

DAILY PT POINTERS

16 August, 2024



The Hindu-Governance(GSII)-Page 1

PM calls for 'secular civil code' in Independence Day speech

In his 11th successive address to the nation from the Red Fort, Modi seeks to do away with a 'communal civil code' and end discrimination on the basis of religion, he flags issue of women's safety, says forces of anarchy want to destabilise country

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI



National narrative: Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing the nation at the Red Fort on 78th Independence Day. R.V. MOORTHY

In his 11th successive Independence Day address from the ramparts of the Red Fort, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday gave a renewed push to the BJP's ideological aim of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC), reframing the idea as a "secular civil code" enshrined in the Constitution and a way of ensuring equality before the law for all.

"The Supreme Court has repeatedly discussed a Uniform Civil Code in India. A large section of the country believes, and it is true that in the civil code, what we have is a communal civil code. The need of the hour is a secular civil code. Only then will we be free of discrimination on

the basis of religion. It is our duty to fulfil the vision of our Constitution makers," the Prime Minister said.

Besides the UCC, a large part of the PM's customary address touched on several contemporary issues that packed a strong criticism of the Opposition. Without naming the West Bengal

government and the rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata, Mr. Modi flagged the issue of women's safety.

"Our mothers, sisters and daughters are being tortured. There is anger among the people and I can feel it. The country, society and State governments need to take this se-

NDA allies strike a cautious note

NEW DELHI
The Janata Dal (U) and Telugu Desam Party (TDP), key allies of the ruling NDA, struck a cautious note on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposal for a "secular civil code". Both parties have not supported the idea in the past. » [PAGE 15](#)

riously. There must be quick investigation and conviction of the perpetrators of such crimes," he said.

Mr. Modi also referred to forces of anarchy that wanted to destabilise the country, especially economically, again an unnamed reference to the report by Hindenburg

Gahlot hoists flag in Delhi

NEW DELHI
Delhi Home Minister Kailash Gahlot on Thursday hoisted the national flag at the Delhi government's I-Day ceremony at Chhatrasal Stadium, and questioned the "meaning of independence" when the CM has been "jailed without evidence". » [PAGE 2](#)

Research on the Adani Group, which BJP spokespersons have termed an attempt to destabilise Indian markets.

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Do you know ?

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) proposes a common set of laws for all citizens, regardless of their religion, covering matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, succession, and adoption. The goal is to have secular laws that override religious laws in these areas. Currently, the UCC is only implemented in Goa, while a bill is under consideration in Uttarakhand.

The Hindu-Economy(GSIII)-Page-1

Centre launches new AI-based surveillance system to manage pests, connect scientists with farmers

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Tech solution: The AI-based system will help in identifying pests and controlling them. A.M. FARUQUI

The Union government on Thursday launched the National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS) powered by artificial intelligence to help farmers to connect with agriculture scientists and experts by mobile phones on controlling pests.

Launching the programme, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the aim was to reduce the dependence of farmers on pesticide retailers and to inculcate a scientific approach among them towards pest management. The NPSS will analyse latest data using AI tools to help farmers and experts in pest control and management.

Releasing the system at an event at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Mr. Chouhan said, "All new developments in

the field of agriculture should be beneficial for the farmers." He added that increasing yield was a priority for the Modi government. "Farmers need better seeds for increasing productivity. Our scientific community is working along with the farmers towards this," he said.

He said technology should reach the fields and

NPSS is such an effort. "If we get to know about the pest attack at the beginning of the attack, it will help in a fast cure. This system will help in identifying pests and controlling them. The benefit of this technology must go to farmers," the Minister said.

The Ministry said the NPSS would help about 14 crore farmers in the coun-

try. The Centre envisages connecting scientists with farmers using it. Farmers can take photos of the infested crops or the insect using the system on their phones and this will reach scientists and experts.

'Help cure diseases'

"Using the correct quantity of correct pesticide at the correct time is the chal-

lenge and this system will help farmers to address this challenge," Union Agriculture Secretary Devesh Chaturvedi told *The Hindu*.

He said it will also help in addressing the problem of using excessive pesticides.

"This system can help cure diseases at the proper time using technology. It will help in accurate diagnosis and accurate treatment. This will build confidence among farmers and production will also increase. This can save the soil too. It is a technological platform and needs no additional funding," he said.

Mr. Chaturvedi added that the technology will be sent to the States and they can propagate this using their outreach programmes. "We have successfully done pilot schemes on this system and it was released based on proper trials," he said.

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The Hindu –Science and Tech (GSIII)-Page 6

Indian astronomers find new method to predict amplitude of next solar cycle

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Astronomers from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) have found a new method to predict the amplitude of the upcoming solar cycle. Besides, their research can also help in space weather forecasting.

The astronomers have discovered a new correlation using 100 years of solar data from the IIA's Kodaikanal Solar Observatory.

The intricacies of the solar cycle and forecasting space weather are important fields of current research, including in India.

What is space weather?

“The main components of



The astronomers have discovered a new correlation using 100 years of solar data. TAMILNADUTOURISM.TN.GOV.IN

space weather are the solar wind, coronal mass ejections, and solar flares. They can compress the magnetosphere of the Earth and trigger geomagnetic storms, which can affect communication and power transmission, damage spacecraft electronics,

and threaten the lives of astronauts. Thus, space weather has a profound influence on modern civilization,” said the Department of Science and Technology.

Astronomers use many different ways to forecast the strength of the next solar cycle. This includes the-

oretical calculations based on dynamo models, extrapolations, precursor methods, etc.

The precursor method uses the value of some measure of solar activity at a specified time to predict the strength of the following solar maximum.

Number of sun spots

In a recently-published work, IIA researchers discovered that the width of the supergranular cells on the solar surface during the minimum year of the solar cycle is related to the number of sunspots seen during the subsequent solar cycle maximum. This simple method can be used in space weather forecasting.

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The Hindu –Environment (GSIII)-Page 14

How can traffic which causes air pollution be controlled?

What is the share of road transport with respect to India's CO2 emissions? Why has the vehicular scrapping policy not been effective in States like Karnataka and Maharashtra?

Lancelot Mark Pinto
Sreeparna Chattopadhyay

The story so far:

A recent report stated that India is home to 83 of the 100 most polluted cities in the world. Another report from the *British Medical Journal* estimated that air pollution led to the deaths of 2.1 million people in India, the second largest numbers after China. Over 99% of the population breathes air that is poorer than the recommended WHO standards.

How severe is air pollution?

The International Energy Associates estimates that 12% of India's CO2 emissions are due to road transport, of which the vast majority of Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 emissions are due to heavy vehicles. PM2.5 comprises pollutants, which, by being microscopic can reach the deepest parts of our lungs, and crawl our blood, thereby causing a

range of respiratory and cardiovascular effects. Moreover, heavy vehicles contribute significantly to the emission of Nitrogen Oxide (NOx), capable of causing similar health effects. NOx contributes to the formation of ground-level ozone, worsening impacts on air quality and heat, which further fuels air pollution in urban contexts. Several studies have indicated that heavy vehicles contribute to about 60-70% of the total vehicular PM emissions and about 40-50% of the total NOx emissions in urban areas.

What are some of the measures taken to combat air pollution?

With the transport industry growing at 9.1% per annum, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency's (BEE) initiative in developing the draft Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) norms for cars in India is timely and laudable. The timelines to implement CAFE III from 2027-2032 and CAFE IV from 2032-2037 are practical. The commitment to shift from the

Modified India Driving Cycle (MIDC) to the World Light Duty Vehicle Testing Procedure (WLTP) from March 31, 2027, is excellent because the WLTP offers a more accurate and globally harmonised measure of a vehicle's actual fuel consumption and CO2 emissions. The proposed emissions target for CAFE III based on the WLTP at 91.7g CO2/km and for CAFE IV at 70g CO2/km is achievable. Such stringent CO2 targets are essential for driving innovation and encouraging the adoption of cleaner technologies. In the interest of the health of our planet and citizens, these targets should be made non-negotiable. However, the CAFE norms exclude emissions by heavy vehicles such as trucks, lorries, and other freight vehicles.

What more can be done?

The government introduced a vehicle scrapping policy to phase out old and polluting vehicles, including heavy

passenger vehicles older than 20 years and commercial vehicles older than 15 years must pass a "fitness and emissions test". If vehicles fail the mandatory tests, they are categorised as end-of-life vehicles, and will lose their registration certificate, and are recommended to be scrapped. Yet this policy is yet to take off in Karnataka for two reasons: there are only two scrapyards for the entire State and it is voluntary. Most older vehicles in Bangalore are not four-wheelers but older BMTC buses, private vans, and heavy vehicles. Maharashtra is one among 21 States that have announced incentives such as discounts on road tax or on a new private vehicle purchase to encourage scrapping but this is yet to have far-reaching impacts on air pollution in the State. Policymakers must ensure that the guidelines do not remain exemplary in the letter alone.

Existing policies of the government to combat air pollution such as the testing of vehicles at regular intervals to ensure they are within emission limits, banning open garbage burning, and checking industrial emissions need to be implemented with the greatest stringency. While we welcome the government's efforts to curb air pollution, we also strongly suggest that mass transit is the only sustainable method of tackling air pollution in India.

Lancelot Mark Pinto is a pulmonologist at P. D. Hinduja Hospital, Mumbai and a public health policy advocate. Sreeparna Chattopadhyay is with TAPMI, Manipal Bangalore and is a medical anthropologist

THE GIST

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How severe is air pollution? The International Energy Associates estimates that 12% of India's CO2 emissions are due to road transport, of which the vast majority of Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 emissions are due to heavy vehicles. Moreover, heavy vehicles contribute significantly to the emission of Nitrogen Oxide (NOx), capable of causing similar health effects.

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The Hindu-Environment -Page 14

Digital boost to revive PM-KUSUM programme

The digital platform allows tracking the scheme's progress in real-time allowing for "prompt corrective actions and provides a level of oversight crucial for the successful deployment of large-scale solar projects, where delays and mismanagement can have significant repercussions," a GEAPP document noted.

Farmers willing to set up solar modules on their lands are paid rent by the power project developer. "GEAPP looks to ensure that landowners receive fair compensation, with lease rates linked to prevailing market rates and adjusted for inflation. GEAPP's digital solutions and on-ground support have helped mitigate these issues, enabling Rajasthan to lead in achieving its renewable energy targets," according to the document. According to the Ministry for New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), of the 256 MW installed nationally, nearly 200 MW of solar capacity is situated in Rajasthan alone.

With delays plaguing the ₹34,000-crore PM-KUSUM programme meant to boost solar energy infrastructure in agriculture, States have begun experimenting with alternate approaches to improve adoption. The Pradhan Mantri-Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) envisages setting up 100 GW of solar power plants in farmer-owned land, installing 14 lakh solar pumps, and solarising 35 lakh grid-connected agricultural pumps.

Dengue control: the unrealised promise of Wolbachia-infected mosquitoes

Reducing mosquito-borne illnesses through proven interventions has an immense potential to reduce the burden on our health systems and productivity. We must resurrect and fund innovative vector control programmes across India to combat the Aedes-borne triple epidemic of dengue, chikungunya and Zika

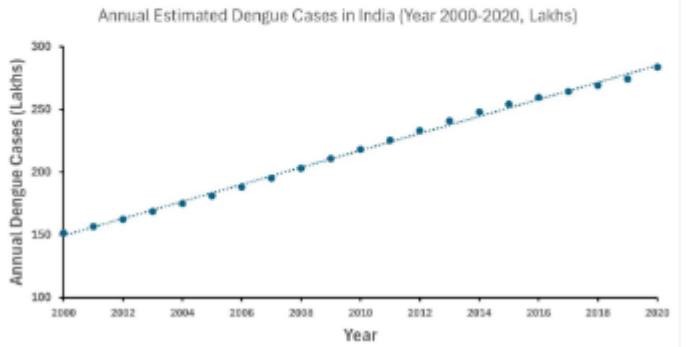
Shrinivas B. Nimmadi
Vinod Sreeni

Dengue, a familiar threat in India, imposes a tremendous burden on the economy, estimated at around ₹28,300 crore in direct costs per year and 5.68 lakh years of young life lost annually. Existing vector control strategies, including insecticides and community education, have achieved only modest success. Clinical trials have yet to define the safety and efficacy of India's two dengue vaccine candidates and unearth effective antiviral agents. Given that a female Aedes mosquito transmits dengue, chikungunya, and Zika, biological vector control methods appear cost-effective, but mixed results limit their use.

Innovative vector control methods have been studied globally since 2009. This method employs a naturally occurring bacterium (Wolbachia) in fruit flies (Drosophila melanogaster) — many insect species in the wild host Wolbachia, but not the Aedes mosquito.

Wolbachia exhibits two facets of a symbiotic relationship: mutualism and parasitism with the host insect. Scientists observed that Wolbachia provides resistance to viral infections in the fruit fly (mutualism) but can also impose a parasitic cost by shortening its life span and skewing insect populations toward a female majority. Resistance to viral infections could be due to direct competition between the virus and Wolbachia for the host cell's resources. This observation laid the foundation for studying Wolbachia-infected mosquitoes at the University of Queensland. In 2006, Morrison used the whole-body strain to reduce the lifespan of Aedes by half. In 2011, Walker and Johnson successfully used the wMel strain to promote viral resistance without reducing the mosquito's life span. The near-normal life span of the wMel mosquito allowed for more mating opportunities, rapidly establishing the bacterium in the study's mosquitoes. It soon became a promising candidate for blocking dengue transmission. The stage was set for field trials and clinical studies, first in Australia and then across Oceania, Latin America, and Southeast Asia under the aegis of the World Mosquito Program.

Using wMel to combat dengue
Laboratory personnel mechanically transfer wMel to the cytoplasm, termed transinfection, and, after establishing successful lines, release them into urban areas. Countries have successfully used two strategic population suppression



New cases of dengue per year in India (Lakhs, 2000-2020). Source: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, Data Visualization Tool of the Global Burden of Disease Project. Accessed July 28, 2021

into its communities, covering 35% of households. When these males mate with uninfected females, they produce non-viable eggs (Cyttoplasmic incompatibility*), drastically reducing the Aedes population by 90%. Singapore estimated that people in the release areas are 77% less likely to have dengue infection.

Australia pioneered the population replacement strategy, releasing infected mosquitoes over population centres over 16 months. Mating between infected males and females, or uninfected males and infected females, produced viable wMel-carrying offspring. The wMel-Aedes mosquitoes soon became dominant in the wild, with no new releases needed since 2017. Studies performed seven years after the initial release show a stable wMel genome — a pre-requisite for continued success. Since then, Australia has reported successful outcomes in dengue control, nearing dengue elimination.

In 2021, a multi-national effort resulted in a pathbreaking randomised controlled trial (RCT) in Indonesia. RCTs are considered the gold standard for testing interventions. In this trial, investigators released wMel mosquitoes in 12 geographic regions, with 12 similar no-release areas. At the end of 3 years, people living in the mosquito deployment areas were approximately 77% less likely to contract dengue and 86% less likely to need hospitalisation. The long-term impact of wMel releases



Scientists do not classify wMel transinfection as genetic engineering because the process does not involve integrating the bacterium's genome into the host's genome.

and vertebrate animals. Importantly, Aedes mosquitoes are a recent import into non-African ecosystems initiated by the slave trade and, in the last 50 years, accelerated by the combination of global trade, travel, and rapid urbanisation. Scientists do not classify wMel transinfection as genetic engineering because the process does not involve integrating the bacterium's genome into the host's genome.

wMel Programs in India
India currently does not have an active wMel mosquito release programme. On July 5, 2022, the Indian Council of Medical Research — Vector Control Research Center (ICMR-VCRC) provided an update about developing two colonies of Puducherry wMel Aedes strains. The update mentioned successful studies since 2018 and pending government approvals. However, the ICMR-VCRC has not issued significant public updates since then. ICMR has recently reported that

THE GIST

Vector control methods have been studied globally since 2009. This method employs the bacterium Wolbachia, which occurs naturally in fruit flies. Many insect species in the wild host Wolbachia, but not the Aedes mosquito.

Infected male mosquitoes released by the Singapore authorities mated with uninfected females. They produced non-viable eggs, reducing Aedes population by 90%. Singapore estimates that people in release areas are 77% less likely to have dengue.

The wMel strategy has potential in the Indian context because we must rely on more than insecticides due to resistance, safety concerns, and limited effectiveness.

and the Indonesian trial highlight important implications for India. The wMel strategy could be highly cost-effective given its potential to reduce the burden of other co-circulating infections like Zika, Japanese encephalitis and chikungunya. wMel strategy also gains importance because we must rely on more than insecticides due to resistance, safety concerns and their limited effectiveness.

Ensuring appropriate public messaging about planned mosquito releases is essential. We can also learn valuable lessons from the experience of mosquito releases in cities across 14 different countries. During the monsoon, the surge in similar febrile illnesses overwhelms our healthcare systems.

Reducing mosquito-borne illnesses through proven interventions has an immense potential to reduce the burden on our health systems and productivity. Exploring all possible interventions to ensure a healthy, productive young population and realising our demographic dividend is crucial. We must resurrect and fund innovative vector control programs across India to combat the Aedes-borne triple epidemic of dengue, chikungunya, and Zika.

(Dr. Shrinivas B. Nimmadi is with the Division of Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine, The Metro Health System, Cleveland, OH, USA, as srinivasb@metrohealth.com. Dr. Vinod S. Sreeni is Senior Consultant, Genome Informatics and Computational Biology, Vishvaasath

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Indian Express-Health(GSII)-Page 7

Why latest mpox outbreak is 'emergency of international concern'

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 15

THE WORLD Health Organisation, sounding its highest level of alarm, declared mpox as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on Wednesday. This is the second time the infection has received the designation in as many years – the outbreak between July 2022 and May 2023 was also declared as PHEIC.

The decision to sound the alarm was taken after an upsurge of cases reported from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and neighbouring countries. At least 99,176 cases and 208 deaths due to mpox have been reported from 116 countries since 2022, according to data from the WHO.

What is mpox?

Mpox, previously known as monkeypox, is a self-limiting viral infection caused by mpox virus (MPVX). The most common symptoms of mpox include fever, headache,

muscle aches, back pain, low energy, and swollen lymph nodes, along with pox-like rashes that last for two to three weeks. It is a self-limiting disease but can lead to death, especially among children and those with weak immune systems.

While the infection has been reported in humans since 1970, it mostly affected people in the endemic regions in Africa till 2022.

What is driving the current concern?

The current concern stems from the spread of clade IIb of the MPVX, which is predominantly transmitted through sexual contact.

Organisms belonging to a clade share common ancestors. When it comes to mpox, there are two different clades: clade I and clade II, with the former deadlier than the latter.

Sexual transmission of clade I infections has not been reported previously, according to a paper published this January in the journal *Emerging Infectious Disease*. Historically, clade I infections have spread through zoonotic spillover events – transmitted from animals



A nurse tends to a child suspected of having contracted mpox in DRC. Reuters

to humans in close proximity. Clade I infections that spread this way continue to affect parts of DRC where the disease was endemic.

Now, over 100 cases of clade IIb infections have been reported in four countries neighbouring DRC – Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda – that have not reported mpox before. The numbers are likely to be higher as many with symptoms might not have been tested. This is coupled with an increase in the total number of mpox cases. More than 15,600 cases and 537 deaths have been reported so far this year alone.

"The emergence of a new clade of mpox, its rapid spread in eastern DRC, and the reporting of cases in several neighbouring countries are very worrying. On top of outbreaks of other mpox clades in DRC and other countries in Africa, it's clear that a coordinated international response is needed to stop these outbreaks and save lives," WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Wednesday.

Research published in the journal *Nature* late last year indicates that recent cases are being driven by human-to-human transmission, and that the virus has diversified

into several distinct lineages in the human population, where it is fast acquiring many new mutations.

Is India at risk?

The first case of the more contagious clade IIb mpox infection outside Africa was reported from Sweden on Thursday. With interlinked global travel, the cases may reach other countries as well.

During the 2022 global outbreak, India too reported cases of mpox, albeit of the less deadly clade II type. Initially, infections were reported among some people from Kerala who had a history of international travel. But later even those without a history of international travel got infected in Delhi. At least 27 laboratory confirmed cases and one death was reported in India, according to the WHO data.

IHR Emergency Committee Chair Professor Dimie Ogoina said, "The current upsurge of mpox in parts of Africa, along with the spread of a new sexually transmissible strain of the virus, is an emergency, not only for Africa, but for the entire globe. Mpox, originating in Africa, was neglected there, and later caused a global outbreak in 2022. It is time to act decisively to prevent history from repeating itself."

Are there vaccines for mpox?

There are at least two vaccines currently in use for mpox, which have been recommended by the WHO's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization.

Last week, an Emergency Use Listing for mpox vaccines was triggered by the WHO, which will accelerate vaccine access for lower-income countries which have not yet issued their own national regulatory approval. This listing also enables bodies such as GAVI and UNICEF to procure vaccines for distribution in these countries.

WHO is working with countries and vaccine manufacturers on potential vaccine donations, and coordinating with partners through the interim Medical Countermeasures Network to facilitate equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics and other tools, the organisation said.

During the previous outbreak in 2022, India too had called on companies to manufacture vaccines and diagnostics.

The World Health Organization (WHO), once again classified Mpox as a global public health emergency. This comes after a surge in cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with the virus spreading to neighboring countries.

Mpox is a viral infection typically spread through close contact. While usually mild, it can be fatal in rare instances. Symptoms include flu-like illness and a rash of pus-filled lesions.

FUNDS ALLOCATED UNDER 2024-25 CAPITAL INVESTMENT SCHEME

Centre's guidelines for special assistance to states finalised, ₹10K cr for land reforms

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 15

THE CENTRE has decided to provide states with Rs 10,000 crore in incentives for implementing land-related reforms in rural and urban areas, and Rs 5,000 crore for creating a Farmers' Registry during the financial year 2024-25 (FY25).

The funds will be provided under the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2024-25. The Ministry of Finance has finalised the guidelines for the scheme and circulated them to the states on August 9, according to a source.

The financial outlays for these activities are significant, as Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her Budget Speech on July 23, announced that the Centre will incentivise land-related reforms by state governments. She also announced that details of six crore farmers and their lands will be included in the farmer and land registries.

According to sources, states will need to undertake land-re-

CENTRAL GOVT INCENTIVES

₹2,000 crore Development of Iconic Tourist Centres to Global Scale	₹5,000 crore Construction of Working Women Hostels
₹3,000 crore Incentives for Scrapping of Old Vehicles	₹5,000 crore Incentives for creating the state Farmers' Registry
₹15,000 crore Stimulating Industrial Growth	₹5,000 crore Incentives for Land-related reforms by State governments in Urban areas
₹1,000 crore Development of National Capital Region	₹4,000 crore Incentives for implementation of SNA Sparsh model for just-in-time release of funds under CSS
₹5,000 crore Incentives for Land-related reforms by state governments in rural areas	
₹15,000 crore State's share of Centrally Sponsored Schemes including Urban and Rural Infrastructure Projects	₹25,000 crore Incentives for achieving targets fixed for capital expenditure for 2024-25

lated reforms in rural areas, which include the assignment of a Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) or Bhu-Aadhaar for all lands; digitisation of cadastral maps;

survey of map sub-divisions according to current ownership; and the establishment of a land registry.

In urban areas, fiscal incentives will be provided for the

digitization of land records using GIS mapping and the establishment of an information technology-based system for property record administration, updating, and tax administration.

Apart from these activities, the Centre has also decided to provide Rs 5,000 crore for the construction of working women's hostels. In her Budget Speech, Sitharaman announced plans to "facilitate higher participation of women in the workforce through the establishment of working women's hostels in collaboration with industry, and setting up crèches."

According to the guidelines, the land for the hostels will be made available by the state government free of cost, or the cost of acquiring the land will be borne by the state government.

The state should adopt a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model for the operation and maintenance of the hostels, according to the guidelines. Ownership of the hostel would rest with the state government, while operation and maintenance would be managed by a private party.

Of the Rs 5,000 crore earmarked for the construction of working women's hostels, Uttar Pradesh will receive the highest amount of Rs 382 crore, followed by Madhya Pradesh (Rs 284 crore) and Assam (Rs 226 crore).

Additionally, the Centre will provide fiscal support of Rs 2,000 crore for the development of iconic tourist centers on a global scale; Rs 3,000 crore for incentives for scrapping old vehicles; Rs 15,000 crore for stimulating industrial growth; Rs 1,000 crore for the development of the National Capital Region (NCR); Rs 15,000 crore for states' shares of Centrally Sponsored Schemes, including Urban and Rural Infrastructure Projects; Rs 4,000 crore in incentives for implementing the SNA Sparsh model for just-in-time release of funds under Centrally Sponsored Schemes; and Rs 25,000 crore as incentives for achieving targets fixed for capital expenditure for 2024-25.

The Rs 1,000 crore allocated for the development of the NCR will be divided equally among the three states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

- The Centre has decided to provide states with Rs 10,000 crore in incentives for implementing **land-related reforms in rural and urban areas**, and Rs 5,000 crore for creating a Farmers' Registry during the financial year 2024-25 (FY25).
- The funds will be provided under the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2024-25.
- According to sources, states will need to undertake land-related reforms in rural areas, which include the assignment of a Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) or Bhu-Aadhaar for all lands; digitisation of cadastral maps; survey of map sub-divisions according to current ownership; and the establishment of a land registry.
- In urban areas, fiscal incentives will be provided for the digitization of land records using GIS mapping and the establishment of an information technology-based system for property record administration, updating, and tax administration.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB-History(GSI)

Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Pays Tribute to Sri Aurobindo on His Birth Anniversary

Posted On: 15 AUG 2024 11:43AM by PIB Delhi

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi took to social media platform X to pay homage to the revered philosopher, thinker, and spiritual leader, Sri Aurobindo, on the occasion of his birth anniversary.

The Prime Minister's post highlighted Sri Aurobindo's lasting legacy and his profound impact on India's national awakening.

In his tribute, Prime Minister Modi expressed, "Tributes to Sri Aurobindo on his birth anniversary. He is remembered as a remarkable philosopher, thinker, and spiritual leader. His emphasis on national awakening keeps inspiring generations. We remain committed to fulfilling the India he envisioned."

- Sri Aurobindo Ghose – nationalist, philosopher, poet - was born on 15th August 1872 in Kolkata. He was an influential leader of the Indian Nationalist Movement who propounded a philosophy of divine life on earth through spiritual evolution.
- Sri Aurobindo was a visionary who created an awakening about education being a primary tool in the growth of the youth. He openly advocated the idea of complete independence for the country in his newspaper Bande Mataram.

He was also a journalist and his first philosophical magazine called Arya was published in 1914.

Among his many writings are The Life Divine, The Synthesis of Yoga and Savitri.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB-Economy(GSIII)

Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan launches 'ASEAN-India Fellowship' for Higher Education in Agriculture and Allied Sciences today in PUSA, New Delhi

Agriculture has been the backbone of India's economy for centuries, providing livelihoods to millions and contributing significantly to the Gross Domestic Product

Posted On: 14 AUG 2024 6:42PM by PIB Delhi

The ASEAN-India Fellowship for Higher Education in Agriculture and Allied Science was launched by Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan in the presence of Union Ministers of State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shri Bhagirath Choudhary and Shri Ram Nath Thakur in ICAR, PUSA, New Delhi.

Currently, around 135 international students are pursuing their degrees at various agricultural universities. India has maintained a strong partnership with ASEAN member countries since the establishment of ASEAN. ASEAN is the cornerstone of India's 'Act East Policy' and the 'Indo-Pacific Vision' built upon it. India fully supports ASEAN unity, ASEAN centrality, and ASEAN's outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

PIB-Environment(GSIII)

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Union Environment Minister Shri Bhupender Yadav says India adds 3 more wetlands to the list of Ramsar sites on the eve of Independence Day 2024

With this addition, the tally of Ramsar sites touches to 85 covering an area of 1358068 ha in the country.

Three new sites included are Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary and Kazhuvveli Bird Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu and Tawa Reservoir in Madhya Pradesh.

The country has added 59 new wetlands to the list of Ramsar sites during 2014-2024

These new designated sites are a testament to the significant policy push from the Ministry for wetlands conservation and management in the country.

Posted On: 14 AUG 2024 3:42PM by PIB Delhi

- Union Environment Minister Shri Bhupender Yadav says India adds 3 more wetlands to the list of Ramsar sites on the eve of Independence Day 2024
With this addition, the tally of Ramsar sites touches to 85 covering an area of 1358068 ha in the country.
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The country has added 59 new wetlands to the list of Ramsar sites during 2014-2024

Do you know ?

. India is one of the Contracting Parties to Ramsar Convention, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. India became a signatory to the convention on 1st February 1982. During 1982 to 2013, a total of 26 sites were added to the list of Ramsar sites, however, during 2014 to 2024, the country has added 59 new wetlands to the list of Ramsar sites. Currently, Tamil Nadu harbours maximum number of Ramsar Sites (18 sites) followed by Uttar Pradesh (10 sites).