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# SAMBHAV

WHATEVER IT TAKES  
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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

NEW DELHI

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Sr.No	Subject	Page No.
1	Polity and Governance	3-22
2	Economic and Social Development	23-38
3	Science and Technology	39-49
4	Environment and Climate	50-55
5	Current Events	56-65

## POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

STATESMAN,NOV28,2022

J&K is emerging as a model of digital governance: L-G

Delivering efficient, effective, and accountable governance is the top priority, said L-G Manoj Sinha. J&K Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday said under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi the UT was emerging as a model of digital governance with focus on transparency and citizen-friendly approach to deliver public services. In his address at the valedictory session of 25th National Conference on e-Governance at Katra, he said that technology has changed the lives of the people. "In 2013, the total number of e-transaction was merely 20 lakh. This year, till 25 November, the number of e-transaction is 38.50 crore. On an average, J&K is recording 550 e-transactions every minute," he said.

According to him, delivering efficient, effective, and accountable governance is the top priority. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar also attended the valedictory session. An IT MoU was signed between J&K and Haryana wherein the latter would invest in Jammu and Kashmir. Khattar said that a lot of money was given to J&K earlier as well but no audits were conducted then. He added that after the abrogation of Article 370, development has begun in J&K.

The Haryana CM also visited the Vaishno Devi temple where he prayed for peace and prosperity in the country.

TELEGRAPH,NOV28,2022

Centre starts Har Ghar Dhyam campaign, ropes in UGC

University Grants Commission is advertising for the BJP and Ravi Shankar, says former Delhi University executive council member

Basant Kumar Mohanty

The Centre has started a Har Ghar Dhyam campaign to promote meditation among all Indians and has got the University Grants Commission and the school board CBSE to nudge the country's universities, colleges and schools to get students and teachers to participate.

The move comes months after the government, under the Har Ghar Tiranga drive, prodded all Indian homes to display the national flag in the run-up to the 75th anniversary of Independence last August. The UGC, the autonomous higher education regulator, had been drafted into that campaign too in a reflection of the Centre's keenness to influence students. Now the UGC has written to the vice-chancellors of all universities and principals of all colleges to join the HarGhar Dhyan programme, being conducted in collaboration with Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, founder of the Art of Living. The CBSE has written a similar letter to its 25,000 affiliated schools countrywide. Former Delhi University executive council member Abha Dev Habib felt that these campaigns with names starting with "Har Ghar" had their root in the "Har Ghar Modi" campaign the BJP had run ahead of the 2014 general election. "Har Ghar' is a BJP slogan. The UGC is advertising for the BJP and Ravi Shankar," Habib said.

The UGC letter said: "Under the aegis of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, ministry of culture has collaborated with the Art of Living foundation and launched a campaign 'Har Ghar Dhyan' to conduct one hour introductory sessions on meditation and mental health for people from all walks of life. "The modules have been developed by founder of Art of Living Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Ji and trained faculty from Art of Living shall conduct these sessions free of any cost to the interested organisations (subject to capacity and execution plan). "The higher educational institutions and their affiliated colleges/ institutions are requested to encourage students and faculty members to take benefit of this program(me) by introducing to meditation as a solution for positive mental health." Interested institutions can fill up the request form and nominate a senior member of the faculty or non-teaching staff as "meditation ambassador" for the programme, the letter said. It added that the Art of Living would directly contact and coordinate with the meditation ambassadors for the conduct of these sessions. Ravi Shankar and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have in the past praised each other in public. Ravi Shankar had been embroiled in controversy when the Art of Living organised a huge event on the Yamuna's floodplains in Delhi in 2016, prompting the National Green Bench to fine the organisation Rs 5 crore for the ecological damage. "Ravi Shankar's event caused damage to the environment; now the UGC is being used to propagate his message," Habib said. She said the UGC had been harnessed to similar campaigns in the recent past, highlighting how it had before Independence Day circulated a letter asking institutions to encourage staff and students to fly the Tricolour at their homes.

“The UGC’s job is primarily to maintain the standard of higher education. It has been reduced to a wing of the government for the propagation of its programmes,” Habib said. A release from the Press Information Bureau, the central government’s publicity arm, had on October 27 said the Har Ghar Dhyam would engage Art of Living teachers as meditation coaches, and representatives of institutions and interested members of the public as meditation ambassadors.

TELEGRAPH, NOV 28, 2022

March stolen: Editorial on the status of women in Indian army

Be it the army or industry or political bodies, spaces must be made more accommodating for meritorious women

The battle for equality among the sexes is tough and seemingly unending. In a historic decision in 2020, the Supreme Court had directed the Central government to offer all women officers permanent commission in the Indian army — a preserve of their male peers till then. The following year, in another landmark judgment, the top court ruled that women absorbed as permanent army officers would also be eligible for promotion and other attendant benefits. The two verdicts, which came after a decades-long struggle by women to achieve parity in a male bastion such as the army, were hailed as important steps towards much-needed reforms. Unfortunately, it seems that the time is ripe to reappraise whether the larger intended goals of these pathbreaking interventions have been met. A recent petition in the Supreme Court by 34 serving women has accused the army of withholding selection boards for promoting women officers, while allowing junior male officers to supersede them. That is not all. The court was also informed of indirect discriminatory practice by the army in denying women officers study leave and deputation. The charges are unsurprising, given the wider institutional inertia in this respect. The Centre had vehemently opposed the granting of permanent commission to women officers citing their physical vulnerabilities. It also justified the prolonged reluctance to implement the court verdict on the grounds that the rank and file — all men — would be uncomfortable with women in commanding positions. This, despite the fact that not all segments of the army are accessible to women aspirants. For instance, the army’s main combat units remain out of bounds for them. Such compartmentalisation along gender lines is not unique to the Indian military. Only 16 countries allow women to serve on the frontline. Worse, instances of prejudice against and sexual harassment of women officers are commonplace in armies across the world.

The army mirrors an entrenched discrimination against women in influential institutions. A recent survey by Deloitte revealed that only 19.7% of the global board seats are held by women and that there has been a marginal rise of 2.8% in the figure since 2018. That a miniscule number of women occupy crucial decision-making positions is borne out by the data. This is strange because an improvement in gender representation is also a means of enhancing productivity. Cosmetic measures will no longer do. Be it the army or industry or political bodies, spaces must be made more accommodating for meritorious women.

INDIAN EXPRESS,NOV28,2022

Quotas on economic grounds are political freebies

Amitabh Kundu writes: It is very likely that those who work in the private sector, where it is difficult to establish the actual income, along with political pressure groups, will grab the benefits

Amitabh Kundu

Through a majority judgment, the Supreme Court has upheld reservation in government jobs and education institutions for economically weaker sections among forward castes. The argument of the petitioners that affirmative action under the Constitution contemplates social and educational backwardness only and not economic disadvantage, stands dismissed. The verdict, nonetheless, opens a big window for different communities to seek reservation based on this criteria. Given the controversies around the methodology, database, sample size, comparability of information from different sources etc., this opens a Pandora's box. While one must now accept that economic criteria as the sole basis for affirmative action does not violate the basic structure of the Constitution, one must analyse whether the eligibility criteria for reservation will enable the genuinely poor to enjoy the benefits. Ravi Shankar Prasad, while defending the Constitution amendment for reservation in general category, had announced on the floor of Parliament that "sixes are hit in the slog overs" in a cricket match. "More sixes will come," he had asserted. Indeed, sixes are, and will be, hit by the batting side, both at the Centre and the states. There is huge scope for each state to design its criteria for defining economic deprivation to cater to their political allies. It would in fact be political freebies to be distributed to the pressure groups.

In the context of reservation for EWS, it can be argued that the children of the poor from the upper castes — vegetable vendors, construction labourers, challenged individuals, self-employed or unemployed widows — deserve reservation at least as much as the children from Dalit households, who have enjoyed high economic and social status, say, for two generations. It would not be surprising if the above stipulation enjoys a large measure of support among a cross-section of political parties and general population. However, the question is: “Was this the principle based on which this new quota has been proposed and supported by the opposition with some minor dissent?” Given contemporary realities and institutional infirmities, is it possible to ring fence this 10 per cent quota? The finance minister, while talking about direct tax collection, has often argued that given our democratic structure, it is difficult to work out clear operational criteria to identify the people who must pay taxes. Even after more than five years after demonetisation, the government has not taken action against the account holders who deposited old currency well above their normal cash balance or indulged in other malpractices. Interestingly, the opposition has made no demand for it. Clearly, they all fear losing their vote bank.

The dearth of will and capacity to target the new quota to the actual poor is evident from the criteria that are likely to be fixed for identifying the potential beneficiaries. Persons from households with annual earning below Rs 8 lakh, possessing agricultural land below five acres, a plot less than 100 yards in a notified municipality or below 200 yards in the non-notified municipal area would be eligible for the reservation. The amendment also allows the states to set income cut-offs to decide who constitutes EWS. They can even relax the criteria set by the Centre. It also allows the states to notify EWS “from time to time on the basis of family income and other indicators of economic disadvantage”, even if they are “adequately represented” in government jobs.

SCs, STs and OBCs account for 70 per cent of the population and are entitled to 49.5 per cent reservation in the government sector. The eligibility issue thus pertains to the remaining 30 per cent or 42 crore people who fall under the general category. Calculations based on available data suggest that about 95 per cent of the people in the general category will be eligible under the proposed criteria. Given the massive number of eligible people among the upper castes and a small window of opportunity, it is not difficult to understand who would be the real beneficiaries of the rather generous eligibility criteria. It is very likely that the middle class, those who work in the private sector, where it is difficult to establish the actual income, the unscrupulous who can manipulate the system through false declarations, would grab the benefits, along with political pressure groups. The children of street vendors and agricultural labourers have very little chance to benefit from the new quota.

Indeed, whenever any committee has shown the benevolence of defining poverty with a high cut-off point, the outcome has been the top 10 to 20 per cent among the eligible grabbing all benefits. It is not a level-playing field. And the poor, as defined by the Tendulkar or Rangarajan Committees, stand very little chance of benefiting from the new quota. It is absurd to believe that Muslims would benefit from the quota, simply because they have a higher share among the poor. Very few Muslims would be in the top 20 per cent among those eligible for the EWS quota. The poor do not constitute a vote bank and can be swayed by promises. When they realise who the real beneficiaries are, it will be too late.

Kundu is Senior Fellow at the World Resources Institute

INDIAN EXPRESS,NOV28,2022

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

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

Yashee

On this day 73 years ago, the Constitution of India was adopted, coming into effect on January 26, 1950. Since 2015, the day has been observed as Constitution Day, or 'Samvidhan Diwas'. The Constituent Assembly took two years, 11 months and 17 days to draft the Constitution for Independent India. During this period, it held 11 sessions covering 165 days, and its members submitted around 7,600 amendments to the draft Constitution.

It was for good reasons that the drafting of India's Constitution was such a mammoth exercise — it was to determine how a newly independent, newly dismembered nation would define and govern itself. As the exercise went on, many questions were raised about the Constitution, including over its approach to federalism, to the protection of minorities' rights, and over the fact that it had borrowed heavily from other Constitutions around the world.

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



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

Dr Ambedkar said, “Another criticism against the Draft Constitution is that no part of it represents the ancient polity of India. It is said that the new Constitution should have been drafted on the ancient Hindu model of a State and that instead of incorporating Western theories the new Constitution should have been raised and built upon village Panchayats and District Panchayats. There are others who have taken a more extreme view. They do not want any Central or Provincial Governments. They just want India to contain so many village Governments. The love of the intellectual Indians for the village community is of course infinite if not pathetic.” Dr Ambedkar went on to say that this love of village communities seemed founded largely on “the fulsome praise bestowed upon it by Metcalfe [Sir Charles Metcalfe], who described them as little republics having nearly everything that they want within themselves”. “The existence of these village communities each one forming a separate little State in itself has according to Metcalfe contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India, through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great portion of the freedom and independence. No doubt the village communities have lasted where nothing else lasts. But those who take pride in the village communities do not care to consider what little part they have played in the affairs and the destiny of the country; and why?” he said. The survival of the village communities was no matter for pride, Dr Ambedkar felt.

“That they have survived through all vicissitudes may be a fact. But mere survival has no value. The question is on what plane they have survived. Surely on a low, on a selfish level. I hold that these village republics have been the ruination of India. I am therefore surprised that those who condemn Provincialism and communalism should come forward as champions of the village. What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism? I am glad that the Draft Constitution has discarded the village and adopted the individual as its unit,” he said.

## Safeguards for minorities

The chairman of the Drafting Committee said that while in introducing safeguards for minorities, the Committee merely followed the “decisions of the Constituent Assembly”, “speaking for myself, I have no doubt that the Constituent Assembly has done wisely in providing such safeguards for minorities as it has done.”

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

## On fundamental rights

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

“The most criticized part of the Draft Constitution is that which relates to Fundamental Rights. It is said that Article 13 which defines fundamental rights is riddled with so many exceptions that the exceptions have eaten up the rights altogether. It is condemned as a kind of deception. In the opinion of the critics fundamental rights are not fundamental rights unless they are also absolute rights,” he said. He then went on to distinguish between fundamental and non-fundamental rights. “The real distinction between the two is that non-fundamental rights are created by agreement between parties while fundamental rights are the gift of the law. Because fundamental rights are the gift of the State it does not follow that the State cannot qualify them,” he said. He also said that while critics have claimed that fundamental rights in America are absolute, even in that country, they are limited by Supreme Court judgments, whereas in India, the limitations had been included in the Draft Constitution itself.

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

PIB,NOV29,2022

Ushering in a new era of good governance in Jammu & Kashmir

2-week 4th capacity building programme for officers of Jammu & Kashmir

Reorientation of officers will enable them to deliver outcome-oriented governance

To strengthen good governance, transparency and efficient public service delivery to people of Jammu & Kashmir, the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), an apex-level autonomous institution of Government of India, has started capacity building programmes for the senior officers of Jammu & Kashmir administration. The 4th such programme of 2 weeks duration, started at NCGG campus Mussoorie.

In July 2021, it was decided to train 2,000 senior officials of Jammu & Kashmir and an MoU was signed between the J&K Institute of Management, Public Administration & Rural Development (J&KIMPARD) and the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) to promote excellence in capacity building and reorient officers of the Govt of Jammu & Kashmir. Giving effect to this MoU, the NCGG has so far conducted 3 such capacity building programmes for the officers of Jammu & Kashmir. In his inaugural address Shri Bharat Lal, Director General, NCGG stressed the need to translate the vision of Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on good governance into concrete action. The aim is to reorient the officers to enable them to work with single-mindedness to improve the quality of life and create opportunities for the people of Jammu & Kashmir. The officers are given exposure to the best practices in governance from across the country to emulate these practices of good governance, transparency and efficient service delivery in Jammu & Kashmir

He highlighted the need to change the approach and act as facilitators to attract investment, promote entrepreneurship and boost job creation by ensuring public service delivery. He said that we are living in a highly competitive and globalized world, and therefore handholding of businesses to attract investment is the need of the hour. . Asserting that everyone’s time is precious, he stated that agile service delivery and valuing time must go hand-in-hand. He emphasized the challenges and said

that this reorientation programme will enable the officers to provide technology-enabled solutions to address the problems of people. The 4th capacity building programme is scheduled from the 28th of November 2022 to the 9th of December 2022 at NCGG campus, Mussoorie. The modules of the training sessions are designed by practitioners, experts and academicians in the field of public administration and good governance including e-governance. The capacity building programme is scientifically tailored to equip civil servants of Jammu & Kashmir to deliver robust and seamless services to the people. The cutting-edge knowledge and new skill set acquired during this programme will help these civil servants in efficient public service delivery to improve the lives of people. The National Centre for Good Governance, set up in 2014 by the Government of India is mandated to train civil servants of India and other countries. In recent pasts, the centre has also trained a large number of officers from Bangladesh, Kenya, Tanzania, Tunisia, Gambia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Laos, Vietnam, Bhutan, Myanmar and Cambodia.

STATESMAN, NOV 30, 2022

Chance to lead

For, despite its limitations, it is undeniable that over the 20-odd years of its existence, the G20, given its constitution, has exemplified the “intricate interaction between the geo-economics and geopolitics of the contemporary world”.

When India formally takes over the year-long presidency of the influential Group of 20 (G20) nations on 1 December, it will have an opportunity to leave its mark on the premier global forum for dialogue and cooperation on economic issues.

Despite criticism of the G20 as a “talking shop” with little muscle to push policy implementation through, leading experts such as Gateway House Executive Director Manjeet Kripalani and Distinguished Fellow Rajiv Bhatia emphasise that this is a “unique grouping, where developing and developed countries come together with equal status”. There is truth to that assertion. It is against this backdrop that India’s 2022-2023 presidency of the G20 provides it with a leadership opportunity that must not be squandered in endless debates over the heft ~ or lack thereof ~ of the grouping. For, despite its limitations, it is undeniable that over the 20-odd years of its existence, the G20, given its constitution, has exemplified the “intricate interaction between the geo-economics and geopolitics of the contemporary world”. Yes, the grouping is consultative in nature as opposed to being treaty-bound but that doesn’t mean it is not an effective tool to influence global economic and financial policy.

New Delhi has an opportunity over the coming year to leverage the strengths of the G20 and, in the process, showcase its leadership abilities on the world stage. As any diplomat worth her salt will tell you, in the contemporary world where the nation-state is the primary unit of global interaction, that's half the battle won as perception plays a key role in how a nation is viewed by its contemporaries. Stewart M. Patrick, Director of International Institutions and Global Governance at the Council on Foreign Relations, New York, underlines the fact that the G20 provides a platform for the world's most important advanced and emerging economies to harmonise their approaches to global challenges. As one of the official Indian presentations in the run-up to the passing of the G20 presidency baton pointed out, the forum represents 85 per cent of global GDP, 75 per cent of international trade, and two-thirds of the world's population. These are not facts to be sneezed at. Kriplani and Bhatia write that ever since the G20 was elevated to a summit level in the aftermath of the US sub-prime crisis in 2008 which subsequently became a Western, and then global financial contagion, presidents and prime ministers began holding regular bi-annual and later annual confabulations with the single goal of preventing another global financial crisis. The intersection of geopolitics and global economics, illustrated by the crisis in Syria which led to massive migration into Europe, caused the G20 to expand its scope. The Covid-19 pandemic has ensured it stays that way.

The core charter of the G20 includes, apart from working to promote global financial stability, the goal of making globalisation work for all nations. Managing the pushback against globalisation across many parts of the world currently being witnessed is possibly the most significant challenge for India as it prepares to assume the G20 presidency. If New Delhi succeeds in evolving a consensus on upholding the value and effectiveness of multilateralism in global affairs, its presidency will be a success. It is this India must strive for

TELEGRAPH, NOV 30, 2022

Castles in the air

Days after the culmination of the G20 summit, it became clear that the Modi government's projection of the PM's importance on the world stage at the meeting wasn't quite shared by the US



Charu Sudan Kasturi

Diplomacy involves efforts at strengthening a nation's geopolitical interests. Often, though, it is also the art of managing expectations — globally and of one's own people.

The jury is out on how well or poorly the Narendra Modi government is performing in the first of those tasks: after all, it still has 18 months left in its current term and could well win a third stint in office. But it is increasingly clear that the Modi government has failed miserably when it comes to realistically communicating India's place in the world to its citizens. That's dangerous for India. And it can come back to bite those in power. Consider the recent G20 summit. On November 15, as the conclave began in Bali, Indonesia, the Bharatiya Janata Party's Amit Malviya posted a 35-second clip on Twitter of Modi speaking with the United States president, Joe Biden. Biden had his hand on Modi's back. "There was a time when Dr Manmohan Singh returned from these summits and no one took note of India, to now when the Indian Prime Minister is sought out by world leaders," Malviya wrote. Of course, the claim was untrue: at the G20 summit in Toronto in 2010, the then US president, Barack Obama, famously said after meeting Singh: "Whenever the Indian prime minister speaks, the whole world listens."

But it was also short-sighted. Days after the culmination of the G20 summit, it became clear that the Modi government's projection of the prime minister's importance on the world stage at the meeting wasn't quite shared by the US. The Indian ministry of external affairs said Modi and Biden had "reviewed" the bilateral relationship in their meeting on the sidelines of the G20. It listed out a range of themes — from "critical and emerging technologies" and "advanced computing" to the Quad, a grouping that also includes Japan and Australia — that Modi and Biden had supposedly discussed.

But Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House press secretary, described their interaction in Bali very differently: Modi and Biden, she said, greeted and met "very briefly". Unlike India, the US did not put out any statement on the meeting that the Indian foreign office claimed took place between their leaders. Instead, the US issued a statement on a trilateral meeting that included the Indonesian president, Joko Widodo. The US further embarrassed Modi when a press secretary cited the Indian prime minister's pre-2014 visa ban— enforced by Washington after the 2002 Gujarat riots —in the context of whether the Biden administration would look to prosecute the Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman. The state department's principal deputy spokesperson, Vedant Patel, pointed out that Modi's visa ban became inconsequential once he came to power, giving him diplomatic immunity. The Saudi crown prince —accused by the US of having engineered the assassination of the

journalist, Jamal Khashoggi — would similarly enjoy immunity from prosecution, Patel argued. That reminder of Modi's dodgy past — and how the US viewed him just eight years ago — was not “relevant, necessary or contextual,” the Indian foreign office responded angrily to Patel's comments. All of this has unfolded in the backdrop of the US failure to approve a new ambassador to India — New Delhi has now gone the longest ever since Independence without an envoy from Washington.

There is no evidence that the US is trying to deliberately snub Modi. But what the recent incidents in the backdrop of G20 underscore is a deeper reality — relations between major nations are based on what they seek from each other, and for the most part are not dependent on individual leaders. Whether with Singh, Modi or any other Indian prime minister, Washington's equation will always hinge on the state of the broader relationship. India is a valuable partner for the US — not because of Modi but because New Delhi is aligned with Washington on key common challenges. Cringe-inducing efforts to suggest otherwise can only boomerang.

Charu Sudan Kasturi is a senior journalist who writes on foreign policy and international relations

PIB, DEC 2, 2022

DARPG collaboration with Government of Maharashtra on Administrative Reforms and Good Governance

On the invitation of Chairman Committee for Good Governance, Government of Maharashtra Shri Suresh Kumar IAS (retd), a 6 member DARPG delegation led by Secretary DARPG V. Srinivas visited Mumbai on December 1, 2022 to firm up the roadmap for collaboration between DARPG and Government of Maharashtra on Administrative Reforms and Good Governance. The DARPG delegation held meeting the 3 meetings (i) Meeting with the Chairman and Members of the Committee for Good Governance (ii) Meeting with the Chief Secretary Shri Manu Kumar Srivastava and Additional Chief Secretary GAD Smt. Sujata Saunak, and Senior Officials of Government of Maharashtra and (iii) Meeting with the Divisional Commissioners, District Collectors, CEO's of Zilla Parishad and Municipal Commissioners of all Districts of Maharashtra.

The following roadmap for collaboration was drawn up:

Draw up a roadmap for time bound saturation of e-Services, e-Office and for replication of the Government of India's Initiative for Increasing Efficiency in Decision Making in State Secretariat comprising of Delaying, Delegation, adoption of Desk Officer System and Digitization of Central Registration Units. Regional Conference on e-Governance at Mumbai proposed



for January 2023. Documentation of best practices and administrative innovations of Maharashtra's districts uploaded on the Good Governance Portal and the PM's Awards. Rewriting the Manual of Office Procedure 2023 for enabling the March to a Digital Maharashtra State Secretariat. The DARPG delegation called on Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra and appraised him on the deliberations and proposed roadmap for collaboration. The DARPG delegation comprised of Secretary Shri V. Srinivas, Joint Secretary Shri N.B.S. Rajput, Director Shri K. Sanjayan, Deputy Secretaries Shri Parthasarathy Bhaskar, Smt Sarita Taneja and Under Secretary Shri Santosh Kumar.

TRIBUNE, DEC 3, 2022

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar raises questions over Supreme Court 'undoing' NJAC Act

Satya Prakash

Amid a stand-off between the government and the Collegium over judicial appointments, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday raised questions over "undoing" of the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act and wondered if a constitutional amendment unanimously passed by Parliament reflecting the will of the people could be "undone" by the Supreme Court. "In the year 2015-16, Parliament was dealing with a constitutional amendment Act and as a matter of record the entire Lok Sabha voted unanimously. There was no abstention and no dissension. And the amendment was passed. In the Rajya Sabha it was unanimous, there was one abstention. We the people... their ordainment was converted into a constitutional provision," he said.

Delivering the 8th Dr LM Singhvi Memorial Lecture on 'Universal Adult Franchise: Translating India's Political Transformation into a Social Transformation', Dhankhar said, "Power of the people, which was expressed through a legitimate platform, was undone. The world does not know of any such instance. "I appeal to the people here, they constitute a judicial elite class, thinking minds, intellectuals — please find out a parallel in the world where a constitutional provision can be undone," he said in the presence of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, several Supreme Court judges, Union ministers, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and several lawyers.

CJI for participatory democracy

Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud said every form of ‘elite understanding’ of the democratic process that educated people were better decision-makers must be rejected. He said the concept of universal adult franchise was linked to the idea of participatory democracy and individuals, whom the society ‘despised’ as being uneducated, had shown tremendous political acumen and awareness of local problems

INDIAN EXPRESS,DEC4,2022

India’s hunger problem: Why the Global Hunger Index, FAO data aren’t to blame

India’s ranking results from the use of the Indian government’s official statistics, the National Family Health Survey, which reveals disconcertingly high rates of child mortality and chronic malnutrition in India, despite clear progress in the past few years. The Global Hunger Index was informed by the same official source.

Carlo Cafiero

This refers to the article, ‘Trivialising hunger‘ (IE, November 10). The article is spurred by the Global Hunger Index 2022, which ranks India 107th out of the 121 countries monitored in 2021. The report is published by Concern Worldwide, an international NGO, using one of FAO’s statistics, among others, to compute its index. While we agree with the seriousness of hunger and the importance of rigorous monitoring to inform policy, the article contains several serious errors.FAO is committed to valid and reliable food security measures. Food security exists when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. It is only by identifying those who are food insecure that effective policies can be designed to address the root causes of the problem.

The article attempts to undermine technical aspects of the way FAO measures food security to argue that the report’s ranking doesn’t reflect the reality and that food insecurity is not a problem in India. The fact: India’s ranking results from the use of the Indian government’s official statistics, the National Family Health Survey, which reveals the rates of acute malnutrition in children under the age of five to be among the highest in the world. The same official data source also confirms that disconcertingly high rates of child mortality and chronic malnutrition persist in India, despite clear progress in the past few years. The Global Hunger Index was informed by the same official data source.

“Is an increase in child stunting and child wasting necessarily bad?”, the article asks. The stunted and wasted children are those who would have died, it contends, had it not been for the decline in child mortality rates. We argue that falling child mortality rates are not a consolation for the fact that a large proportion of children still suffer from the devastating consequences of acute and chronic malnutrition. The article also criticises an indicator FAO uses to measure food security, the prevalence of undernourishment. This indicator was scrutinised and approved by countries through the UN Statistical Commission and the UN Economic and Social Council in 2015 to monitor the UN’s SDGs.

The article makes two fundamental mistakes. First, it wrongly assumes that the prevalence of undernourishment is simply based on survey data collected by FAO using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES). The fact is, it is computed using data on national food balances and consumption at the household level. The most recent food consumption data available for India is from 2011, when the results of the 68th round of the NSS were released. Regrettably, FAO does not have access to more updated data, including the results from the 75th round of the same survey on consumer expenditures conducted in 2017-2018, which is not publicly available. The second mistake is a lack of understanding regarding how FAO’s FIES data are processed to ensure valid, reliable measures of the severity of food insecurity across countries. In 2013, FAO started the “Voices of the Hungry” project, engaging global academic and political communities, because the international community didn’t have a way to identify and monitor food insecure households and individuals in a comparable manner across countries.

This effort resulted in the development of statistical protocols that ensure the different translations, adaptations and nuanced interpretations of the FIES survey questions in 180 languages — such as the difference between “running out of food” and “having less food,” which the article mentions — do not affect the information obtained.

All of the methodological details regarding the way FAO measures food security are public knowledge and explained every year in the technical notes of the UN’s annual food security and nutrition report and FAO’s data and statistics website. Moreover, for the last four years, FAO has been actively collaborating with the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation to include FIES data into official national data collection initiatives and to align the national SDG indicators

to the global SDG monitoring framework. We stand ready to continue working with the government of India to strengthen food security statistics and achieve the common mission of a sustainable and food secure world for all.

Cafiero is team leader of Food Security Statistics, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations

INDIAN EXPRESS,DEC4,2022

Ram Madhav writes: What Rahul Gandhi needs to know about Ambedkar and Savarkar — and doesn't

Ambedkar and Savarkar were opposed to religious orthodoxy among Hindus, whereas that orthodoxy was upheld by some of the Congress leaders of those times

Ram Madhav

On December 6, 1273, a famous Catholic saint, Thomas Aquinas, went into a final trance. Aquinas is remembered for his medieval endeavour to inject rationalism into Catholic theology. Reason and reform were the core of Thomistic thought. After facing a lot of criticism, Aquinas was finally canonised as a saint by the Vatican after 50 years. December 6 is also the “Mahaparinirvan” day of an Indian reformist leader B R Ambedkar. Like Aquinas, Ambedkar too fought for reason in religion. He too faced rejection but finally found his place in history. Ambedkar continues to be at the centre of a legacy battle. During his recent Bharat Jodo Yatra at Mhow in Madhya Pradesh, the birthplace of Ambedkar, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accused the RSS of showing false sympathy for him and “backstabbing” him. These allegations smack of an urge to appropriate the legacy of a great reformer and deny it to others. Before talking about backstabbing, it may be important to ponder over the “front stab” that Ambedkar had to endure at the hands of the Congress leadership not just while he was alive but even after his death.

When Ambedkar breathed his last on December 6, 1956, Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru rose in the Rajya Sabha to deliver an obituary address. Paying glowing tributes to the deceased is a custom in obituary addresses. But Nehru's address was different. “Ambedkar, from many many years, had been a very controversial figure”, Nehru contended, insinuating that he pursued convictions “with rather greater intensity than perhaps required”. While Ambedkar was the “symbol” of the intense feeling of the suppressed classes in India, “some of us thought” that he “overdid the expression of that feeling”, Nehru said in an accusatory tone.

Leaders of the Congress should know this aversion of their leadership to accepting and supporting Ambedkar. Gandhi to Nehru to Patel – almost all the senior leaders of the Congress had demonstrated strong reservations about Ambedkar for one reason or the other. Ambedkar too never hid his aversion for the Congress and its leadership. Gandhi and Ambedkar had profound disagreements. Even in 1955, seven years after Gandhi's death, Ambedkar would argue in a BBC interview that Gandhi was no "Mahatma", not even "from the point of view of his morality". Gandhi too conveyed his reservations over Ambedkar's views in 1946 in a letter to Sardar Patel. "One has to be very careful indeed" in dealing with Ambedkar, Gandhi cautioned.

Gandhi's ideological differences with Ambedkar date back to the Second Round Table Conference in 1932 when the British agreed to Ambedkar's proposal of separate electorates for Dalits. Gandhi went on a hunger strike forcing Ambedkar to the negotiating table, which resulted in the famous Poona Pact in December of that year. But Gandhi never hated Ambedkar. On the contrary, he invited Ambedkar to write his views in the Harijan in early 1933. Ambedkar argued in that article that "there will be outcastes as long as there are castes" and said that "nothing can help to save Hindus and ensure their survival in the coming struggle except the purging of the Hindu faith of this odious and vicious dogma".

When Nehru was unwilling to accommodate Ambedkar in the interim government in 1946, Gandhi, at the prodding of a young Dalit leader of the Congress, Jagjivan Ram, intervened to get him in. But that didn't help Ambedkar much as Nehru and other leaders in Congress never displayed any empathy. Ambedkar wrote in his resignation letter from the cabinet in 1951 about the ill-treatment meted out to him by Nehru. In fact, Congress leaders didn't make way for Ambedkar in the 1946 election from Mumbai. His Scheduled Castes Front (SCF) was roundly defeated by Congress candidates. Jogendranath Mondal, an SCF leader from Bengal, came to Ambedkar's rescue and got him elected from Bengal with the Muslim League's help.

In the Constituent Assembly, Ambedkar found it tough to pursue his agenda for Hindu social reform and the upliftment of SCs. At one point, Sardar Patel told the "Scheduled Caste friends" to "forget what Ambedkar has done". Ambedkar's life-long desire to reform Hindu society through the Hindu Code Bill was blocked by Congress at every stage, from the Constituent Assembly to Parliament, after 1950.

After Independence, the Congress leadership allowed the memory of Ambedkar to fade away until it was resurrected by Kanshi Ram in the 1980s through the DS4 movement. None of the Congress governments in the first 40 years thought it prudent to offer Ambedkar a place of honour, prompting his grandson Prakash Ambedkar to accuse them of “failing to do justice” to him. It was only in 1990 that the United Front government supported by the BJP honoured him with the Bharat Ratna.

On the other hand, Ambedkar maintained cordial relations with Hindutva icons that Rahul Gandhi detests, like Savarkar and Swami Shradhdhananda. In a letter to Savarkar, Ambedkar conveyed his “appreciation of the work you are doing in the field of social reform”. In a special issue of his Janata magazine in April 1933, Ambedkar heaped praise on Savarkar saying that his contribution to the Dalit cause was as decisive and great as that of Gautama Buddha himself. Interestingly, Ambedkar was one of the first to use the word “Hindutva”. In a statement issued in 1927 on the issue of temple entry, Ambedkar said “Hindutva belongs as much to the untouchable Hindus as to the touchable Hindus. To the growth and glory of this Hindutva, contributions have been made by Untouchables”.

Ambedkar and Savarkar were opposed to religious orthodoxy among Hindus, whereas that orthodoxy was upheld by some of the Congress leaders of those times. It is important for Congress leaders to understand this history to learn who backstabbed whom. They should also understand that when more than a lakh RSS volunteers fought against the draconian Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi in 1975-77, they were protecting the dignity of the Indian Constitution, and when Mohan Bhagwat called the caste system as a thing of the past, he was resolutely pursuing Ambedkar’s agenda.

he writer, member, Board of Governors, India Foundation, is with the RSS. His column appears every alternate Saturday.

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

STATESMAN,NOV28,2022

India must make full use of G20 presidency by focusing on global good & world welfare: PM

The G-20 has a partnership comprising two-thirds of the world's population, three-fourths of world trade, and 85 per cent of world GDP, Modi said. Calling the G20 presidency a big opportunity for India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the country must make full use of it by focusing on global good and world welfare. In the 95th edition of his monthly 'Mann Ki Baat' broadcast over All India Radio, the Prime Minister said India was set to assume the presidency of G20 from December 1 onwards. The G-20 has a partnership comprising two-thirds of the world's population, three-fourths of world trade, and 85 per cent of world GDP, Modi said. "India is going to preside over such a big group, such a powerful group, 3 days from now i.e. from the 1st of December. What a great opportunity has come for India, for every Indian! This becomes even more special because India was awarded this responsibility during Azadi Ka Amrit Kaal," the Prime Minister said.

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

The Prime Minister said, "In the coming days, many programmes related to G20 will be organised in different parts of the country. During this period, people from different parts of the world will get a chance to visit your states. I am sure that you will bring the diverse and distinctive colours of your culture to the world and you also have to remember that the people coming to the G20, even if they come now as delegates, are tourists of the future." In the broadcast, while referring to the recent launch of the country's first private rocket 'Vikram-S', Modi said, "On November 18, the whole country witnessed new history being made in the space sector. On this day, India sent its first rocket into space, which was designed and prepared by the private sector of India. The name of this rocket is – Vikram-S. As soon as this first rocket of the indigenous space startup made a historic flight from Sriharikota, the heart of every Indian swelled with pride." Vikram-S rocket is equipped with many features, he said, adding that it is also lighter than other rockets, and also cheaper.

Its development cost is much less than the cost incurred by other countries involved in space missions. In space technology, world-class standard at a low cost has now become the hallmark of India. Another modern technology has been used in making this rocket. You will be surprised to know that some crucial parts of this rocket have been made through 3D Printing. Surely, the name ‘Prarambh’ given to the launch mission of ‘Vikram-S’, suits it perfectly. This marks the dawn of a new era for the private space sector in India,” the Prime Minister said. In the broadcast, Modi said India is sharing its success in the space sector with its neighbouring countries as well.

“Just yesterday, India launched a satellite, which has been jointly developed by India and Bhutan. This satellite will send pictures of very good resolution which will help Bhutan in the management of its natural resources. The launching of this satellite is a reflection of the strong Indo-Bhutan relations.”

**INDIAN EXPRESS, NOV 30, 2022**

EWS reservation: Recognising the poor

Dr Ashwani Kumar writes: Economic deprivation, with its attendant consequences, must be addressed as part of the government's affirmative action policies for empowerment of the poor, not covered by caste-based reservation. The verdict in the EWS case is in keeping with the vision of a dynamic Constitution with equity at its heart.

Dr Ashwani Kumar

The Supreme Court's majority judgment in Janhit Abhiyan is a watershed moment in the nation's endeavour to advance inter-generational justice. It views reservation in government employment and educational institutions as a tool of affirmative action and reparative justice, beyond identity and representation. Endorsing the 103rd constitutional amendment, the Court has expanded the sweep of affirmative action by extending the benefit of quotas to the hitherto excluded economically weaker sections (EWS) of the “forward classes”. It repelled the legal challenge to the amendment, mounted principally on the ground that reservation on the basis of economic backwardness alone was a species of class discrimination constitutionally impermissible and violative of the Constitution's basic structure (Kesavanand Bharti, 1973). The Court also rejected the argument that the exclusion of SCs, STs and the non-creamy layer of OBC's from the 10 per cent reservation was discriminatory and that the amendment breached the judicially-mandated 50 per cent cap on reservation. The majority thus



endorsed the central premise of the amendment — economic deprivation, with its attendant consequences, must be addressed as part of the government’s affirmative action policies for empowerment of the poor, not covered by caste based reservation.

The defining logic of the majority view, also accepted in principle by the minority, is that the debasing impact of poverty on human dignity is caste neutral. Indeed, the ravages of history and histories of marginalisation including our own experience as an oppressed colonial nation tell us that “calculated oppression” is a function of economic deprivation that scars the soul in a dehumanising perpetuation of poverty. An acute awareness of the social and economic inequities that have inspired the Constitution’s preambular promise, elaborated in the inter-play of Directive Principles (Articles 38, 39A, 46) and Fundamental Rights provide the edifice for the Court’s majority judgment. In upholding the challenged amendment, the majority reasoned that reservation was an exception to the equality principle and therefore, not a part of the basic structure of the Constitution. It could thus be modulated for the benefit of those not already availing of the benefits of affirmative action. It held that the new beneficiaries could be treated as a distinct and separate category for the purpose of reservation with reference to the twin constitutional tests of rational differentiation and the object sought to be achieved. Breaching of the 50 per cent cap on reservation has been justified on the basis that it was judicially conceived only in respect of the backward classes and is not “inflexible and immovable for all times to come”.

Recalling its judgment in *N M Thomas* (1976) and logic of the Punjab and Haryana High Court in *Jagdish Rai* (1977), as also the dissenting judgment of Chief justice of Patna High Court in *Sudarshan Thakur* (1957) endorsing the State’s power to provide reservation in case of “undeserved want”, the Court rejected “the tying (of) substantive equality to a fixed category of backwardness”. It recognised “a constantly evolving situation where groups that are the sites of social and institutional disadvantages can change over time and even new groups can be added as times change”.

In a compelling construct of the nation’s democratic arrangement enshrined in a dynamic Constitution, the Court affirmed that each generation must invest the document with new content to make it a “living organic thing”; “not bound to be understood or acceptable to the original understanding of the constitutional economics...” (*Association of United Tele services Providers*, 2014). The majority view builds upon a stated deference to Living Tree Constitutionalism and unfolds an expansive judicial gaze upon the Constitution, not frozen in time, to ensure its continuing relevance in the advancement of national goals. The majority decision affirms that in a parliamentary democracy, policy choices representing the harmonising

of conflicting interests through pragmatic adjustments is essentially a legislative function that ought not to be overridden by judicial fiats, unless plainly offensive to the Constitution.

However, in a never-ending process of justice, the split verdict in the case will keep the competing arguments alive on complex questions at the intersection of law and politics. For the moment, the majority view with its precedential value must hold the field. Legal finesse apart, the distinction of the majority view rests upon its exposition of an idea of constitutional justice consistent with current popular sensitivities and aspirations and is grounded in “reasoned engagement”. It addresses the disquiet amongst the economically disadvantaged sections at being excluded so far from the orbit of the state’s empowering policies, validating thereby the Constitution’s stabilising function through the redressal of remedial injustices.

Political parties, reportedly having politically expedient second thoughts on the validity of the amendment, even after unreservedly supporting its passage in Parliament, must know that politics based on compromised principles inevitably fails. And only those who appealed to “the brooding spirit of the law, to the intelligence of a future day...” post Indra Sawhney (1992), can now claim vindication.

However, for the new architecture of “compensatory discrimination” scripted by the majority in Janhit to endure, it is necessary to ensure that reverse discrimination is not stretched to a point where it “eat(s) up the rule of equality”. This is a burden of statesmanship and of the quality of our democratic politics. In the final analysis, constitutional doctrines and changes in the temper of intellectual speculations reflect the fluctuating conditions of social, economic and political life. B R Ambedkar’s reminder that “the spirit of the Constitution is the spirit of the age”, is the unmistakable message of the majority judgment in the Janhit case.

The writer is Senior Advocate, Supreme Court and former Union Minister for Law & Justice.

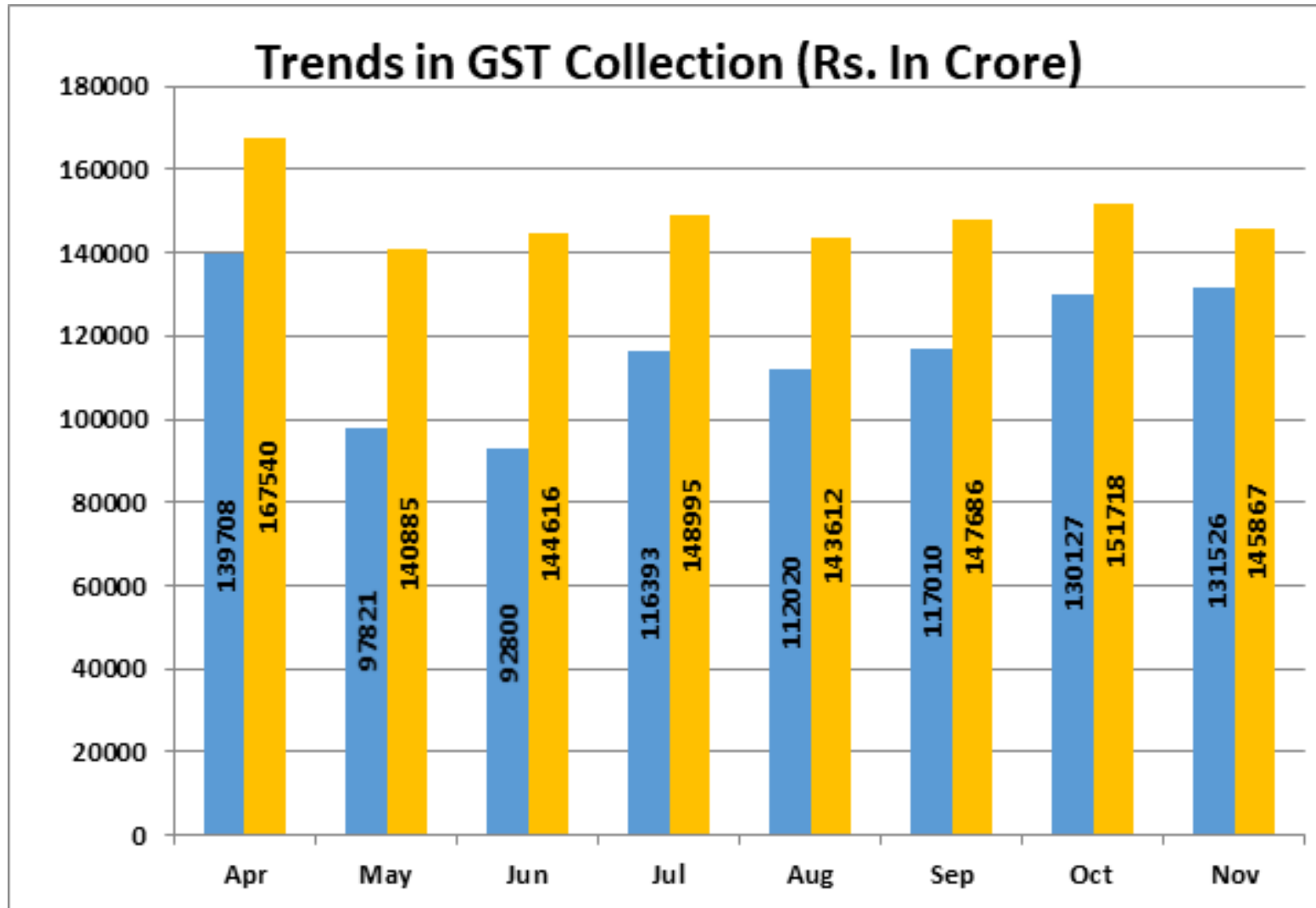
PIB,DEC1,2022

₹1,45,867 crore gross GST revenue collected for November 2022, records increase of 11% Year-on-Year. Monthly GST revenues more than ₹1.4 lakh crore for nine straight months in a row. Revenues from import of goods 20% higher and revenues from domestic transaction (including import of services) 8% higher than the same month last year

The gross GST revenue collected in the month of November 2022 is ₹1,45,867 crore of which CGST is ₹25,681 crore, SGST is ₹32,651 crore, IGST is ₹77,103 crore (including ₹38,635 crore collected on import of goods) and Cess is ₹10,433 crore (including ₹817 crore collected on import of goods). The government has settled ₹33,997 crore to CGST and ₹28,538 crore to SGST from IGST as regular settlement. The total revenue of Centre and the States after regular settlements in the month of November 2022 is ₹59,678 crore for CGST and ₹61,189 crore for the SGST. In addition, Centre had also released ₹17,000 crore as GST compensation to States/UTs in November 2022.

The revenues for the month of November 2022 are 11% higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year, which itself was Rs. 1,31,526 crore. During the month, revenues from import of goods was 20% higher and the revenues from domestic transaction (including import of services) are 8% higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year. The chart below shows trends in monthly gross GST revenues during the current year. The table shows the state-wise figures of GST collected in each State during the month of November 2022 as compared to November 2021.

State-wise growth of GST Revenues during November 2022[1]



STATESMAN,DEC3,2022

Unorganised must form the core of economic growth

Without industry, it is believed today that rapid economic growth is not achievable. Industrial development has shaped our modern life. Science and technology are the backbones of this development.

PATRANGA BASU

Success lies in exponential economic growth. Large industries are the prime movers of growth. Without industry, it is believed today that rapid economic growth is not achievable. Industrial development has shaped our modern life. Science and technology are the backbones of this development. The industrial revolution enabled the establishment of giant industries with the mechanization of production. Industrial labour is engaged in the direct production process in organised sectors. But the jobs they perform are mostly repetitive, mindless, and mundane. These jobs demand no innovation or creativity. The machines do it all. The workers have fixed hours with weekly holidays and earn fixed and honourable remuneration with a well-defined pay structure and social security benefits. They have plenty of leisure time. But the number of such jobs in India is quite a few as a proportion of the total labour force in India. Recent data shows that organised sector jobs are also dwindling. Computers, robots, and artificial intelligence have replaced human involvement in big industries. On the other hand, a huge number of workers – about 90 per cent of the workforce in India – make up the unorganised sector contributing, in aggregate, 50 per cent of the GDP. T

They must work for long hours without a break. They work even odd hours. Farmers work from dawn to dusk; fishermen work at night. They use little or no technology but employ more physical labour and brain power. They rely on their skills. It builds up confidence. But they cannot differentiate between work and leisure. These people are self-taught or have learnt from parents, seniors, friends, or fellow workers. But at the day's end, their earnings are meagre. There is no formal pay protection; the earnings are sufficient only for daily sustenance. They do not enjoy any social security benefits.

They cannot even afford the best levels of health and education benefits. An unexpected disaster could push them into disarray. But these people are the real mass of society. There is a stark difference between the average income of these two sets of workers. In 2011, the real average daily wage in India's organised sector was Rs. 513 whereas the corresponding wage in the informal sector stood at Rs. 166. This shows the disparity. Job is not the only concern of people; job satisfaction also matters to them. Large industries do not recognize an individual's self-respect, job satisfaction or creativity. Mundane repetition of the

same task is the key to success or profitability. A person tries to fulfil his life's ambitions through his job. But in modern society, one becomes frustrated quite easily. So, what we need is simple technology at affordable prices, understood and comprehensible by an ordinary individual and which will not snatch away his or her joy and creativity. As most people, men and women, work in unorganised sectors, simple technology that is environmentally friendly will obviously be profitable to them. The invention of more 'grassroots technology' should be the desired goal of science and technology. Farming in India has traditionally been done by individuals or members of a family. The risks and rewards are on individual landowners, however small the holding may be. Farmers individually cannot influence the market, but their products in aggregate can. It contributes to the GDP of the nation. Insecurity looms large on the farmers because of poor income.

At current prices, the average monthly income of a farmer's family is a little more than Rs 10,000. Moreover, agricultural income may vary tremendously from year to year. Agricultural income in India is 21 times more variable than in the US. Similar is the case for several hundred million individuals working in the unorganised sector or in numerous trades and businesses. They include domestic or home-based workers, street vendors, rickshaw pullers, motor mechanics, carpenters and so on. The individual annual income of this huge workforce including farmers is disastrously low. The recognition of this large workforce is particularly important. Unless their presence in the economy is felt and recognized, improvement in their conditions will not happen. The Government of India launched the e-SHRAM portal in August 2021 to create a National Database of Unorganised Workers.

Within three months up to December 2021, about 25 per cent of the workforce in the unorganised sector registered their names in the portal. 52.39 per cent who registered are women. The income slab of 94 per cent of workers is Rs 10,000 and below. To date, the registration has reached 28.42 crores of which 14.89 crore (52 per cent) are from agriculture, 2.78 crore (9.8 per cent) are household workers, and 2.58 crore (9 per cent) are construction workers.

The perseverance and resilience of these workers make our economy vibrant, though they live in the shadows. These workers are contributors to the GDP and at the same time good consumers collectively. But they have nothing to save. So, they are only participating in the economy without being able to invest in it. There are two parallel economies running simultaneously in developing countries like India. One is of large industries in the organised sector producing consumer goods, infrastructural facilities, and luxuries and the other is engaged primarily in agriculture, essentials, and other services in the unorganised

sector. These two economies are unlikely to merge in the foreseeable future. There is no possibility that the unorganised sector will be taken over by the organised sector. So, unemployment or underemployment in a developing economy is imminent.

But the unorganised sector is not the focus of society. All eyes are on big industries, their investments, opportunities, and stock markets. The focus needs to be shifted now. Priorities must be redefined. People should be at centre stage, and not big industries. Organisations and institutions as well as thinkers and economists must reflect on the health of the unorganised sector. Better-paid workers will create a better society as well as a robust economy more quickly as the size of the labour force in India is incredibly high. A small increase in their income level will have a cascading effect on the economy. Well-remunerated unorganised sector workers will give much better results of equitable, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth than may be possible through the 'trickle-down approach. Unorganised sector workers toil hard day and night, but their efforts are not well rewarded.

The risks they undertake are not matched by their rewards. These workers are so fragmented that they cannot influence market prices with their products or services. They operate in the same market where big industries operate. This market tends to accept the prices thrown by the big corporate houses but bargains hard with unorganised sector participants. This is unequal competition. Here comes the question of governmental or institutional intervention. The need of the hour is to organize the unorganised sector. Subdued, ill-paid workers are undesirable in a fast-developing economy.

TELEGRAPH, DEC 3, 2022

Faulty reasoning

Divorce law in India remains a site of daily tragedy

Akshat Agarwal

Mr X and Ms Y fell in love and got married. They moved abroad and had three children. Unfortunately, things went awry and X filed for divorce in India, claiming an irretrievable breakdown of the marriage. He contended that Y had inflicted physical and mental cruelty on him. Y vehemently opposed the divorce and countered that X had been an irresponsible husband and had been in an extra-marital affair. They had been living apart for five years by this time. Any responsive and modern family law regime should, in such circumstances, consider divorce a given and focus its energies on ensuring equitable economic

consequences for the spouses and maximising the welfare of the children. But when faced with such a matrix in a recent case, the Kerala High Court denied divorce and concluded that none of the ‘fault’ grounds for seeking it was met. Moreover, the husband had seemingly indulged in an “unholy alliance” by having an extra-marital affair and, thus could not “benefit” from it. This is the tragedy of divorce law in India, where courts condemn couples to perpetual unhappiness. Currently, Hindu, Christian and secular marriage laws only recognise divorce on fault grounds. A successful divorce requires proving that the other spouse committed a legal fault. While legislative amendments have introduced mutual consent divorce, laws still do not recognise a unilateral divorce based on the irretrievable breakdown of a marriage. Recently, a Constitution Bench concluded hearings on whether it should grant a unilateral divorce, and, if so, when and under what factual circumstances should such divorces be granted? It was argued that if the Indian Constitution recognised an individual’s right to marry, there had to be a corresponding right to exit the marriage as well. These arguments build on the court’s jurisprudence on the right to privacy and the decriminalisation of homosexuality, where it emphasised the autonomy of individuals to make intimate decisions. But apart from constitutional arguments, there are reasons rooted in family law and policy which strongly advocate for a no fault, unilateral divorce regime in India. Requiring parties to prove fault unnecessarily prolongs marital dispute and relies excessively on judicial discretion. While judges routinely exercise discretion, in family law, this needs fact-intensive queries in high-conflict, interpersonal disputes where establishing bright lines is almost impossible. Moreover, it incentivises the spouses to become adversarial and, rather than promoting long term relationships, only fosters discord. It also diverts judicial time and energy in the pointless pursuit of establishing fault rather than concentrating on spousal economic dependency and the welfare of children. For the sake of argument, even if one assumes a governmental interest in preserving marriage and promoting rapprochement between spouses, the current fault-based divorce regime serves no such purpose. Alternative policy instruments like mandatory pre-divorce mediation or a cooling-off period before unilateral divorce are more useful.

In family law, the excessive focus on fault has diverted policy attention from significant reform questions, such as the need to legally value the spouses’ contributions to marriage while determining post-divorce economic support or ensuring fair parental access in bringing up children. Further, debates that reduce family law reforms to a zero-sum choice between a Uniform Civil Code and patriarchal and religious identity-based personal law also shift focus from more concrete legal and policy conundrums in family law. Consequently, divorce law in India remains a site of daily tragedy. While the Supreme Court has reserved its judgment on its powers to grant a divorce upon their retrievable breakdown of marriage, a judicial resolution



of the issue may only serve a limited purpose. Most litigants simply do not have the wherewithal to go up to the Supreme Court to resolve their marital disputes. Lawmakers must give family law policy the serious attention it deserves.

Akshat Agarwal is a doctoral candidate at Yale Law School.

PIB,DEC3,2022

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh says, India's bio-economy has grown 8 times in the last 8 years under Prime Minister Modi from \$10 billion in 2014 to over \$80 billion in 2022

The Minister addresses an “International Conference on Emerging Trends in Biosciences and Chemical Technology- 2022” in Jammu

Biotech Startups have grown 100 times in the last 8 years from 52 odd startups in 2014 to 5300 plus in 2022

14 international participants like USA, Greece, South Korea, Scotland, Singapore, Thailand, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Malaysia and Vietnam taking part in conference

Investment in Bio-economy increased from Rs 10 Crore in 2014 to Rs 4200 crore in 2022, growth of 400 times creating over 25,000 high skilled jobs: DrJitendra Singh

The Minister informs that Biotech industry crossed one-billion-dollar R&D spend and it almost trebled within a year from 320 million dollars in 2020 to 1.02 billion dollars in 2021

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, DrJitendra Singh said, India's bio-economy has grown 8 times in the last 8 years under Prime Minister Modi from \$10 billion in 2014 to over \$80 billion in 2022.

Addressing an “International Conference on Emerging Trends in Biosciences and Chemical Technology- 2022” in Jammu, DrJitendra Singh said, Biotech Startups have grown 100 times in the last 8 years from 52 odd startups in 2014 to 5300 plus in 2022. He said, 3 Biotech Startups were incorporated every day in 2021 and a total of 1,128 biotech startups were set up in 2021 alone, signaling the rapid growth of the sector in India. The conference is being organized by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, School of Biotechnology, Jammu in collaboration with CSIR-IIIM Jammu and The Biotech Research Society of India, from 3rd - 5th December 2022. There are 14 international participants like USA, Greece, South Korea, Scotland, Singapore, Thailand, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Malaysia and Vietnam and 24 National keynote and invited speakers and around 300 participants from almost every state of India who are presenting their work in the form of Oral and Poster Presentations.

Dr Jitendra Singh pointed out that from a paltry investment of Rs 10 Crore in Bio-economy in 2014, the fund growth saw 400 times hike to Rs 4200 crore in 2022, creating over 25,000 high skilled jobs. He said, number of Bio tech incubators have increased from 6 in 2014 to 75 now, while Biotech products have increased from 10 products to more than 700 today. Dwelling on the growth of India Bioeconomy, DrJitendra Singh pointed out that India administered nearly 4 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines per day and a total of 1.45 billion doses in 2021. Similarly, we conducted 1.3 million COVID-19 tests each day in 2021 and overall 507 million tests in 2021.

Dr Jitendra Singh also pointed out that Biotech industry crossed one-billion-dollar R&D spend, thanks to Covid economy and it almost trebled within a year from 320 million dollars in 2020 to 1,02 billion dollars in 2021. The Minister said, India will soon enter the league of top-5 countries in Biotech's global ecosystem.

Dr Jitendra Singh quoted Prime Minister Narendra Modi to point out the five big reasons why India is being considered a land of opportunities in the field of biotech. First- diverse population and diverse climatic zones, Second- India's talented human capital pool, Third- increasing efforts for ease of doing business in India. Fourth- The demand for Bio-Products is increasing continuously in India and fifth- India's Biotech Sector and its track record of success. Referring to the growing reputation and profile of Indian professionals on the global stage, Dr Jitendra Singh said, there is growing trust in the skill and innovation of Indian IT professionals in the World and in this Bio-economy decade, the same will be true for the Bio Professionals of India.

Scientific sessions of the conference have been divided under different themes on Health Sciences, Enzymology and Molecular biology, Synthetic Biology, Material Science and Nanomaterial, Natural Products and Green Chemistry, Environmental Sustainability and Development and Plant & Animal Science.

Noted participants from organizing bodies include Prof. R K Sinha, Vice Chancellor, SMVDU, Director, CSIR-IIIM Jammu, Prof. Ashok Pandey, Distinguished Scientist Centre for Innovation & Translational Research, CSIR-Indian Institute of Toxicology Research Lucknow, Shri Nagendra Singh Jamwal, JKAS, Registrar SMVDU, Dr. Indu Bhushan, Asst. Prof., School of Biotechnology, SMVDU and Convener of the Conference, Dr. Ratna Chandra, Head, School of Biotechnology, SMVDU and Organizing secretary of the Conference.

PIONEER, DEC 4, 2022

per capita income not gdp shows prosperity

s Kalyanasundaram

India's rank on per capita income is a lowly 144

When the economy of India overtook that of the UK, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently said, "We have surpassed those who ruled us for 250 years in economic growth." Yes, India has overtaken the United Kingdom to become the fifth largest economy in the world. But when we deeply analyse and understand the entire economic indicators, we will realize how India is far away from the prosperity of not only UK but also many other countries, including many Asian countries. India's nominal GDP or GDP at the current price in the April-June quarter was Rs 64.95 lakh crore, which at the June rupee-dollar exchange

rate comes to around \$823 billion. The UK's nominal GDP in the April-June quarter was \$763 billion. According to IMF projections, India is likely to become a \$5 trillion economy by 2026, whereas the UK would be languishing at \$4.35 trillion. Germany's economy was \$4.2 trillion at the end of 2021. India is likely to surpass Germany and become the fourth largest economy in 2027, according to IMF projections. Without comparing per capita GDP, just comparing GDP is meaningless and it leads to false self-satisfaction. It is similar to comparing the family income of two families without considering their dependents. For example, a family which consists of a husband and wife may have a monthly income of Rs 1 lakh and another family with six members may get Rs 1.20 lakh. In such a scenario, each member in the first family gets Rs 50,000, whereas in the second each gets Rs 20,000. Which family is prosperous here?

Now, let us analyse the data of the 10 biggest economies. In 2021, the GDP of the US was \$23 trillion, growth 5.7 per cent, and per capita income. The corresponding figures for China were \$17.7 trillion, 8.1 per cent, and \$12,556; for Japan (\$4.9 trillion, 1.6 per cent, and \$39,285), Germany (\$4.2 trillion, 2.9 per cent, and \$50,801), the UK (\$3.2 trillion, 7.4 per cent, and \$47,334), India (\$3.2 trillion, 8.9 per cent, and \$2,277), France (\$2.9 trillion, 7 per cent, and \$43,518), Italy (\$2.1 trillion, 6.6 per cent, and \$35,551), Canada (\$2 trillion, 4.6 per cent, and \$52,051), South Korea (\$1.8 trillion, 4 per cent, and \$34,757).

India is at 144th position out of 194 economies in terms of GDP (nominal) per capita. India's nominal per capita is over 60 times lower than the richest country and approximately eight times greater than the world's poorest country. India is at 33rd position in the list of Asian countries. The countries with real prosperity are the countries with the highest per capita GDP and the following are those countries. Liechtenstein \$139100, Monaco \$115700, Luxembourg \$110300, Singapore \$93400, Ireland \$89700, Qatar \$85300, Isle of Man \$84600, Bermuda \$81800, Cayman Islands \$73600 and Falkland Islands \$70800. When our present GDP per capita is \$2277 and the Singapore's GDP per capita is \$93400, where are we and how much we have to catch up? Even if we take into account the PPP adjusted figures, there is a wide gap between us and other prosperous countries. When we expect the world to measure coronavirus death in our country in terms of our population, we must also be willing to measure GDP in terms of GDP per capita and not by just GDP number. We have a long way to go.

(The author is a retired banker)

PIONEER, DEC 4, 2022

The obsession with economic growth

Atul Sehgal

Growth doesn't mean economic growth driven by the profit motives, indifferent to environment. It must be driven by human values and inclusive

Economic growth is the watchword these days. Every individual, every community, every society, and every country seems to be interested in such growth. Today, we indulge in glib talk of economic growth all the time. The developed countries as much as the developing and the laggard countries seem to be obsessed with this term. Every political head talks of growth and makes it the prime agenda item of governance. Institutional agencies work overtime to analyze the growth patterns of various countries and extrapolate them and, at the same time, attempt to draw a policy framework to accelerate growth. Economic growth seems to have become the key issue for the welfare of nations as also human individuals.

Is the above obsession with economic growth really proper? Does it necessarily lead to individual and collective action conducive to peace, progress, and prosperity? Does it result in action that enhances the happiness quotient of people? Does it lead to living paradigms that protect the global physical environment? Does it engender a human approach that affects the improvement of the quality of human life on this planet? Is it consistent with the spiritual character of a man? These important questions cry for urgent answers because our progeny's survival is at stake. We need to find answers because our sustenance on this planet is threatened by the adverse fallouts of environmental degradation. It seems that this relentless pursuit of economic growth by all has eroded the happiness of people. It has generated newer types of problems unforeseen by the human population. We know that earth has plenty of material resources for its 7.9 billion human population. Beyond any semblance of doubt, there exists in this world enough to satisfy everyone's needs but not enough to satisfy everyone's greed.

The concept of economic growth is closely linked to productivity, for productive work creates wealth. But a person cannot become productive without a supporting ecosystem. Also, a person cannot be expected to be productive if he is deprived of the necessities of life like adequate food and nutrition, and housing. In the twenty-first century world too, there are close to 200 million humans who live in deprivation of such necessities. The stark disparity of wealth prevalent in the 19th and 20th centuries continues into the 21st century. Even today, 15 percent of the global population owns or consumes 80 percent of the global wealth.

Growth is commonly understood as an accretion to wealth and well-being. Such growth, therefore, means purely economic growth. But consider the fact that the planet has limited, finite resources, and its population is only increasing, not falling. Growth without human values is lopsided growth or exclusive growth. These values are humanism, righteousness, and preservation of environmental purity. Assiduous adherence to these values will bring about inclusive growth and maintain peace and harmony. Scientific techniques and technological processes that degrade the environment lead to growth with deleterious side effects. A work culture devoid of spiritual values leads to exploitation and plunder, driven by greed. It leads to malignant growth, like the growth of cancer cells.

Man's obsession with material growth should be supplanted by an obsession with balanced growth, which is material cum spiritual, driven by principles of righteousness or dharma. Only such type of growth establishes and maintains stability. It prevents ruthless exploitation of man by man and doesn't let grave disparity and inequality set in. It promotes harmony, peace, and happiness and is sublime. We surely need to develop paradigms of living that will bring about the balanced growth of humans inhabiting this planet. These paradigms will be necessarily built upon a humanistic work culture and environmentally friendly technologies. They will be built on collaboration rather than fierce competition. They will be premised on the welfare of all rather than the survival of the fittest. They will be based on the growth of true knowledge, maturity, and humanism rather than the growth of gross wealth.

Our pursuit of unbridled material growth has created a huge ecological and environmental crisis. Many of our so-called scientific processes are based on half knowledge because we are unable to control or counteract their dangerous side effects. The cost of rapid industrialization has been tremendous. We have burdened mother earth with a heavy concentration of solid, liquid, and gaseous pollutants and are witness to severe sporadic spells of cyclones, tsunamis, dry spells, wildfires, and floods. We do realize that global warming, climate change, and ocean level rise are the result of environmental degradation caused by our crude, cruel and inferior technologies coupled with the near-mad pursuit of economic growth. We need to align our thinking with nature and the principles of harmonious existence (dharma) delivered to us by the Creator to achieve growth that is in sync with nature, conducive to universal welfare, and sustainable.

(The writer is a Management Consultant based in New Delhi.)

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

PIB,NOV29,2022

Accuracy more important than speed in news communication and should be primary in the minds of communicators: Union Minister Shri Anurag Thakur. For responsible media organisations maintaining public trust should be the highest guiding principle: Shri Anurag Thakur. Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Shri Anurag Thakur has today said that, “presenting authentic information is the prime responsibility of media and that facts should be properly checked before they are put in the public domain”.

Speaking at the Opening Ceremony of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union General Assembly 2022, the Minister said, “while speed with which the information is transmitted is important, accuracy is even more important and should be primary in the minds of communicators”. With the spread of social media, fake news has also proliferated, the Minister added. To that end he informed the audience of broadcasters from the Asia-Pacific region that the Government promptly established the Fact Check Unit in the Press Information Bureau of Government of India to counter unverified claims and present truth to the people.

The Minister highlighted that for responsible media organizations maintaining public trust should be the highest guiding principle. He credited public broadcasters Doordarshan and All India Radio for having always stood by the truth and having won people’s trust for their truthful reporting. He underlined that media’s role during the time of crisis becomes critical as it directly concerns saving lives adding that media is at the core of national disaster management plans. Shri Anurag Thakur also credited the media for coming to the aid of people stuck at home during the COVID19 pandemic saying it was media which connected people with the outside world. He informed the audience of the stellar work done by Doordarshan and All India Radio in particular and the Indian media in general saying Doordarshan and All India Radio, very satisfactorily delivered on their mandate of public service and stood strong with the people during the time of pandemic. Indian media, he said, in general ensured that COVID-19 awareness messages, important government guidelines and free online consultations with doctors reached everyone in nook and corner of the country. The Prasar Bharati lost over hundred members to COVID19 and yet it did not deter the organisation from carrying on with its public service mandate, the Minister said.

Shri Thakur invited media to become a partner in Governance and used the podium to reiterate the words of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi that “Media should act as a link between government and people and provide continuous feedback, at both national and regional level”. He further urged that ABU as an association of broadcasting organizations must continue to train and equip media practitioners with the best professional skills on role of media in the time of crisis and promised that India was ready to all such efforts. The Minister also deliberated on the collaborations and partnerships India has with ABU members and said that NABM, the apex training institute of Prasar Bharati is closely collaborating with ABU Media Academy in organising trainings covering various aspects of broadcast industry. India has bilateral agreements in the areas of content exchange, co-production, capacity building, etc. with about 40 countries, a number of them are fellow ABU countries such as Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Fiji, Maldives, Nepal, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam. “We have also partnered with Australia in the field of broadcasting in March 2022 for programme sharing. The broadcasters of the two countries are also exploring opportunities in co-production and joint broadcasting of programmes spanning multiple genres”, he further added.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Masagaki outlined on the important role being played by ABU in Asia Pacific region and appreciated the collaborated efforts being made by all public service broadcasters of the region in sharing news of public importance among themselves. Mr. Javad Mottaghi speaking on the occasion said that the region is full of diversity yet we all member countries find commonality and display true unity in such wide diversity. Shri Gaurav Dwivedi, CEO, Prasar Bharati, in his welcome address appreciated the role of ABU in promoting the collective interests of television and radio broadcasters and regional and international co-operation between broadcasters in the Asia Pacific Region. He further said that India proudly celebrates 2022 as the 75th anniversary of Independence from the colonial rule through the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav initiatives in various sectors and this conference is a great opportunity to share the achievements of the country in the sector of media and communication and showcase the rich heritage, vast diversity and progressive India to the world.

Prasar Bharati, India’s Public Service Broadcaster, is hosting the 59th ABU General Assembly 2022. The theme for this year’s assembly is “Serving the People: Media’s Role in Times of Crisis”. The General Assembly was Inaugurated today by Hon’ble Minister of Information and Broadcasting Shri Anurag Singh Thakur in New Delhi in the presence of Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting Dr. L Murugan, Shri Apurva Chandra, Secretary, I&B, Mr. Masagaki Satoru, President ABU and Mr. Javad Mottaghi, Secretary General, ABU. The ABU (Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union) is a nonprofit, professional association of the broadcasting organizations of Asia and Pacific region. More than 300 international delegates from 40 countries representing 50 organizations are participating in the event.



TELEGRAPH,NOV30,2022

India's latest earth observation satellite starts serving images

Bangalore-headquartered ISRO shared on Twitter the first-day images received at National Remote Sensing Centre

Earth Observation Satellite-06 launched by ISRO has started serving imagesThe Earth Observation Satellite-06 launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation on November 26 has started serving images, the national space agency said on Wednesday.Bangalore-headquartered ISRO shared on Twitter the first-day images received on Tuesday at National Remote Sensing Centre, Shadnagar, Telangana, covering the Himalayan region, Kutch region of Gujarat and the Arabian sea."They are captured by the Ocean Color Monitor (OCM) and Sea Surface Temperature Monitor (SSTM) sensors (on board EOS-06)", it said.

EOS-06 commenced serving the images.First-day images received on Nov 29, 2022, at NRSC, Shadnagar cover the Himalayan region, Gujarat Kutch region, & the Arabian Sea.They are captured by the Ocean Color Monitor (OCM) & Sea Surface Temperature Monitor (SSTM) Sensors. (1/2) pic.twitter.com/xkQjP1GT7z

— ISRO (@isro) November 30, 2022

The images were released by ISRO Chairman S Somanath in virtual mode, in the presence of Director of UR Rao Satellite Centre, M Sankaran, and NRSC Director Prakash Chauhan, it was stated.

**PIB,DEC1,2022**

World's first intra-nasal vaccine for COVID developed by India has got approval from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) for restricted use in emergency situations in the age group of 18 and above.Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh lauds the role of Department of Biotechnology (DBT) for supporting the development of world's first Intranasal vaccine for COVID by Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL)In another historic and path-breaking decision, Dr Jitendra Singh today approved subsuming of 14 Autonomous Institutions of DBT to create one Apex Autonomous Body - Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC) for achieving centralized and unified governance to maximize impact of biotech research

The Minister chairs the Annual General Body Meeting of the Societies of Autonomous Institutions of DBT at National Institute of Immunology in Delhi. The vaccine received approval from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) under Restricted Use in Emergency Situations for ages 18 and above in India, for heterologous booster doses: Dr Jitendra Singh. The Minister says, BRIC will build on the foundations developed at the DBT institutions to foster synergies while maintaining their distinct research mandates and undertake cutting edge research addressing national priorities. World's first intra-nasal vaccine for COVID developed by India has got approval from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) for restricted use in emergency situations in the age group of 18 and above.

This was stated here today by 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 while chairing the meeting of the Societies of Autonomous Institutions of Department of Biotechnology where he also informed about the historic decision to merge the 14 societies of Biotechnology Institutes into a single society in the interest of convenient functioning, cost-effectiveness and integrated working. The Minister lauded the role of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and its PSU, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance (BIRAC) for supporting the development of world's first Intranasal vaccine for COVID by Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL). Dr Jitendra Singh informed that the Product development and Clinical trials were funded by the Department of biotechnology, Government of India and BIRAC under the Mission COVID Suraksha Program. This vaccine received approval under restricted Use in emergency situations for ages 18 and above for primary 2 dose schedule, homologous booster doses.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, India's efforts through Mission COVID Suraksha under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not only strengthened AtmaNirbhar Bharat but also bolstered India's status as a worldwide vaccine development and manufacturing center showcasing the strength of Science and Technology. It is a matter of great pride for the country, the Minister added. Phase-III trials were conducted for safety, and immunogenicity in ~3100 subjects, in 14 trial sites across India (supported by BIRAC). Heterologous booster dose studies were conducted for safety and immunogenicity in ~875 subjects, where a booster dose (3rd dose) of BBV154 intranasal vaccine was administered to study participants who were previously vaccinated with licensed COVID vaccines. The clinical trials were conducted in 9 trial sites across India. National Institute of Immunology (NII), an autonomous institute of DBT in New Delhi utilized their "Human Immune Monitoring and T-cell Immunoassay Platform" to examine the vaccine-induced SARS-CoV-2-specific systemic and mucosal cellular immune responses the trial participants. Interactive Research School for Health Affairs (IRSHA), Pune (supported by

BIRAC) completed the “Plaque Reduction Neutralization Assay” (PRNT) to quantify the titer of neutralizing antibody for the virus from three trial sites. This vaccine has the double benefit of enabling faster development of variant-specific vaccines and easy nasal delivery that enables mass immunization to protect from emerging variants of concern. It promises to become an important tool in mass vaccinations during pandemics and endemics.

Vaccine is a recombinant replication deficient adenovirus vectored vaccine with a pre-fusion stabilized spike protein. This vaccine candidate was evaluated in Phases I, II and III clinical trials with successful results. It has been specifically formulated to allow intranasal delivery through nasal drops. The nasal delivery system has been designed and developed to be cost-effective in low- and middle-income countries. This vaccine is stable at 2-8°C for easy storage and distribution. Large manufacturing capabilities have been established by Bharat Biotech at multiple sites across India, including Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Telangana, with operations pan India. In another historic and path-breaking decision, Dr Jitendra Singh today approved subsuming of 14 Autonomous Institutions of DBT to create one Apex Autonomous Body - Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC) for achieving centralized and unified governance to maximize impact of biotech research.

Dr Jitendra Singh the move is a tribute to Prime Minister Modi’s vision of “Minimum Government, Maximum Governance” as well as his call for Greater Integration of Ideas and Institutions for cost-cutting and effective output. Dr Jitendra Singh explained that the restructuring of DBT institutes is being carried out with a larger goal to enhance the scientific character and science outcomes at the institutes by building research synergies, new education programs in line with National Education Policy, improving human resource structures across cadres and effective management and monetization of assets emanating from the research being carried out.

The Minister hoped that BRIC will build on the foundations developed at the DBT institutions to foster synergies while maintaining their distinct research mandates. With an emphasis on interdisciplinary interactions that cut across institutional boundaries, BRIC institutes will undertake cutting edge research addressing national priorities, the Minister added. Secretary, DBT, Rajesh Gokhale earlier welcomed the Minister and oversaw the presentation of Science activities in 2021-2022 by 9 Institutes today, while remaining 5 will give their presentations tomorrow.

PIB, DEC 2, 2022

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh calls for enhancing StartUp cum public outreach and incentivising the research as well as Inter and Intra collaboration among the frontier DBT institutes for cutting-edge and translation research for the overall benefit of society and the country. The Minister undertakes two-day comprehensive review of 14 Autonomous Institutions of the Department of Biotechnology on achievements and way forward

Dr Jitendra Singh gave the mantra of “Strive for Excellence & Innovate for the Future” to all the 14 Autonomous Institutions of the DBT. 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 called for incentivizing the research and public outreach as well as Inter and Intra collaboration among the frontier DBT institutes for cutting-edge and translation research for the overall benefit of society and the country. Speaking after two-day comprehensive review of 14 Autonomous Institutions of the Department of Biotechnology at National Institute of Immunology, Dr Jitendra Singh gave the mantra of “Strive for Excellence & Innovate for the Future” to all the 14 institutes.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, in era of rapid innovations and transformative changes, Biotech Institutes should focus on its core competency and strive hard to bring research and product development at par with global standards. He said, though National Institute of Immunology (NII) has been pioneering in deciphering the molecular basis and host response to infectious diseases like tuberculosis, malaria and viral diseases including Dengue and COVID, but its recent breakthrough in evaluating the intranasal Covid-19 vaccine in phase 3 clinical trial for its immunological effectiveness is noted by all. Dr Jitendra Singh pointed out that DBT-National Agri Food Biotechnology Institute (NABI), Mohali identifies priority cereal and fruit crops with focused traits to implement genome editing approaches. He said, these new initiatives will be co-developed along with industries to streamline its operations and thereby providing impetus to Indian agriculture. Similarly, Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad has a strong mother and child health research program. Its research on immediate Kangaroo mother care has resulted in a new recommendation by WHO for preterm babies. THSTI is developing therapeutic molecules against tuberculosis, dengue and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. It has contributed to covid-19 vaccine and is currently developing a pan beta corona virus vaccine, the Minister added.

Dr Jitendra Singh informed that Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology (RGCB)’s HPV vaccine efficacy studies of 10 years have resulted in establishing a single dose of HPV vaccine for 9 to 18 years children sufficient to prevent infection. RGCB is

also doing vaccine efficacy studies for the first indigenously developed HPV vaccine and the above has now been adopted by WHO for immunization strategy. The achievements of National Institute of Animal Biotechnology, (NIAB) Hyderabad has been underlined for the development of LSDV vaccine candidates through immunoinformatics, first report on complete genome sequence of LSDV (Andhra isolate), Electrochemical based Lateral Flow Assay for Japanese Encephalitis Virus and Toxoplasma Gondii. Dr. Jitendra Singh was given presentation by Institute for Stem Cell Science and Regenerative Medicine (inStem) in Bengaluru as the institute is carrying out cutting edge research using stem cells to understand blood and cardiovascular diseases and brain disorders. Using human genetics and human stem cell technology from human clinical samples they have generated a large resource of stem cells under collaborative programs, to understand why some individuals might be prone to developing mental illness. inStem's Centre for Stem Cell Research (CSCR) at CMC Vellore is leading efforts on musculoskeletal regeneration and gene therapy for blood disorders like hemophilia, beta-thalassemia and sickle cell disease. Being India's first stem cell institute inStem is also regularly carrying out extensive outreach, and highly sophisticated stem cell training for capacity building in stem cells and regenerative biology.

Director of the National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (NIBMG) has informed the Minister that they have identified the genomic changes which mark transition from precancer to frank oral cancer. They have conducted the first genome wide study in the GARBH-Ini cohort to identify genomic and epigenomic markers of preterm birth and also spearheaded the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium, INSACOG, which provided valuable information on the emergence and spread of viral variants for public health management during the pandemic

Institute of Life Sciences (ILS), Bhubaneswar is working on several research programs in the areas of Infectious Disease Biology, Cancer Biology, and Plant and Microbial Biotechnology the research programme of ILS strategically plans to address issues on infectious disease biology in experimental as well as human models. National Brain Research Centre (NBRC) Manesar is mandated to study brain function at different levels and apply the knowledge for societal benefit. We operate the MEG facility in collaboration with AIIMS to serve patients at a subsidized rate. In the past one year we developed a new method to estimate brain metabolites as an early indicator of dementia. We also showed that coordination between different brain centers remain invariant even though the peak alpha frequency is slowed with aging. In the next year they plan to expand our research in the areas of autism and epilepsy by utilizing the state-of-the-art MRI facilities on campus. They also aim to



increase collaborations with clinicians through joint internship and MD programmes. Heads and Directors of Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology (RGCB), Thiruvananthapuram, Centre for DNA Fingerprinting & Diagnostics, (CDFD),

Hyderabad, Institute of Life Sciences (ILS), Bhubaneswar, National Institute for Plant Genome Research, (NIPGR), New Delhi, Institute of Bioresources & Sustainable Development (IBSD), Imphal National Institute of Immunology (NII), New Delhi, National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute (NABI), Mohali, Punjab, Center of Innovative and Applied Bioprocessing (CIAB), Mohali, Punjab, National Brain Research Centre (NBRC), Manesar, Haryana, Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad. National Centre for Cell Science (NCCS), Pune, National Institute of Animal Biotechnology (NIAB), Hyderabad, Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine (InStem), Bangalore, National Institute of Bio Medical Genomics (NIBMG), Kalyani took part in the review meeting.

**PIB,DEC3,2022**

The world looks to New India for Tech & Innovation leadership: MoS Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Inaugurates Centre of Excellence for AI, Robotics in Jyothi Engineering College, Thrissur

Visits old school, meets Teachers and Students, announces setting up of Atal Tinkering Lab

The Minister of State for Electronics & Information Technology and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar today said that New India under PM Shri Narendra Modi has changed the discourse completely from being a country saddled in scams and red tape to one that the world looks up to for both Technology and Innovation leadership.

MoS Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar addressing students at the Jyothi Engineering College, Thrissur, Kerala

Addressing students at the Jyothi Engineering College in Thrissur, Kerala, the Minister said, “Technology and digitalisation are playing a significant role in shaping of the economies, the trades across the world and India is already taking the lead in that direction and coming decade will be India’s Techade full of opportunities for the young Indians.”The Minister inaugurated a Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics in the campus and expressed hope that it will encourage young Indians to venture into innovation and applications of AI and robotics in different fields.MoS Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar addressing students at the Jyothi Engineering College, Thrissur, Kerala

The Minister said there is already a wave of opportunities for innovation and startups in India and the Government looks up to students, entrepreneurs and startups from across the country to grab these opportunities and help India become the trusted tech partner of the world. MoS Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar visiting his first school St. Paul's, Kuriachira, Thrissur, Kerala

Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, who reached Thrissur earlier today, visited his first school St. Paul's, Kuriachira that he had joined as a five-year-old. He was given a ceremonial welcome with the school band presenting a march. He was happy to meet the students, teachers and caregivers at the school. He was shown his admission records that dated 1969—meticulously preserved by the school. Sister Felicita, sister of his then School Headmistress, Sister Clarence presented him a picture of Sister Clarence as memorabilia. Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar meeting Sister Felicita, sister of his then School Headmistress, Sister Clarence, at his first school St. Paul's, Kuriachira, Thrissur, Kerala

Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar later went to the Senior Secondary wing of the school and announced setting up of an Atal Tinkering Lab. Speaking to students, he urged them to be innovative and enterprising, while working for their academic credits in school. He hoped the ATL will usher in a culture of innovation and encourage the students to break new grounds.

Later, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar went to Cheruthuruthy, where he was felicitated by the eminent personalities and business leaders from the region.

**ECONOMIC TIMES, DEC 4, 2022**

**Govt mulls exempting early stage startups from Data Protection Bill provisions**

The government is mulling exempting early stage startups from complying with norms under proposed Digital Personal Data Protection bill, an official source said. The exemption may be for a limited period to assist startups in developing their business models and to ensure that innovation is not stifled due to compliance burden.

"Meity (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology) is mulling to improve upon the bill to exempt early stage startups from the provisions of DPDP (Digital Personal Data Protection) bill." "This may be for a limited time period in cases where they may be doing some kind of data modelling etc to develop their solution," the source, who did not wish to be named, said. The draft DPDP has proposed exemption only for government notified data fiduciaries and data processing



entities when it comes to data collection, data sharing, giving information around data processing etc. Last week, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar had said the government will not be able to violate the privacy of citizens under the proposed law as it will get access to personal data only in exceptional circumstances like national security, pandemic and natural disasters.

The minister said the bill does not exempt government or related entities in case of data breach. The government has issued a draft DPDP bill which proposes a penalty of up to Rs 500 crore for violation of DPDP rules. The bill also proposes to remove a section from the IT Act which provides an option of compensation to individuals impacted by data breach. When asked about the reason for removing the compensation clause, the source said the government does not want people to misuse the provision of the bill and make a business out of it to earn compensation. The bill is open for public comments till December 17 and the government is likely to place the draft before Parliament in Budget Session.

## ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

PIB,NOV29,2022

International Jaguar Day celebrated at National Zoological Park

The National Zoological Park, New Delhi (Delhi Zoo) celebrated the International Jaguar Day, today. On this occasion National Zoological Park organized activities like Zoo Walk and Expert talk on 'Big Cats and Jaguars'. Students from Little Star Public School participated in these events. Participation certificates, literature on wildlife conservation and souvenirs were given to the students to encourage them and arouse their curiosity in understanding the importance of nature and wildlife conservation. Little Star Public School Students at Delhi Zoo on the occasion of International Jaguar Day

About International Jaguar Day:

International Jaguar Day was created to raise awareness about the increasing threats facing the jaguar and the critical conservation efforts ensuring its survival. Observed annually on November 29, International Jaguar Day celebrates the Americas' largest wild cat as an umbrella species for biodiversity conservation and an icon for sustainable development and the centuries-old cultural heritage of Central and South America. This is the third largest Cat Predator of the World and an important species of Amazon Rainforest.

Jaguar in the wild

International Jaguar Day also represent the collective voice of jaguar range countries, in collaboration with national and international partners, to draw attention to the need to conserve jaguar corridors and their habitats as part of broader efforts to achieve the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. Jaguars (*Panthera onca*) are often mistaken for leopards, but can be differentiated due to the spots within the rosettes on their coats. While many cats avoid water, jaguars are great swimmers, and have even been known to swim the Panama Canal.

PIB,NOV29,2022

NITI Aayog releases study report on ‘Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage (CCUS) Policy Framework and its Deployment Mechanism in India’ CCUS is key to ensuring sustainable development and growth in India, particularly for the production of clean products and energy, leading to an Atmanirbhar Bharat. A study report, titled ‘Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage Policy Framework and its Deployment Mechanism in India’, was released today. The report explores the importance of Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage as an emission reduction strategy to achieve deep decarbonization from the hard-to-abate sectors. The report outlines broad level policy interventions needed across various sectors for its application.

As, India has updated its NDC targets for achieving 50% of its total installed capacity from non-fossil-based energy sources, 45% reduction in emission intensity by 2030 and taking steps towards achieving Net Zero by 2070, the role of Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage (CCUS) becomes important as reduction strategy to achieve decarbonization from the hard-to-abate sectors. “CCUS can enable the production of clean products while still utilizing our rich endowments of coal, reducing imports and thus leading to an Atmanirbhar Indian economy.” said Suman Bery, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog. Implementation of CCUS technology certainly be an important step to decarbonise the hard-to-abate sector. CCUS projects will also lead to a significant employment generation. It estimates that about 750 mtpa of carbon capture by 2050 can create employment opportunities of about 8-10 million on full time equivalent (FTE) basis in a phased manner. “India’s dependency on the fossil-based Energy Resources is likely to continue in future, hence CCUS policy in Indian Context is needed” said Dr. V.K Saraswat, Member, NITI Aayog. The report indicates that CCUS can provide a wide variety of opportunities to convert the captured CO<sub>2</sub> to different value-added products like green urea, food and beverage form application, building materials (concrete and aggregates), chemicals (methanol and ethanol), polymers (including bio-plastics) and enhanced oil recovery (EOR) with wide market opportunities in India, thus contributing substantially to a circular economy.

Live Stream: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=biwDpAqvTFA>

Report Link: <https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2022-11/CCUS-Report.pdf>

PIB, NOV 30, 2022

## Sumangalam Panchmahabhoot Conference Series VAYU- The vital life force to be held in Bhubaneswar

To celebrate the spirit of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in the 75th year of Independence and channel dialogue on need for clean air in the country, a conference titled ‘Vayu – The vital life force’ is being organized at Siksha O Anusandhan University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha from December 02 – 04, 2022. This Conference is focused on varied air quality issues ranging from scientific discussions on climate change and pollution control to enriching our understanding on air quality from ancient scriptures and texts.

His Excellency Prof. Ganeshi Lal, the Governor of Odisha; Shri Bhupender Yadav, Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship; Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change; Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab, Member of Parliament, Cuttack; Smt Aprajita Sarangi, Member of Parliament, Bhubaneswar and distinguished dignitaries from all around the country will be gracing the event. According to the concept of Panchmahaboot everything in nature is made up of five elements Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Space. The imbalance or threat to any of these elements threatens the wellbeing of humanity. Thus, the clean air is vital to sustain life force and good health. The aim of the Vayu conference is to build upon the multidimensional efforts taken by Governments to achieve our air quality targets as set in National Clean Air Program by uniting all the important stakeholders. To celebrate the achievements of our cities in their efforts to achieve clean air targets, ‘National Clean Air City’ award based on Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan will be given to best performing nine cities for meeting air quality targets and implementation of corrective, preventive and mitigation actions. Total cash prize of about Rs. 05 Crores will be awarded to these cities to motivate them to take further concrete action towards clean air goals.

To constructively engage the youth of the country and give them a platform to present their innovative ideas to solve air quality challenges, an engaging youth session has been organized on December 02, 2022, wherein students will be involved in scholar sessions on atmospheric science, climate change, human health, heritage studies, agriculture issues and mitigation measures. An exhibition to raise public awareness on air quality, natural alternatives and showcasing heritage of Odisha will also be held.

The conference will be attended by more than 500 participants comprising experts, students, academicians, State Pollution Control Boards, Pollution Control Committees, Municipal Commissioners, State Environment Secretaries, scientists, and engineers. It will be a mega participatory event to nurture Jan Bhagidari in the ongoing celebrations under Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

PIB,DEC2,2022

Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change addresses Valedictory Session of National Youth Conference on Vayu: The Vital Life Force. Urges youth of the country to embrace Bhartiya tradition to fight against air pollution

Minister of State for Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey addressed the valedictory session of National Youth Conference on Vayu: The Vital Life Force, in Odisha today. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Choubey laid emphasis on the role of panchmahabhoot, the five basic elements of creation in sustaining and nurturing life. Realizing the immense trove of knowledge left by ancient Indian civilizations, who lived in harmony with the planet and nature, he expressed that it is time India rediscovers the significance and relevance of Indian thought, and initiatives are taken to promote the Bharatiya world view at the global level. He appreciated the dissemination of knowledge through technical sessions and paper presentations undertaken on various aspects of air quality management such as atmospheric sciences, thermal pollution, role of meteorology, composition of air, climate change, impact on agriculture, among others.

Sh. Choubey said that the Central Government has taken several measures for air quality management in the country such as developing National Clean Air Programme with air pollution reduction targets, augmenting air quality monitoring network (manual & real time), etc. This conference takes the efforts forward by bringing together all the important stakeholders and helping us broaden the discussion on air quality improvement. The conference strengthens the message that we need to adopt as per nature and treat nature and culture with respect. Addressing a gathering of over 900 delegates, Sh. Choubey said that the youth of the country have an important role in building the future of India and such youth conferences provide further impetus to the government's efforts to constructively engage the youth and give them a platform to present their innovative ideas to solve air quality challenges. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, along with Central Pollution Control Board, at Siksha O Anusandhan University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha commemorated the union of modern and traditional knowledge, to tackle air pollution in the country at the youth conference.

PIB,DEC3,2022

‘International Conference Series on Vayu: The Vital Life Force’ inaugurated by His Excellency, Prof. Ganeshi Lal, Governor of Odisha and Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav

Essence of this conference is inner awakening: Hon’ble Governor

Sustainable production and sustainable consumption, as part of Mission LiFE, is the way ahead to beat Climate Change and Air Pollution: Union Environment Minister. ‘National Clean Air City’ awards with a total cash prize of over Rs. 5 crores given for the first time to 9 cities

A 2-day International Conference Series on Vayu: The Vital Life Force, was inaugurated today by His Excellency, Prof. Ganeshi Lal, Hon’ble Governor of Odisha, and Union Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav at Bhubaneswar, Odisha. As a part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, the conference is one of a series of conferences, which intend to disseminate Indian thought across the globe vis-à-vis Panchmahabhoot, the five essential elements of creation.

Addressing the inaugural session, Hon’ble Governor said that Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav is symbolic of an initiative to give back to the country and world at large, as the world has increasingly become individualistic. He further said that the conference aims to help individuals realize the connection that exists between the universe and humanity, as the universe is based on the spirit of cooperation and coexistence. The Governor noted that the element of Vayu cannot be separated from the other elements of the panchmahabhoot and it is essential to consider them together. He emphasized that the essence of this conference is inner awakening, and appreciated the efforts of the Central Government for protecting the environment. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Yadav expressed his sincere gratitude to the Hon’ble Governor of Odisha for gracing the inaugural session. He appreciated the participation of students in the conference and said that it is important to understand the challenges posed by climate change and each one of us has a responsibility towards the country and the planet.

The Minister said that under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the country has made great strides in tackling air pollution and climate change. This includes increase in renewables capacity and establishment of the International Solar Alliance for the energy sector, promotion of electric vehicles and mandated ethanol blending for vehicular sector, conversion to cleaner fuels in case of industrial sectors, ban on Single Use Plastic, among others.

Speaking about Mission LiFE, i.e., Lifestyle For Environment, a One-Word Movement launched by the Prime Minister in October 2022, he said that emphasis needs to be laid not only on converting waste to wealth, but also on reducing waste generation. While action is being initiated for carbon markets, carbon finance, mitigation and adaptation, sustainable consumption, sustainable production and creating awareness among the people for an environmentally conscious lifestyle is the way forward. He hoped that useful inputs would emerge from the technical sessions that would be held during the conference, however, it should be ensured that discussions take into account policy formulation, policy execution, innovative and scientific developments, ethical values and traditional knowledge, as all these elements would be required for putting up an effective fight against climate change. 'National Clean Air City' awards were given to 9 best performing cities in meeting air quality targets and implementation of corrective, preventive and mitigation actions, based on Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan 2022.

Prize cheques and certificates were given in three categories of cities based on population. In the first category of cities i.e., those having population more than 10 lakh, Lucknow bagged the first prize with a cash reward of Rs. 1.5 crore for reducing average ambient PM10 concentration by 31% from 2019-20 to 2021-22 and scoring higher on actions taken for abating burning of biomass and solid waste. Ms. Sanyukta Bhatia, the Mayor of Lucknow received the cheque and certificate from His Excellency, Prof. Ganeshi Lal, Hon'ble Governor of Odisha, and Union Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav.

In the second category of cities i.e., those having population between 3-10 lakh, Moradabad bagged the first prize with a cash reward of Rs. 75 lakhs by reducing PM10 concentration by 36%. In the third category of cities i.e., those having population less than 3 lakh, Dewas bagged the first prize with a cash reward of Rs. 37.5 lakh. The awards are expected to motivate these cities and other non-attainment cities to amplify their efforts towards achieving a cleaner and greener India. The inaugural session saw wide participation from senior officials of MoEF&CC, CPCB, Municipal commissioners of non-attainment cities, representatives from State urban development departments, State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees, air quality experts, PSG officials, academicians and students from various universities across India.

## CURRENT EVENTS

PIB,NOV29,2022

President of India Graces International Gita Seminar; Launches/Lays Foundation Stone for Various Projects of Government of Haryana Related to Health, Road Transport and Education. Gita is a Life Code and Spiritual Beacon for The Humanity; Putting The Teachings of Gita into Practice is Important: President Murmu

The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu, graced the International Gita Seminar in Kurukshetra, Haryana today (November 29, 2022). She also launched the 'Mukhyamantri Swasthya Sarvekshan Yojana'; and Haryana e-ticketing projects for all public road transport facilities as well as laid the foundation stone for a Medical College and Hospital in Sirsa through virtual mode.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that Shrimad Bhagavadgita is a global book in true sense. It has been translated into many languages. This is the most popular book of India. The number of commentaries that have been written on Gita would hardly have been written on any other book. Just as Yoga is India's gift to the entire world community, Gita is the spiritual gift of India to the entire humanity. The Gita is a life code and spiritual beacon for humanity. The President said that Gita teaches us to work hard and not worry about result. Working hard without self interest is the right path in life. Life becomes meaningful in doing work, renouncing both inaction and desire. To be alike in happiness and sorrow, to accept gain and loss with equal sense, not to be affected by honour or dishonour, and to maintain balance in all circumstances - is very useful message of Gita. The President said that Shrimad Bhagavadgita is a book that promotes fervour in adverse circumstances and communicates hope in depression. This is a life-building book. She urged the organizers of the International Gita Mahotsav to make continuous efforts for promotion and dissemination of the message of Gita. She emphasized that putting the teachings of Gita into practice is more important.

The President said that she was happy to launch the health survey scheme and Open Loop Ticketing System and lay the foundation stone for Medical College and Hospital in Sirsa. She said that these initiatives remind us of the saying in the Gita 'sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ' which means those engaged in the welfare of all beings deserve the grace of God. She appreciated the Government of Haryana for these people-welfare initiatives.



PIB,NOV29,2022

Vice President praises glorious history and rich cultural heritage of Tripura

Tripura and other North Eastern states are the pillars of India's Act East Policy - Vice President

Shri Dhankhar visits and prays at Mata Tripureswari Temple at Udaipur, Tripura

Vice President concludes maiden visit to Tripura, says touched by the warmth and affection of the people

The Vice President, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar today visited Tripura and West Bengal, on his maiden tour to the states after assuming the new office. During his daylong tour, the Vice President inaugurated an exhibition on "Historical & Cultural Heritage of Tripura" and presided over a seminar on "New Horizon of Educational Development in Tripura" at Maharaja Bir Bikram College in Agartala. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Dhankhar complimented the state on its numerous achievements in the field of education, including the steps taken towards implementation of New Education Policy -2020. "It is a well thought out policy aimed at transformation of our education sector and to make India a Vishwa Guru again," he underscored.

Describing his maiden visit to the north eastern state as a memorable one, Shri Dhankhar said that he was touched by the warmth and affection shown by people of Tripura. "I share your aspirations and dreams," he told them. Praising the glorious history and rich cultural heritage of the state, the Vice President said that Tripura and other North Eastern states are the pillars of India's Act East Policy. Shri Dhankhar also appealed to the students to follow Fundamental Duties as these would help them become better citizens of the country. Earlier in the day, the Vice President along with his spouse, Dr Sudesh Dhankhar visited and performed puja at Mata Tripureswari Temple at Udaipur, Tripura. During the visit, he was briefed about the development work being undertaken at the renowned Shaktipeeth. "The holy Shaktipeeth emanates sublimity and welfare for humanity. Gratifying to note that a well thought out, massive development is taking shape at this revered ancient Temple," he remarked. Shri Dhankhar also held interaction with the Governor, Shri Satyadeo Narain Arya and other dignitaries at Raj Bhawan, Agartala. The Chief Minister of Tripura, Shri Manik Saha accompanied the Vice President during these programs. After his Tripura visit, the Vice President departed for his onward journey to Kolkata from Agartala Airport, where he was bid farewell by the Governor of Tripura, Shri Satyadeo Narain Arya, Chief Minister, Prof (Dr) Manik Saha and other dignitaries.

PIB,NOV30,2022

## Manthan Platform Wins the Best Tech Initiative Award at D&B Business Excellence Awards 2022

The Manthan platform won NSEIT the Best Tech Initiative of the Year at the Dun & Bradstreet Business Excellence Awards 2022 on 29th November 2022 during an event in Mumbai. The award was presented for building the technology infrastructure to support Manthan, a platform that promotes collaboration at scale between industry and the scientific research and development ecosystem. The development of the platform was conceptualized and implemented by the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India. The award was received by Dr. Sapna Poti, Director of Strategic Alliances Division, Office of Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India and Shri. Anantharaman Sreenivasan, MD & CEO, NSEIT.

Manthan is aimed at promoting collaboration between industry and the scientific research and development ecosystem. Launched on India's 76th Independence Day, Manthan empowers multiple stakeholders to collaborate for co-creating solutions aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and our national scientific missions.

The Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, Prof. Ajay K. Sood launched the platform and noted that the creation of Manthan will be crucial for "building, nurturing, and celebrating the outcome of partnerships between various stakeholders of science, technology, and innovation ecosystem in India." Emphasising the mandate of Manthan, he added, "This will give an impetus to the government's efforts to improve participation of industry in terms of GDP. In the last few years, the partnerships between academia and industry have been encouraging and it has worked well when two sides have come together to solve the problems or the challenges faced." Congratulating the teams behind Manthan, Dr. Parvinder Maini, Scientific Secretary, Office of PSA, said, "Manthan is a unique platform enabling public-private-academia collaboration to achieve sustainability goals, and the goal is to play a transformative role in doing that. It is giving a thrust for innovative ideas and inventive minds to seamlessly collaborate and work towards making India a global innovation hub. This recognition commemorates the larger vision of Digital India and highlights the contributions of the teams behind Manthan's success."

Dr. Sapna Poti, Director of the Strategic Alliances Division, Office of PSA, said, "As the nation takes rapid strides towards becoming a global innovation hub, a platform to cater to the science, technology, and innovation ecosystem specifically is

essential. Manthan – India’s Platform for Research and Innovation will allow industries to source their project and innovation partners for both CSR and Industry R&D, facilitating the exchange of ideas, enhancement of communities’ support, and co-development of solutions that will fuel scientific research and development in the country. Congratulations to the entire NSEIT team who designed and implemented Manthan.”“The Manthan platform is visionary and is a true enabler for the Government of India’s Digital India vision. I congratulate the teams from the Office of the PSA and NSEIT for their meticulous contributions toward making this ingenious and innovative platform a reality. This award is an outcome of teamwork and rigorous pursuit of excellence”, said Shri. Ashishkumar Chauhan, MD & CEO of National Stock Exchange of India Limited.

On receiving the award, Shri. Anantharaman Sreenivasan, MD & CEO of NSEIT, said, “This award is a validation of NSEIT’s commitment to delivering high-impact and complex projects for customers. I thank the jury members and the organizing team at Dun & Bradstreet for recognizing NSEIT’s efforts in providing innovation excellence and driving robust business outcomes. I also express gratitude to the Office of PSA to the Government of India for entrusting us with the honor of being a strategic technology partner. The teams behind the successful launch of Manthan deserve all the credit for fructifying this global innovation platform.”

Dun & Bradstreet Business Excellence Awards 2022:

Dun & Bradstreet is a global provider of B2B data, insights, and AI-driven platforms for organizations around the world. Since 1841, companies of every size have relied on Dun & Bradstreet to help them manage risk and reveal opportunity. The Dun & Bradstreet SME and Mid-Corporate ‘Business Excellence Awards 2022’ is an endeavor to acknowledge and recognize the achievements and performance of SMEs and Mid-Corporates. The award covers 23 categories largely based on business performance parameters. The award nominations were reviewed by a distinguished jury panel featuring experts from the banking and energy development sectors.

About NSEIT:

NSEIT Limited is a global technology enterprise focused on delivering excellence in a complex digital environment, primarily in the banking, insurance, and capital market ecosystem, and a 100% subsidiary of the National Stock Exchange of India. Their key service pillars are Application Modernization, Business Transformation, Data Analytics, Infrastructure & Cloud Services, Cybersecurity, EdTech, and online examinations solutions.

For more information, visit [www.nseit.com](http://www.nseit.com).

PIB,DEC1,2022

Union Minister of State for Health Family Welfare Dr. Bharti Pravin Pawar virtually inaugurates WORLD AIDS Day with the theme “Equalize”, a Call to Action for an inclusive agenda.National AIDS toll-free helpline, lifetime free ART services and regular viral load monitoring for PLHIV: Dr. Bharti Pravin Pawar.National Digital Repository, National Data Hub along with important Surveillance & Epidemiology Reports unveiled/More than 3000 participants joined from across States, NGOs, partner agencies

Union Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar virtually inaugurated the World AIDS Day celebrations at Talkatora stadium today. The event was attended by more than 3000 people cutting across states, people living with HIV (PLHIV) communities, NGOs, CSOs, development partners and youth. Special Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Shri S. Gopalakrishnan was also present at the event.

At the outset, Dr. Bharti Pravin Pawar through her video message said that “World AIDS Day which is globally observed on 1st December since 1988, is an opportunity to show solidarity with people living with HIV (PLHIV) and create awareness for the same.” “The theme of this year’s World AIDS Day is “Equalize”, which is a slogan for a call to action for all connected with this crusade. It calls for taking practical actions needed for addressing inequalities in the HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Viruses) infected and affected populations across the country and also help in ending AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome)”, she added.

Dr. Pawar focused on increasing social inclusivity and using a multisectoral approach to tackle HIV. She said that creativity through efforts of Civil Society Organizations, youth communities established in the colleges and universities must be harnessed. Red ribbon clubs are playing an important role too and with more than 12,500 such clubs they can be used to create massive awareness.” She reiterated the commitment of the government under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister towards strengthening HIV/AIDS and STD (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) response. Some steps being National AIDS toll-free helpline, lifetime free ART services and regular viral load monitoring for PLHIV. Dr. Pawar also highlighted the need to reduce discrimination against the affected population. Government in this regard has notified “HIV & AIDS policy for establishments 2022”.

Several reports were released at the event:

4th edition of Sankalak (2022): Flagship report of NACP which shows the status of National AIDS response in the country. It contains programmatic and epidemic data and factsheets at both National and State/UT level.

Three Surveillance & Epidemiology Reports: These are technical reports made in line with globally accepted model-based estimation methodology and processes.

HIV Sentinel Surveillance Plus 2021- Antenatal Clinic Attendees

HIV Sentinel Surveillance Plus 2021- Central Prison Sites

India HIV Estimates – 2021

White paper on Transgender Health: intends to strengthen promotion of comprehensive health services for Transgender persons along with providing enabling environment.

Release of Prevention Progress Report 2021-22: an update report on progress and important activities for provision of services to High-Risk Groups (HRGs), Bridge populations and other vulnerable populations under NACP.

National Digital Repository: It is a digital hub where all IEC resource materials related to HIV and AIDS will be available for common public.

National Data Hub of NACO: A central digital repository for key reports, documents and all approved data of NACO for internal use. Campaign on Stigma and Discrimination: A countrywide campaign (#AbNahiChalega) is being launched for elimination of HIV-related Stigma and discrimination among people. Special Secretary Shri S. Gopalakrishnan inaugurated the exhibition showcasing achievements of National AIDS Control Program (NACP) and important activities undertaken during the year. Speaking at the event, Special Secretary emphasized on accurate detection and treatment, ensuring care services reach to remotest part of the country. Ms Hekali Zhimomi, Additional Secretary & DG NACO congratulated the country for an exceptional response in reducing HIV burden in the country. She said that “annual new HIV infections have declined by 46% between 2010-2021 against the global average of 32%. AIDS related mortality has also declined by 76% against the global average of 52%.” Event also saw the cultural performances by folk groups from around the country and a

Hunar Haat set up by community members from states. Re-emphasizing empowerment and inclusivity, Hunar Haat represented the idea of upskilling of community members so that they get better employment opportunities in the future and will therefore be more empowered. Ms. Nidhi Kesarwani, Director, NACO, Dr. Roderico H. Ofrin, WHO Representative to India, Mr. David Bridger, Country Director UNAIDS were also present at the event along with other dignitaries.

PIB, DEC 1, 2022

Cabinet Secretary, Shri Rajiv Gauba launches the Approach paper on Annual Capacity Building Plans for Ministries and Departments of Government of India under “Mission Karmayogi” in Vigyan Bhawan today. Cabinet Secretary interacts with Secretaries of all Ministries/Departments on creation of Annual Capacity Building Plans of each Ministry/Department, during a workshop organised by Capacity Building Commission (CBC). There is a need to completely transform the Government’s capacity building system and the Capacity Building Commission is moving in this direction only, says Shri Rajiv Gauba.

In line with the Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s vision to improve the Human Resource Management practices in the Government through “Mission Karmayogi”, Cabinet Secretary, Shri Rajiv Gauba interacted with Secretaries of all Ministries/Departments on creation of Annual Capacity Building Plans of each Ministry/Department, during a workshop organised by the Capacity Building Commission (CBC) at Vigyan Bhawan today. An Approach paper on Annual Capacity Building Plans prepared by CBC was also launched on the occasion. At the launch of the Approach Paper for creation of Annual Capacity Building Plans for Ministries/Departments, Shri Rajiv Gauba, Cabinet Secretary appreciated the initiatives of CBC and said that, the basic idea of “Mission Karmayogi” is to fulfil the mandate of democratising knowledge across all verticals and levels. He mentioned that within a short span of time, with the help of the Commission, over 1 lakh personnel of M/o Railways and Police forces have been trained under Mission Karmayogi. Over 200 contractual personal staff of several Union Ministers have also been trained.

Shri Gauba stated that Ministries / Departments under GoI have made considerable progress to move closer towards the vision of Hon’ble Prime Minister to focus on citizen centricity and national priorities. He appreciated various Ministries / Departments for taking up the initiative to start working on developing an Annual Capacity Building Plan.



Hailing efforts of various ministries and departments, Shri Gauba said that Ministries are doing a marvellous work in streamlining the functioning of the government through structured training and enhancing access to learning opportunities, optimising learning ecosystem and inculcating future-readiness from top to bottom level staff.

Shri Gauba echoed the words of the Hon'ble Prime Minister that there is a need to completely transform the government's capacity building system. The Capacity Building Commission is moving along these lines and making positive impact for the Civil Service fraternity. He added that capacity building plans of the Ministries / Departments should enable officers to acquire overall competency in all spheres of their work. Shri Gauba stressed on the need to replicate best practices of one Ministry to other Ministries. Shri Gauba also lauded the training module developed by Capacity Building Commission on 'Stress Management', calling it as an essential tool for the work force of Government. He favoured deep immersion method and suggested that it should be mainstreamed.

He emphasised the need for Annual Capacity-building plans (ACBPs) for all the Ministries, Departments, Organizations (MDOs) to overcome the challenges that India faced in the past. The Commission is mandated to facilitate the preparation of the Annual Capacity Building Plan for all Government of India Ministries, Departments and Organizations. Secretaries of several Ministries made presentation on the occasion, enlisting their progress towards preparing Annual Capacity Building Plans for their respective Ministries.

PIB,DEC4,2022

DRI to celebrate 65th Founding Day tomorrow

8th Regional Customs Enforcement Meeting (RCEM) to be held on the occasion

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) is celebrating its 65th Founding Day on 5th-6th December, 2022 this year. Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman will inaugurate the 2-day event along with the Union Minister of State for Finance Shri Pankaj Chaudhary.

DRI is the premier intelligence and enforcement agency on anti-smuggling matters under the aegis of Central Board of Indirect taxes & Customs (CBIC), Government of India. It came into existence on 4th December 1957. The DRI with its Headquarters at New Delhi has 12 Zonal Units, 35 regional Units and 15 Sub-regional units, with a working strength of about 800 officials.

For more than six decades, DRI with its presence across India and abroad has been carrying out its mandate of preventing and detecting cases of smuggling of narcotic drugs & psychotropic substances, gold, diamonds, precious metals, wildlife items, cigarettes, arms, ammunitions & explosives, counterfeit currency notes, foreign currency, SCOMET items, hazardous &



environmentally sensitive materials, antiques etc. and taking punitive action against the organised crime groups engaged therein. DRI is also engaged in unearthing commercial frauds and customs duty evasion. DRI has also been at the forefront in international Customs collaboration under Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements signed with various countries, where thrust is on information exchange and learning from the best practices of other Customs administrations.

Accordingly, DRI takes the opportunity of its founding day to organise Regional Customs Enforcement Meeting (RCEM) for effectively engaging with partner Customs organisations and International agencies like World Customs Organisation, INTERPOL for enforcement related issues. This year, 22 Customs administrations covering the Asia-Pacific region along with international organisations such as World Customs Organisation (WCO), Interpol, UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Regional Intelligence Liaison Office – Asia Pacific (RILO AP) have been invited to the event. The current edition of “Smuggling in India Report 2021-22” will be released by Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister on this occasion. The report brings together the trends in the field of anti- smuggling and commercial fraud and DRI’s performance and experience over the last financial year.

The DRI day serves as a day for honouring and recognizing the achievements of the past, a day of motivation for the young officers of the CBIC and the DRI and also offers an opportunity to interact and deliberate with the Custom Administrations of regional countries and important regional trading partners, thus reinforcing India’s role in Custom related matters in the region.