma, IT, Computer and Communications. The Minister says, Start-up culture in North India has yet to catch up the imagination of the youth and entrepreneurs in comparison to South, which has taken a magnificent lead

engaging also a chain of globally recognised Start-Ups. A new wave of Agritech start-ups has emerged in the country in the last few years, solving problems related to supply chain management, cooling and refrigeration, seed management and distribution, besides helping farmers to access a wider range of markets: Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ministry of Science and Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ministry of Earth Science; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Space and Atomic Energy, Dr Jitendra Singh today said, the government job mind-set is proving an impediment to Start-Up culture, mainly in North India.

Dr Jitendra Singh gave full credit to the futuristic vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who had given a call for "Start-Up India Stand Up India" from the ramparts of Red Fort in his Independence Day address of 2015 that initiated a mass interest,

as a result of which the number of Start-Ups in India has increased from mere 350 in 2014 to over 77,000 in 2022 with more than 100 unicorns, while India under Modi has achieved 3rd ranking in the world in the StartUp ecosystem.

Inaugurating the first-of-its-kind Start-Up Expo in Jammu, covering areas of Agriculture, Aroma, Dairy, Pharma, IT, Computer and Communications, Dr Jitendra Singh said that Start-Up culture is yet to fully catch up the imagination of the youth and entrepreneurs in some of the North Indian States, as comparison to some of the South Indian States, which have taken a magnificent lead, engaging also a chain of globally recognised Start-Ups. He said, it is important to take note of some of the exemplary instances of many young entrepreneurs who are seen quitting their lucrative jobs in the MNCs to establish their own Start-Ups, as these young entrepreneurs are now beginning to realise the possibility of greater fortunes in this.

Dr. Jitendra Singh pointed out that the Start-Up movement in Jammu and Kashmir has been relatively slow, even though the "Purple Revolution" of India was born in J&K and J&K is also the birthplace of the grand Aroma Mission. He hoped that its impact would be realised through the success stories of various Agri-based Start-Ups, besides in the fields of Dairy and Pharma.

Dr Jitendra Singh underlined the contribution of cities like Bengaluru and Chennai for the Start-Up boom in India and said that the innovators, incubators, and entrepreneurs are making a global mark by focussing on areas like 5G, artificial intelligence, drones, semiconductors, Block chain, green energy and Space economy. The different Ministries and departments headed by him, informed Dr Jitendra Singh, are providing attractive support by way of both financial assistance as well as technical hand-holding and facility to carry the Start-Up products to the market, which also holds a lucrative livelihood opportunity. But unfortunately, particularly in this region, many of the potential beneficiaries are not able to avail of it because the awareness is lacking although all information is available on websites and portals.

Dr Jitendra Singh regretted that even though Start-Up is a very high priority for the Modi Government and urged upon the media persons to put out at least one Start-Up success story a week, to serve the cause of the youth. Calling for promoting Agri-tech Start-Ups in a big way, the Minister said, Agriculture is one of the important pillars of the Indian economy as 54 percent of the Indian population depends directly on agriculture and it accounts for around 20 percent of GDP. He said, the success story of CSIR promoted Aroma Mission of Lavender cultivation in Jammu and Kashmir needs to be replicated in other States.

The Minister pointed out that a new wave of Agri-tech Start-Ups has emerged in the country in the last few years and these Start-Ups are solving problems related to supply chain management, cooling and refrigeration, seed management and distribution, besides helping farmers to access a wider range of markets. He said, the young entrepreneurs are now quitting their jobs in the IT sector and MNCs to establish their own Start-Ups, as these young entrepreneurs are now beginning to realise that investing in agriculture is one of the very few safe and profitable businesses. Dr Jitendra Singh said, 'Kisan Drones' could be adopted in a big way for promoting crop assessment, digitisation of land records, spraying of insecticides, and nutrients and pointed out that countries like Israel, China and the US have transformed several agriculture practices in their country with the use of technology. Some of the prominent Start-Ups that took part in the Expo are- Anmol Shakti Farmer Producer Company Ltd, Fermentech Labs Pvt. Ltd, Marine Gate Incubation Centre (MAGIC), Vrinda Agrifarm Technologies, Vanix Technologies Private Limited, Aroma, Bhaderwah, Urban Air Labs, Pahadi Amrut, Ahuja Engineering Services Pvt Ltd, Genetico Research & Diagnostics, Scanpoint Geomatics Limited, Paradox Sonic space research association (PSSR India), Paradox Sonic space research association (PSSR India), Sengathali Biofiber Private Limited, Earthtech Renewables LLP, Kidaura Innovations Pvt. Ltd., Verdant Impact Private Limited (Earlier known as Starskill Consultancy Private Limited), Scientech Technologies Pvt. Ltd., Himalayan Essential Oils Producer Company Ltd., SRNAS OPC Pvt Ltd, JK Aroma Ltd, Gear Technologies, UBreathe, ESPAL CAN Pvt .ltd, Suraj shreechemicals, Sahil Apiaries and Beehive Products, Kashmir Trout, Yuktika Biotech, Rudra Shakti herbs Pvt Ltd.

TELEGRAPH,OCT1,2022

Far Ahead: Editorial on SC's historic ruling on abortion

This was also the first judgment in which the apex court reportedly acknowledged marital rape

The Supreme Court of India has demonstrated in recent times what women's autonomy should mean. It permitted a woman to terminate her pregnancy when her live-in relationship broke down. Yesterday, in a progressive judgment, the Supreme Court ruled that all women had the right to abortion under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act; any distinction between married and unmarried women in this regard was artificial and constitutionally unsustainable. The ruling would come as relief to thousands of unmarried women who are not rape survivors but are just sexually active. This may have been what the court indicated when it reportedly said that law must evolve with the times. Against the hurdles to legal abortion throughout the world, reportedly making 67 per cent of abortions in India unsafe, this judgment was striking in its clarity and justness. A

woman's autonomy over her body was also reproductive autonomy, a principle Indian society ignores. But contraception, the number of children and abortion should be decisions taken without considering social factors. While the United States of America remains largely tilted against abortion, many other countries often permit abortion after assessments of the effects of pregnancy on the woman's mental and physical state. China's permissiveness, meanwhile, is tied in with its population policies. The Supreme Court here ruled that there would be no need to prove rape before an external forum for the purposes of the MTP Act. This exemplifies the freedom to exercise rights, something courts in many other countries seem reluctant about.

This was also the first judgment in which the Supreme Court reportedly acknowledged marital rape. Although the court directed that marital rape should be included in the definition of rape only within the purview of the MTP Act, it did articulate the horror of a woman being forced to raise a child with a spouse who subjects her to mental and physical harm. The framing of the offence seems limited, but the reported references to intimate partner violence and the possibility of non-consensual sex in a consensual relationship may act as stepping stones to an understanding of marital rape in a misogynistic culture that believes, without always saying it, that male coercion alone can save the 'sacred' institution of marriage. The Supreme Court's judgment on abortion rights may have given Indian women more to hope for.

ECONOMIC TIMES, OCT 2, 2022

The global economic slowdown could hit India's plans for a higher export trajectory

Shantanu Nandan Sharma

Earlier this week, the Union ministry of commerce and industry decided to postpone the release of its much - anticipated Foreign Trade Policy, a set of five-yearly guidelines and instructions that focuses primarily on boosting exports. The latest version, 2015-20, expired two years ago and has since been on serial extensions, first due to the Covid-19 pandemic and now thanks to uncertain global economic conditions. The document was almost ready when officials disagreed on the timing of its release, ET has learnt. Some insisted that these turbulent times called for a well laid-out policy to forge ahead, while others, who finally prevailed, contended that such a long-term policy should be launched only during a phase of economic tranquillity, if not buoyancy, and not when India's key export markets, the US and Europe, were experiencing a massive economic downturn triggered by the Russia-Ukraine war, among others. The new policy, as of now, will be unveiled only after six

months. “Releasing a foreign trade policy is not enough. As the government is targeting a yearly export of \$1 trillion (by 2030), it must also bring in a funding mechanism to incentivise exporters,” says Ajay Sahai, director-general, Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO). “The global slowdown has started impacting us. One, the demand for highvalue products has started shrinking. Two, prices of raw materials and intermediates which India exports in huge quantities have drastically fallen in recent months.” The global economic slowdown, along with price rise and currency fluctuations, is bound to affect India’s bid for a higher export trajectory. The question is no longer about whether exports will be hit but to what extent.

At the beginning of the current fiscal year, there was a sense of optimism as India had clocked an all-time high export figure of \$676 billion (\$421 billion in goods and \$255 billion in services) in FY22, well above the \$527 billion of pre-Covid FY20 and the \$497 billion of FY21.

RISE & FALL

Indian exporters began with a bang this fiscal year — with a 19.7% jump in overall (merchandise and services) exports in April-August 2022 as compared with the same period last year. The first sign of trouble was spotted in August when the month’s merchandise export of \$33.9 billion had merely grown by 1.6% year-on-year. The number for September is likely to be released mid-October but exporters whom ET has spoken to did not exude much confidence. Exports seem to have begun a turbulent path downhill.

The finance ministry’s monthly economic review for August also points to how the world’s growth and trade outlook have weakened. “Global composite PMI declined from 50.8 in July 2022 to 49.3 in August, as manufacturing and services output, mainly in advanced economies contracted. The US witnessed a massive slowdown with its rate of decline the steepest since May 2020. Japan, Germany, the UK and Italy faced similar contraction of output,” it says.

1.6%

Growth of merchandise exports in Aug, y-o-y, the first sign of trouble

19.7%

Growth of overall exports in Apr-Aug 2022, y-o-y

India's Top 5 Export Destinations

(April-August, 2022)

Country	Exports (\$bn)	Growth (y-o-y)
US	35	18%
UAE	13.7	27%
Netherlands	7.5	105%
China	6.8	-35%
Bangladesh	5.7	7.7%

Source: Department of Commerce

PMI (Purchasing Managers' Index) above 50 means an expansion in business activity; if it falls below 50, it denotes contraction. From April to August this year, the US continued to be the top importer from India, buying goods worth \$35 billion, a jump of 18% year-on-year. The US was far ahead of the United Arab Emirates (7%) and Netherlands (3.8%), which came second and third on the country-wise list of top exporters from India. If the US economy stumbles in the coming months, Indian exporters will pay a heavy price.

As far as exports to China are concerned, there has been a 36% fall in April-August year-on-year, mainly due to its stringent zero-Covid policy. During the same period, India's imports from China surged by 29%. China accounts for 14% of India's total imports, well ahead of the UAE and the US, each having a 7% share. "India must eschew the lure of low-value-added products and invest in deep manufacturing," says Ajay Srivastava, a former Indian Trade Service officer, analysing the India China numbers (See column, "China's Covid Sneeze").

Some imports, for instance, solar cells and lithium-ion batteries surged over 100% in January-August 2022 over the same period last year. "The adoption of electric vehicles will increase this value steeply," he adds. Economist and former chief statistician of India, Pronab Sen, says India's export to China may bounce back to the original level as the story of China's slowdown is a bit different from that in the West. "Its slowdown is the result of very harsh Covid restrictions. Once the restrictions are lifted, the country will rebound," says Sen, adding that the slowdown in advanced economies is, however, a grave concern. "After all, the slowdown affects both volume and value in exports. The impact could be huge."

To add to their woes, exporters are facing yet another challenge — volatile currency fluctuations. Though a depreciated rupee should theoretically fetch more value in exports, in practice it's not so simple. Exports with high import contents, for instance, petroleum, cut diamond, gold jewellery etc., don't gain much due to the fall of rupee against the dollar. Many other currencies, for example, the euro and the British pound, have depreciated more than the rupee, against the US dollar. According to an FIEO analysis, the pound fell by 16% and the euro by 15% while the rupee depreciated only by 7.2% as of September 14 compared with the same date last year. This means, Indian exporters settling their accounts in pounds or euros may end up losing some money. Meanwhile, the newly conceived mechanism of rupee trade is still at a nascent stage and requires more clarity.

CEREAL NUMBER

Another monster threatening to drag down export growth is inflation. One, it weakens household spending in advanced economies, thus exerting pressure on high-value export items. Two, inflation at home has already forced our policymakers to impose ban, partial restrictions and export duties on multiple items ranging from wheat and broken rice to steel.

“The ban on broken rice (used for poultry feed in some countries), effective from September 9, may lead to a loss of business worth `6,000 crore for the rest of the fiscal year,” says Vinod Kaul, executive director, All India Rice Exporters Association. He adds that once a customer is lost because of ban or restrictions, it becomes a herculean task to woo them back when the situation normalises and curbs are lifted. In the beginning of the financial year, India’s fast-growing agri-exports seemed to be leading the country to a healthy overall export growth figure. But agri-exports have faltered mid-way.

In FY22, India’s agricultural exports touched a historic high of \$50 billion, with the momentum continuing this fiscal till the government imposed a ban on wheat exports in mid-May, a step necessitated by rising domestic food prices. Three staples which were fully or partially banned this year had a 32% share in last year’s exports in terms of value— rice (\$9.65 billion), wheat (\$2.19 billion) and sugar (\$4.6 billion). This is one reason questions are raised on whether India’s agri-exports will touch last year’s milestone, forget registering a spectacular growth this fiscal. Last year, agricultural exports saw a 20% rise y-o-y, with wheat witnessing a 273% jump, mainly due to low base effect.

M Angamuthu, chairman of the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), concedes that there are challenges due to multiple restrictions but says his team is concentrating on “value-added and processed food products” sourced from segments such as “horticulture, millets, coarse cereals and organics”. To compensate for possible losses from core items, APEDA has shifted its focus to some unique products this year. “Products with distinct identities such as those with a GI (geographical indication) tag are prioritised,” he says. Sahai of FIEO anticipates that this year's export growth will settle at about 10%, down from 17% till August, which means business will fall in the rest of the fiscal. “The situation is so volatile that we need to evaluate targets on a monthly basis,” he says.

PIB,OCT2,2022

Concessional custom duty on Edible Oil import extended till March 2023 to keep domestic price under control

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) in a notification no. 46/2022-Customs dated 31st August, 2022, has extended existing concessional import duties on specified edible oils up to March 31, 2023. The move is aimed at increasing domestic supply and keeping prices under control. The concessional customs duty on edible oil import has been extended by another 6 months, which means that the new deadline will now be March 2023. Prices of edible oil have been on declining trend driven by fall in global prices. With falling global rates and lower import duties, retail prices of edible oils have fallen considerably in India.

The current duty structure on crude palm oil, RBD Palmolein, RBD palm oil, crude soybean oil, refined soybean oil, crude sunflower oil and refined sunflower oil remains unchanged till March 31, 2023. The import duty on crude varieties of palm oil, soyabean oil and sunflower oil is currently zero. However, after taking into account 5 per cent agricess and 10 per cent social welfare cess, the effective duty on crude varieties of these three edible oils touches 5.5 per cent. The basic customs duty on refined varieties of palmolein and refined palm oil is 12.5 per cent, while social welfare cess is 10 per cent. So, the effective duty is 13.75 per cent. For refined soyabean and sunflower oil, the basic customs duty is 17.5 per cent and taking into account 10 per cent social welfare cess, the effective duty comes to 19.25 per cent.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

PIB,SEP26,2022

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh, who is also the Vice President of CSIR, announces "One Week One Lab" campaign to showcase the technological breakthroughs and innovations in each of the 37 CSIR laboratories/institutes spread across the country. The Minister addresses the first ever CSIR Leadership Meet attended by the Directors and Head of Departments of all the 37 CSIR labs across the country. Dr Jitendra Singh said, CSIR breakthroughs in areas like Drone, Heliborne technology, state of the art Sewage cleaning machines, Aroma Mission has opened up huge opportunities for developing meaningful and equal stake partnership among Research, Academia and Industry

CSIR with a pool of over 4,500 CSIR scientists must reorient and revitalise to emerge as Global Centres of Innovations in the Amrit Kaal: 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, who is also the Vice President of CSIR (Council of Scientific & Industrial Research), today announced "One Week One Lab" theme-based campaign to showcase the technological breakthroughs and innovations in each of the 37 CSIR laboratories/institutes spread across the country.

Addressing the first-ever CSIR Leadership Meet attended by the Directors and Head of Departments of all the 37 CSIR labs across the country, Dr Jitendra Singh said, the legacy of CSIR is built on the cumulative contribution of its several national laboratories and institutes. He said, each laboratory of CSIR is unique and specialising in as diverse areas as genomics to geology, material technology to microbial technology and food to fuel.

The Minister also recalled how the laboratories came together during the COVID pandemic last year and developed several technologies that helped India's fight against COVID. The Minister said, the success stories of each lab must be brought to the fore of the country through a massive mass media campaign.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, CSIR breakthroughs in areas like Drone, Heliborne technology, state of the art Sewage cleaning machines, Aroma Mission has opened up huge opportunities for developing meaningful and equal stake partnership among Research, Academia and Industry. The Minister said, the state-of-the-art Heli-borne survey technology with cooperation from Jal Shakti Ministry was applied last year in States of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana and this could play an important

role in positively contributing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Vision and Mission of "Har Ghar Nal Se Jal". Similarly, the mechanized sewage cleaning system developed by CSIR for wider dissemination will help in achieving the target of Swachh Bharat Mission, he added.

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, said the Minister who is also Vice President CSIR, that Science & Technology has got enhanced budget and a very special impetus in the last 8 years and the scientific pursuits and endeavours are now being assigned special importance. He said, the ultimate goal of all Scientific Innovations is to bring "Ease of Living" for the common man.

Dr Jitendra Singh called upon a pool of over 4,500 CSIR scientists to reorient and revitalise the organization to emerge as Global Centres of Innovations in the Amrit Kaal. He said, they must focus on emerging innovations in areas like Hydrogen in the energy transition, Carbon capture and storage, Accessible solar power, Plastic recycling and Cheap energy storage.

Dr Jitendra Singh said that there should be a Science Pavilion on the lines of DST and DBT at Pragati Maidan. He also urged the DG, CSIR to organize CSIR-Expos in various parts of the country to showcase its technological prowess to various states and industries, besides other stakeholders. In conclusion, Dr Jitendra Singh asked CSIR and all the science departments to explore S&T innovations needed in the next ten years to make India globally a frontline state in technological achievements and innovations. The Minister said, "We should not restrict our ambition to be the best in India but be the best in the world as India is blessed with the demographic dividend of youth and they can take up any challenge with the right training and motivation".

DG, CSIR, Dr N. Kalaiselvi said in her welcome address that 21st century is going to be the century of India and for India. She said, Science and Technology fraternity must rise to the occasion and work hard to make India a respected name in the global arena. CSIR will have a celebration of eight decades of its foundation soon with several commemorative activities and prizes to be announced.

TELEGRAPH,SEP27,2022

NASA's DART mission first step to prevent possible armageddon, say Indian scientists

We are surrounded by several asteroids and comets that orbit our Sun. Very few of them are potentially hazardous to Earth: Scientist at the IIA, Bangalore

NASA's DART mission is a step towards preparing the world for a potential future asteroid strike like the one which killed dinosaurs some 66 million years ago, the chances of which are very slim in our lifetime, Indian scientists said. In a first-of-its-kind mission, the Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) spacecraft successfully crashed into an asteroid on Tuesday to test whether space rocks that might threaten Earth in the future could be nudged safely out of the way. DART the world's first planetary defence technology demonstration -- targeted the asteroid moonlet Dimorphos, a small body just 160 metres in diameter.

"We are surrounded by several asteroids and comets that orbit our Sun. Very few of them are potentially hazardous to Earth. Hence, It is better to prepare our defenses to avoid such asteroids on a collision course with Earth in the future," said Chrispin Karthick, a scientist at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bangalore. Karthick, who is involved in the DART project, noted that the mission "certainly is a step towards" preparing the world for a potential future event like the one which is believed to have led to the extinction of dinosaurs some 66 million years ago. "This successful DART mission is an example of that. We now know to precisely aim the spacecraft for such a small body. We can also prepare ourselves for the larger body from the post-impact observations of this DART mission," Karthick told PTI. Dimorphos orbits a larger 780-metre asteroid called Didymos. Neither asteroid poses a threat to Earth. By comparison, the dinosaur-killing asteroid that hit Earth was about 10 kilometers in diameter. The DART mission's one-way trip, confirmed NASA, can successfully navigate a spacecraft to intentionally collide with an asteroid to deflect it, a technique known as kinetic impact.

Goutam Chattopadhyay, a senior scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in the US also noted that the mission will help to prepare for a future-threatening asteroid. "DART is an experimental mission to try out a concept of deflecting an asteroid. The idea is, if we can encounter these asteroids whose trajectory is towards us and we do that at a sufficient distance from the Earth, then a minor deflection will be enough to change the path of the asteroid," he added. However, scientists noted that most of the asteroids, which are somewhat significant in size and can cause damage on impact with the Earth, have a minuscule chance of hitting the planet.

"However, the probability of that is non-zero and we must always be vigilant. There is always a possibility that a big one might be headed towards us and the question becomes, what would be our approach and how we could mitigate that. That's

why these programs are important," Chattopadhyay told PTI."At least for the next century, there is no such threat from the known asteroids that can cause mass casualties," said Karthick, adding that this risk assessment is, however, based on the asteroids known to science so far.

Small asteroids are always hitting the Earth all the time but they burn due to the heat generated in the atmosphere. However, for sufficiently large asteroids, that is not the case as the outer core will burn but there will be sufficient mass left to create damage. The team will now observe Dimorphos using ground-based telescopes to confirm that DART's impact altered the asteroid's orbit around Didymos. Researchers expect the impact to shorten Dimorphos' orbit by about 1 per cent, or roughly 10 minutes; precisely measuring how much the asteroid was deflected is one of the primary purposes of the full-scale test. "Post impact, the team will observe Dimorphos using ground-based telescopes to confirm that DART's impact altered the asteroid's orbit around Didymos," Karthick said. "The expected output of the impact is to shorten Dimorphos' orbit by about 1 per cent, or roughly 10 minutes. One of the primary goals is to measure the deflection of the asteroid's orbit," he added. However, Chattopadhyay said whether the mission has been able to deflect the orbit of the asteroid will be known only once all the data has been collected. "I would emphasise that our calculations and small-scale lab experiments show that it might work well," he added

NASA has a multi prong approach to monitor Near Earth Asteroids (NEAs). The space agency initiated observations program in 1998. Most discoveries are supported by ground-based telescopic surveys, "We primarily use radars and lidars for this. Mostly they are ground-based systems. However, our existing satellites in space are also used to image and track these objects," the scientist added. Lidar is a method for determining distance by targeting an object or a surface with a laser and measuring the time for the reflected light. "The DART mission is humanity's first attempt to alter the trajectory of an asteroid by crashing a human made object into it. Today's successful impact is a big step forward in that direction.

"However, to know the eventual success of this concept, we have to wait a few more years by when any significant change in the trajectory would be clearly apparent," said Dibyendu Nandi, space scientist at Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research, Kolkata.

PIB,SEP29,2022

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh says, India and Singapore are closely collaborating in cutting edge areas like fintech, information technology, cyber security, skill development, smart city solutions and renewable energy and food security. A high-level Singaporean Delegation led by Mr Loh Khum Yean, Minister in PMO and Permanent Secretary, Public Service Department (PSD), Singapore calls on Dr Jitendra Singh at North Block office in New Delhi

The Second Bilateral Meeting in the field of Personnel Management and Public Administration held in New Delhi was co-chaired by Secretary (DARPG) V Srinivas and Mr. Loh Khum Yean

Singapore Minister in PMO Loh Khum Yean, currently on a 2-day visit to India, called on his Indian counterpart 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 at North Block here.

Dr Jitendra Singh told the high-level Singaporean delegation led by Loh Khum Yean, Minister in PMO and Permanent Secretary, Public Service Department (PSD) that India and Singapore are closely collaborating in cutting edge areas that will shape the future in the context of accelerating technological disruption - fintech, information technology, cyber security, skill development, smart city solutions and renewable energy and food security. Simon Wong, High Commissioner of Singapore also attended the delegation level talks between the two sides. Dr Jitendra Singh said, the strategic partnership between India and Singapore has shown its resilience and both sides look forward to further strengthening this important relationship in areas like trade, defence, science and innovation, education, governance and the digital economy.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, the maiden India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable held in New Delhi on 17th September, 2022 was envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which he described as a path breaking initiative that is a testament to the unique India-Singapore bilateral ties and can pave the way for coordination in new areas of partnership. Dr Jitendra Singh pointed out that India and Singapore show convergence on a variety of issues of international importance and they are part of numerous groupings like G20, Commonwealth, IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association), East Asia Summit, and IONS (Indian Ocean Naval Symposium). He said, following the conclusion of Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) of 2005, this robust relationship was elevated to a Strategic Partnership in 2015 during the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Loh Khum Yean told his Indian counterpart Dr Jitendra Singh that Singapore has emerged as the top source nation in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI) equity flows into India for the financial year 2021-22. The amount of FDI inflow from Singapore to India in fiscal year 2022 was estimated to be almost 16 billion U.S. dollars. Both the sides also discussed to firm up the Exchange Program of Civil Services and visit by PM Excellence Awardees to Singaporean Institutes of Excellence. The Future of Work, Workforce and Workplace of Singapore has agreed to work closely with the Vision India-2047, being headed by Dr Jitendra Singh.

Earlier, the Second Bilateral Meeting was held in New Delhi which was co-chaired by Secretary (DARPG) Shri V. Srinivas and Loh Khum Yean, Permanent Secretary, Public Service Department (PSD), Prime Minister's Office, Singapore. During the meeting both sides exchanged information on initiatives taken in the field of governance reforms. Indian side made presentations on Good Governance Index, National e-Governance Service Delivery and CPGRAMS and the Singapore side on Service Delivery Benchmarking Study, Citizen Centric Public Services and The Future of Work, Workforce and Workplace.

V, Srinivas, Secretary, DARPG informed that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Singapore in the field of Personnel Management and Public Administration was signed on 1st June, 2018. Key areas identified for cooperation include Public Service Delivery, Human Resource Management, Public Sector Reform, Leadership/Talent Development and E-Governance/Digital Government. After signing of the MoU in June, 2018, both sides held the first round of bilateral meeting virtually on 6th July, 2021 due to pandemic. The MoU facilitates sharing of information and experience through workshops, seminars and conferences, exchange of information and experts to deliver lectures, build capacity and undertake joint comparative research of common interest, co-operation between training institutes of the both the countries in the training of public officials. In his concluding remarks, Dr Jitendra Singh said, he is quite confident that both sides will continue to engage in exchanging of best practices in areas of Public Administration and Governance Reforms and will also explore the possibility of its replication.

PIB, SEP29, 2022

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh says, "Science Leaders" are needed to drive the integration of science and technological development to address the needs of the citizen and the sector

The Minister addresses the launch of “Building Science Leaders Program” in New Delhi

It is important for scientists to be at the forefront of their work and hone competencies to deliver science for the public good:
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 today said, "Science Leaders" are needed to drive the integration of science and technological development within society in a way that places science in position to address the needs of the citizen and the sector.

Addressing after the launch of “Building Science Leaders Program ”, Dr Jitendra Singh said, for government service delivery, it is important for scientists to be at the forefront of their work and hone competencies to deliver science for the public good. Dr Jitendra Singh said, science & technology sector in India further has an emphasis on deriving social good, one good example of this is use of remote sensing technology for life saving cyclone predictions in coastal areas. Similarly, technology such as United Payment Interface built on India Stack is revolutionising payment for everyone. UPI is the world’s only API-driven interoperable real-time money transfer platform designed for a mobile-only world; the Minister added. Dr Jitendra Singh lauded the role of the Capacity Building Commission, Office of Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) for engaging with the Centre for Technology, Innovation and Economic Research (CTIER) and Ahmedabad University to develop and deliver the ‘Building Science Leaders in India’ programme.

The Minister said, the ‘Building Science Leaders in India’ is a uniquely designed collaborative executive development programme for scientists who are leading labs or are likely to assume leadership roles and future directors of research organizations. He said, the program will hone the key competencies such as communication, design thinking and project management in scientists. The first batch of the program has participation from 7 scientific departments under the government of India – DST, DBT, ISRO, DAE, CSIR, MoES and MoEFCC. The cohort approach is also aimed at ensuring scientists across the departments work with each other. The program was designed in two phases- Phase 1 (online): Two days online program held on 7th and 8th September, while Phase 2 (in-person): Four days of the programme in-person program at ISRO Bangalore between 27th and 30th September.

INDIAN EXPRESS, OCT1, 2022

Roundtable of Centre, state IT officials today for synergy in electronics manufacturing

To facilitate a better working relationship between the Centre and state governments, and for explaining the potential and opportunities of the government's electronics-related manufacturing schemes, the central government on Saturday will conduct a dialogue with IT ministers of state governments. The roundtable, called the 'Digital India Conference of State IT Ministers' will take place during [...]

Soumyarendra Barik

To facilitate a better working relationship between the Centre and state governments, and for explaining the potential and opportunities of the government's electronics-related manufacturing schemes, the central government on Saturday will conduct a dialogue with IT ministers of state governments. The roundtable, called the 'Digital India Conference of State IT Ministers' will take place during the sixth edition of the India Mobile Congress 2022 in New Delhi where the Centre has invited state IT Ministers and IT Secretaries to discuss with them the role states and union territories can play in the rollout of 5G, business opportunities, need for skill development and for interaction with potential start-ups and investors. "There is an unprecedented opportunity for India in electronics manufacturing which can only be realised when state governments work closely with the central government," Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar told The Indian Express. "The Centre has announced a number of programmes including production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes for electronics and semiconductor manufacturing. At the conference, we will urge state governments to make electronics manufacturing a priority in their industrial and investment strategy." With the disruption in the global value chains led by Covid-19, there has been a global discussion about moving some electronics and semiconductor manufacturing away from China. Chandrasekhar said that it is important for state governments to realise the potential of this transition. "This opportunity is being discussed in the context of a short window of two to three years because if the 'China plus one strategy' finds its roots in other countries like Vietnam, it would be very difficult to bring it back to India from there. The transition in the global value chains is underway now," he said.

According to the agenda of the meeting, a copy of which has been seen by this paper, Chandrasekhar and Minister of State for Communications Devusinh Chauhan will explain the various electronics- and 5G-related initiatives of the Centre, after which state IT ministers will give a presentation on digital-related initiatives of their respective states. Union Minister of IT Ashwini Vaishnaw, IT Secretary Alkesh Sharma and Telecom Secretary K Rajaraman will also speak at the meeting.

Asked how he would explain at the conference the political debacle around the semiconductor plant of the joint venture between mining giant Vedanta and Taiwanese electronics manufacturer Foxconn going to Gujarat in the last minute when the project seemed ready to be set up in Maharashtra, Chandrasekhar said that the “competitive nature of fighting for investments and proposals is par for the course now”. “There is competition amongst countries and there is competition amongst various states within India. India, Vietnam, Thailand etc are all competing for the same place in the global electronics value chain right now. States that have proactive policies and leadership are going to be more competitive,” he said. “On Friday, I inaugurated a manufacturing facility of Taiwanese electronics manufacturer Pegatron set up under the electronics PLI scheme in Tamil Nadu, which is a DMK-governed state. So any attribution of partisanship is wrong.” In February this year, Chandrasekhar had written a letter to all industrial ministers of state governments highlighting the large available market for electronics manufacturing, The Indian Express has learnt.

“My intention is to highlight this important growth opportunity for attracting investments and creating jobs in your state, and in the country ... We will undertake tactical and strategic steps to build India’s competitiveness and scale by attracting global electronics manufacturers, shifting sub-assemblies and component ecosystems, building a robust design ecosystem, fostering Indian champions, and removing cost disadvantages. This is the time for India’s rise as the Electronics hub for the world,” the letter said.

MINT,OCT1,2022

5G in India: How next-gen technology changes your life

5G will have a cumulative economic impact of \$1 trillion by 2035,

5G network ushers a new era of digital solution in India. The latest network service was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at 6th India Mobile Congress in New Delhi.

Bringing a new era in technology, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 5G telecom services in India today. The technology seeks to provide seamless coverage, high data rate, low latency and highly reliable communications system. 5G services are also expected to play a major role to achieve the economic goal of making India a \$5-trillion economy by 2024-25. According to experts, 5G will have a cumulative economic impact of \$1 trillion by 2035 and can deliver an additional GDP of \$150 billion for the country, between 2025-40. At the launch event, PM Modi also spent time understanding the

indigenous development of end-to-end 5G technology and different use cases of the service. Here are 10 ways that 5G could change your life

-For consumers, 5G promises higher data speeds over 4G. At its peak, internet speeds on 5G could touch 10 Gbps, compared to the 100 Mbps peak of 4G.

-5G technology offers latency as low as 1ms. For the unversed, latency is the time taken by the device to send packets of data and get a response. Shorter the latency, quicker the response.

-5G technology will provide seamless coverage in remote areas across the country. It will increase energy efficiency, spectrum efficiency and network efficiency.

-5G will also usher in the era of technology advances in the country such as Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR) and more. These technologies will have end-to-end affect on multiple sectors - healthcare, agriculture, education, disaster management and others.-5G will enhance the fan experience at live music festivals and sports events like football matches. The low latency offered by 5G will offer immersive experience to sports lovers.-5G will also enable new services and products powered by Internet of Things (IoT) technologies. The advanced abilities offered by 5G networks will also drive new business models.

-The arrival of 5G will also transform the transport and mobility sector. Using 5G, a network of electric vehicles (EVs) and charging stations can be established to help maximise the cost-effectiveness of the EV ecosystem;-Next-generation 5G network will also aid the remote working more effectively. 5G-powered smart buildings can help provide more comfortable working environment for the employees, boosting productivity along with reducing costs for employers.-5G technology will give a boost to the Industrial Revolution 4.0. The all-new 5G services will connect a variety of IoT (Internet of Things) sensors and devices to automate the scheduling of various processes.-5G will enable customers to watch 4K video on their phones. It will also enable the use of AR/VR, mobile gaming apps, and a number of other immersive activities and new applications.-Next-generation 5G technology will also have an impact on the way of production and distribution of goods. Applications of 5G in the manufacturing sector includes reduced costs, lower down time, minimum wastage and improve productivity. 5G is expected to bring the logistics cost to 5% from 13-14% at present.

-5G will also have a big impact in the safety and surveillance sector. 5G technology and its applications will enable remote control over disaster hit areas, live 4K feed from HD camera installed in public spaces and more. It will also help in minimising the role of humans in dangerous industrial operations such as in deep mines, offshore activities etc.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

PIB,SEP28,2022

Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change participates in the Ministerial Roundtable for Green Economy, World Green Economy Summit, UAE

Accelerating low carbon transition across different economic sectors is the need of the hour: Shri Bhupender Yadav

Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav attended the Ministerial Roundtable for Green Economy at the World Green Economy Summit at the World Trade Center in Dubai, UAE today. While speaking at the Roundtable, Union Minister stressed the importance of addressing environmental and climate objectives alongside economic development and further stated that accelerating low carbon transition across different economic sectors is the need of the hour.

The Minister outlined achievements under various policies as well as partnerships steered by India under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. He mentioned global initiatives like International Solar Alliance and other initiatives for strengthening the green economy across key sectors like energy, industry, transportation, agriculture, and forestry. He further mentioned about the measures taken by India on sustainable finance such as sovereign green bonds, blended finance as well as setting up the GIFT city and the ISA-Solar Risk Mitigation Initiative. The Union Environment Minister stated that India is the first country with a cooling action plan based on energy efficiency and thermal comfort, and has launched important initiatives including UJALA Yojana and schemes for industrial energy efficiency. India's ambitious renewable energy progress was also mentioned.

On climate finance, Shri Yadav stated that Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero estimates a requirement of USD 100 trillion of finance for global net zero by 2050. But, Developed countries have failed even in mobilizing the amount of USD 100 billion per annum by 2020, and India's NDCs are thus largely financed by domestic investment. After the Roundtable, The Union Minister also had a bilateral meeting with H.E Dr. -Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE Minister of State for

Foreign Trade. In the meeting, they discussed issues relating to COP 27, COP 28, MoU on Climate Actions between India and UAE, and global initiatives spearheaded by UAE and India for combating climate change.

CURRENT EVENTS

PIB,SEP28,2022

Government appoints Lt General Anil Chauhan (Retired) as Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

The Government has decided to appoint Lt General Anil Chauhan (Retired) PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM as the next Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) who shall also function as Secretary to Government of India, Department of Military Affairs with effect from the date of his assumption of charge and until further orders. In a career spanning over nearly 40 years, Lt Gen Anil Chauhan had held several command, staff and instrumental appointments and had extensive experience in counter-insurgency operations in Jammu & Kashmir and North-East India.

Born on 18th May 1961, Lt Gen Anil Chauhan was commissioned into the 11 Gorkha Rifles of the Indian Army in 1981. He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla and Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. In the rank of Maj General, the officer had commanded an Infantry Division in the critical Baramula sector in the Northern Command. Later as Lt General, he commanded a corps in the North East and subsequently went to become the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Command from September 2019 and held the charge until his retirement from the service in May 2021.

In addition to these command appointments, the officer also tenanted important staff appointments including the charge of Director General of Military Operations. Earlier, the officer had also served as a United Nations mission to Angola. The officer superannuated from the Indian Army on 31 May 2021. Even after his retirement from the Army, he continued to contribute to national security and strategic matters. For his distinguished and illustrious service in the Army, Lt General Anil Chauhan (Retired) was awarded the Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Uttam Yudh Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Sena Medal and Vishisht Seva Medal.

PIB,SEP30,2022

PM inaugurates Phase-I of Ahmedabad Metro project at the Ahmedabad Education Society in Ahmedabad

PM flags off the new Vande Bharat Express between Gandhinagar and Mumbai at Gandhinagar Station

PM flags off the Ahmedabad Metro rail project

“Today is a big day for India of 21st century, urban connectivity and Aatmnirbhar Bharat”

“India of the 21st century is going to get new momentum from the cities of the country”

“For the first time a 32 km long stretch has been operationalised in one go in the history of Metro in the country”

“India of 21st century considers speed to be a critical factor and guarantee of expeditious development”

“Insistence on speed is clearly visible in National Gatishakti Master Plan and National Logistics Policy”

“In the last 8 years, we have linked infrastructure with people's aspirations”

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated Phase-I of Ahmedabad Metro project at a public function at the Ahmedabad Education Society in Ahmedabad. The Prime Minister also flagged off the Ahmedabad Metro rail project and took a metro ride from Kalupur station to Doordarshan Kendra metro station. The Prime Minister flagged off Gandhinagar-Mumbai Vande Bharat Express at Gandhinagar station and travelled on the train from there to Kalupur Railway Station today.

Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister said that today is a big day for India of 21st century, urban connectivity and Aatmnirbhar Bharat. He expressed his delight in the ride that he undertook in Vande Bharat Train and Ahmedabad Metro.

The Prime Minister praised the sound-proofing inside the Vande Bharat Express where the sound was reduced to a hundredth when compared to what is experienced inside an airline. On a personal note, the Prime Minister thanked the people of Ahmedabad for a huge turnout and in a light-hearted manner, recounted the wisdom and calculation of Ahmedabad commuters. “I can not salute Ahmedabad enough, today, Ahmedabad has won my heart”, a visibly moved Prime Minister said.

The Prime Minister remarked that India of the 21st century is going to get new momentum from the cities of the country. “With the changing times, it is necessary to continuously modernise our cities with the changing needs”, Shri Modi said. He pointed out that the system of transport in the city should be modern and should have seamless connectivity where one mode of transport supports the other. In pursuant to this thinking huge investment is being made in the urban infrastructure. In the last 8 years, in more than two dozen cities either Metro has started or work is in an advanced stage. Dozens of smaller cities have been connected via air connectivity and UDAN scheme. Similarly, Railways stations are undergoing transformation. “Today, Gandhinagar Railway Station is no less than any airport in the world”, he said. He also mentioned the government’s decision to modernise Ahmedabad Railway Station. Citing the success of Ahmedabad-Gandhinagar, the Prime Minister elaborated on the success of twin-city development concept. He said that many twin cities like Anand-Nadiad, Bharuch Ankaleshwar, Valsad and Vapi, Surat and Navsari, Vadodara - Halol Kalol, Morvi-Wankaner and Mehsana Kadi are going to further strengthen Gujarat’s identity.

Shri Modi underlined the role of cities like Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, Bhopal, Indore, Jaipur in ensuring the developed status in the coming 25 years. The Prime Minister highlighted that along with the focus on improving and expanding old cities, new cities are being developed according to the demands of global businesses. “GIFT Cities are also a very good example of such plug and play facilities”, he added. The Prime said that this is for the first time a 32 km long stretch has been operationalised in one go in the history of Metro in the country. He also noted the fast completion of the project despite the challenge of constructing Metro track over railway line.

Talking about the Vande Bharat Express, the Prime Minister pointed out that the journey between the two big cities of Ahmedabad and Mumbai will become comfortable while also reduce the distance. The Prime Minister further added that an express train takes roughly seven to eight hours to complete the journey from Ahmedabad to Mumbai, whereas a Shatabdi train takes six and half to seven hours. On the other hand, the Vande Bharat Express will take a maximum of five and a half hours to complete the journey from Gandhinagar to Mumbai, the Prime Minister remarked. The Prime Minister also highlighted that Vande Bharat Express can accommodate more passengers than other trains. The Prime Minister also recounted his interaction with the technicians and engineers who designed and made the Vande Bharat Coaches and expressed his admiration for their initiative and confidence. Recalling his conversation on Kashi Railway Station when the Prime Minister was informed about the rush for availability in Vande Bharat Express, the Prime Minister said that it was the go-to train for the labourers and the poor due to the increased luggage room and reduced travel time. “This is the power of Vande

Bharat”, Shri Modi added. The Prime Minister also explained that due to ‘double-engine government’ clearances and other permissions for the metro projects were obtained very quickly for fast completion of the project. Route planning for Metro was done while keeping the needs of the poor and needy in mind. Kalapur is getting a multi-modal hub, he said.

The Prime Minister highlighted that the government launched the FAME scheme to manufacture and operate electric buses so that the poor, middle class friends of cities can get rid of the smoke emanating from the buses. “So far, more than seven thousand electric buses have been approved in the country under this scheme”, Shri Modi added, “Central government has spent close to Rs. 3,500 crore on these electric buses.” The Prime Minister informed that eight hundred fifty electric buses have been introduced in the state of Gujarat as part of this scheme so far, of which a hundred are already running on the roads of Gujarat.

Calling out the Central Governments of the past, the Prime Minister pointed out the negligent amount of work done to clear out the traffic jams in the cities. Shri Modi interjected that the India of 21st century considers speed to be a critical factor and guarantee of expeditious development. The Prime Minister informed that this insistence on speed is clearly visible in the National Gathishakti Master Plan and also appears in the National Logistics Policy. “It is also evident in the drive to increase the speed of our railways”, the Prime Minister added. We are working rapidly on running 75 Vande Bharat Trains by August, next year. The beauty of India's Vande Bharat train is that it reaches the speed of 100 kmph in just 52 seconds, he informed.

Speaking about the developments made in the railway network, the Prime Minister highlighted that a large part of the country's railway network has been freed from unmanned gates. “Once the Eastern and Western Dedicated Freight Corridors are ready, the speed of goods trains will also increase and delays in passenger trains will also be reduced”, he added.

The Prime Minister acknowledged the monumental changes in the thought process about infrastructure development in the country along with the speed being the driving factor. “In the last 8 years, we have linked infrastructure with people's aspirations” Shri Modi continued, “There was a time when announcements regarding infrastructure were made keeping in mind the electoral gains and losses only. The income of the taxpayer was used only for political interests.” The double engine government has changed this thinking.” Highlighting the changes, the Prime Minister said that the basis of sustainable progress is an infrastructure built with strong and visionary thinking and the work being done today aligns with this thinking.

The Prime Minister expressed a wish that students of schools and engineering fields should be sensitized to the huge work that goes into the construction of underground and overground Metro and the type of investment that goes into it. This will increase their faith in the role of technology in the country's progress and also create a sense of ownership in them. With this there will emerge a generation that will never harm public property as they will understand the ownership, efforts and investment that goes into them. In concluding the address, the Prime Minister urged the need for more speed and power toward construction of modern infrastructure to build a developed India in Azadi Ka Amrit Kaal. "The double engine government in Gujarat is also making serious efforts for this. I believe that with Sabka Prayas (everyone's efforts), this work will be able to be realised", the Prime Minister concluded.

Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Bhupendra Patel, Governor of Gujarat, Shri Acharya Devvrat, Union Minister of Railways, Shri Ashvini Vaishnav, Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Member of Parliament, Shri C R Patil, Union Minister of State for Railways Smt. Darshana Vikram Jardosh and Mayor of Ahmedabad, Shri Kirit Parmar were those present on the occasion.

Background

The Vande Bharat Express offers a myriad of superior and aircraft-like traveling experiences. It is equipped with advanced state-of-the-art safety features including an indigenously developed Train Collision Avoidance System - KAVACH. There are reclining seats in all classes while the Executive Coaches have the added feature of 180-degree rotating seats. Every coach is equipped with 32" screens providing passenger information and infotainment.

Phase-I of Ahmedabad Metro project comprises about 32 km of the East-West corridor from Apparel park to Thaltej and the North-South corridor between Motera to Gyaspur. The Thaltej-Vastral route in the East-West corridor has 17 stations. This corridor also has a 6.6 km underground section with four stations. The 19 km North-South corridor that connects Gyaspur to Motera Stadium has 15 stations. The entire Phase 1 project is built at a cost of more than ₹12,900 crores. Ahmedabad Metro is a massive state of art infrastructure project involving underground tunnels, viaducts & bridges, elevated and underground station buildings, ballastless rail tracks and driverless train operation compliant rolling stock etc. The metro train set is equipped with an energy-efficient propulsion system which can save about 30-35% of energy consumption. The train has a state of art suspension system providing a very smooth riding experience to passengers. Inauguration of Ahmedabad Phase-1 metro project will provide world-class multi-modal connectivity to the people of the city. Multi-Modal connectivity is being

provided with the Indian Railways, and Bus system (BRTS, GSRTC and City Bus service). This includes connectivity with BRTS at Ranip, Vadaj, AEC station etc. and with Indian Railways at Gandhidham, Kalupur and Sabarmati station. At Kalupur, the metro line will be connected to the High-Speed Rail system connecting Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

The inauguration and foundation stone of these wide-ranging developmental projects reflect the commitment of the Prime Minister to develop world-class infrastructure, enhance urban mobility and improve multi-modal connectivity. It also showcases the continuous focus of his government on enhancing the ease of living of the common man.

PIB,SEP30,2022

Dr VK Paul Delivers Inaugural Lecture in NITI Aayog's First India Development Strategies Lecture Series

India's Covid-19 story is a story of atmanirbharta, which saved lakhs of life, atmavishwas, that we can fight the coronavirus, and the signature leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Ours is a story of India's resilient public health system and of everyone working together as team India to battle the pandemic,' said Dr VK Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog. Dr Paul was speaking at NITI Aayog's first in-house lecture series on India's Development Strategies. NITI's flagship in-house lecture series aims to sensitize participants about major initiatives and exercises of the government, develop shared commitments, create a more productive and inclusive environment and provoke innovative thinking for meeting the developmental objectives of the nation.

While delivering the inaugural lecture, 'Covid-19 Vaccination: The India Story', Dr Paul walked the audience through India's journey to 2 billion doses by July 2022. Dr Paul spoke about the enabling structures set up by NITI since 2020 and about the evolution of different vaccines and their impact, and India's vaccine maitri programme.

Today's lecture was followed by a panel discussion between Dr VK Paul; Rajesh Bhushan, Secretary (Health); Dr Krishna Ella, Founder, Bharat Biotech; and Priyam Gandhi-Mody, author and political strategist, moderated by NITI Aayog CEO Param Iyer. At the first lecture of the #NITI In-House Lecture Series, @BharatBiotech Chairman and MD Krishna M. Ella highlighted India's vaccine prowess and the need for the government and the private sector to work together in combating emerging biological threats. pic.twitter.com/Lm02hhMsKa

— NITI Aayog (@NITIAayog) September 30, 2022

Our collective resolve to address the pandemic along with ensuring proactive decisions was at the core of our fight against #COVID, such as getting healthcare & frontline workers vaccinated first and then opening it to the rest of the population: Secretary (Health) Rajesh Bhushan pic.twitter.com/9T3f3em2zL

— NITI Aayog (@NITIAayog) September 30, 2022

In his closing remarks, NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery said, ‘Our vaccination drive, as envisioned by the PM, illustrates what India can accomplish when its people come together in the spirit of jan bhagidari. The global community looks at India as a role model because of its effective vaccination programme based on the “Vasudhaiva Kutumbhakam” ideology.’ The India Development Strategies lecture series will be held every month. The lectures will focus on national developmental priorities, policies for inclusive growth, best practices in various sectors, initiatives to promote cooperative and competitive federalism. Today's lecture was attended by over 300 people, including the senior leadership, joint secretaries, mission directors, advisers and lateral entrants.

PIB,SEP30,2022

PM to launch 5G services on 1st October

PM to inaugurate sixth edition of India Mobile Congress

Sharing in a new technological era, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will launch 5G services on 1st October at 10 AM in Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. 5G technology will provide seamless coverage, high data rate, low latency, and highly reliable communications. It will increase energy efficiency, spectrum efficiency and network efficiency. Prime Minister will also inaugurate the sixth edition of the India Mobile Congress (IMC). The IMC 2022 is scheduled to be held from 1st to 4th October with the theme of “New digital Universe”. It will bring together leading thinkers, entrepreneurs, innovators, and government officials to discuss and showcase unique opportunities emerging from the rapid adoption and spread of digital technology.

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Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti To Celebrate Swachh Bharat Diwas, 2022 on 2nd October

President Of India To Confer Awards For Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2022, Swachhta Hi Sewa 2022, Sujlam 1.0 & 2.0, Jal Jeevan Mission Functionality Assessment, Har Ghar Jal Certification & Start-Up Grand Challenge

As the country commemorates the birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on 2nd October, the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu will be conferring the awards for Swachh Survekshan Grameen (SSG) 2022, Swachhta Hi Sewa 2022, Sujlam 1.0 & 2.0, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) Functionality Assessment, Har Ghar Jal certification and Start-up Grand Challenge.

Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) is organising Swachh Bharat Diwas-2022 on 2nd October at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The Department is implementing two flagship programmes of the central government i.e. Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G) and Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). SBM-G was started on 2nd October 2014 with the aim to stop Open Defecation. On 2nd October 2019, all villages in the country declared themselves ODF. Thereafter, SBM-G 2.0 was launched in 2020 to sustain the ODF status in villages and improve the level of cleanliness in rural areas through Solid and Liquid Waste Management, thereby making villages ODF Plus.

On 15th August 2019, Jal Jeevan Mission was launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. At the time of the launch, only 3.23 Crore rural households had access to tap water connection. With relentless efforts made on ground by the Mission in partnership with the State and UTs, today over 10.27 Crore rural households are getting water through taps, in a short period of 3 years. As a means to recognize exemplary efforts of the States/ UTs in implementation of the two flagship programmes, the Department has organized various competitions, campaigns and Survekshans. The good performing States/ UTs/ Districts will be felicitated for accelerating ODF Plus and Har Ghar Jal momentum. The awards will be conferred under SBM-G and JJM by the President of India and Union Minister of Jal Shakti under the following categories –

Swachh Survekshan Gramin-2022 – The Survekshan aimed to undertake ranking of States and Districts on the basis of their performance attained on key quantitative and qualitative SBM-G parameters and engage rural community in improvement of their sanitation status through an intensive and holistic IEC campaign and engage with select Gram Panchayats and citizens in every district. Wall Paining - A national-level wall painting campaign on ODF Plus was also launched on 15th August 2021. Three best performing States will be awarded on each theme from each zone. The five themes are BWM, GOBARdhan, PWM, GWM & FSM.

NFC Awards - A national-level film competition for Gram Panchayats was launched on 15th December 2021 on various components of ODF plus. Awards are to be given for 3 categories viz; hilly terrain, islands and UTs. 33 films were recommended by States for these awards which will be conferred during the event.

Awards for Sujalam I and Sujalam II - The Sujalam 1.0 award will be given on the occasion based on a 100-day campaign launched by the Department on “ODF Plus Sustainability and Sujlam 1.0”. The target of Sujalam 1.0 was completely achieved on 15th February 2022, as more than 1 million soak pits for household and community level were reported. To continue the momentum of Sujalam 1.0, DDWS launched Sujalam 2.0 focussing on creation of community and institutional level greywater management assets viz; Panchayat Ghars, Primary Health Care Centres, schools , anganwadi centres and other government institutions. Over 1 million soak pits have been constructed for household and community level under it by 30th June 2022.

Start-up Grand Challenge Awards - DDWS has set up a Start-up Grand Challenge to scout technologies that could support sustainable, affordable, scalable and responsive solutions to solid and liquid waste management challenges in rural areas. The key focus is to achieve ‘Sampoorna Swachhta’ at the village level solid liquid waste management. The Grand Challenge was organized and Start-ups, technology providers, technical institutes and entrepreneurs participated in the Challenge under seven categories.

Awards for Functionality Assessment 2022 - To assess the performance of local water utilities in the States/ UTs, a functionality assessment exercise is undertaken every year by JJM to understand the status of water service delivery in households. The tap water connection is referred functional only if it provides 55 lpcd water of BIS:10500 standard on regular basis. This year the functionality assessment was carried out in all 33 States/ UTs covering 712 districts with 3.01 lakh households, 22,596 village level institutions. The details of the findings can be accessed through the report. Swachh Bharat Diwas is not a single event but a culmination of several activities/campaigns for the components of SBM-G phase II. The following activities were conducted as a run up to the event –

Swachhta Hi Sewa (SHS) – is a fortnightly campaign undertaken by the public offering “shramdaan” for sustaining cleanliness in the country. It is a massive community mobilization drive for cleaning up of legacy waste and activities under solid waste management, across rural India. The Campaign was launched on 15th September and concludes on 2nd October. As on 30th Sept more than 18 crore people have participated in the SHS activities across the country. The activity includes:

Cleaning of legacy waste and garbage vulnerable sites in the villages

Keeping the area clean around the water body and doing tree plantation in the catchment area

Sarpanch Samvads on element of ODF Plus

Slogan writing and taking a pledge towards "No Littering"

Community awareness for segregation of waste (dry and wet) at source

Construction of waste collection & segregation sheds/centres

Purchase of waste collection vehicle like tricycle/ e-cart (battery operated vehicle) through GeM

Door-to-door collection of non-biodegradable waste like plastic

Generate awareness about ill effects of Single Use Plastics (SUP) by organizing Gram Sabha meetings and passing resolutions for ban on SUPs'

Promote the principle of 4Rs for Plastic Waste Management – Refuse, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle

United India for Swachhata – is a dedicated week-long intensified campaign for complete cleanliness – ‘sampoorna swachhta’ in 9 states across the country. The activities comprise of events across railways stations, beaches, schools, AWCs etc. to highlight the achievements of SBM during last 8 years.