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SAMBHAV

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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

PIB,JUNE27,2023

Cashless Treatment Facilities Now Available to CGHS Beneficiaries at AIIMS New Delhi, PGIMER Chandigarh, and JIPMER Puducherry

Memorandum of Agreement signed between Central Government Health Scheme(CGHS) and Three Institutes of National Importance (INI)

CGHS beneficiaries will have direct access to state-of-the-art treatment facilities available in these medical institutions, without the hassle of making upfront payments and seeking reimbursements from CGHS

The government aims to expand the number of hospitals empaneled under CGHS to provide excellent tertiary care facilities aligned with the rising requirements of the patients: Shri Rajesh Bhushan, Union Health Secretary

Through a significant and people centric move, cashless treatment facilities will now be available to CGHS beneficiaries (both serving and pensioners) at AIIMS New Delhi, PGIMER Chandigarh, and JIPMER Puducherry. The Memorandum of Agreement to this effect was signed between the three medical institutions- AIIMS, New Delhi, PGIMER, Chandigarh, and JIPMER, Puducherry, and CGHS, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in the presence of Shri Rajesh Bhushan, Union Health Secretary, here today. This initiative builds upon the six previously signed MoAs on May 20, 2023, between CGHS and various All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) located in Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Patna, Jodhpur, Raipur, and Rishikesh (<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1925806>).

“The extension of patient care facilities at AIIMS New Delhi, PGIMER Chandigarh, and JIPMER Puducherry to CGHS beneficiaries on a cashless basis will be particularly beneficial for pensioner beneficiaries of CGHS. It eliminates the need for them to submit individual reimbursement claims and follow up for approvals. With this new initiative, CGHS beneficiaries will have direct access to state-of-the-art treatment facilities available in these medical institutions, without the hassle of making upfront payments and seeking reimbursements from CGHS. This streamlined process will save time, reduce paperwork, and expedite the settlement of individual claims. Previously, CGHS pensioner beneficiaries availing treatment at these institutions were required to make payments upfront and claim reimbursement later from CGHS.” This was stated by Shri Rajesh Bhushan, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare at the signing of the MoA today. The Union Health Secretary appreciated this development highlighting that CGHS is a significant service-oriented vertical of the Health Ministry through which existing and retired employees can avail medical services. He further stated, “The government aims to expand the number of hospitals empaneled under CGHS to provide excellent tertiary care facilities aligned with the rising requirements of the patients.”

Shri Bhushan further emphasized that this agreement will benefit a large segment of the population by simplifying lengthy formalities and expediting access to medical care. He also noted that this agreement will help expand the reach of CGHS services across the nation, allowing beneficiaries to avail CGHS facilities at the INIs institutions in their respective states. Additionally, CGHS has revised certain rates of treatment and medical care, further facilitating access to treatment facilities for patients.

The salient features of this initiative are as under:

Cashless treatment will be available in outpatient departments (OPD), investigations, and indoor treatment for CGHS pensioners and other eligible categories of beneficiaries. The three institutions will raise credit bills for CGHS pensioners and other eligible beneficiaries, and CGHS will preferably make payment within 30 days of receiving the bills. CGHS beneficiaries will be admitted only upon the production of a valid CGHS Beneficiary ID Card for treatment at these institutions. Separate Help Desks and accounting systems will be created for CGHS beneficiaries at AIIMS New Delhi, PGIMER Chandigarh, and JIPMER Puducherry. Medicines prescribed by the doctors at these institutions, whether for OPD treatment or at the time of discharge, will be collected by beneficiaries through CGHS. CGHS beneficiaries will no longer require referrals to access healthcare facilities at these institutions.

The MoA signing ceremony was attended by Officer on Special Duty, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Shri Sudhansh Pant, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Smt. V. Hekali Zhimoni, among other senior government officials. Directors of AIIMS New Delhi, Dr. M Srinivas, Medical superintendent, PGIMER Chandigarh, Dr. Vipin Kaushal, and Director, JIPMER Puducherry, Dr. Rakesh Agrawal were also present at the MOA signing event.

PIB, JUNE 27, 2023

On directions of Dr Jitendra Singh, DoPT approves mass promotion of nearly 1,600 ASOs to Section Officers “Government led by PM Modi granting mass promotions to employees in order to motivate them and overcome the problem of long stagnation”: Dr Jitendra Singh

Another 2000 promotions of SSA and other grades to be done by this year end

Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), Ministry of Personnel has approved the mass promotion of 1,592 officials working in the capacity of Assistant Section Officers (ASOs) to the post of Section Officers on

ad hoc basis with immediate effect. Announcing this here today, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh said that the Promotion orders will be issued soon by the respective Cadre Controlling authorities. The Promotions had been expedited at the directions of the Minister Incharge DoPT, Dr Jitendra Singh who personally reviewed the entire process. "Government has been granting mass promotions to employees in order to motivate them and overcome the problem of long stagnation. Another 2,000 promotions in ASO and other Grades are in process and hopefully they will get promoted by this year end," the Minister said.

Dr Jitendra Singh said that in the last nine years, under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Government has periodically reviewed the longstanding stagnation issues in the various Central Ministries that are a legacy of the past due to pending court cases, lack of vacancies in higher grades and other personnel issues. The Minister said, last year also about 9,000 mass promotions were made and prior to that the DoPT granted 4,000 promotions in the preceding three years.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, he himself personally feels disturbed to come across cases where some of the employees working in the lowest rung of administration spend their entire service tenure of 30 to 35 years without securing a single promotion. He said, he has discussed the issue with all the senior officers in the Ministry and several innovative means have been evolved to avoid stagnation at middle and lower rungs of the administration. Dr Jitendra Singh also regretted that in a large number of cases, stagnation in promotions was the result of litigation amongst the employees themselves and even though the DoPT tries its best to put forward its view in the court of law, the delay becomes inevitable.

“PM Modi has made efforts to ensure that government jobs are available to the maximum extent possible. It is extremely painful and disheartening to see employees sometimes superannuating in the same grade as promotions remained stuck,” said the Minister. The orders for mass promotion of these employees belonging to the Central Secretariat Service (CSS) have been issued after several rounds of high-level meetings in DoPT chaired by Dr Jitendra Singh in the last few months. The Minister said, even legal experts were consulted as some of the orders are subject to the outcome of pending writ petitions. Dr Jitendra Singh said, in order to bring in the ease of governance as well as objectivity in empanelment, the government has, in the last nine years, improvised upon the procedures so as to ensure that there are no subjective preferences involved in carrying out the promotions. “Procedures have been made more hi-tech using sophisticated technology tools to minimize the human interface,” he added.

The DoPT Minister said that the government has done away with over 1,600 rules which were either obsolete or had become irrelevant with the passage of time. Dr Jitendra Singh said, “All this is meant not only to ensure effective and timely delivery of outcomes for the public, but also to enable the employees to perform to the best of their ability”.

PIB, JUNE 28, 2023

Cabinet approves Introduction of National Research Foundation Bill, 2023 in Parliament to strengthen research eco-system in the country

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, today approved the introduction of the National Research Foundation (NRF) Bill, 2023 in the Parliament. The approved Bill will pave the way to establish NRF that will seed, grow and promote Research and Development (R&D) and foster a culture of research and innovation throughout India’s universities, colleges, research institutions, and R&D laboratories.

The bill, after approval in the Parliament, will establish NRF, an apex body to provide high-level strategic direction of scientific research in the country as per recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP), at a total estimated cost of Rs. 50,000 crore during five years (2023-28). The Department of Science and Technology (DST) will be the administrative Department of NRF which will be governed by a Governing Board consisting of eminent researchers and professionals across disciplines. Since the scope of the NRF is wide-ranging – impacting all ministries - the Prime Minister will be the ex-officio President of the Board and the Union Minister of Science & Technology & Union Minister of Education will be the ex-officio Vice-Presidents. NRF's functioning will be governed by an Executive Council chaired by the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India. NRF will forge collaborations among the industry, academia, and government departments and research institutions, and create an interface mechanism for participation and contribution of industries and State governments in addition to the scientific and line ministries. It will focus on creating a policy framework and putting in place regulatory processes that can encourage collaboration and increased spending by the industry on R&D.

The bill will also repeal the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) established by an act of Parliament in 2008 and subsume it into NRF which has an expanded mandate and covers activities over and above the activities of SERB.

PIB, JUNE 28, 2023

DARPG to conduct 12 National Good Governance Webinars on awarded initiatives under the PM's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration

Award winners to share their experiences, the webinars seek to disseminate the best practices to facilitate replication by other States/Districts

Calendar for Twelve Webinars for 2023-24 released, two awarded initiatives will be presented in each Webinar to be held on last Friday of every month

The National Good Governance Webinar for June 2023 to be held on 30 June 2023 on the theme “SAMAGRA SHIKSHA”

The Prime Minister has directed Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) to hold virtual conferences/ webinars with District Collectors and other officers in which past award winners of PM’s Awards for Excellence in Public Administration be invited to present their experiences with the objective of greater dissemination and replication. In pursuance of the Prime Minister’s directions, the DARPG will conduct 12 National Good Governance Webinars in the year 2023-24. The DARPG today released the calendar for 12 Webinars under the National Good Governance Webinar Series. The National Good Governance Webinars are to be held on the last Friday of every month. The National Good Governance Webinar for June 2023 will be held on 30 June 2023 on the theme “SAMAGRA SHIKSHA”. The speakers would be District Collector Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh and District Collector Mahesana, Gujarat. District Collectors of all Districts of India and Secretaries of Administrative Reforms, State Administrative Training Institutes and Central Training Institutes, Officials of concerned line Departments of State Governments would be participating in these webinars. The calendar for the National Good Governance Webinar series can be accessed at <https://darpg.gov.in/sites/default/files/Compendium23-24.pdf>

In the year 2022-23, the DARPG conducted 13 National Good Governance Webinars from April, 2022 to April, 2023 to encourage dissemination and replication of the award-winning nominations under the Scheme of Prime Minister’s Award for Excellence in Public Administration. Each webinar was attended by about 1000 officials from Line Departments, State Governments and District Collectors.

The Vice President of India released the compendium of the National Good Governance Webinar Series 2022-23 on 20th April 2023 in the inaugural session of Civil Services Day events 2023.

PIB,JUNE28,2023

India no longer figures in the United Nations General Assembly Security Council Children and Armed Conflict Report of the Secretary-General in view of measures taken by the Government to better protect children

Road map for cooperation and collaboration on child protection issues was developed under the guidance and leadership of Union WCD Minister

India was being mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General on Children and armed conflict since 2010 along with other countries of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Lake Chad basin, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Philippines for alleged recruitment and use of boys by armed groups in Jammu and Kashmir; detainment of boys by Indian security forces in J&K for their alleged association with armed groups, or on national security grounds; children killed and maimed by Indian security forces, including by the use of pellets; unidentified perpetrators, crossfire between armed groups and unidentified perpetrators, and crossfire and shelling across the line of control. The Government of India had been consistently engaged in efforts to exclude our country's name from this ignoble list. The ongoing engagement of the Government of India with the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) sped up after an inter-ministerial meeting was held in November 2021 with Shri Indevar Pandey, the Secretary Ministry of Women and Child Development , Ministry of External Affairs, Permanent Mission of India at New York, and the MHA from the Government of India, and Ms Virginia Gamba, Special representative of the Secretary-General for Children and the UN officials in New Delhi. It led to an agreement to appoint a national focal point to identify priority national interventions to enhance protection of children, joint technical mission to hold inter-ministerial, technical-level meetings with the UN

to identify areas of enhanced cooperation for child protection. Under the guidance and leadership of Smti. Smriti Zubin Irani, Union Minister of Women And Child Development, a road map for cooperation and collaboration on child protection issues was developed by the Ministry. The technical team of the office of the SRSG visited India on 27-29 July 2022. This was followed by a workshop on strengthening child protection held in Jammu & Kashmir in November, 2022 by the Ministry of WCD in collaboration with the MHA, and the Govt. of J&K with the participation of the United Nations. All statutory service delivery structures like the Child Welfare Committee and Juvenile Justice Boards under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015 have been established. In view of the measures taken by the Government to better protect children, India has been removed from the report in 2023.

TRIBUNE,JUNE29,2023

PM's push for UCC

Code should be reformatory, not a Hindutva plank

With less than a year to go for the Lok Sabha elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made a strong pitch for the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), even as he has accused Opposition parties of inciting minority communities against it. Hitting back at the PM, the Congress has said that a 'divisive' code cannot be forced on people by an 'agenda-driven majoritarian government'. The UCC continues to be a key poll plank of the ruling BJP, which kept its core-agenda promises of abrogating Article 370 months after it won the 2019 General Election and is on course to get the Ram Mandir ready by early next year. The UCC envisages a common set of personal laws dealing with matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and adoption, applicable to all citizens of India irrespective of their religion. The Law Commission had on June 14 initiated the process of inviting views from stakeholders, including the public and recognised religious organisations, on the contentious issue. The BJP-ruled Uttarakhand is spearheading the UCC campaign, even

as the Supreme Court had observed in January this year that state governments had the power to examine the feasibility of implementing the common code. The Constitution's Article 44, which is one of the directive principles of state policy, says that 'the State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India'. The Union government faces the onerous task of building consensus on the UCC, even as AAP has extended 'in principle' support to the code. The perception that it would be Hindu-centric has triggered doubts and apprehensions among the minorities. The UCC can gain credibility and acceptability only if it encapsulates the spirit of Article 25, which guarantees freedom of religion, and is aimed at doing away with regressive practices in various religions. An ideal code ought to be reformatory. It's hoped that the Centre will take into consideration the views of all stakeholders while drafting the UCC.

PIB, JUNE 30, 2023

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh says, Ayushman Bharat is so far the world's best health insurance scheme, credit goes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for its conceptualization; Option of seeking insurance cover even for a pre-existing disease

Addressing the ET's Doctor's Day Conclave in New Delhi, Dr Jitendra Singh said, by bringing in Ayushman Bharat, India has moved from sectoral and segmented approach of health service delivery to a comprehensive need-based health care service

Ayushman Bharat is at the initial stages of implementation and the government is open to make suitable changes in the scheme in due course: Dr Jitendra Singh. Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh today asserted that Ayushman Bharat is so far the world's best health insurance scheme and credit goes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for having conceptualized it.

This is possibly the only health insurance scheme in the world which offers the option of seeking insurance cover even for a pre-existing disease, like for example, if today a person is detected having cancer, he can thereafter go and get himself insured to receive the financial support for treatment.



Addressing the Economic Times Doctor's Day Conclave on the eve of Doctor's Day here today, Dr Jitendra Singh said, by bringing in Ayushman Bharat, India has moved from sectoral and segmented approach of health service delivery to a comprehensive need-based health care service. The Minister said, this is the unique scheme, where one can register for pre-existing diseases also. He informed that Jammu and Kashmir was the first UT to have universal coverage of the health scheme irrespective of the economic criteria.

The Minister informed that Ayushman Bharat Yojna provides free treatment of upto five lakh rupees in the best of hospitals to eligible beneficiaries. Responding to queries about some irregularities in the implementation of the scheme, he said, we are at the initial stages of implementation and the government is open to make suitable changes as required in the scheme in due course. The Minister also emphasized that integrity is a big factor in a vast heterogeneous country like India and slowly but surely this health insurance scheme will become a model for the world to emulate. Dr Jitendra Singh said the Pandemic has taught us the virtues of holistic healthcare and even after the pandemic has passed, it will be in the interest of mankind to institutionalize integrated medicinal approach for adequate treatment and prevention of various diseases. The Minister said that during the COVID even the West started looking up to India in search of immunity building techniques drawn from Ayurveda, Homoeopathy, Unani, Yoga, Naturopathy and other oriental alternatives. He said, however, even after the COVID phase passes out, an optimum integration and synergism of different streams of medical management are the key to successful management of various diseases and disorders which may not be otherwise completely amenable to treatment by any single stream of medicine or the treatment given in silos.

Dr Jitendra Singh informed that when COVID-19 hit us, India notified the telemedicine practice guidelines in March 2020, and we did the same for AYUSH in April 2020. He said, India could immediately notify these guidelines as our groundwork was done and we were ready. The Minister said, we must work together to ensure 'Digital Health for All', which is a pre-condition to achieve 'Health for All'. Dr Jitendra Singh said, it was the far-sightedness of Prime Minister Modi that soon after coming to power in 2014, he shared the powerful vision of 'Digital India' much before COVID-19 hit the world. Dr Jitendra Singh concluded that it was Prime Minister Modi again who gave a call for Startup India and Standup India from the ramparts of the Red Fort in 2015, when there were only 350 odd startups operating in India and now the country ranks 3rd in terms of Startups in the world, with around one lakh startups and 100 plus Unicorns and many of them are health and biotech startups.

STATESMAN, JULY 2, 2023

Political will needed to push UCC

Prime Minister Narendra Modi raised the controversial issue of a Uniform Civil Code again this week while addressing BJP workers in Bhopal. Madhya Pradesh is going to the polls at the end of the year.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi raised the controversial issue of a Uniform Civil Code again this week while addressing BJP workers in Bhopal. Madhya Pradesh is going to the polls at the end of the year. It was not an off-the-cuff remark, as Modi had measured every word. Significantly, it was part of the Sangh Parivar's core agenda. Modi has overseen the other two parts of the agenda in the past nine years of his regime – building the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and revoking Article 370. Bringing a Uniform Civil Code remains on the table. There are various angles, such as political, legislative, religious, gender and Constitutional, to the question. The origin of the UCC dates back to colonial India. The British government submitted its report in 1835 and recommended uniformity in the codification of Indian law. Whether India needs a single law and whether now

is the time to implement it remains a question mark. Article 44 of the Constitution stipulates the state shall endeavour to secure a UCC throughout India for citizens. According to the Directive Principles of State Policy, the UCC is essential. Interestingly, Goa is the only Indian state that follows a uniform civil code. The Portuguese law of 1867 remained even after India annexed Goa. The Supreme Court asked the Centre why it was not extended to other states. Despite the codification of Hindu laws in 1956, a consensus on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is yet to be achieved in India. Various religious communities in India currently abide by their own distinct personal laws. The UCC intends to unify all personal religious laws, encompassing marriage, divorce, property rights, inheritance, and maintenance, under a secular framework. The UCC has become more politically charged. Supporters and opponents are arguing on both sides.

Supporters believe that sooner or later, there must be a common law that applies to all religious communities. The BJP believes in bringing the UCC as soon as possible. Prime Minister Modi, while making a strong pitch for the UCC, said in Bhopal that the Constitution speaks of having equal rights. “If there is one law for one member in a house and another for the other, will the house be able to run? So how will the country be able to run with such a dual system?” the Prime Minister asked. He argued that passing a uniform civil law would provide more benefits despite many differences and conflicts. The UCC would provide gender equality and remove different laws for different religions. Modi urged Muslims to see how the Opposition provoked and exploited them. The opponents, led by the Congress, fear the loss of minority votes. They oppose it, as Muslims and other minorities do not favour it. Although some Islamic countries have adopted a common law for all, there has yet to be a consensus in India. The UCC is prevalent in France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia.

However, Kenya, Pakistan, Italy, South Africa, Nigeria, and Greece do not have it. The issue had been debated in the Constituent Assembly. India's first Prime Minister, Jawahar Lal Nehru, postponed a decision claiming, "I do not think that at the present moment, the time is ripe for me to try to push it (UCC) through". Had the framers of our Constitution decided on the issue, there would have been no problem. Modi's call for a UCC has provoked sharp criticism from opposition parties. Many, including DMK, RJD, and JD (U) and AIMIM, led by the Congress, allege that Modi was diverting attention from bread-and-butter issues such as rising prices, unemployment and violence in Manipur. They note that there needs to be a consensus on the subject. The opponents point out that Muslims perceive the UCC as infringing on their religious freedom.

The Supreme Court highlighted the importance of a UCC in 1985, stating that it would help maintain national unity. In 1995, the Court recommended that a single law govern all citizens. In 2019, the Modi government expressed its commitment to implementing the UCC for all, following the Supreme Court's ban on Triple Talaq, thus doing justice to Muslim women on divorce. Last month, the Law Commission of India began to examine UCC afresh. It solicited views and suggestions from the public. In a secular country like India, UCC is significant to assure the majority that there is one law for all. Seventy-five years have passed, and it is time to consider it seriously in a country where 65 per cent are youth. However, it is the political will that is required. The Prime Minister must convene an all-party meeting to mobilise support for the UCC. With Assembly elections in some states and the General elections scheduled for next year, the UCC may have to wait for some more time.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

PIB,JUNE26,2023

Centre approves Rs. 56,415 crore to 16 States for Capital Investment under ‘Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2023-24’ Scheme for giving timely boost to capital spending by States

The Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, has approved capital investment proposals of Rs. 56,415 crore in 16 States in the current financial year. Approval has been given under the scheme entitled ‘Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2023-24’

Capital investment projects in diverse sectors have been approved including health, education, irrigation, water supply, power, roads, bridges and railways. Funds for meeting the State share of Jal Jeevan Mission and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana have also been provided to the States under this scheme to enhance pace of the projects in these sectors. In view of a higher multiplier effect of capital expenditure and in order to provide boost to capital spending by States, the scheme ‘Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2023-24’ was announced in the Union Budget 2023-24. Under the scheme, special assistance is being provided to the State Governments in the form of 50-year interest free loan up to an overall sum of Rs. 1.3 lakh crore during the financial year 2023-24. The scheme has eight parts, Part-I being the largest with allocation of Rs. 1 lakh crore. This amount has been allocated amongst States in proportion to their share of central taxes & duties as per the award of the 15th Finance Commission. Other parts of the scheme are either linked to reforms or are for sector specific projects. In Part-II of the scheme, an amount of Rs. 3,000 crore has been set aside for providing incentives to States for scrapping of State Government vehicles and ambulances, waiver of liabilities on old vehicles, providing tax concessions to individuals for scrapping of old vehicles and setting up of automated vehicle testing facilities. Part-III & IV of the scheme aim at providing incentives to States for reforms in Urban Planning and Urban Finance. An amount of Rs. 15,000 crore is earmarked for Urban

Planning Reforms, while additional Rs. 5,000 crore is for incentivising the States for making Urban Local Bodies creditworthy and improving their finances. The scheme also aims at increasing the housing stock for the police personnel and their families within the police stations in urban areas. An amount of Rs. 2,000 crore is earmarked for this purpose under Part-V of the scheme. Another objective of the Scheme is to promote national integration, carry forward the concept of “Make in India” and promote the concept of “One District, One Product (ODOP)” through construction of Unity Mall in each State. An amount of Rs. 5,000 crore has been set aside for this purpose under the Part-VI of the scheme. Part-VII of the Scheme, with an allocation of Rs. 5,000 crore is for providing financial assistance to States for setting up libraries with digital infrastructure at Panchayat and Ward level for children and adolescents. A similar scheme entitled ‘Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment for 2022-23’ was also executed by the Ministry of Finance in the last financial year. Under the scheme, Capital Investment proposals of Rs. 95,147.19 crore were approved and an amount of Rs. 81,195.35 crore was released to the States in the last financial year.

The scheme for financial assistance to States for capital investment/expenditure, first instituted by the Ministry of Finance in 2020-21 in the wake of COVID-19 Pandemic have given a very timely boost to capital spending by States. The flexibility and simplicity of the scheme design has earned liberal praise from Chief Ministers and Finance Ministers of States in successive pre-budget consultations.

PIB, JUNE 26, 2023

EPFO provides last opportunity to employees to submit options within fifteen days to get pension on higher wages and Employers given three months time for uploading wage details online

Online facility has been made available by EPFO for submitting Applications for Validation of Option /Joint Options for pension on higher wages. The facility is for eligible pensioners / members in compliance with the Hon’ble Supreme Court order dated 04.11.2022. The facility was launched on 26.02.2023 and was to remain

available only till 03.05.2023. However, considering the representations of the employees, the time limit was extended to 26.06.2023 in order to provide complete four months time to eligible pensioners / members for filing applications. 16.06 lakh Applications for Validation of Option / Joint Options have been received till 26.06.2023. Last opportunity of 15 days is being given to remove any difficulty faced by the eligible pensioners/ members. Accordingly, the last date for submission of Applications for Validation of Option / Joint Options by employees is extended to 11.07.2023. Any eligible pensioner / member who on account of any issue in updation of KYC, faces difficulty in submitting online Application for Validation of Option / Joint Option, may immediately lodge such grievance on EPFiGMS for resolution. The grievance may please be submitted by selecting the grievance category of ' Higher Pensionary benefits on higher wages'. This will ensure proper record of such a grievance for further action. Meanwhile, many representations have been received from Employers & Employers' Associations wherein requests have been made to extend time period for uploading wage details of applicant pensioners / members. The request has been considered sympathetically and the employers are being given further period of three months to submit wage details etc. online latest by 30.09.2023.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

PIB,JUNE27,2023

E Sewa Kendras - Bridging the digital divide & ensuring justice for All

815 eSewa Kendras have been made under 25 High Courts, benefiting all the stakeholders to avail citizen-centric services of courts and case-related information conveniently. About eSewa Kendras: eSewa Kendras have been rolled out to bridge the digital divide by providing e filing services to lawyers and litigants. Covering all High Courts and one District Court as pilot project, it is being expanded to cover all court complexes. The eSewa Kendras are being set up at the entry point of the court complexes with the intention of facilitating the lawyer or litigant who needs any kind of assistance ranging from information to facilitation and e filing.

On 30 October 2020, India's first e-Resource Center was inaugurated at Nagpur in Maharashtra. The e-Resource Centre "Nyay Kaushal" will facilitate e-filing of cases in Supreme Court India, High Courts and District Courts across the country. It will also assist the lawyers and litigants in access online e-Courts services and shall be the saviour for those who cannot afford the technology. It will provide benefits in saving time, avoidance of exertion, travelling long distances, and saving cost by offering facilities of e-filing of cases across the country, to conduct the hearing virtually, Scanning, Accessing e-Courts services etc.

PIB,JUNE29,2023

Aadhaar based face authentication transactions cross all time high of 10.6 million in May

Aadhaar based face authentication transactions for service delivery are gaining robust momentum with monthly transactions in May touching an all time high of 10.6 million, since its launch in October 2021.

This is the second consecutive month to register more than 10 million face authentication transactions. The number of face authentication transactions is on an upward trajectory and the monthly numbers clocked in May is an increase of 38 per cent, compared with such transactions reported in January 2023, indicative of its growing usage. The AI/ML based face authentication solution developed in-house by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), is now being used by 47 entities, including state government departments, ministries in the central government and some banks.

Among many usages, it's being used for registering beneficiaries under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana; for authentication of beneficiaries in the PM Kisan scheme and for generating digital life certificates at home by pensioners. It's being used for marking staff attendance at several government departments and for opening bank accounts at a few leading banks via their business correspondents. Among several states, the government of Andhra Pradesh is using Aadhaar based face authentication for Jagananna Vidya Deevena Scheme for fee reimbursement to eligible higher education students and under EBC Nestham scheme for welfare delivery to women from economically backward segments. Face authentication provide features like ease of usage, faster authentication and it is preferred as an additional modality to strengthen the authentication success rate along with fingerprint and OTP authentications. It captures live images for authentication. It is safe against any video replay attacks and static photo authentication attempts by anti-social elements. Face authentication is also working as a robust alternative and helping senior citizens and all those who have issues with the quality of their fingerprints due to several reasons including manual work or health issues. The month of May also saw the UIDAI executing 14.86 million Aadhaar updates following request from residents

Aadhaar e-KYC service continues to play a key role in the banking and non-banking financial services sectors by providing transparent & improved customer experience and helping in ease of doing business. More than 254 million e-KYC transactions were carried out in May alone. By the end May 2023, the cumulative number of Aadhaar e-KYC transactions has gone past 15.2 billion. Continued adoption of e-KYC is significantly reducing customer acquisition cost of entities like financial institutions, telecom service providers among others. Whether it is AePS for last mile banking, e-KYC for identity verification, Aadhaar enabled DBT for direct fund transfer or authentications, Aadhaar, the foundation of India's digital public infrastructure and a tool of good governance, is playing a stellar role in improving Ease of Living for residents.

STATESMAN, JUNE 29, 2023

Saving Banks~III

The IRDP alone accounted for 40 per cent of the losses incurred by commercial banks in rural lending in India. By the end of the 1980s, great concern began to be expressed about public sector banks' low capital base, low profitability, and the high percentage of non-performing assets, whose earnings were invariably lower than their loan losses and transaction costs. They required continual refinancing and recapitalization by apex institutions. The final nail in the coffin was the official loan waiver of 1989, which destroyed whatever semblance of credit discipline remained

MOIN QAZI

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) is a grim reminder of how mechanically trying to meet targets can undermine the integrity of a social revolution to such an extent that a counter-revolution can be set into motion. Arguably India's worst-ever development program, the IRDP, was intended to provide income-generating assets to the rural poor through cheap bank credit. There was little support for skill formation, access to inputs, markets and necessary infrastructure.

In the case of cattle loans, for example, most cattle owners reported that either they had sold off the animals bought with the loan or that the animals were dead. Cattle loans were financed without adequate attention to other details involved in cattle care: fodder availability, veterinary infrastructure, marketing linkages for milk, etc. The people erroneously believed the state had all the answers to their problems. Governments, international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) threw vast amounts of money at credit-based solutions to rural poverty, particularly in the wake of the World Bank's 1990 initiative to put poverty reduction at the head of its development priorities.

And yet those responsible for such transfers had, and in many cases continue to have, only the haziest grasp of the unique demands and difficulties of rural banking. Working for the poor does not mean indiscriminately thrusting money down their throats. Unfortunately, IRDP did precisely that. The programme did not attempt to ascertain whether the loan provided would lead to creating a viable long-term asset nor try to make the necessary forward and backward linkages to supply raw material or establish marketing linkages for the produce. Little information was collected on the intended beneficiary. The IRDP was principally an instrument for powerful local bosses to distribute political largesse opportunistically. The abiding legacy of the programme for India's poor has been that millions have become bank defaulters through no fault of their own. Today, the people so marked find it impossible to rejoin the formal credit stream. The IRDP alone accounted for 40 per cent of the losses incurred by commercial banks in rural lending in India. By the end of the 1980s, great concern began to be expressed about public sector banks' low capital base, low profitability, and the high percentage of non-performing assets, whose earnings were invariably lower than their loan losses and transaction costs. They required continual refinancing and recapitalization by apex institutions.

The final nail in the coffin was the official loan waiver of 1989, which destroyed whatever semblance of credit discipline remained. A one-time provision of credit without follow-up action and a lack of a continuing relationship between borrowers and lenders also contributed to the failure of the programmes. It is thus recommended that all selfemployment programmes be merged, a shift of importance from an individual beneficiary approach to a group-based process. It emphasized the identification of activity clusters in specific areas and robust training and marketing linkages. The government of India accepted these recommendations. On 1 April 1999, a new programme called Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) was launched by amalgamating programmes like IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme) and several allied programmes such as TRYSEM (Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment), DWCRA (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas), SITRA (Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisans), GKY (Ganga Kalyan Yojana) and MWS (Million Wells Schemes). There are two essential prerequisites of poverty eradication programmes. Firstly, reorientate the agricultural relations so that land ownership is shared by a more extensive section of the people. Secondly, programmes for alleviating poverty cannot succeed in an economy plagued by corruption, inflation and inefficient bureaucracy.

A poverty eradication programme must mop up the surplus with the elite classes. This requires a strong political will in the national leadership to implement much-needed structural reforms. Besides, the government must aim at a strategy for developing the social sector. The critical component should be population control, universal primary education, family welfare and job creation, especially in rural areas. These and other aspects of poverty alleviation have not been given any importance so far in our planning. However, we have always thought that economic development can remove poverty. Rural finance programmes should have substantial inputs in rural sociology as a part of the training kit for managers. Rural banking requires a greater insight into rural sociology than into banking practices. As far as finance is concerned, even basic knowledge is adequate to handle these simple transactions.

Good exposure to primary sources, like the works of Shrinivas, Beteille, Ghurye, Mandelbaum, and Jodhka, can provide solid academic tools for rural managers. I would recommend Robert Chamber's *Putting the Last First* as the best introduction to the grammar of rural development, particularly its exposition of participatory approaches now being espoused by the World Bank. Rural branch expansion during that period may have accounted for substantial rural poverty reduction, mainly through increased non-agricultural activities, which experienced higher returns than agriculture, and primarily through an increase in unregistered or informal manufacturing activities. But there was a significant downside; commercial banks incurred large losses attributable to subsidized interest rates and high loan losses ~ suggesting potential longer term damage to the credit culture. During the massive banking expansion phase in the 1980s, opening a bank branch was made to look as casual as punching a flag post. It was impossible to locate a proper structure to house the bank.

The possibility of a toilet or a medical centre or a police post or a primary school in a village as a precondition for a bank branch was overlooked. In several cases where the expiry of the RBI license for the opening of the bank branch approached without proper premises being identified, banks had to be opened in a local temple or a community centre, marked by a small banner and a photograph screened as evidence of the launch of the bank's operations. Juicy numbers give musical resonance to the ears of all bosses. Numbers have been a great obsession with Indian planners in particular. Several men and women were sterilized, contraceptives circulated, wells dug, toilets constructed, villages screened for polio, TB, or malaria, children enrolled in schools, and saplings planted. There is no accountability for fudged figures. Most rewards are given to officers adept at massaging figures.

The game of numbers without a concurrent focus on social performance and evaluating the quality of assets created has been the bane of most credit programmes for poverty reduction and selfemployment. Successful rural bankers do believe in writing intricate business plans. But they also focus their energy, intelligence, and skills on creating businesses that can thrive in a challenging environment where social skills are as critical as financial skills. Even if it means deploying financial resources, rural development has social levelling as its overarching goal.

Since you are part of a financial planet, you must work through equations honed by financial experts and then create your own. But you cannot find all the convincing answers in spreadsheets and databases, mainly when dealing with people in villages where formal documents and complex data are complicated. Human behaviour is far too complex to be captured by mathematical models. All social banking loans are potential credit risks as the culture of meeting targets characterizes them by rushing through due process and then offering populist sops such as mass waiver of loans.

Credit targets are sometimes achieved by abandoning appropriate due diligence, creating the environment for future NPAs. Thus, a subsidy on interest rates cuts at the very root of the philosophy of self-reliance. The assistance could be re-directed towards capacity-building efforts or in providing input supplies and marketing support. Branch managers felt that in terms of frequency and relevance to their work, training was inadequate, too theoretical, inappropriate for rural assignment, outdated and in some cases, a mere formality (Jones, Williams & Thorat).

The proper judgment of human attitudes is needed for rural banking and banking as a whole. It requires an open mind willing to learn the dynamics of all types of societies. The biggest misconception about banking is that people think one should have a degree in business or finance to do well in this industry. Banking is a generalist profession dealing with diverse sectors. An educational background in economics or finance may help one understand banking concepts. But in the long run, the person with the right mix of personal qualities and managerial skills will rise above the rest. These include the ability to learn quickly and continuously, openness to new challenges, a disciplined professionalism, an outgoing and inquisitive nature, an analytical and systematic mind, and negotiating savvy and personal integrity.

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PIB, JULY 2, 2023

"StartUps Intellectual Property Rights Protection" is aimed at promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, says Science & Technology Minister Dr Jitendra Singh

Patents by Startups, along with Industry linkages, encourage Innovation and motivate Enterprise, says Dr Jitendra Singh

"PM Modi has launched several schemes which supplement each other to reinforce the Startup ecosystem and their Capacity Building"

In the nine years of the Government led by PM Modi, today we are at an equal level with the developed nations: Dr Jitendra Singh

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, MoS PMO, Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space and MoS Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr Jitendra Singh has

said that "StartUps Intellectual Property Rights Protection" is aimed at promoting innovation and entrepreneurship. In his inaugural address at the 'National Intellectual Property Festival', organised by the CSIR at the National Physical Laboratory in New Delhi, Dr Jitendra Singh said, the filing of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) including Patents and Trademark by StartUps, along with Industry linkages will encourage innovation and motivate enterprise in India. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, after the Government came up with the IPR Act in 2016, the Trademark Registration process has come down to one month, which was more than one year earlier, he said. "Soon after this, 'StartUps Intellectual Property Rights Protection' scheme was brought in, which envisages 80% rebate in patent filing and 40%-50% rebate vis-à-vis the Industry and the companies," the Minister said.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has launched several schemes which supplement each other to reinforce the StartUp ecosystem and their Capacity Building. "You can couple the StartUps, eg. you have the Mudra scheme, which offers you a loan of 10-20 lakhs without any gratuity, mortgage, almost interest free," he said.



Pertinent to mention that with the vision to protect IPRs for StartUps, the Government has launched a scheme, Startups Intellectual Property Protection (SIPP) for encouraging innovation and creativity of Startups. The startups are given an 80% rebate on Patent filing fees and a facility for expedited examination of patent applications. Under the new Trademark Rules, Startups have been given a 50% rebate in filing fees vis-à-vis other companies. Even for promotion of registration of Industrial Designs by StartUps as per the new design amendment rules 2021, the Government has reduced filing and prosecution fees for small entities. The Minister said, there is a huge round of encouragement and promotion both for StartUps in the terms of being innovative and entrepreneurs. “In the last nine years, PM Modi has given esteem to science and scientists and also raised it as a subject of international deliberations. Even during his just concluded US visit, the predominant subject in the Joint Statement is science related issues, - from semiconductors to space to International Space Station, Artemis Accords,” said Dr Jitendra Singh. “In Global Innovation Index we have jumped 31 places, - from 81 to 40; in Startup ecosystem we started very late, in 2016 when PM Modi gave a call from the Red Fort in his Independence Day address, but in just a couple of years we have gone to the No.3 ranking in the Startup ecosystem in the world,” he said.

Dr Jitendra Singh called for combining the digital repository of traditional knowledge and heritage with the modern scientific innovation and by institutionalising this mechanism, we can gain cutting edge in sectors such as Khadi, Aroma Mission and Lavender cultivation. “I am convinced this is one of the best times happening, optimum times happening, and if we are into this StartUp IPR protection, we have the advantage of supplementing our StartUp ventures with our traditional knowledge, which is not happening as frequently as it could happen here. And if we do that, we would actually have an edge over other countries,” he said.

The Minister said that in the nine years of the Government led by PM Modi, because he has been carrying that kind of vision, today we are at an equal pace and at an equal level with the developed nations. “Today, we are equal partners with other nations in technology application. In Quantum Computing, for example, we are in the same league as the developed world,” he said. Speaking on the occasion, Secretary, DSIR and DG, CSIR, Dr. (Smt.) N Kalaiselvi said the National Intellectual Property Festival is being celebrated this month, - from 1st to 31st July 2023. Secretary, DPIIT, Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh and senior scientists and officials of CSIR and DST were present on the occasion.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

PIB,JUNE28,2023

Shri Bhupender Yadav calls upon the BRICS nations for urgent concrete climate actions

The 9th BRICS Environment Ministers Meeting was held today under the theme of theme, “Advancing Environmental Cooperation amongst BRICS towards the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” through video conferencing under the Presidency of South Africa. Prior to this meeting, a meeting of the senior officials took place on 27th June to finalize the outcome documents, to be adopted during the BRICS Environment Ministerial. Representing India, the Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav stated that the Implementation Plan of the BRICS Environment MoU signed in July 2018 can be a platform for exchange of knowledge, information, ideas, best practices, etc. among the BRICS nations. Shri Yadav called upon the BRICS nations for urgent concrete climate actions, and to intensify the efforts for saving the planet. The Union Minister elaborated on the efforts made by India for protection of environment and for combatting climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. He also shared the major initiatives taken by the India under the dynamic leadership of Hon’ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi. Highlighting the significance of Mission LiFE, launched by the Prime Minister, Shri Yadav stated that Mission LiFE is also about adopting lifestyle change to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution at all levels including at the individual level.

Shri Yadav urged that finance and technology partnerships are the key pillars for the BRICS Nations to foster greater efforts to combat climate change and to protect biodiversity while joining hands for ensuring environmental justice; climate justice; fair, just and inclusive transition.

PIB,JUNE30,2023

The first half of 2023 i.e., for the period between January – June, Delhi registers best ever air quality during the 8 years i.e., from 2016 to 2023 (barring the COVID affected year 2020)

Delhi records its lowest daily average AQI in 2023 as compared to the corresponding period for the last 7 years. As on 30th June, the average air quality of Delhi is in ‘Moderate’ Category i.e. below 200 AQI, a significant milestone. Favourable meteorological conditions and continual efforts at the ground level to prevent, control and abate air pollution in the region result in better air quality during 2023

Ongoing strict monitoring and enforcement actions through various stakeholder agencies lead to better implementation of the air pollution control measures. As on 30th June, the average air quality of Delhi is in ‘Moderate’ Category i.e. below 200 AQI. Favourable meteorological/ weather conditions coupled with consistent, comprehensive and concerted efforts by Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) and various stakeholders to control air pollution in the National Capital Region (NCR) helped in achieving better overall air quality in Delhi during the first half of current year.

During the first six months of current year, Delhi experienced a remarkable increase in the number of days categorized as 'Good to Moderate' on the Air Quality Index (AQI). During the 08 years i.e. from 2016 to 2023 (for the period January – June), Delhi registers its best air quality during current year (barring the periods of very low anthropogenic, industrial and commercial activities during the year 2020 due to Covid-19 lockdown as depicted in the graph) with highest number of ‘Good to Moderate’ Air Quality Days. A comparative chart for days with ‘Good to Moderate’ Air Quality witnessed during the first half-year period of each year between 2016-2023 is depicted below:

The number of ‘Good to Moderate’ Air Quality Days for the first half-year period (i.e. January to June) was 30 in the year 2016; 57 in 2017; 65 in 2018; 78 in 2019; 126 in 2020; 84 in 2021; 54 in 2022; and 101 in the current year 2023. During this period, Delhi has also experienced least number of days with ‘Poor to Severe’ Air Quality in 2023, as compared to the corresponding period of last 07 years since 2016 (barring 2020 – the year of lockdown due to Covid). The number of ‘Poor to Severe’ Air Quality Days for the first half-year period (January to June) have also been progressively reducing from 147 in the year 2016 to 80 in the current year 2023. The average AQI for Delhi during this period also remained in Moderate AQI category i.e. below 200. Delhi has reported its lowest Average AQI during current year (January – June) compared to the corresponding period for the last 07 years i.e. from 2016 (barring 2020 – the year of lockdown due to Covid as depicted in the graph). The chart below depicts the Average AQI for the first half-year period during the 08 years (2016-2023):

Considering the daily average PM10 and PM2.5 concentration levels, during the first half-year period of 2023, Delhi has witnessed the lowest levels of daily average PM10 and PM2.5 concentration, as compared to the corresponding period for last 07 years i.e. from 2016 (barring 2020 – the year of lockdown due to Covid as depicted in the graph). A comparative chart depicting PM10 and PM2.5 running average ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) for the first half-year period during the 08 years (2016-2023) is placed below:

This improvement signifies a substantial reduction in air pollutants, with lower levels of particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10) and other harmful emissions. This declining trend has been sustained over a considerable period and is a testament to the commitment and action taken by CAQM and various stakeholders to improve the overall air quality of Delhi-NCR.

The Commission reiterates that it is essential to maintain the momentum and continue to strive for better air quality in Delhi-NCR in the days to come. CAQM is working closely with various stakeholders concerned to take effective measures for prevention, control and abatement of air pollution and to improve the overall air quality in the region.

PIB,JULY1,2023

Shri Bhupender Yadav says we do no favour to Nature by working to protect it, it is a favour we do to Ourselves

Shri Yadav emphasizes we must all do everything to protect Nature and its Gifts it bestows upon us

ZSI Celebrates 108th ZSI Day with Special Focus on ‘Mission Life’

The Union Minister for Environment & Forest and Climate Change and Labour and Employment Shri Bhupender Yadav today inaugurated the three-day celebration programme of the 108th ZSI day in Kolkota in presence of Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Director General of Forests and Special Secretary, Shri Chandra Prakash Goyal, Director, Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) Dr Dhriti Banerjee and Director, Botanical Survey of India (BSI), Dr Ashiho Asosii Mao. Addressing the gathering Shri Yadav congratulated ZSI for completing 108 glorious years dedicated to the service of our faunal diversity. He shared the significance of the number 108, which denotes a cycle of 108 repetitions counted in a japamala, focusing on the sounds, vibration and meaning of what is said. He also described the number as 54 letters in Sanskrit alphabet, each having a masculine and feminine features.

The Minister categorically pointed out that we must protect the Indian faunal diversity to protect ourselves as climate change has busted the myth that humans are superior to nature. He gave an instance put forward by renowned Anthropologist Eduardo Kohn, who said forests can think as the trees interact with their environment because they have specialised characteristics of pest resistance. The forest characteristics, he said, remind us of what Gandhiji once said-‘In nature, there is enough for everyone’s need’. The Union Minister gave the instance of discovery of DDT, the pesticide, during World War II and how the eminent biologist and conservationist Rachel Carson made people aware of the harm it causes to the environment in her book named ‘Silent Spring’ in 1958, a testimony to human arrogance towards nature.

Shri Yadav reminded in his address, that we will not favour nature by working to protect it; rather it’s a favour we do to ourselves. He, in this regard, appreciated the efforts of ZSI in establishing globally well-known protected areas such as Silent Valley National Park (Kerala), Namdapha Tiger Reserve (Arunachal Pradesh), Nilgiri and Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserves and many others. He also mentioned ZSI’s prominent role in providing technical inputs for amending the Wildlife Protection Act. The Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey said that ZSI should focus on the research and conservation of important wetlands of Gangetic plains of India as ‘Sarovar Mitra’, by initiating a programme for citizen scientists for better data dissemination and conservation awareness.

As a part of the event six books were released by the dignitaries-1) Animal Discoveries: New Species and New Records 2022, 2) Plant Discoveries 2022, 3) Faunal Diversity of 75 Ramsar Wetlands of India, 4) Records of Zoological Survey of India-Special Issue of ATS 2023, 5) 75 Endemic Birds of India and 6) Fauna of India-108 DNA Sequences.

ZSI signed three MoU's for research and academic collaboration with the Royal Government of Bhutan, IIT Jodhpur and University of Burdwan. With the Royal Government of Bhutan, MoU was signed to conduct population assessment of the Red Panda, through a non-invasive method. With the IIT Jodhpur and University of Burdwan, MoUs were signed for research collaborations and student exchange programmes. Besides, awards were conferred for various competitions held during the World Environment Day, Mission Life and International Day of Biodiversity.

As part of the celebration, the first two-day Animal Taxonomy Summit will be organised by ZSI tomorrow and day after tomorrow (July 2 & 3, 2023), where 400 delegates across India and abroad including the Natural History Museum, London will be participating. The summit will be hearing talks on different aspects of animal taxonomy, bio-diversity conservation and biogeography from 12 eminent invited speakers. Director, ZSI, Dr Dhriti Banerjee gave the welcome address, followed by the inaugural address by Director General of Forests and Special Secretary, Shri Chandra Prakash Goyal.

CURRENT EVENTS

PIB,JUNE26,2023

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah's message on “International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking”

Under the guidance of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the policy of zero tolerance against narcotics adopted by Ministry of Home Affairs is showing successful results today

One of the main pillars of this policy is the "Whole of Government Approach" of the Modi government, in which coordination of different departments makes the policy more effective

On the occasion of “International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking”, I congratulate all the organizations and people fighting against drugs

It is our resolve that we will not allow the narcotics trade in India, nor we will allow drugs to be routed to the world through India

Drugs worth Rs.768 crore only were seized in 2006-13, it has increased almost 30 times to Rs.22,000 Crore in 2014-22, 181% more cases have been registered against drug peddlers in comparison to the earlier period

This shows the commitment of the Modi government towards a drug free India

A destruction campaign was launched in June 2022 to prevent re-use of seized drugs, under this campaign around 6 lakh kg of seized narcotics have been destroyed across the country so far

This battle against drugs cannot be won without people's participation, I appeal to all the countrymen to keep themselves and their family away from drugs. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah has said that under the guidance of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the policy of zero tolerance against narcotics adopted by Ministry of Home Affairs is showing successful results today. One of the main pillars of this policy is the "Whole of Government Approach" of the Modi government, in which the coordination of different departments makes the policy more effective.

In his message on the "International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking", the Union Home Minister said that on the occasion of "International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking" today on 26th June, I congratulate all the organizations and people fighting against drugs. It is a matter of great pleasure that this time also the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) is organizing 'Nasha Mukh Pakhwada' at all India level.

Union Home Minister said that it is our resolve that we will not allow the narcotics trade in India, nor we will allow drugs to be routed to the world through India. In this campaign against drugs, all the major agencies of the country, especially the "Narcotics Control Bureau" are continuously fighting their war. To strengthen this campaign, the Ministry of Home Affairs established NCORD in 2019 and Anti Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) was formed in the police department of every state, first national conference of ANTF was held in April 2023 in Delhi.

Shri Amit Shah said that the campaign against the misuse and side effects of drugs is being carried out on a war footing at the national level through appropriate forums. The effect of our comprehensive and coordinated fight against drugs is that where drugs worth Rs.768 crore only were seized in 2006-13, it has increased almost 30 times to Rs.22,000 Crore in 2014-22. 181% more number of cases have been registered against drug peddlers in comparison to the earlier period. This shows the commitment of the Modi government towards a drug free India. We also launched a destruction campaign to prevent re-use of seized drugs in June 2022, under

this campaign around 6 lakh kg of seized narcotics have been destroyed across the country so far. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation said that whether it is about destroying the drug cultivation or spreading public awareness, the Ministry of Home Affairs in coordination with all institutions and states, is making every possible effort, for a "drug free India", but this battle cannot be won without people's participation. On the occasion, I appeal to all the countrymen to keep themselves and their family away from drugs. Drugs not only make the young generation and society hollow, but the money earned from its smuggling is used against the security of the country. I appeal to the people to take an active part in this war against its misuse and inform the security agencies about the drug-trade taking place around them. Shri Amit Shah said that I am sure that with collective efforts, we all will be able to root out the problem of drugs and achieve our goal of 'Drugs-free India'. I congratulate the NCB again and other institutions for their contribution in working towards the resolve of the Modi government and I hope that we will not rest unless we win this fight against drugs.

PIB, JUNE 27, 2023

PM flags off five Vande Bharat trains

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi flagged off five Vande Bharat Express trains at Rani Kamalapati Railway Station in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh today. The five Vande Bharat trains are Bhopal (Rani Kamalapati) - Indore Vande Bharat Express; Bhopal (Rani Kamalapati) - Jabalpur Vande Bharat Express; Ranchi - Patna Vande Bharat Express; Dharwad - Bengaluru Vande Bharat Express and Goa (Madgaon) - Mumbai Vande Bharat Express. The Prime Minister inspected the first coach of Rani Kamalapati - Indore Vande Bharat Express. He also interacted with children who were onboard and the crew of the train.

The Prime Minister tweeted

"आज भोपाल में पांच वंदे भारत ट्रेनों को एक साथ शुरू करने का सौभाग्य मिला। यह दिखाता है कि देशभर में इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर और कनेक्टिविटी के तेज विकास को लेकर हमारी सरकार कितनी प्रतिबद्ध है।"

Replying to a tweet by Shri Shankar Lalwani, Member of Parliament from Indore who travelled in Bhopal (Rani Kamalapati) - Indore Vande Bharat Express, the Prime Minister congratulated people of Madhya Pradesh and said it will ease the travel for pilgrims going to Ujjain. He tweeted

"मध्य प्रदेश के लोगों को इंदौर-भोपाल के बीच शुरू हुई वंदे भारत ट्रेन की बहुत-बहुत बधाई। इससे जहां उन्हें सुरक्षित और सुविधाजनक यात्रा का लाभ मिलेगा, वहीं धार्मिक नगरी उज्जैन की यात्रा पर जाने वाले भक्तों को भी आसानी होगी।"

Replying to a tweet by Shri Rakesh Singh Member of Parliament from Jabalpur who welcomed the Bhopal (Rani Kamalapati) - Jabalpur Vande Bharat Express at Jabalpur, the Prime Minister tweeted that the train will lead to better connectivity between capital Bhopal and cultural capital Jabalpur and will promote tourism and ease the travel for pilgrims.

"देश की शान वंदे भारत ट्रेन से एक ओर जहां मध्य प्रदेश की सांस्कृतिक राजधानी जबलपुर और राज्य की राजधानी भोपाल के बीच कनेक्टिविटी बढ़ेगी, वहीं धार्मिक और पर्यटन स्थलों का भी तेजी से विकास होगा।"

Replying to a tweet by the Member of Parliament from Ranchi Shri Sanjay Seth, Shri Narendra Modi said Ranchi - Patna Vande Bharat Express will help in prosperity of mineral rich Jharkhand and Bihar.

"रांची-पटना के बीच नई वंदे भारत ट्रेन न सिर्फ लोगों की यात्रा को और सुगम बनाएगी, बल्कि यह खनिज संपदा से समृद्ध झारखंड और बिहार की आर्थिक प्रगति में भी मददगार होगी।"

Replying to a tweet by the Chief Minister of Goa, Dr Pramod Sawant regarding Goa (Madgaon) - Mumbai Vande Bharat Express, the Prime Minister tweeted

"The Vande Bharat train will enable more tourists to discover Goa's scenic beauty. It will also improve connectivity across the Konkan coast."

Union Minister, Shri Pralhad Joshi and Karnataka Governor Shri Thavarchand Gehlot traveled the Dharwad - Bengaluru Vande Bharat Express. In reply to a tweet by Shri Joshi the Prime Minister tweeted

"The Dharwad-Bengaluru Vande Bharat Express will improve connectivity across Karnataka. It will also improve commerce and tourism in the state."

PIB,JUNE27,2023

Helen Keller's Day Celebrated on 27th June

Helen Keller Day is a commemorative day to celebrate the birth of Helen Keller, observed on June 27 annually. Although Helen Keller was born deaf and blind, she persevered in life and achieved her goals. She became a prolific writer, published numerous books, founded the "American Foundation for the Blind," and served as an advocate for people with disabilities. Thanks to advances in science and technology, blind and deaf people are able to lead full and productive lives. On Helen Keller Day, we recognize the progress that has been made in supporting and accommodating individuals with disabilities. It's a reminder that everyone has potential and can contribute greatly to society.

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India is the nodal body to look after all the development agenda of Persons with Disabilities of the country with an objective of highlighting the achievements of Helen Keller and inspiring the stakeholders especially the Divyangjans, the department observed the Helen Keller's Day on 27th June 2023, through the institutions associated with it by conducting various events at more than 50 places across India. Awareness Generation Programmes, Seminars & Workshops, an Audio Video programme by the Institute's community radio station 91.2 NIVH Hello Doon, Webinars, Sports Activities, Quiz Competitions were organized across the country to observe the Helen Keller's Day on 27th June 2023,

PIB, JUNE 28, 2023

International Conference on Green Hydrogen to be held in New Delhi during July 5 – 7, 2023

Conference seeks to establish Green Hydrogen Ecosystem and Catalyse Attainment of Global Goals for Decarbonization through Green Hydrogen

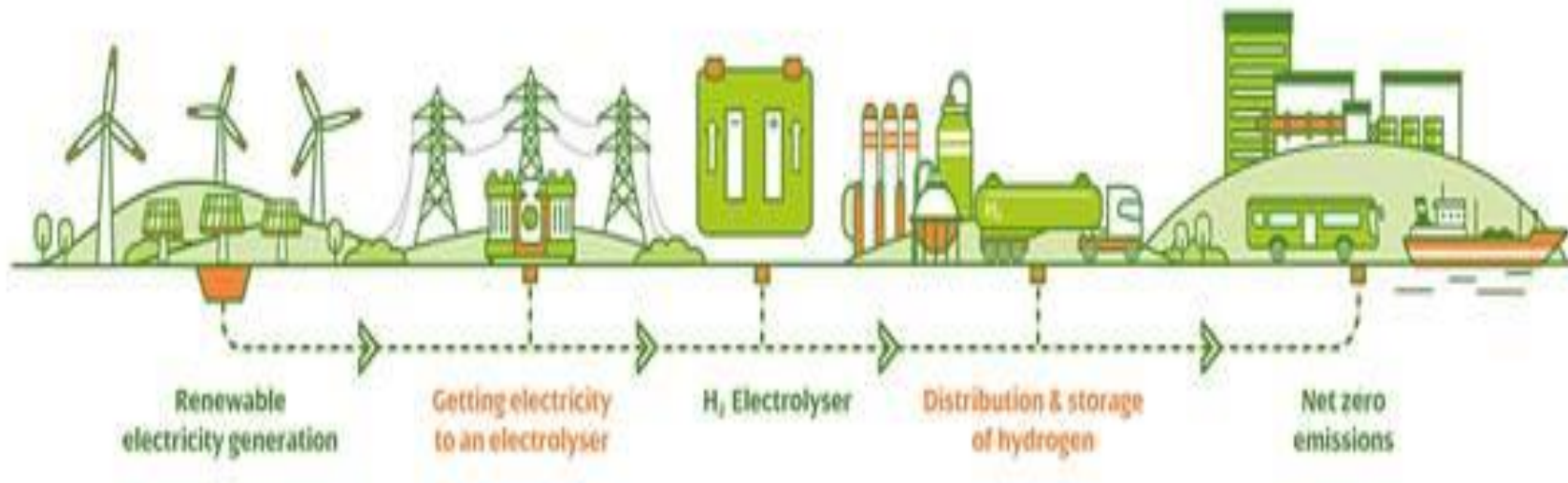
ICGH 2023 will enable us to Learn Best Practices from Experts to help Attain Production Targets under National Green Hydrogen Mission: Secretary, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy

The Government of India is organizing an International Conference on Green Hydrogen (ICGH-2023) during 5th – 7th July 2023 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, to bring together the global scientific and industrial community to discuss recent advances and emerging technologies in the entire green hydrogen value chain. The conference will enable the sector stakeholders to explore the evolving green hydrogen landscape and innovation-driven solutions in the sector.



The conference is being organized by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, in partnership with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and Office of Principal Scientific Advisor to Government of India.

Green Hydrogen



The fundamental aim of the Conference is to explore how we can establish a Green Hydrogen ecosystem and foster a systemic approach for meeting the global goals for decarbonization through Green Hydrogen. Apart from domain-specific research interactions on hydrogen production, storage, distribution and downstream applications, the conference will also discuss green financing, human resource upskilling and startup initiatives in this area. The conference will enable to share and learn from international best practices in the sector.

National Green Hydrogen Mission targets



At least
5 MMT GH₂
Annual Production



60-100 GW
Electrolyser
capacity



50 MMT
Emissions
Averted



₹ 1 lakh crores
Import Savings



125 GW RE
Capacity for GH₂
Generation



₹ 8 lakh cr
Investment

Check out the conference website here: <https://icgh.in>. A brief presentation on the conference can be found here. The conference brochure can be found here and the conference flyer here. Various plenary talks, expert panel discussions and technical deliberations held at the conference will provide domestic and international participants from the industry and research communities an opportunity to dive deep into these national and global priorities, in line with the objectives embedded in India's of National Green Hydrogen Mission, a mission launched by the Government of India to help achieve India's target of Net Zero by the year 2070.

Addressing a curtain raiser press conference on the international conference, the Secretary, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Bhupinder Singh Bhalla said that outreach and industry partnership are integral parts of the National Green Hydrogen Mission. The Secretary underlined the role of industry in various steps of the value chain, such as production, distribution and storage. He said that the conference seeks to bring the best brains together to explore solutions towards developing and strengthening the national green hydrogen ecosystem.

“Technology Adoption is Crucial for Ramping up Electrolyzer Production Capacity”

The Secretary said that the conference is the first major event on green hydrogen. He said that the green hydrogen ecosystem is important in order to attain the basic production target of National Green Hydrogen Mission, of producing 5 MMT of green hydrogen per annum by the year 2030. “Electrolyzer production capacity in the world is very limited, this capacity has to come up in India. And for this, it is important that we learn and adopt the appropriate technology for electrolyzer manufacturing as well as for various individual components of the manufacturing process. Through this process, we are creating a platform where experts can talk about various steps of the value chain, so that we can learn from others; this would comprise not only production, but also marketing and collaborations. Our focus is on the entire value chain which is important for the success of the National Green Hydrogen Mission.”

Responding to a media query, Shri Bhalla said that at last count, about 48 projects on green hydrogen / green ammonia have been publicly announced in India. “A lot of them are talking about green ammonia, which totals to production of around 3.5 million metric tonnes per annum of green hydrogen. There is a lot of traction from the industry, as far as green hydrogen opportunity is concerned.”The Conference will also guide us in determining the focus areas for R&D and on the standards and regulations needed, said the Secretary. Shri Bhalla said that a Working Group on Standards for Green Hydrogen Manufacturing has already submitted a report comprising around 100 recommendations, to Bureau of Indian Standards and other standards-related organizations.“Government is working on Definition of Green Hydrogen, Global Standard Needed”

Shri Bhalla said that the government is working on a definition for green hydrogen and expressed the hope that the conference helps to also evolve some global standards for green hydrogen. He added that there is no standard definition for green hydrogen, with different countries and private organizations coming up with multiple definitions. “It is an evolving field, so every country is learning, so India is going to come up with a definition based on what we believe should be green hydrogen and eventually, we should be having a global standard on the definition of green hydrogen. This should have clear starting and ending points, so that we can effectively evaluate our energy transition and adoption of green hydrogen.”

25 Sessions, 1,500 Plus International and Indian Delegates

The three-day international conference will no less than 25 deep-dive sessions aimed at establishing a green hydrogen ecosystem, with expected participation of more than 1,500 delegates from India and abroad. Delegates will also get to hear regional perspectives on green hydrogen, by the Americas, Australia, Africa, Europe and of course, India.

The conference will also have demos, prototypes by PSUs, private companies and startups, as well as B2B and B2G meetings. The opening day of the conference will have sessions on Hydrogen Production-

Electrolysis and Bio-Pathways; Hydrogen Storage, Distribution and Refuelling; Hydrogen Energy Ecosystems & Assessment; Fuel Cells & Electrolyzers: Key materials & components; Hydrogen Production – Thermochemical Nuclear / Other; Hydrogen in Mobility; Integrated Hydrogen Systems; Hydrogen in Industries; and a panel Discussion on Disruptive Science and Technology.

Day 2, i.e., July 6, will have two plenary lectures, one presenting a Japanese and another an Australian perspective on the role of green hydrogen. The technical sessions for the day would be on Pipeline Infra, and Compatibility; Hydrogen Economy - Logistics and Infrastructure; Codes, Standards and Regulations; Hydrogen Valleys/ Hubs / Clusters; Start-ups in Hydrogen; Hydrogen Strategies and Policies; Green Financing; Strengthening R&D Ecosystem. The day will close with a Panel Discussion on Carbon Emissions associated with Green Hydrogen Production. The third and final day of the international conference will feature a plenary lecture presenting a European perspective and a panel discussion among key industry stakeholders. The conference will conclude with the valedictory session.

Incentive Schemes for Electrolyzer Manufacturing and Green Hydrogen in the Works

Speaking on demand creation, the Secretary said that the government is working with respective Ministries to promote green hydrogen. “The Ministry is also working on provision of incentives for electrolyzer manufacturing and for production of green hydrogen. As regards production of green hydrogen, incentives will be awarded based on setting up of green hydrogen plants; in a second model, incentives will be provided for consumption, based on a Demand Aggregation Model.”

The New & Renewable Energy Secretary said that the draft of the incentive scheme for electrolyzer manufacturing and part of the incentive scheme for production of green hydrogen have been finalized and will be rolled out soon. He said that the total incentives being offered under the Mission is more than Rs. 17,000 crores until the year 2030, which will be rolled out in tranches, so that the government will learn from the first tranche and evolve the second one. On the question of funding for green hydrogen, the Secretary recalled that there is a need for Rs. 8 lakh crores of investment under National Green Hydrogen Mission and said that the government is talking with banking and financial system, private sector and other stakeholders for financing of green hydrogen. He said that the government would be handholding industry in order to attract funding for the sector.

Green Hydrogen Hubs on the Anvil

The Secretary said that the government is working with states on development of green hydrogen hubs. Explaining the concept, the Secretary said: “A Green Hydrogen Hub is an area where production and consumption occur in close proximity. If a particular green hydrogen production capacity is purely export-oriented, they would be largely near the ports and this is a call which the private sector is going to take. We are working with the Ministry of Shipping in order to explore setting up of green hydrogen hubs at major ports. Hubs will be selected for infrastructure support from the government based on parameters identified under the policy to be rolled out, but hubs in addition to what the government supports can also come up, based on initiatives by the industry.”

National Green Hydrogen Mission

The National Green Hydrogen Mission was launched by the Government of India on 4th January 2023, as part of its decarbonization strategy. The Mission places significant emphasis on R&D in green hydrogen and aims to make India a global hub of Green Hydrogen production, utilization, and export. The Mission will kickstart

major interventions in policies and technology to develop a robust Green Hydrogen ecosystem in the country. It seeks to do this by creating demand, strengthening the supply side, and focusing on policy and regulatory frameworks, innovation and affordability. The Mission will encourage private investment in the sector and enable rapid scale-up, technology development, establish standards & regulatory framework and enable rapid cost reduction. R&D in green hydrogen not only fosters sustainable energy solutions but also opens opportunities for job creation and economic growth in India's clean energy sector. By prioritizing R&D, India is poised to become a global leader in green hydrogen technology, paving the way for a cleaner and greener future.

PIB,JUNE29,2023

“Statistics Day” celebrated on 29th June, 2023

Theme: Alignment of State Indicator Framework with National Indicator Framework for Monitoring Sustainable Development Goals

In recognition of the notable contributions made by (late) Professor Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis in the field of statistics and economic planning, the Government of India has been celebrating his birth Anniversary, on 29th June, as “Statistics Day”, every year since 2007. This year, the main event of the Statistics Day, 2023 was organized at Scope Convention Centre, Scope Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi. The Chief Guest of the event, Rao Inderjit Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Ministry of Planning, and Minister of State of Ministry of Corporate Affairs, inaugurated the event and addressed the participants on the occasion. Prof. Rajeeva Laxman Karandikar, Chairman, National Statistical Commission and Dr. G. P. Samanta, Chief Statistician of India & Secretary, MoSPI also addressed the participants. Senior officers of MoSPI, representatives of other Central line Ministries/Departments and States/ UTs Governments, representatives of UN organizations also

participated in the event. The event was also live-streamed through social media handles of the Ministry. Winners of ‘On the Spot Essay Writing Competition, 2023’ were also felicitated during the event.

A brief presentation on the theme of Statistics Day, 2023 was made by Dr. Ashutosh Ojha, Deputy Director General, MoSPI. Mr Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator for India, Dr. Yogesh Suri, Senior Adviser, NITI Aayog and Mr Rajesh Gupta, Director, NITI Aayog also addressed the participants on the theme of Statistics Day, 2023. The Sustainable Development Goals-National Indicator Framework, Progress Report, 2023 was released during the event. Along with the report, Data Snapshot on Sustainable Development Goals-National Indicator Framework, 2023 and Sustainable Development Goals- National Indicator Framework, 2023 were also released. There is a provision in the Report to download goal wise data from the website of MoSPI in the Excel file.

PIB, JUNE 30, 2023

PM addresses Valedictory Ceremony of Centenary Celebrations of University of Delhi

Lays foundation stone of building for Faculty of Technology, Computer Centre and Academic Block of the University

Releases Commemorative Centenary Volume - Compilation of Centenary Celebrations; Logo Book - Logo of Delhi University and its colleges; and Aura - 100 Years of University of Delhi

Takes Metro Ride to reach University of Delhi

“Delhi University has not been just a university but a movement”

“If during these hundred years, DU has kept its emotions alive, it has kept its values vibrant too”

“India’s rich education system is the carrier of India's prosperity”

“Delhi University played a major part in creating a strong generation of talented youngsters”

“When the resolve of an individual or an institution is towards the country, then its achievements are equated with the achievements of the nation”

“The third decade of the last century gave new momentum to the struggle for India’s independence, now the third decade of the new century will give impetus to the development journey of India”

“Indian values like democracy, equality and mutual respect are becoming human values”

“World's largest heritage museum - ‘Yuge Yugeen Bharat’ is going to be built in Delhi”

“Soft power of India is becoming a success story of the Indian youth”

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed the Valedictory Ceremony of Centenary Celebrations of the University of Delhi at the Multipurpose Hall of Delhi University Sports Complex today. He also laid the foundation stone of the building for the Faculty of Technology, Computer Centre and Academic Block, to be built in the North Campus of the University. The Prime Minister released Commemorative Centenary Volume - Compilation of Centenary Celebrations; Logo Book - Logo of Delhi University and its colleges; and Aura - 100 Years of University of Delhi. The Prime Minister took a metro ride to reach University of Delhi. He also interacted with the students during the journey. Upon arriving, the Prime Minister took a walkthrough of the exhibition - Journey of 100 Years. He also witnessed Saraswati Vandana and University Kulgeet presented by the Faculty of Music and Fine Arts.

Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister asserted that he had firmly decided on taking part in the Valedictory Ceremony of Centenary Celebrations of University of Delhi and said that the feeling is like a homecoming. Referring to the short movie played before the address, the Prime Minister said that the contributions of the personalities which have emerged out of the University give a glimpse of the life of Delhi University. The Prime Minister expressed happiness to be present at Delhi University on a festive occasion and in a festive spirit. Underlining the importance of the company of colleagues for any visit to the University, the Prime Minister expressed happiness to have the opportunity to travel by Metro to reach the event.

The Prime Minister noted that the centenary celebrations of the University of Delhi are taking place at a time when India is celebrating the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav after completing 75 years of its independence. “The universities and educational institutions of any nation present a reflection of its achievements”, the Prime Minister said. In the 100-year-old journey of DU, the Prime Minister continued, there have been many historic landmarks which have connected the lives of many students, teachers and others. He remarked that Delhi University is not just a university but a movement, and it has filled every single moment with life. The Prime Minister congratulated every student, teacher and those associated with Delhi University on the Centenary Celebrations. Noting the gathering of old and new alumni, the Prime Minister said that this is an occasion to catch up. The Prime Minister said, “If during these hundred years, DU has kept its emotions alive, it has kept its values vibrant too”. Underscoring the importance of knowledge, the Prime Minister noted that when India had vibrant universities like Nalanda and Takshila, it was at the peak of prosperity. “India’s rich education system is the carrier of India's prosperity”, he said, underlining the high Indian share in the global GDP of that time. Continuous attacks during the period of slavery destroyed these institutions leading to obstruction of the intellectual flow of India and bringing the growth to standstill, he added.

He said after Independence, universities played a crucial role in giving concrete shape to the emotional swell of post-independence India by creating a strong generation of talented youngsters. Delhi University too played a major part in that, he said. This understanding of the past gives shape to our existence, shape to our ideals and expansion to the vision of the future, he said.

“When the resolve of an individual or an institution is towards the country, then its achievements are equated with the achievements of the nation”, the Prime Minister remarked. Shri Modi pointed out that there were only 3 colleges under Delhi University when it began but today there are more than 90 colleges under it. He also underlined that India which was once considered a fragile economy has now become one of the top 5 economies in the world. Noting that the number of women studying at DU is more than men, the Prime Minister pointed out that the gender ratio has significantly improved in the country. He emphasized the importance of an interconnection between the resolutions of a University and a nation and said that the deeper the roots of the educational institutions, the higher the progress of the country. The Prime Minister noted that the goal of Delhi University was India’s independence when it first began, but now that the institution will complete 125 years when India reaches 100 years of independence, the goal of Delhi University should be to make India a ‘Viksit Bharat’. “The third decade of the last century gave new momentum to the struggle for India’s independence, now the third decade of the new century will give impetus to the development journey of India”, the Prime Minister said. The Prime Minister indicated the large number of upcoming universities, colleges, IITs, IIMs and AIIMS. “All these institutes are becoming the building blocks of new India,” he added. The Prime Minister emphasized that education is not merely a process of teaching but also a way of learning. He pointed out that after a long time, the focus is shifting to what a student wants to learn. He talked about the flexibility in the new National Education Policy for selecting subjects. Talking about the improvement of the quality and infusion of competitiveness among the institutions, the Prime Minister

mentioned the National Institutional Ranking Framework which is motivating the institutions. He also pointed out the effort to link the autonomy of the institutions with the quality of education.

The Prime Minister said that due to the futuristic educational policies and decisions, recognition of Indian universities is increasing. He informed that while in 2014, in the QS world ranking there were only 12 Indian universities, today this number has reached 45. He credited India's youth force as the guiding force for this transformation. The Prime Minister hailed today's youth for transcending the concept of education being limited to placement and degrees. He said that they want to blaze their own trail and presented more than one lakh startups, 40% more patent filing as compared to 2014-15 and a rise in the Global Innovation Index as proof of this thinking.

The Prime Minister highlighted the deal on the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology or iCET with the USA during his recent visit and said that it will create new opportunities for the youth of India in various sectors ranging from AI to semiconductors. He said that it will enable access to technologies which were once beyond the reach of our youth and enhance skill development. The Prime Minister informed that companies like Micron, Google, Applied Materials etc. have decided to invest in India and it provides a glimpse of the bright future for the youth. "The Industry 4.0 Revolution is knocking on India's doors", the Prime Minister remarked as he noted that technologies like AI, AR and VR which could only be witnessed in the movies have now become a part of our real lives. He noted that Robotics has become the new normal from driving to surgery and said that all these sectors are creating new avenues for the young generation of India. In the past years, the Prime Minister continued, India has opened its space and defence sector and made huge changes in the policies related to drones which have provided a chance to move forward for the youth.

The Prime Minister explained the impact of the growing profile of India on the students. He said now people wish to know about India. He mentioned India's help to the world during the corona period. This created a curiosity in the world to know more about India that delivers even during the crisis. He said growing recognition through events like the G20 presidency is creating new avenues for students such as Yoga, Science, culture, festivals, literature, history, heritage and cuisine. "The demand of Indian youth is increasing, who can tell the world about India and can take our things to the world", he said.

The Prime Minister said that Indian values like democracy, equality and mutual respect are becoming human values, creating new opportunities for Indian youth at fora like government and diplomacy. He also emphasized that the focus on History, culture and heritage is also creating new opportunities for the youth. He gave the example of tribal museums being set up in different states of the country and the development journey of independent India being presented through the PM Museum. He also expressed delight that the world's largest heritage museum - 'Yuge Yugeen Bharat' is also going to be built in Delhi. The Prime Minister also recognized the growing recognition of Indian teachers and mentioned how world leaders have often told him about their Indian teachers. "This soft power of India is becoming a success story of the Indian youth", he said. He asked the universities to prepare their mindset for this development. He asked them to prepare a roadmap for this and asked Delhi University that when they celebrated 125 years, they should figure among the top-ranking universities in the world. "Future making innovations should be done here, world's best ideas and leaders should emerge from here, for this you will have to work continuously", the Prime Minister said.

Concluding the address, the Prime Minister emphasized the need to prepare our minds and hearts for a goal that we set for ourselves in life. He underlined that the responsibility of preparing the mind and heart of a nation has to be fulfilled by its educational institutions. The Prime Minister expressed confidence that Delhi University will fulfill these resolutions while taking this journey forward. "Our new generation should be future-ready, have the temperament to accept and face challenges, this is possible only through the vision and

mission of the educational institution”, the Prime Minister concluded. Union Minister for Education, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan and Vice Chancellor of University of Delhi, Shri Yogesh Singh were present on the occasion.

Background

The University of Delhi was established on 1st May 1922. In the last hundred years, the University has grown and expanded immensely and now has 86 departments, 90 colleges, and more than 6 lakh students and has contributed immensely towards nation-building.