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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

PIB,AUG14,2023

Government of India is committed to the all round development of Border Villages under the Vibrant Village Programme: Shri Arjun Munda

Shri Arjun Munda holds interactive session with sarpanches of villages covered under Vibrant Village Programme

Sarpanches to attend Independence Day Celebrations at the historic Red Fort tomorrow

Union Minister of Tribal Affairs, Shri Arjun Munda, hosted more than two hundred Sarpanches from Border Villages, under the Vibrant Villages Programme with their spouses at his official residence in New Delhi today. Those present on the occasion included Shri Atal Dullo, Secretary, Border Management, MHA; Shri Anil Jha, Secretary, Tribal Affairs and Shri Ashish Dayal Singh, Director General, Indo- Tibetan Border Police along with officers of Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The Government of India is prioritizing the development of the country's strategically important border areas. The guests have also been invited to attend the Independence Day celebrations at the iconic Red Fort, in the presence of the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi.

The Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP) launched as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, envisages comprehensive development of identified villages in 46 blocks abutting northern border in 19 districts of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, UT of Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh.

Shri Arjun Munda, Union Minister of Tribal Affairs welcomed the guests as members of the family and remarked, “Tribals in border villages have protected the country since ages along with preservation of their local traditions and culture. They are the true patriots of the country. We are privileged to have you in our midst in the capital city. These border villages, once termed the ‘Last Villages of India’ have been termed the ‘First Villages’ by the Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. India feels secure because the inhabitants of these border villages are keeping watch. Over 17 Ministers have visited and stayed overnight in these villages. Under the visionary guidance of the Hon’ble PM, the Government is trying to ensure the delivery of Government Programmes focusing on the Empowerment of women and youth, Connectivity with all-weather roads, provision of clean drinking water, 24x7 power to be focused on solar and wind energy, Mobile and Internet connectivity, Tourist centers, Multipurpose Center and Health and Wellness Center. Further, cooperatives will be developed at the local level to manage livelihood opportunities including entrepreneurship agriculture horticulture, cultivation of medicinal herbs etc.” The Government is committed to the all round development of Border Villages under the Vibrant Villages Programme, the Minister added.

Shri Atal Dullo, Secretary, Border Management observed, “In light of the Hon’ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi’s remarks, Border Villages are not the last villages, but the First Villages, we have strived to extend our full support to the development of these villages holistically by laying emphasis on their economy, livelihood, social structure, infrastructure, education, electricity and telecommunications.”

On the occasion, Shri Anil Kumar Jha, Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, gave the keynote address. Mentioning the Vibrant Villages Program, he highlighted, “The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is implementing several schemes and initiatives in the border areas, whether it is Grants under Article 275 (1), Eklavya Model Residential Schools for ST Students, Grants to NGOs, or the PM-Adi Adarsh Gram Yojna.”

Further, Shri Ashish Dayal Singh, DG, ITBP, remarked, “We support the livelihood of the local vendors of the border villages by purchasing their produce. ITBP wholeheartedly supports this program launched with the aim of connecting and developing border villages in India in collaboration with the residents of these areas.”

Over 200 Sarpanches/ Gram Pradhans from Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, UT Ladakh, and Himachal Pradesh attended the program. One Sarpanch from each state shared their views on the Vibrant Village Programme. Sarpanch of Gnathang, (Gangtok) Sikkim- Smt. Pema Sherpa, Sarpanch of Shyo Toth (Tawang), Arunachal Pradesh- Smt. Phurpa Zomba, Sarpanch of Durbuk Block (Changthang), UT Ladakh- Shri Konchokley Namgyal, Sarpanch of Mana village, Uttarakhand- Shri Pitambar Molfa, Sarpanch of Batsari, Tehsil Sangla, Himachal Pradesh- Shri Pradeep Kumar appreciated the Government's initiative of Vibrant Villages Programme and expressed hope it will bring a new dawn for these villages.

The dignitaries and guests were also felicitated by the Minister.

The Vibrant Villages Programme was approved on 15th February 2023, with central contribution of Rs.4800 crore for the period FY 2022-23 to 2025-26 including Rs.2500 crore specifically for road connectivity.

PIB,AUG15,2023

Government schemes have enabled 13.5 crore people to break the shackles of poverty and join the new middle class: PM

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, speaking from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the occasion of 77th Independence Day today, recalled that India has improved its world ranking from the 10th largest economy in 2014 to the 5th largest in 2023 today. The PM said that this rise happened due to fighting corruption, the stopping of leakages in transfer of government benefits and creation of a strong economy and spending of

public money for the welfare of the poor. “Today, I want to tell the countrymen that when the country is economically prosperous, it does not just fill the coffers; it builds the capability of the citizens and the nation. If there is a government that takes a pledge to spend this honestly for the welfare of its citizens, only then one achieves such rare progressive outcomes.”

Transfer of funds from Centre to states up from Rs. 30 lakh crore to Rs. 100 lakh crore

Giving an account of the progress in the last 10 years, the PM said that the figures tell a compelling story of change. Asserting that the transformation is huge and a testament to the immense capability of the nation, the PM said that 10 years ago, 30 lakh crore rupees used to go to the states from the Government of India. In the last 9 years, this figure has reached 100 lakh crore, the PM pointed out. “Earlier, 70 thousand crore rupees were spent from the treasury of the Government of India for the development of local bodies, today it is more than 3 lakh crore rupees.”

Four-fold increase in housing for poor, Rs. 10 lakh crore urea subsidy for farmers

The PM told the nation that earlier, 90 thousand crore rupees were spent to build the houses of the poor; today it has increased 4 times and more than 4 lakh crore rupees are being spent to build the houses of the poor. The PM informed that bags of urea which are sold at Rs. 3,000 in some global markets are being given to farmers at not more than 300 rupees. “The bags of urea that are sold for 3,000 rupees in some global markets, we provide to our farmers for 300 rupees, and hence the government is providing a subsidy of 10 lakh crore rupees on urea for our farmers.”

MUDRA Yojana has enabled nearly 10 crore citizens to become job creators

The PM explained that the MUDRA Yojana has enabled crore of citizens to become entrepreneurs and thus also be job creators for others. “The Mudra Yojana, with a budget of over 20 lakh crore rupees, has provided opportunities for self-employment, businesses, and ventures for the youth of our country. About eight crore people have started new businesses, and it's not just eight crore people who started their businesses; each entrepreneur has provided employment to one or two individuals. The capability to provide employment to 8-10 crore new individuals has been achieved through the Mudra Yojana availed by eight crore citizens.” The PM added that businesses too were supported during the COVID-19 pandemic, wherein MSMEs were supported with nearly 3.5 lakh crore rupees, preventing them from sinking and providing them strength.

The PM also recalled how the "One Rank One Pension" initiative brought the benefit of 70,000 crore rupees from India's treasury to our soldiers, as a tribute to them. The families of our retired soldiers have got this money, he said. The PM underlined that these are just a few examples and that there are many more initiatives that have significantly contributed to the country's development, generating employment in various corners of the nation. The PM reminded the nation that compared to earlier years, the nation's budget has been increased manifold across categories.

“13.5 crore people have broken the chains of poverty and entered the new middle class”

The PM informed that as a result of all these efforts, 13.5 crore poor people have broken free from the chains of poverty and entered the new middle class, during the one tenure of five years of the government. The PM told that there can be no greater satisfaction in life than this. The PM added that the various schemes ranging from housing schemes, provision of 50,000 crore rupees to street vendors through the PM SVANidhi scheme, and many more such schemes have aided these 13.5 crore people to rise above the hardships of poverty.

PIB,AUG16,2023

It has been recently decided to conduct the government job test in 15 Indian languages so that the language barrier does not let any youth miss the job opportunity, says Dr Jitendra Singh

Notable progress made in last more than nine years under the leadership of PM Modi to promote the Indian regional languages besides the Official Language Hindi: Dr Jitendra Singh

“As we promote Hindi, other Indian languages will also prosper”

Dr Jitendra Singh calls for adoption of common terminology from English and other languages to promote the Indian Languages

Dr Jitendra Singh chairs the 14th Hindi Consultative Committee meeting attached to the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions

It has been recently decided to conduct the government job test in 15 Indian languages so that the language barrier does not let any youth miss the job opportunity. This was stated in New Delhi today by the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, while addressing the 14th Hindi Consultative Committee meeting attached to the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

Notable progress has been made in the last more than nine years under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to promote the Indian regional languages besides the Official Language Hindi, he said. This historic decision will give impetus to participation of local youth and encourage regional languages, said the

Minister. In addition to Hindi and English, the question paper will be set in the 13 regional languages i.e. Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Odia, Urdu, Punjabi, Manipuri (also Meiti) and Konkani, he said. The decision will result in lakhs of aspirants taking part in the examination in their mother tongue/regional language and improve their selection prospects. Notable progress has been made in the last more than nine years under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to promote the Indian regional languages besides the official Language Hindi, said Dr Jitendra Singh.

The DoPT Minister said there had been persistent demands from different States to hold SSC exams in languages other than English and Hindi. Government appointed an Expert Committee to look at this aspect too amongst other things (review of scheme and syllabus of examinations conducted by the Commission).

“Though the policy was initiated with the Official Language Rules, 1976, significant progress has been made only in the last five-six years,” he said. Dr Jitendra Singh said the Staff Selection Commission recently unveiled the format for candidates to write their examination in 15 languages, plans are afoot to allow written tests in all 22 Scheduled Languages. The JEE, NEET and UGC exams are also being conducted in 12 of our languages.

“In UPSC, there is still a dearth of higher studies subject books but efforts are on in coordination with the HRD Ministry to promote specialized books in Indian languages. The first MBBS course in Hindi in the country was launched in October last year in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. And now Uttarakhand has become the second state to launch an MBBS programme in Hindi,” he said. Calling for adoption of common terminology from English and other languages, Dr Jitendra Singh said Madhya Pradesh could take the lead in introducing medical education in Hindi by adopting words such as “nucleus” and “amoeba” verbatim rather than wasting time and resources in trying to cook up a translation.

Dr Jitendra Singh said the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has taken a very historic decision in the new National Education Policy (NEP) by giving importance to the mother tongue of students in Primary, Technical and Medical education.

“PM Modi has given a call to provide Medical and Engineering education in regional languages such as Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Gujarati, Bengali. Medical education has commenced in Hindi and soon Engineering studies will also begin in Hindi and translation of Engineering books has commenced in eight languages across the country, and soon students across the nation will be able to pursue Technical and Medical education in their mother tongue,” he said. Dr Jitendra Singh said the Government introduced three pathbreaking bills in parliament during the recently concluded Monsoon session to replace the two centuries old criminal justice system, a legacy of the colonial era. “The Indian Penal Code, 1860 will be replaced by the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill, 2023, the Criminal Procedure Code, 1898 will be replaced by the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita Bill, 2023 and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 will be replaced by the Bharatiya Sakshya Bill, 2023,” he said. Dr Jitendra Singh said 56 of over 650 training modules of the Mission Karmayogi Prarambh under the Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT) portal have been made available in Hindi. Its scope may be widened to include other Indian Languages, he said. Calling for more frequent meetings of Hindi review committees in the Government Departments, Dr Jitendra Singh said, as we promote Hindi, other Indian Languages too would gain and prosper. “Real impact would be felt as the mindset changes, resulting in social change,” he said.



On the occasion, Dr Jitendra Singh distributed awards and certificates of appreciation. He also released a book on freedom fighter Veer Savarkar by Dr K C Ajay Kumar, a member of the Hindi Consultative Committee and official publications of the Ministry. Members of the Consultative Committee and Members of Parliament, - Shri Satish Kumar Gautam and Shri Shyam Singh Yadav (both Lok Sabha) and Shri Rwngrwa Narzary (Rajya Sabha) besides Hindi scholars participated in the deliberations. Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances, and Secretary, Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare, Shri V. Srinivas, Ms Deepti Umashankar, Establishment Officer & Additional Secretary, DoPT, and senior officers of the Ministry also attended the meeting.

TELEGRAPH,AUG19,2023

Billed: Editorial on Modi government's bill to remove CJI from panel to select election commissioners

Symbolic diminution of power can't be without intent. The bill could be considered more dangerous than the undermining of all democratic or independent institutions during the present regime

The narrative continues without pause. Going by the policies and laws it formulates, the Narendra Modi-led government seems to have as its primary goal the concentration of all power in the hands of the Centre. With the appearance of responding to the Supreme Court order of March 2 that a selection committee for commissioners of the Election Commission should be formed, the government moved the chief election commissioner and other election commissioners (appointment, conditions of service and term of office) bill, 2023, that would establish the executive as the sole selector by law. The Supreme Court had formed an interim panel with the prime minister, the leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India, which would function till Parliament made a law; its emphasis was reportedly on making the selection objective and fair. Those who would take decisions regarding elections and ensure their conduct in a free and fair manner in a democracy are not expected to be selected by the government of the day alone. The bill,

however, complies with the requirement of making a law while ignoring the principle associated with the order which made the presence of the CJI logical. Mr Modi's government usually has a tense relationship with the Supreme Court; the bill takes it one — especially noticeable — step further by dropping the CJI from the proposed committee.

The bill is ominous. The committee shall consist of the prime minister, the leader of the Opposition and any Union minister of the prime minister's choice. Even this is not a particular chair, such as the law minister's. 'Choice' is extended to each of the commissioners. This would mean that the custom of the senior-most commissioner becoming the CEC would no longer operate, the government's preferences would. The picture is of an almost complete hijacking of the control of who runs the EC — the leader of the Opposition would be in a minority. Besides, the status of Election Commissioners has been equated with cabinet secretaries instead of Supreme Court judges. The symbolic diminution of power cannot be without intent. The bill could be considered more dangerous than the undermining of all democratic or independent institutions during the present regime. Its provisions reveal a possible goal — the people must decide whether it is their goal too.

ECONOMIC TIMES,AUG20,2023

New National Cooperative Policy almost ready: Suresh Prabhu

New National Cooperative Policy is nearing completion, and a committee of 47 members is currently finalising the draft to be submitted to the central government, said chairman of the panel and former Union minister Suresh Prabhu on Saturday. Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah had last year announced that a dedicated policy will soon be prepared to strengthen the cooperative movement in the country, and that Prabhu will head the national-level committee. The panel members include experts and representatives of the cooperative sector and officials of central ministries. "The policy document is almost ready and the submission process is underway. We can now look forward to the release of the policy and its

implementation," Prabhu told PTI on the sidelines of an event organised by the Merchants' Chamber of Commerce & Industry here.

According to Prabhu, the policy holds the capacity to transform India's socio-economic landscape by significantly increasing the share of cooperatives to the overall GDP. Prabhu highlighted that the policy's fundamental objective is to promote a cooperative-based economic development model backed by a legal and institutional framework.

"I have been connected with all types of national and international cooperatives for a long time, and know their potential. Any economic activity will add value to people's lives, but cooperatives help in spreading and distributing income while creating wealth." And, that is the reason the government is thinking of increasing the share of cooperatives in almost all sectors of the economy," he said. The existing National Policy on Cooperatives was formulated in 2002.

India has around 8.5 lakh cooperative societies with a member base of nearly 29 crore, according to government data. These cooperatives are engaged in varied activities like agro-processing, dairying, fisheries, housing, weaving, credit and marketing.

Prabhu, also a former railway minister, added that the cooperation ministry has decided upon creating cooperative warehousing as well.

"I think this is an amazing idea to further boost cooperatives. Millions of square metres of warehousing are being developed across the country," he added. In his Independence Day address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that cooperatives are a significant part of India's social economy, and that a separate ministry was created to empower cooperatives and spread their network.

TRIBUNE,AUG20,2023

The spirit of service

It is when you hear dedicated civil servants who entered the service not to wield power but to do good and serve the people that you realise how far away we have drifted from the idealism of that time. The earlier generation of civil servants and politicians must have done something good

Ira Pande

I OFTEN feel that the last cruel joke the departing British played on us was granting us our independence in August, surely one of the cruellest months in this part of the world. And this year, thanks to the phenomenon called adhikmas (extra month) by our astrologers, the sultry, humid weather seems unending. Add to it this year's monsoon that has devastated large parts of north India, bringing floods and landslides every other day. The latest I see are parts of Punjab taking a hit, after Himachal and Uttarakhand have been battered relentlessly. Since I've already written about the human errors that have compounded the fury of nature and several experts have pointed this out already, there is little point in repeating those lessons that we never learn. However, these natural disasters can no longer be ignored. Wildfires raging across other parts of the developed world have not spared even those countries where the monsoon is not responsible for human and economic loss.

Independence Day celebrations are regarded as official torture by those who are compelled to attend them, sitting in the heat in front of the Red Fort ramparts and later, attending the President's At Home, in formal dress. The military top brass is the most pitiable lot in their starched uniforms and headgear. The others, in their formal bandgalas or suits with a mandatory necktie, are no better. Someone will have to think about this yearly punishment and perhaps have just flag-hoisting in the morning and the celebration at another time. I know this will never be acceptable but it's my concern for the audience who cannot sit at home to watch it on

their TVs that makes me suggest this. After all, the late Queen Elizabeth had two birthday celebrations: a private one at home and another one later when the weather was right for a parade and garden party.

Despite one's unwillingness to step out in this weather, some notable exceptions have to be made. Memorials, book events, landmark birthdays and anniversaries. This fortnight has had them all. Two of these book events were unmissable: one was my sister Mrinal's delightful book 'Sahela Re', written in Hindi and now translated into English. The discussion was one of the best I've heard in a long time but the highlight of the evening was an animated reading by the famed dastangoi artistes, Mahmood Farooqui and Darain Shahidi. Mahmood and Darain have revived this medieval genre to bring the magic of Urdu storytelling to modern audiences. They play to packed houses whenever they present a new dastan and have now inspired others, such as Sunil Mehra, to do their magic. If you ever get a chance to attend a performance, don't let it slip away. Persian literature is full of tales that were narrated by accomplished professional storytellers to those who could not read the classics. It is said that 'Arabian Nights', that fascinating cycle of stories and adventures, is a compilation of such stories. Akbar, a dyslexic who could not read, was lulled to sleep by a dastango each night, I gather. The art of animated narration has never lost its magic and whether a fractious, cranky child or an insomniac adult, a bedtime story soothes all restless people who find it difficult to relax.

The other book event was a panel discussion on Rajan Kashyap's memoir 'Beyond the Trappings of Power', which had an impressive panel of speakers: NN Vohra, Tejendra Khanna, Wajahat Habibullah and the author. It was delightful to run into several old friends and remember the days we spent together in Punjab and Chandigarh. I have yet to read the book but it is an addition to the many memoirs by Punjab-cadre friends and refreshes one's memories of those decades when Punjab was at the height of its glory, and then the later decades that were to see the worst days of terrorism and separatism. I am no longer in touch with the state and its present circumstances apart from what I gather from articles and books, so I cannot speak of what it is like now. What I hear and learn is disturbing, to say the least, and the kind of politicians that are now in charge

speak a language that I can no longer decipher. How much is truth and how much hype to build an individual leader is difficult to discern. This is as true of my own home state and the government in Delhi, so I cannot say that Punjab is worse than the others. However, when I look back at the deep attachment that we still have for the state and its people, the earlier generation of civil servants and politicians must have done something good.

This was brought out by all the panelists, each of whom rose to the highest echelons of power. From the aftermath of Partition, to the division of Punjab into three states and the creation of a new city, to the dark days of separatism and its handling — all these were vividly remembered and analysed. It is when you hear dedicated civil servants who entered the service not to wield power but to do good and serve the people that you realise how far away we have drifted from the idealism of that time. It is my fervent prayer that that spirit of service remains inviolate.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

PIB,AUG15,2023

Government to open 25000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras to make medicines available at affordable prices

“Jan Aushadhi Kendras have given new strength to the middle class of the country by savings of Rs. 20,000 crores”

"The target is to increase the number of Jan Aushadhi Kendras to 25,000 Kendras"

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during his Independence Day speech at Red Fort said that the government has plans to increase the number of 'Jan Aushadhi Kendras' from 10,000 to 25,000.He said Jan Aushadhi Kendras given a new power to the people special the middle class. If someone is diagnose with diabetes then a monthly bill of Rs. 3000 get accrued. Through Jan Aushadhi Kendras, the medicines that cost Rs 100, we are giving it at Rs 10 to Rs 15," he said.



The Government will launch Vishwakarma scheme with an allocation of ₹13,000 to 15,000 crore in the next month for those with traditional skills. He said the government is working to increase the number of 'Jan Aushadhi Kendra' (subsidised medicine shops) from 10,000 to 25,000.

PIB,AUG18,2023

Number of Jan Dhan Accounts Cross 50 Crore

56% Accounts Belong To Women and 67% Accounts Opened In Rural / Semi-urban Areas

The national Mission on Financial Inclusion popularly known as Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) was launched on 28th august 2014 and it has completed almost 9 years. As per the latest reports submitted by banks the total number of Jan Dhan accounts have crossed 50 crore as on 9th August 2023. Out of these accounts 56% accounts belong to women and 67% accounts have been opened in Rural / Semi-urban areas. The deposits in these accounts are above Rs. 2.03 lakh crore and about 34 crore RuPay cards have been issued in these accounts free of cost. The average balance in PMJDY accounts is Rs. 4,076 and more than 5.5 crore PMJDY accounts are receiving DBT benefits. PMJDY scheme has been successful in changing the financial landscape of the country and has brought near saturation in bank accounts for adults. The success of PMJDY lies in the comprehensive nature of the scheme with an attempt to connect the last mile with the formal banking system through technology, collaboration and innovation.

PMJDY offers multiple advantages to account holders such as a bank account without requirement of minimum balance, free of cost RuPay debit cards with inbuilt accident insurance of Rs. 2 lakh and overdraft facility of up to Rs. 10,000.

STATESMAN,AUG18,2023

I-Day hopes

This Independence day should be about looking forward to India's K-shaped growth projection that highlights the diverging economic paths of different segments of society. While certain sectors and groups thrive, others face challenges. It is important for policies to ensure that benefits are widespread and disparities are addressed. Sectors such as technology, e-commerce, healthcare, renewable energy and digital services look promising. These industries have shown resilience and adaptability, attracting investment and driving innovation. Traditional manufacturing, hospitality, tourism, and small-scale retail have faced challenges, particularly during uncertain times like the Covid-19 pandemic. These industries often rely on physical presence and face-to-face interactions, making them more vulnerable to disruptions. Efforts to modernise and adapt are crucial for their recovery and sustained growth. To ensure widespread benefits from economic growth, a combination of policies is essential.

Policies that improve access to quality education, vocational training, and skill development can empower individuals to participate in diverse sectors of the economy. Establishing strong social safety nets, including healthcare, unemployment benefits and poverty alleviation programmes can protect vulnerable populations during economic fluctuations. Investing in physical and digital infrastructure can create jobs, enhance connectivity and stimulate economic activity across regions. Providing targeted support to MSMEs can foster entrepreneurship, employment generation and economic growth in local communities. Expanding access to banking and financial services can enable underserved populations to save, invest and participate in economic activities. Focusing on agriculture and rural development can uplift rural economies, reduce migration to urban areas and address urban-rural disparities. Ensuring digitization efforts reach all segments of society can bridge the digital divide and provide equal access to online services and opportunities. Implementing labour market policies that balance job security with flexibility can encourage job creation and protect workers' rights. Encouraging research and innovation across sectors can lead to the development of new industries, job

opportunities and sustainable growth. Integrating environmental considerations into policies can promote sustainable growth, create green jobs and mitigate negative impact on the environment.

To address disparities and ensure that those left behind by K-shaped growth are not excluded, specific policies are needed. Offering skill training and upskilling programmes can equip individuals with the capabilities needed to participate in emerging sectors and bridge the skills gap. Promoting economic activities in underdeveloped regions through targeted incentives and infrastructure projects can reduce regional disparities. Implementing policies that make housing more affordable can help low-income families secure stable living conditions and enhance their quality of life. Promoting gender equality through policies that ensure equal pay, combat gender-based violence, and support women's participation in the workforce can help address disparities. Engaging local communities in decision-making processes and involving them in development projects can lead to more inclusive growth. By combining these strategies and tailoring them to the unique challenges of different segments of society, governments can work towards reducing disparities and promoting more inclusive growth. That should be the goal going forward.

ECONOMIC TIMES,AUG19,2023

Jan Dhan accounts cross 50 crore-mark in less than 9 years: Govt

The total number of Jan Dhan accounts in the country has crossed 50 crore-mark, with 56 per cent of the accounts belonging to women, the finance ministry said on Friday. About 67 per cent of these accounts have been opened in rural and semi-urban areas, it said in a statement. The total deposits in these accounts are above Rs 2.03 lakh crore while around 34 crore RuPay cards have been issued with these accounts free of cost.

The average balance in Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) accounts is Rs 4,076 and more than 5.5 crore of these are receiving Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), it said. The National Mission on Financial Inclusion -- popularly known as PMJDY -- which was launched on August 28, 2014, has been successful in changing

the financial landscape of the country, it added. PMJDY offers multiple advantages to account holders such as a bank account without the requirement of a minimum balance, free of cost RuPay debit cards with in-built accident insurance of Rs 2 lakh, and an overdraft facility of up to Rs 10,000.

ECONOMIC TIMES,AUG19,2023

Government will adhere to fiscal deficit target of 5.9 pc for FY'24

The government will stick to the fiscal deficit target of 5.9 per cent of the GDP as robust tax, non-tax collections will help meet the spending requirement and make up for any shortfall in disinvestment proceeds, Finance Secretary T V Somanathan said on Friday. Although there would be a shortfall with respect to disinvestment, he said, this shortfall would be met by non-tax revenue mobilisation. "Disinvestment target is unlikely to be met. However, I would say in aggregate the collective amount between disinvestment and non-tax revenue is likely to be very close to the budget," he told PTI in an interview. The total of disinvestment receipts, plus non-tax receipts are likely to be very close to the Budget Estimates, he said. "We expect to adhere to our fiscal deficit target this year...none of the events so far have caused anything for us to deviate from it," he said. The government has already got a higher dividend from the Reserve Bank of India and expects higher dividends from public sector banks and other PSUs than estimated in the Budget. The Reserve Bank of India in May approved a Rs 87,416 crore-dividend payout to the central government for 2022-23, nearly triple of what it paid in the previous year. The government was expecting Rs 48,000 crore from the RBI, public sector banks and financial institutions in the current fiscal. The dividend payout by the RBI was Rs 30,307 crore for the accounting year 2021-22. With public sector banks posting record profits of over Rs 1 lakh crore in fiscal 2022-23, the government's earnings from them are likely to be higher. Finance Minister Nirmala Sithartaman in the Budget stated that the fiscal deficit is estimated to be 5.9 per cent of GDP in BE 2023-24. To finance the fiscal deficit in 2023-24, the net market borrowings from dated securities are estimated at Rs 15.4 lakh crore.

In Budget Estimates 2023-24, the Finance Minister had that the total receipts other than borrowings and the total expenditure are estimated at Rs 27.2 lakh crore and Rs 45 lakh crore respectively. Moreover, the net tax receipts are estimated at Rs 23.3 lakh crore. In Budget Estimates 2023-24, the Finance Minister had that the total receipts other than borrowings and the total expenditure are estimated at Rs 27.2 lakh crore and Rs 45 lakh crore respectively. Moreover, the net tax receipts are estimated at Rs 23.3 lakh crore. Continuing the path of fiscal consolidation, the Government intends to bring the fiscal deficit below 4.5 per cent of GDP by 2025-26.

PIONEER, AUG 19, 2023

Libraries are repositories of knowledge, must be revived

Library is the temple of knowledge and even in this digital era, thousands of people depend solely on public libraries for knowledge gathering

Libraries symbolize the progress of civilization,” Droupadi Murmu, President of India. Every year National Librarian’s Day is celebrated commemorating the birth anniversary of Padmashri Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, the father of Library Science in India. He was the doyen of library science in India who developed the systematic classification of books, the colon classification and also penned the five laws of library science. The five laws he developed - Books are for use, Every reader, his book, Every book, its reader, Save the time of the reader; and A library is a growing organism, form the fundamental tenet of a library. Very often most of our librarians forget these principles and behave in an unwelcoming manner towards the readers.

They often forget that books are for the use of readers. This is more evident in libraries managed by schools, colleges and research institutions. The culture being followed in most of our schools and colleges is how to make students keep away from the readers. The books are locked safely in shelves and many poor books are awaiting a reader to touch its pages. Even in colleges accredited with very high ranks students are not allowed

free usage of the library. In libraries managed by research institutions, the situation is more pathetic. They will not entertain the public to utilize their facility or even if they allow there will be several do's and don't's, as if the reader is in a high-security area. Once there is a restriction no youngster will enter that zone further in his lifetime. Reading is a skill that can be nurtured only through active reading and librarians have a larger role to play. A good librarian is as good as a good encyclopaedia. A good librarian can bring attitudinal change in our youngsters. There are a few good librarians who keep interacting with the readers and inspiring them to read the new books available in the library. He should act as an agent for knowledge dissemination.

The library is a growing organism and its growth is possible only with the help of a good librarian. A good librarian should bring changes in the library culture that suites the present time. Even though the culture of silence should be maintained in the library, there should be allocated spaces for readers to make active discussions within the library. In some good libraries like IIM Trichy, there are even spaces where readers can lie down relax and read. Similarly in many libraries usage of laptops is restricted. Present day generation is more convenient in taking notes on their electronic devices rather than on paper. In most of the publicly supported libraries digital resources are also available, but in many cases, the users have to pay extra to use the computer system, even if they have a valid membership. The digital resources available in the library should be made accessible to all members even from their homes, as the British Council libraries are doing.

Library is the temple of knowledge and even in this digital era, thousands of people depend solely on public libraries for knowledge gathering. For students from economically marginalized sections, they are the sole resource material for the preparation of competitive examinations. Even though there are differences of opinion regarding the need for a physical library, the fact is that no digital library can replace the physical library in its role and function. Information in this era can indeed be gathered from our smartphones, but progress in human culture and civilization can happen only through libraries. The librarians of this generation

should not only act as facilitators in locating appropriate books but also act as facilitators in finding authentic resources from digital platforms.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

PIB,AUG14,2023

MeitY Secretary Shri Alkesh Kumar Sharma launches the ‘Graphene-Aurora Program’

Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) Secretary Shri Alkesh Kumar Sharma launched the ‘Graphene-Aurora program’ at a function in Maker Village Kochi, Kerala today.

The program shall be implemented by Digital University Kerala with joint funding from Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India and Government of Kerala and Industry partners, with the total budget outlay of Rs 94.85 Crore, wherein, Carborundum Pvt Limited joined as one of the main industry partners. Along with the startup products developed, the technologies and products also developed at research and development centers like India Innovation Centre Graphene (IICG), setup at Makers village, Kochi shall be considered for commercialization. Addressing the gathering, Shri Alkesh Kumar Sharma said that a section 8 company (not for profit) called ‘India Graphene Engineering and Innovation Centre (I-GEIC)’ shall be set up and the initial operations will start from the recently opened facility of Government of Kerala at Digital Science Park in Trivandrum. It shall fill the gap between R&D and commercialization by providing a complete facility to startup and industry.

The Secretary, MeitY mentioned that it shall nurture the deep/emerging Graphene technology & innovation ecosystem that can guide, develop, implement, and support SMEs and startups to commercialize developed graphene technologies for scale adoption. He also mentioned that creation of a commercialization eco-system for graphene as an emerging technology would help India take a pole position in the world’s new material market.

Shri Alkesh Kumar Sharma also announced the progress and contributions of Maker Village, to the development of hardware startups in the country, and assured MeitY's support for the creation of a complete ecosystem for Electronics Product Testing. He also appreciated the outcomes of other MeitY funded Centre of Excellence on IIOT Sensors and India Innovation Centre for Graphene that complements the solutions from materials, sensors to system integration that electronic product development.

Dr Rathan Kelkar, IAS, Secretary, Department of Electronics and IT, GoK; Shri. Suman Billa IAS, Principal Secretary Industries Department, GoK; Dr. Saji Gopinath, Vice Chancellor, Digital University Kerala; Smt Sunita Verma, Group Coordinator, MeitY; Prof Alex James, CI, Graphene Aurora program, and Shri Kamesh Gupta, Co-CI, Graphene Aurora; Dr. P S Jayan, Carborundum Private limited were also present on the occasion.

PIB,AUG16,2023

Union Cabinet approves expansion of the Digital India programme with an outlay of ₹ 14,903 crore

Digital India programme was launched on 1st July, 2015 to enable digital delivery of services to citizens. It has proved to be a very successful program. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, today approved the expansion of the Digital India programme. The total outlay is ₹14,903 crores.

This would enable the following:

6.25 lakh IT professionals will be re-skilled and up-skilled under the FutureSkills Prime Programme;

2.65 lakh persons will be trained in information security under the Information Security & Education Awareness Phase (ISEA) Programme;

540 additional services will be available under the Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG) app/ platform. At present over 1,700 services are already available on UMANG;

9 more supercomputers will be added under National Super Computer Mission. This is in addition to 18 supercomputers already deployed;

Bhashini, the AI-enabled multi-language translation tool (currently available in 10 languages) will be rolled out in all 22 schedule 8 languages;

Modernisation of the National Knowledge Network (NKN) which connects 1,787 educational institutions;

Digital document verification facility under DigiLocker will now be available to MSMEs and other organisations;

1,200 startups will be supported in Tier 2/3 cities;

3 Centres of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence on health, agriculture and sustainable cities will be set up;

Cyber-awareness courses for 12 crores college students;

New initiatives in the area of cyber security including development of tools and integration of more than 200 sites with National Cyber Coordination Centre

Today's announcement will give a boost to the digital economy of India, drive digital access to services and support India's IT and electronics ecosystem.

PIB,AUG17,2023

A software solution for preventing attacks on 5G networks

A new indigenous software technology solution can now proactively detect and prevent zero-day vulnerability attacks in the 5G networks thereby reducing the network downtime. This can help smoothen countrywide communication as 5G networks become its lifeline in the near future. Around ninety percent of the 5G technology is implemented into software by integrating several latest technologies (NFV, SDN, control plane/user plane segregation) which enable testing the technology easily. But attack surface area is increased multifold in this process and is impossible to manage manually. Automating the whole testing process and continuous monitoring is the only sustainable solution. Currently majority of the run time zero-day vulnerabilities are identified post attack, thereby creating damage to the brand as well as increasing the cost of recovery.

IITM Pravartak Technologies Foundation at IIT Madras, a Technology Innovation Hub for Sensors, Networking, Actuators and Control Systems (SNACS), supported by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) under National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber Physical Systems (NM-ICPS), along with its incubated startup, is developing an indigenous security testing solution for 5G core network functions and Radio Access Network (RAN) software. This technology solution can automatically identify zero-day vulnerabilities in the network in advance by using techniques such as fuzzing and test oracles. This solution has been manually tested in the 5G security lab of IITM Pravartak. Since it can help avoid the attacks in advance, it protects organisations against loss and saving the credibility of the brands.

The team used ethical hacking for finding vulnerabilities in the system. They tested the functionality issue in the network, created various attack scenarios based on topology, feature interaction, and the number of nodes involved by following the defined 5G standards of 3GPP. The team is testing interoperability and security

issues with multi-vendor products. Tests are conducted at the network packet level, the binary level, the code level and also using the code vulnerability scanners. A combination of all these methods will help reducing zero-day attacks by pre-emption mechanism. Reducing zero-day vulnerabilities will reduce attack surface area, which in turn will reduce the need to pay ransom and also decrease network downtime of 5G networks which are crucial for communication.

PIB,AUG17,2023

Indian scientist develops novel method to improve accuracy and precision of nanomechanical testing technology

The new method enables faster testing of mechanical strength of extremely small volumes of materials for a wide range of fields from medicine to space

A novel method to test nanomechanical properties of materials at very minute scales with high precision and accuracy has been developed by an Indian scientist in collaboration with two international institutions. The new methodology not only significantly improves the precision and accuracy of what is known as nanoindentation technique or testing of mechanical strength, but enables testing at much higher rates, thus facilitating high throughput.

With Conventional testing methods not always feasible at nano scales, which are usually of the order of 1/100th of the diameter of a human hair, the nanoindentation technique was invented by Dr. Warren Oliver (KLA Corp.) and Dr. John Pethica (Oxford University) in the 80s and the analysis procedure was proposed by Dr. Warren Oliver and Dr. George Pharr (Texas A&M University) in their seminal work which had a huge impact on a broad spectrum of scientific research.

The technique has been widely used to measure the strength of semiconductor devices and structural materials that have ubiquitously penetrated every aspect of our daily life through electronic gadgets. The technique has been used for a wide range of applications from identifying cancerous cells to establishing how meteorites are formed in deep space.

In developing the new methodology, Dr. Sudharshan Phani of the Advanced Nanomechanical Characterization (ANC) Centre at Centre for Engineered Coatings, International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy & New Materials (ARCI), Hyderabad, collaborated with Dr Warren Oliver at KLA and Prof. George Pharr of Texas A & M University. The novel approach involved a combination of extensive modeling and simulation to understand the material response during an indentation test and subsequent tailoring of the methodology to improve the precision and accuracy. The modeling results have also been validated by experiments under extreme conditions. Setting the tone for high precision and high accuracy nanoindentation measurements at much higher rates than what is traditionally possible, the new methodology is expected to impact a broad spectrum of scientific research on measuring the strength of materials at small scales. The details of methodology have been recently published in the prestigious journal in the field of materials science, 'Materials & Design'.

PIB,AUG18,2023

Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), passed by the Parliament last week, aims at equitable funding and democratisation of resources in research and academics, says Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh

Dr Jitendra Singh calls for assimilation of more and more Private Research Foundations with Government Scientific Departments for technology-led development of India

The Minister says, Anusandhan National Research Foundation is aimed at equitable funding of scientific research and for bringing in greater private participation

Speaking at a workshop on Capacity Building for Science and Technology in New Delhi, Dr Jitendra Singh stressed on meaning exchange of ideas between public and private labs for building a tech-led prosperous India

"Anusandhan National Research Foundation" (ANRF), passed by the Parliament last week, aims at equitable funding and democratisation of resources in research and academics. This was stated by the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh, while delivering the keynote address at a workshop on Capacity Building for Science and Technology, in New Delhi.

Dr Jitendra Singh called for more and more Private Research Foundations to be assimilated with Government Scientific Departments for technology-led development of India. He called for equitable funding of scientific research and bringing in greater private participation. The Minister emphasised that the ANRF, envisaged by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will catapult India to the league of developed nations pioneering new research in new frontiers. Dr Jitendra Singh said, ANRF will have to nudge companies to invest in R&D. He added that the Government is planning a unique Public Private Partnership (PPP) entity for which ₹36,000 Cr of the research funding is to come from the private sector, mostly industry whereas Government will put ₹14,000 Cr for the same, to ensure greater participation of industry. Dr Jitendra Singh said, the pace of change is so rapid that India can't afford to wait any longer and the time has come to end the demarcation of Public and Private entities. He called for meaningful exchange of ideas between public and private labs for building a tech-led prosperous India. Dr Jitendra Singh said, scientists should adopt team driven approach for problem solving and product development rather than individual approach towards research.

Dr Jitendra Singh expressed happiness that all the heads of the Scientific Department attended the Capacity Building meeting along with a large number of scientists joining online. The Minister exhorted the scientific community to pick up good things and best practices of the Corporate Sector. He also underlined that a threshold of absorption of capacity building must be defined. Dr Jitendra Singh informed that India is now launching cutting-edge technological breakthroughs in tandem with the Developed countries of the world and gave the example of the National Quantum Mission (NQM) and international laurels in the Space sector.

The Minister said, investments in AI and quantum technology would lead to transformative advances in our everyday lives and greatly benefit our social well-being by impacting healthcare, agriculture, climate change and more. He welcomed the transformative potential of the Endowment fund.



Shri Adil Zainulbhai, Chairman, Capacity Building Commission, Prof, Ajay Sood, Principal Scientific Advisor to Government of India, Dr Rajesh Gokhale, Secretary, DST & Secretary, DBT Shri Praveen Pardeshi, Member (Admin), CBC and many senior scientists and officials took part in the workshop.

About CBC

The Capacity Building Commission (CBC) has been set up to provide a strategic framework for capacity building of the ministries and departments. This strategic framework came out to be as Annual Capacity Building Plan (ACBP), which brings out the identified competencies in a calendarized format. The government has put in place a number of initiatives to support the mission, including:

A competency-based framework for capacity building

An online learning platform

A performance management system

A culture of continuous learning

Scientific capacity building is essential for the advancement of knowledge across various fields. By investing in research infrastructure, training, and education, India can contribute significantly to global scientific progress. A strong scientific workforce can drive the creation of new technologies, products and solutions that address local and global challenges. The country's, whose economy is developing rapidly, building scientific capacity can fuel economic growth ever further, and a thriving scientific ecosystem fosters economic growth and job creation. Research and innovation lead to the development of new industries, startups, and businesses, which in turn generate employment opportunities.

Capacity Building for S&T can create a pipeline of skilled researchers, scientists, and professionals who can enable India to engage more effectively in international collaborations as Collaborative research efforts can lead to shared knowledge, cultural exchange, and collective solutions to global problems. Addressing environmental challenges, such as climate change, pollution, and resource depletion, requires scientific expertise. A skilled workforce can contribute to the development of sustainable practices and clean technologies. Focusing on functional competencies policies for S&T, Scientists can provide policymakers with accurate and reliable information to guide decisions on issues ranging from public health to technology regulation. Scientific capacity building contributes to national resilience and preparedness, as we all experienced with Covid-19. Capacity Building for R&D is essential in dealing with natural disasters, pandemics, and other unforeseen challenges. Building scientific capacity encourages interdisciplinary research, where experts from different fields collaborate to solve complex problems. This approach leads to holistic and comprehensive solutions, this also calls for interdisciplinary knowledge sharing between our own S&T departments as well.

Developing a skilled scientific workforce is crucial for achieving technological sovereignty, reducing dependency on foreign technologies, and ensuring self-reliance in critical sectors. A strong scientific workforce is not only necessary for India's progress and development but is also a driving force behind innovation, economic growth, sustainable practices, and global leadership. Investing in scientific education, research, and capacity building is an investment in the future of the nation. We are in the midst of a technology revolution and we as a nation must make best use of this transformation to deliver good governance for our citizens. A sound structure encapsulating scientific research and development is needed to stay abreast with the fast-paced science ecosystem.

STATESMAN,AUG18,2023

Consent Manager's role vital in data protection

PAKHI GARG & NACHIKETA MITTAL

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 is being portrayed as the most revolutionary and awaited law for India. While it promises many protections, it also leaves many questions unanswered. One such issue pertains to the case of Consent Manager Framework introduced in DPDP Act, 2023. "Consent Manager Framework" was catalyzed by the recommendations of the report submitted to the Parliament visà-vis the Data Protection Bill, 2019. Consent Managers are third-party independent entities registered with the Data Protection Board They are responsible for managing, reviewing, and withdrawing the consent of the Data Principal by using a transparent platform. The Data Fiduciary is required to implement those processes to enable the Consent Managers to act on behalf of the Data Principal.

They will be operated within the paradigms of the electronic consent framework established by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. The MeitY has released a set of technology standards for the purpose of electronic consent (wherein Consent Managers are referred as Consent Collectors). Section 2(g) specifies the definition of "Consent Manager" as a person registered with the Board, who acts as a single point of contact to enable a Data Principal to give, manage, review and withdraw her consent through an accessible, transparent and interoperable platform. A similar concept of Consent Managers was introduced by Reserve Bank of India in 2021.They are called "Account Aggregators." Like the Consent Manager, the prime job of AA is to obtain, submit and manage customer's consent via a technical legal framework that emphasises on the legality of sharing of consent like the Consent Managers do. Additionally, AAs accelerate the consented transfer of financial data between financial institutions such as Banks, Insurance Companies, Pension Funds etc.

The only difference is that AAs are acting as the Consent Manager in the financial sector. The objective of the act is to reinstate the concept of trust by safeguarding the personal information of the data principal and by imposing various lawful obligations on the Data processors and Data Fiduciary. “Consent,” is the foundation of any privacy principle and data protection law. Given the diverse nature of the country, the operationalization of effective consent is required. Furthermore, the Consent Managers are thirdparty entities that use an interoperable tech framework to enable consent regulation digitally. A consent manager has the duty to act on the behalf of the Data Principal. They play a pivotal role in standardizing the consent. Organizations using this consent management framework find it quite feasible to adhere to the rights and regulations pertaining to the Data Principal and attract new clients and customers. The organizations are subject to numerous consent related responsibilities like permission to share, acknowledging the withdrawal of consent request, obtaining permission for the collection of data, obtaining informed consent for a specific objective and ability to showcase that the data was obtained before the handling of the data of Data Principals. To comply with the requirements for these standards, the organizations need to establish procedures and structures.

However, the correct practical answer will be provided by the Consent Manager who will follow a techno-legal approach. The Consent Management Framework will provide the following: As the consent manager will construct the technical and legal standards as enumerated by the concerned authorities, so the organizations or companies who interlink their companies’ systems with it will by default comply with the law. After the Data Principal gives consent for the sharing of data, the personal information shall flow directly from the original source to the one in need. This will assuredly avoid unauthorized collection of data from public sources, data scrapping etc. The trust of the user is at stake. However, once the authority approves the consent managers who will work under the set of guidelines such as openness, confidence, control and data reduction, this will surely be a win-win situation. Thus, the consent manager plays an important role in building the trust with clients as they are the only bridge between the Data Fiduciary and Data Principal. The

role of a Consent Manager within the DPDP Act can be seen as both a boon and a potential challenge, depending on the context and implementation. As a boon The consent taken from the Data Principal shall be specific, informed and unambiguous in nature along with clear affirmative action. A thoughtful Consent Manager shall simplify and streamline the consent provision process, making it more accessible for them.

A Consent Manager empowers individuals by bestowing them with enhanced transparency and control over their personal data which aligns harmoniously with DPDP Act's rights of the Data Principals. Consent Managers can serve as a mechanism for organizations to standardize their consent-related procedures, ensuring congruence with the Act. As a challenge In scenarios where Consent Managers are not appropriately implemented, there is a potential for organizations to misuse them as a means to manipulate or coerce users into granting consent without a full understanding of the implications. The incorporation of Consent Managers could potentially augment the compliance complexity, possibly creating challenges for organizations to seamlessly integrate, and for users to navigate.

Excessive consent requests without adequate information, or if consent becomes a mandatory prerequisite for availing services, may result in a situation where true, freely given consent is compromised. In conclusion, the Consent Manager Framework reflects that the DPDP Act, 2023 presents a transformative approach to data protection as it addresses the need for effective consent management in an evolving digital landscape. It is expected that the Consent Managers may act as intermediaries, facilitating transparent and controlled consent processes for Data Principals with the aim of restoring trust by safeguarding personal information and imposing legal obligations. However, the role of Consent Managers is two-fold. On the one hand, they enhance consent management by offering clarity, empowerment, and standardization. On the other, there's a risk of misuse and complexity if not implemented thoughtfully. While this framework symbolizes India's readiness to embrace the digital era by promising to protect the personal data of the citizens, it lacks the foolproof

mechanism in law vis-à-vis regulation of Consent Managers. One hopes that this issue will be expediently addressed for smooth implementation of the law.

(The writers are, respectively, Advisor & Data Privacy Counsel, World Cyber Security Forum, and Professor, National Law University, Bhopal.)

TRIBUNE,AUG18,2023

Boost for artisans

Vishwakarma Yojana can provide a lifeline

THE approval by the Union Cabinet of the Rs 13,000-crore Vishwakarma Yojana is a much-needed boost for traditional craftspersons. Electoral considerations may have played a part in the announcement of the scheme in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections; that said, extending help in any form to the traditional artisans is a highly laudable move. To be launched next month, the scheme covers 18 traditional trades across rural and urban areas. It aims to benefit about 30 lakh artisans and craftspersons, including weavers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, laundry workers and barbers. Providing an opportunity to upgrade skill-sets, the promise of marketing support and the offer of collateral-free credit are welcome policy interventions.

The Centre plans to fund the scheme, but it will need the support of state governments. Without close coordination and a shared sense of purpose, the scheme could hit undesirable political hurdles. That must be avoided for the sake of artisans and the survival of traditional crafts. The younger generation does not find craft-making lucrative. Many are choosing not to carry forward the family legacy as they look for better job options. The increasing cost of raw material and the shift from handmade to factory-made products are the other challenges. In such a scenario, an institutionalised support system can be a lifeline for the struggling artisan families.

It's ironical that though the demand for curios for home décor is growing, the craftspersons are not reaping the benefits. Any plan targeted at their upliftment deserves all-round support. Equally praiseworthy is the Rajasthan Government's initiative to provide opportunities for artistes to perform for 100 days in their areas to encourage and preserve folk art.

PIB,AUG19,2023

Dr Jitendra Singh unveils new variety "Lotus" flower developed by Lucknow Institute CSIR-NBRI (National Botanical Research Institute): Named 'Namoh 108', the new Lotus has 108 petals

Namoh 108 is a grand gift to the relentless zeal and innate beauty of Shri Narendra Modi, coming as it does in the tenth year of his tenure as the Prime Minister: Dr Jitendra Singh

Dr Jitendra Singh also launches the Lotus Mission, a project being undertaken in Mission mode like the other priority schemes

S&T Minister also launches and releases a slew of initiatives and publications including the new variety of Aloe vera named 'NBRI-Nihar', having approximately 2.5 times high gel yield in comparison to Aloe vera

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh today unveiled the new variety "Lotus" flower developed by Lucknow Institute CSIR-NBRI (National Botanical Research Institute) that has 108 petals. The lotus named 'NBRI Namoh 108' is developed by the CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI), a premier plant-based, multidisciplinary, state-of-the-art National R&D center based in Lucknow.

Dedicating to the nation the Namoh108 lotus variety and its products at NBRI, Lucknow, Dr Jitendra Singh said, “Considering the religious importance of the 'lotus flower' and 'the digit 108', this combination gives an important identity to this variety.”The Namoh 108 lotus variety flowers from March to December and is rich in nutrients. This is the first lotus variety whose genome is completely sequenced for its characteristics.

Dr Jitendra Singh also released apparel made from lotus fibre and perfume ‘Frotus’, extracted from lotus flowers and developed by the NBRI under the Lotus Research Programme in collaboration with FFDC, Kannauj.Lauding the NBRI for naming the unique lotus variety as Namoh 108, Dr Jitendra Singh said it is a grand gift to the relentless zeal and innate beauty of Shri Narendra Modi, coming as it does in the tenth year of his tenure as the Prime Minister.



Also launching the Lotus Mission on the occasion, Dr Jitendra Singh said this project is being undertaken in Mission mode like the other priority schemes, - the National Honey and Bee Mission (NHBM), National Bamboo Mission (NBM), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF), National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA), Gokul Mission, Blue Revolution, Mission Shakti - an integrated women empowerment programme and the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS) etc. “Under the guidance of PM Modi, the Government has now initiated the Lotus Mission after the stupendous success of Aroma Mission. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has reiterated that this Government not only starts a scheme or project, but also ensures that it is capped,” he said.

In another novel initiative at recycling, Dr Jitendra Singh also released herbal colours for various applications, extracted by NBRI from flower offerings made at temples. These herbal colours can also be used for dyeing silk and cotton cloths. The Minister also released the new variety of Aloe vera named ‘NBRI-Nihar’, a clonal selection having approximately 2.5 times high gel yield in comparison to Aloe vera. As per the field observations, 'NBRI-Nihar' is found least affected against bacterial and fungal diseases. Two herbal products namely ‘Herbal Cold Drops’



for curing common cough and cold & Herbal Anti Dandruff Hair Oil, made by Marc Laboratories, were also launched by the Minister. Dr Jitendra Singh also launched a Database of 500 Raw Drug Repositories of the Institute developed as per Indian Pharmacopoeia Standards and released a book on roses in CSIR-NBRI Garden, comprising the details of elite varieties conserved at the Botanic Garden. On the occasion, an MoU was signed between CSIR-NBRI & M/s Nucleome Informatics, Hyderabad for collaborative research on Cotton. The CSIR-NBRI digital Herbarium, a National Repository of flora specimens of India, was also launched to easily disseminate information among the public and a book on 'Plant Resources of Uttar Pradesh and a Check List' and 'e-flora of Uttar Pradesh' were also released. The e-flora and book provide a list and information of more than 5,000 plants of Uttar Pradesh. The S&T Minister also released the NBRI-Goutout, a supplement for gout/gouty arthritis, and a nutri-bar for army personnel deployed in high-altitudes.

Dr Jitendra Singh also visited the six-days theme-based event organised by NBRI from 14 to 19 August 2023, showcasing the laboratory's cutting-edge research, products and technologies, expertise and facilities to various stakeholders. Earlier the Director of NBRI, Dr Ajit Kumar Shasany welcomed Dr. Jitendra Singh and lauded him for giving the consent of 'One Week One Lab', which has created a revolutionary transformation in showcasing the CSIR achievements. Dr Jitendra Singh also inaugurated an exhibition dedicated to nutra-central original byproducts and went around all across each stall discussing the various aspects of it.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

PIB,AUG15,2023

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi says as the world grapples with climate crises, we have shown the way and launched the LifeStyle for Environment – Mission LiFE initiative

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressing the nation on the occasion of 77th Independence Day from the ramparts of historic Red Fort in New Delhi said we have put forth the concept of "One World, One Family, One Future" for the G20 summit and are working in that direction. As the world grapples with climate crises, we have shown the way and launched the LifeStyle for Environment – Mission LiFE initiative.

The Prime Minister said we formed the International Solar Alliance in collaboration with the world and many countries are now part of the International Solar Alliance. We have emphasized the importance of biodiversity and advanced the establishment of the "Big Cat Alliance"

PIB,AUG19,2023

The tree plantation campaign of the Ministry of Home Affairs is going to inspire everyone in the direction of conservation of environment and nature: Prime Minister

In a X post, Union Home Minister, Shri Amit Shah informed that under the 'All India Tree Plantation Campaign' of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the 40 millionth sapling has been planted. Shri Shah also congratulated all the CAPFs for making this campaign an important contribution to protect the environment.

Responding to the X post of Shri Shah, the Prime Minister said;

“शानदार उपलब्धि! पर्यावरण और प्रकृति के संरक्षण की दिशा में गृह मंत्रालय का यह वृक्षारोपण अभियान हर किसी को प्रेरित करने वाला है।”





CURRENT EVENTS

PIB,AUG14,2023

NHA and IRDAI jointly organized a workshop for Insurance Companies and TPAs for helping them complete integration with ABDM and National Health Claims Exchange (NHCX)

The three-day workshop saw participation by representatives from 45 insurance companies and Third-Party Administrators (TPAs)

The National Health Authority (NHA) and IRDAI (Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India) jointly organized an exclusive three-day Accelerator Workshop to help insurance companies complete their ABDM integration and to facilitate adoption of Health Claims Exchange (HCX) specifications and e-Claim standards for insurance companies and Third-Party Administrators (TPAs). The workshop was organized from 10th to 12th August 2023 in New Delhi and saw participation from over 150 professionals representing 29 insurance companies and 16 TPAs.

The IRDAI had issued a circular in June 2023 advising all insurance companies to start capturing ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account) number of all of the persons seeking insurance cover and also to obtain their consent for sharing medical records with insurers/TPAs through ABHA. The ABHA number would help identify the insured in a digital environment and facilitate seamless healthcare and insurance service delivery. It would give insurers easy and timely access to a person's medical information in a safe and paperless manner and help the insured with a transparent and speedy process of claims servicing. Further, the IRDAI also issued a circular advising the insurers and providers get on-boarded to the National Health Claims Exchange (NHCX). The NHCX will serve as a gateway for exchanging claims-related information among stakeholders present in the healthcare and health insurance ecosystem including insurers, TPAs, claimants, beneficiaries,

healthcare providers etc. The integration with NHCX will enable seamless interoperability of health claims processing. More information on the NHCX is available here: <https://sbxhcx.abdm.gov.in/>

The combined efforts from the teams resulted in 29 entities, including 23 insurance companies and 6 TPAs completing their first level (M1) of ABDM integration, which enables them to create and verify ABHA. Further, 20 insurance companies were also able to successfully complete Level 1.2 of their NHCX integration which would enable them to link or delink ABHA with an insurance policy. Speaking about the outcomes from this workshop, CEO, NHA said – “This Accelerator Workshop was a first-of-its-kind focused initiative for ABDM adoption in the insurance sector. The large number of entities who got successfully integrated demonstrate the power of collaborative working to achieve a larger goal. This has definitely encouraged us to organize more such workshops to strengthen the digital health ecosystem.”

NHA and CDAC, Pune provided technical support to the representatives from insurance companies and TPAs and helped them complete the respective integrations. The General Insurance Council (GIC) helped in bringing the concerned teams from leading insurers and providers for the workshop.

PIB,AUG15,2023

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, addressing the nation on the occasion of 77th Independence Day from the Red Fort in New Delhi, said that Cooperatives are a significant part of the country's social economy

A separate Ministry of Cooperation has been created to strengthen cooperatives, modernise them and strengthen the biggest unit of democracy in every nook and corner of the country. Ministry of Cooperation is spreading a network of cooperatives in the country, ensuring that the voices of even the poorest individuals are heard, their needs are met, and they can contribute to the nation's development

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PIB,AUG17,2023

LAUNCH OF Y - 3024 (VINDHYAGIRI)

Vindhyagiri, the sixth Stealth Frigate of Project 17A being built at GRSE, was launched today at the shipyard by the Hon'ble President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu. As Vindhyagiri descended into the waters of river Hoogly, a wave of euphoria swept across the gathering. Dignitaries, Naval personnel, Shipbuilders, and spectators were united in their heartfelt applause, in admiration of the vessel and the team behind her creation. Shri CV Ananda Bose, Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal, Ms Mamata Banerjee Chief Minister of West Bengal, Shri Ajay Bhatt Raksha Rajya Mantri, Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of Naval Staff, other senior officers from the Indian Navy and MoD, were amongst the several dignitaries who attended the launch ceremony. M/s GRSE has established itself as a reliable partner of the Indian Navy, with a record of multiple successful conventional launches in the past. Vindhyagiri's launch is yet another milestone in the illustrious journey of the Shipyard, reflecting its commitment to deliver quality warships. Following the launch, ‘Vindhyagiri’ will join its two sister ships at the Outfitting Jetty at GRSE, to progress remaining activities and equipment trials, in the run up to their delivery and commissioning.

Project 17A Frigates are the follow-on class of the Project 17 (Shivalik Class) Frigates, with improved stealth features, advanced weapons & sensors and platform management systems. Seven Project 17A Frigates are under various stages of construction at MDL and GRSE. The design of Advanced Stealth Frigates also showcases the prowess of the Warship Design Bureau, in designing technologically advanced warships for the Indian Navy. With the launch, the Nation's indigenous expertise and engineering capabilities receives a major boost, reducing India's dependence on foreign suppliers, promoting self-reliance and fostering a robust defence industrial base. Over 75% of the orders of Project 17A, have been placed on indigenous firms including MSMEs, keeping in line with the Government's vision of 'Aatma Nirbhar Bharat'. Economic development, employment generation, growth of MSMEs and ancillary industry in the country, are positive spin offs of the shipbuilding project.

During the event, the Hon'ble President of India conveyed her profound satisfaction and heartfelt appreciation for the remarkable achievements of the Warship Design Bureau and other Naval Teams, for fulfilling the nation's aspiration of self-reliance in warship building. She also lauded GRSE for its unwavering commitment and steadfast support to warship production. The shipyard effort, has significantly enabled the Indian Navy to successfully execute its ship induction plan and emerge as a formidable force in the Indian Ocean Region. Emphasising the significance of the newly christened 'Vindhyagiri,' she hoped that as Vindhyagiri touches the waters of the mighty Hooghly for the first time, it draws strength from the very mountains it is named after, sailing with unwavering determination, upholding the values we hold dear. May this warship serve as a powerful testament of our resolve and commitment to national security, and our vision of a prosperous and secure future.

PIB,AUG17,2023

Chairman, Central Water Commission Launches Mobile App ‘Floodwatch’ To Provide Real-Time Flood Forecasts To Public Using Interactive Maps

The Chairman, Central Water Commission (CWC), Shri Kushvinder Vohra today launched the mobile application, "FloodWatch" with the aim of using mobile phones to disseminate information related to the flood situation and forecasts up to 7 days on a real-time basis to the public. The in-house developed user-friendly app has readable and audio broadcast and all the information is available in 2 languages, viz. English and Hindi. Key feature of the app includes real-time flood monitoring where users can check up-to-date flood situation throughout the country. The app utilizes near real-time river flow data from various sources. The app also provides flood forecast at nearest location where users can check the flood advisory at the station nearest to them on the Home Page itself.

Other key features include forecast using an Interactive Map where users can check the CWC Flood Forecast (up to 24 hours) or Flood Advisory (up to 7 days) either by directly selecting the station from map or the user can also search for the name of the station in the search box. The location will be zoomed in on the map when the name of the station will be selected from the dropdown. The app will also provide State-wise/Basin-wise Flood Forecast (up to 24 hours) or Flood Advisory (up to 7 days) which can be accessed by selecting specific stations, state wise or basin wise from the dropdown menu.

Addressing the gathering after launching the app, Shri Vohra said "we are delighted to introduce "FloodWatch," a mobile app that provides real-time flood situation in the country and flood forecasts to the public. The user-friendly app is available for download on Android devices, providing widespread accessibility to users globally. The app can be downloaded free of charge from the Google Play Store. The app will also be available on Apple iOS soon"

“FloodWatch” app utilizes advanced technologies such as satellite data analysis, mathematical modelling, and real-time monitoring to deliver accurate and timely flood forecasts. With this app, users can access essential information regarding flood situation in the country. The user-friendly interface will make it easy for anyone to stay informed and minimise risk during flood events.

PIB,AUG18,2023

Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma inaugurates National SC-ST Hub Mega Conclave for Creating Awareness Among SC-ST Entrepreneurs at Gumla, Jharkhand

The Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India organized National SC-ST Hub (NSSH) Conclave at Town Hall, Gumla, Jharkhand on 18th August 2023 to promote entrepreneurship culture and spread awareness of the NSSH Scheme and other Schemes of the Ministry. The Union Minister of State of MSME, Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma graced the occasion with his presence along with Shri Jitendra Kumar Singh, Secretary, Department of Industries, Government of Jharkhand and other senior dignitaries. The event saw the participation of around 650 SC-ST aspiring and existing entrepreneurs.

Addressing the Conclave, Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma emphasized the significant role of the MSME Sector in the Indian economy in terms of its contribution to GDP and overall exports from India. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister stated that MSMEs not only provide huge employment opportunities but also help in the industrialization of rural & backward areas. He also said that the MSME sector of Jharkhand is endowed with a wide variety of natural resources and is one of the most attractive destinations for setting up of mineral-based units. Shri Verma mentioned that the State offers ample opportunities for the development of forest & mineral based industries and our Ministry is taking several measures to provide the necessary support for these units to thrive. He also highlighted the potential of various schemes of the Government to empower the MSME

Sector and said that through this conclave, the SC/ST entrepreneurs from the State will explore innovative ideas and mutual business opportunities and avail maximum benefits of these schemes. Speaking at the occasion Ms. Mercy Epao, Joint Secretary, Ministry of MSME briefed on the various initiatives implemented under the National SC-ST Hub scheme for SC/ST entrepreneurs along with other major schemes of the Ministry being implemented for MSME Sector.

A special technical session with CPSEs, Banks & Lending institutions was also held providing an interactive platform for aspiring and existing SC-ST entrepreneurs. The CPSEs like ONGC, BSNL, Damodar Valley Corporation Ltd. etc. gave presentations on their vendor empanelment process and shared the details of products/services that can be procured from SC-ST owned MSEs. The program also had financial institutions such as SBI, SIDBI, IFCI Venture Capital Funds, and NABARD, which detailed various lending schemes pertaining to the MSME sector. Other Government bodies like KVIC, MSME-DFO, TRIFED and GeM also participated in the program and deliberated on their schemes for MSMEs. The program included facilitation desks of UDYAM Registration for facilitating the registration of SC/ST MSEs participants on the spot.

For inclusive growth and to promote entrepreneurship culture among SC-ST communities and their active participation in the public procurement process to reach 4% mandate as per public procurement policy was also described.

PIONEER,AUG19,2023

Take charge

India has a pivotal role in shaping the future of humanity through BRICS

As the BRICS summit in South Africa approaches, the world's attention turns to this gathering of leaders from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. This annual event, being organised from August 22 to 24, holds immense significance as it aims to transform the loose coalition of nations, accounting for a substantial quarter of the global economy, into a formidable geopolitical force capable of challenging the dominance of western powers in global affairs. Amid discussions ranging from economic cooperation to multilateral influence, India's pivotal role within BRICS cannot be understated. While Russian President Vladimir Putin would be absent due to the ongoing Ukraine war, leaders such as China's Xi Jinping, Brazil's Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi are likely to be in attendance. As the host nation, South Africa sets the stage for a summit with a theme that resonates deeply: "BRICS and Africa." This thematic choice underscores the alliance's aspirations to extend its reach, build ties and engage in collaborative efforts with an African continent that is increasingly becoming a theater of global power competition.

Of all the BRICS nations, India's significance in this endeavour shines brightly. Its economic prowess, strategic location and diplomatic finesse position it as a linchpin in the alliance's quest for a more multipolar world order. The unity within BRICS might stem from shared scepticism about a global order that often caters to the interests of western powers. The call for expansion is poised to dominate the discussions. Around 40 nations have expressed their interest in joining BRICS, a fact emphasised by South Africa. China, in its pursuit to bolster its global influence, is advocating for swift enlargement, while Brazil harbours concerns that expansion could dilute the group's effectiveness. India's stance, perhaps, will play a critical role in mediating this debate. As a strong advocate for multipolarity and inclusive international systems, India's voice can contribute to finding a balanced approach to expansion, ensuring the alliance's cohesion while welcoming like-minded partners. The central challenge facing BRICS is the transformation of lofty ideals into practical action. The bloc's New Development Bank (NDB) seeks to reshape global finance, providing an alternative to traditional institutions. Yet, its progress has been modest, with sanctions on Russia hampering its operations.

India, with its vast financial expertise and developmental experience, could play a pivotal role in driving the NDB's ambitions forward. Climate change also demands the alliance's attention. Here, India's involvement is crucial, given its sizeable population and growing carbon footprint. The BRICS nations collectively contribute a significant share of greenhouse gas emissions, and India's proactive engagement in finding sustainable solutions could catalyse meaningful progress. The summit is an opportunity for India to showcase its global vision, collaborative spirit and dedication to crafting a more equitable world order.

STATESMAN,AUG20,2023

Govt launches wedding tourism campaign to showcase India as premier destination for marriage

The Ministry of Tourism on Saturday launched a campaign to showcase India as a premier wedding destination globally, by enticing couples from around the world to embark on a remarkable journey to celebrate their special day in India. This campaign also envisions exploring avenues of great potential, for scaling tourism in India to new heights, the ministry said in the statement. “Building upon the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s “Developing Tourism in Mission Mode,” Ministry of Tourism unveiled an ambitious campaign aimed at showcasing India as a premier wedding destination on the global stage. This campaign seeks to explore avenues of great potential, for scaling tourism in India to new heights,” the Ministry of Tourism said on Saturday.

The campaign seeks to expand India’s wedding industry, by enticing couples from around the world to embark on a remarkable journey to celebrate their special day in India. Launching the campaign, Union Minister for Tourism G Kishan Reddy said, “Today marks the beginning of a remarkable journey. A mission to position India as the epitome of wedding destinations worldwide”.

Reddy said the “360-degree approach” of the campaign will “ensure that every moment, from the first ‘hello’ to the final ‘I do’ is a testament to India’s warm embrace and rich heritage”. The campaign begins with profiling about 25 key destinations across the country, exploring how India fits into their wedding aspirations in more than one way.

From breathtaking landscapes to sacred traditions, from tantalising culinary delights to cutting-edge infrastructure, this campaign captures the essence of India’s grandeur, inviting couples to say “I do” against a backdrop that transcends imagination. It celebrates the fusion of India’s ancient heritage with modern elegance, weaving a narrative that entices the world to embark on an unforgettable journey of love and celebration. A key highlight of the campaign lies in its collaborative approach, developed in close consultation with industry experts, associations, and seasoned wedding planners. Their invaluable feedback has shaped a comprehensive narrative that unravels India’s allure as a wedding tourism destination, addressing diverse aspirations and showcasing the myriad facets of this incredible nation.