

DAILY PT POINTERS

9th August, 2024



The Hindu : _GS 3/Economy–Page-1

RBI holds repo rate at 6.5% for ninth time in a row

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

In its first meeting after the Union Budget, the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to keep the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.50% for the ninth consecutive time.

Of the six members of the MPC, four voted in favour of the decision, which is aimed at taming inflation.

RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said that the MPC had judged it important for monetary policy to stay the course while maintaining a close vigil on the inflation trajectory and its risks. "Inflation is moderating but the pace of disinflation is uneven and slow. Still, there is distance to cover to align inflation with the target," he emphasised.

- In its first meeting after the Union Budget, the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to keep the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.50% for the ninth consecutive time.
- Consequently, the standing deposit facility (SDF) rate remains at 6.25%, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the bank rate at 6.75%.
- Of the six members of the MPC, four voted in favour of the decision, which is aimed at taming inflation.
- "RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said that the MPC had judged it important for monetary policy to stay the course while maintaining a close vigil on the inflation trajectory and its risks. "Inflation is moderating but the pace of disinflation is uneven and slow. Still, there is distance to cover to align inflation with the target."

The Hindu-Governance(GSII)-Page 1

Union govt. amends CAA guidelines on documents to prove foreign origin

Vijaita Singh

NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has amended a provision of the rules of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019 that required applicants seeking citizenship to submit a document by any government authority in Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan establishing their roots in these countries. The CAA requires applicants to declare that they are foreigners.

The requirement under

Schedule 1A, or the list of nine documents issued by any government authority in the three countries to prove that the applicant, or ancestors, is/are a national of Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan, has been expanded to include any document issued by the State or the Union government or any quasi-judicial authority in India. An “etc.” (et cetera) has been added in the order, which would give discretion to government officials while processing CAA applications if there are any short-

comings in the documents.

The CAA rules also enable local priests or a “locally reputed community institution” to issue the mandatory certificates certifying the faith of an applicant. CAA facilitates citizenship to six non-Muslim communities from the three countries that entered India before December 31, 2014. Union government officials belonging to the Directorate of Census, Postal Department, Railways, National Informatics Centre, and Intelligence Bureau have been in-

formed by the Ministry that “CAA is a facilitative law and its spirit has to be understood while processing the applications”.

Schedule 1A has not been a problem for Hindu migrants from Pakistan as most entered India on valid documents such as passports and visas.

In December 2019, the Citizenship Act, 1955 was amended to facilitate citizenship through registration and naturalisation to undocumented migrants belonging to six non-Muslim communities.

- The Union Home Ministry has amended a provision of the rules of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019 that required applicants seeking citizenship to submit a document by any government authority in Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan establishing their roots in these countries. The CAA requires applicants to declare that they are foreigners.
- The requirement under Schedule 1A, or the list of nine documents issued by any government authority in the three countries to prove that the applicant, or ancestors, is/are a national of Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan, has been expanded to include any document issued by the State or the Union government or any quasi-judicial authority in India.
- An “etc.” (et cetera) has been added in the order, which would give discretion to government officials while processing CAA applications if there are any shortcomings in the documents.

The Hindu-Economy(GSIII)-Page-12

Why Himalayan towns need a different kind of development

Do cities along the Indian Himalayan Range have adequate funds and resources to manage civic issues?

Tikender Singh Panwar

The story so far:

The Indian Himalayan Range (IHR), comprising 11 States and two Union Territories, had a decadal urban growth rate of more than 40% from 2011 to 2021. Towns have expanded, and more urban settlements are developing. However, Himalayan towns require a different definition of urbanisation.

What is happening in IHR towns?

Almost all Himalayan towns, including State capitals, struggle with managing civic issues. For example, cities like Srinagar, Guwahati, Shillong, and Shimla, as well as smaller towns, face significant challenges in managing sanitation, solid and liquid waste, and water. Planning institutions in these States often fail because they use models copied from the plains and have only limited capacities to implement these plans. City governments

are short of human resources by almost 75%. For instance, in the Kashmir Valley, excluding the Srinagar Municipal Corporation, there are only 15 executive officers across over 40 urban local bodies.

Cities continue to expand into the peripheries, encroaching on the commons of villages. Srinagar, Guwahati are examples of such expansion, leading to the plundering of open spaces, forest land, and watersheds. In Srinagar, land use changes between 2000 and 2020 showed a 75.58% increase. Water bodies have eroded by almost 25%, from 19.36 square kilometres to 14.44 square kilometres. These areas have been taken over by built-up real estate, increasing from 34.53 square kilometres to 60.63 square kilometres, a rise from 13.35% to 23.44% of the total municipal area. Nearly 90% of the liquid waste enters water bodies without treatment.

Why is this happening?

The IHR faces increasing pressure from

urbanisation and development, compounded by high-intensity tourism, unsustainable infrastructure, and resource use (land and water), further aggravated by climatic variations like changing precipitation patterns and rising temperatures. This has led to water scarcity, deforestation, land degradation, biodiversity loss, and increased pollution, including plastics. These pressures have the potential to disrupt lives and livelihoods, impacting the socio-ecological fabric of the Himalayas.

Over the past few decades, tourism in the IHR has continued to expand and diversify, with an anticipated average annual growth rate of 7.9% from 2013 to 2023. Current tourism in the IHR often replaces eco-friendly infrastructure with inappropriate, unsightly, and dangerous constructions, poorly designed roads, and inadequate solid waste management, which leads to loss of natural resources damaging biodiversity and ecosystem services. Ecotourism, emphasising

environmentally friendly tourism, is crucial for long-term sustainability.

THE GIST

What needs to be done?

Planning institutions in IHR cities are still guided by land-use principles. Every town needs to be mapped, with layers identifying vulnerabilities from geological and hydrological perspectives. Climate-induced disasters annually erode infrastructures built without such mapping. Therefore, the planning process should involve locals and follow a bottom-up approach.

Consultant-driven urban planning processes should be shelved for Himalayan towns, with the urban design based on climate resilience.

Additionally, none of the cities in the IHR can generate capital for their infrastructure needs. The Finance Commission must include a separate chapter on urban financing for the IHR. The high costs of urban services and the lack of industrial corridors place these towns in a unique financial situation. Current intergovernmental transfers from the centre to urban local bodies constitute a mere 0.5% of GDP; this should be increased to at least 1%. Himalayan towns must engage in wider conversations about sustainability, with the focus on urban futures being through robust, eco-centric planning processes involving public participation.

Author is former Deputy Mayor, Shimla, and Member, Kerala Urban Commission.

▼ Cities like Srinagar, Guwahati, Shillong, and Shimla, as well as smaller towns, face significant challenges in managing sanitation, solid and liquid waste, and water.

▼ The IHR faces increasing pressure from urbanisation and development, compounded by high-intensity tourism, unsustainable infrastructure, and resource use (land and water), further aggravated by climatic variations like changing precipitation patterns and rising temperatures.

▼ Planning institutions in IHR cities are still guided by land-use principles. Every town needs to be mapped, with layers identifying vulnerabilities from geological and hydrological perspectives.

The Indian Himalayan Range (IHR), comprising 11 States and two Union Territories, had a decadal urban growth rate of more than 40% from 2011 to 2021.

- Almost all Himalayan towns, including State capitals, struggle with managing civic issues. For example, cities like Srinagar, Guwahati, Shillong, and Shimla, as well as smaller towns, face significant challenges in managing sanitation, solid and liquid waste, and water. Planning institutions in these States often fail because they use models copied from the plains and have only limited capacities to implement these plans.
- Current tourism in the IHR often replaces eco-friendly infrastructure with inappropriate, unsightly, and dangerous constructions, poorly designed roads, and inadequate solid waste management, which leads to loss of natural resources damaging biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Planning institutions in IHR cities are still guided by land-use principles. Every town needs to be mapped, with layers identifying vulnerabilities from geological and hydrological perspectives.

The Hindu –Health (GSII)-Page 16

No clinical trial for drugs approved in select nations

Centre waives the requirement if drugs are approved in U.S., U.K., Japan, Australia, Canada and EU; it specifies five categories for new drugs that will be considered for the Indian market

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

In a decision that will make drugs manufactured outside India more accessible and affordable in the local market, the Union government has decided to waive the requirement for clinical trials in India if the drugs are approved in the U.S., the U.K., Japan, Australia, Canada, or the European Union.

The government has specified a set of five categories for new drugs that will be considered for the Indian market.

Rare disease drugs

Drugs for rare diseases, gene and cellular therapy products, new drugs used in pandemic situations, new drugs used for special defence purposes, and new drugs having significant therapeutic advances over the current standard care will be considered for waiver, said a senior Health Ministry official, adding that names of the countries on the current list can be taken off and new ones added.

The order issued by India's drug regulatory agency



Drugs for rare diseases and new drugs used in pandemic situations are among those that will be considered for the waiver.

Control Organisation, on Wednesday said the Union government had authorised the exemption of local clinical trials for approval of new drugs under Rule 101.

Govt. Rules

"As per Rule 101 of the New Drugs and Clinical Trial Rules, 2019, the Central licensing authority, with approval of the Union government, may specify by an order, the name of the countries from time to time for considering waiver of local clinical trial for approval of new drugs under Chapter X and for grant of permission for

domestic and foreign drug manufacturers by expediting the approval process and facilitating faster access to essential medications for Indian patients.

"The OPPI has been advocating for this notification, recognising its potential to transform both the pharmaceuticals, and the healthcare landscape in India. The inclusion of specific categories such as orphan drugs for rare diseases, gene and cellular therapy products, new drugs used in pandemic situations, those for special defence purposes and new drugs with significant therapeutic advance over the current standard care would address critical and unmet medical needs. This strategic alignment is particularly crucial for accelerating access to innovative therapies to the patients in India," he said.

The group has, however, maintained that extending these waivers to a broader range of therapeutic categories will further enhance access to cutting-edge treatments. It has asked the Centre to consider additional therapeutic areas where similar waivers could significantly

der Chapter V of the said rules," reads the order.

Meanwhile, another official at the Union Health Ministry noted that the order has been a long-standing demand of the pharmaceutical companies and health experts who have been advocating for enhanced drug accessibility for patients and for research.

'Progressive move'

Anil Matal, director-general, Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI), reacting to the announcement, said that this a welcome and progressive move that will

- Centre waives the requirement if drugs are approved in U.S., U.K., Japan, Australia, Canada and
- EU; it specifies five categories for new drugs that will be considered for the Indian market
 - As per Rule 101 of the New Drugs and Clinical Trial Rules, 2019, the Central licensing authority, with approval of the Union government, may specify by an order, the name of the countries from time to time for considering waiver of local clinical trial for approval of new drugs under Chapter X and for grant of permission for conduct of clinical trial under Chapter V of the said rules

The Hindu –Health(GSII)

Viral encephalitis outbreak claims 73 lives in Gujarat

Mahesh Langa
GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat is going through its worst outbreak of Chandipura virus and viral encephalitis, in which 73 people have died so far.

The State has reported 162 cases of viral encephalitis, including 60 cases of Chandipura virus, since the outbreak began last month.

The disease has spread to more than two dozen districts [of the total 33 districts] and to cities such as Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Jamnagar and Vadodara.

Five patients from neighbouring Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have died in Gujarat, as per the details shared by the State health department on Thursday.

As on Thursday, 11 patients are under treatment while 78 have been discharged. "It has spread practically across the State with cases being reported

The disease has spread to more than two dozen districts, and cities such as Ahmedabad, Rajkot, and Jamnagar

from a majority of districts," a top health official told *The Hindu*.

The State health authorities have formed rapid action teams to carry out surveillance in the affected areas but their efforts have not helped to contain the disease, as two to three deaths are being reported every day since the outbreak began last month.

In a press statement on Thursday, the State health department said that so far, surveillance was carried out in 53,323 houses. Malathion, a pesticide, has been sprinkled in nearly 7.5 lakh mud houses and cattle sheds in villages for disease control. Liquid pesticide was also sprayed

in nearly 1.49 lakh kutcha (non-cemented, unbricked) houses. Schools and playgrounds in the affected districts too have been covered.

According to medical experts, the sandfly, which carries the Chandipura virus, lives in the cracks of mud houses.

The health officials and medical experts have described the outbreak as the worst that the State and even the country has witnessed in over 20 years, with the majority of victims being children under the age group of 15.

"In Gujarat, around two dozen cases were reported way back in 2005 and a few deaths had also occurred. This time, the spread and severity is huge," a senior doctor from a public hospital said.

Andhra Pradesh saw a major outbreak in 2003 when 329 children tested positive for the virus and 183 died.

Viral encephalitis outbreak claims 73 lives in Gujarat

- Viral encephalitis is inflammation of the brain parenchyma caused by a virus. It is the most common type of encephalitis and often coexists with viral meningitis.
- Viruses invade the host outside the central nervous system and then reach the spinal cord and brain via hematogenous spread or in a retrograde manner from nerve endings. This activity describes the evaluation and management of viral encephalitis and highlights the role of the interprofessional team in improving care for affected patients.

Indian Express–Miscellaneous-Page 8

Ashoka, Chandragupt & Kalpataru: Three Indian Ocean structures named

ANJALI MARAR
BENGALURU, AUGUST 8

THREE UNDERWATER geographical structures located in the Indian Ocean have been awarded names proposed by India.

Named after the rulers of the Mauryan dynasty are the Ashoka seamount and Chandragupt ridge. Kalpataru ridge is the third structure for which the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) have recently awarded names originally proposed by India. In all, there are seven structures in the Indian Ocean named mainly after Indian scientists or bear names proposed by India in this region of the Indian Ocean.

All the three recently named structures were discovered by oceanographers from Goa's National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR). These are located along the Southwest Indian Ridge area of the Indian Ocean and were discovered dur-

ing an international survey exploration programme. Since 2004, India has been undertaking the Indian Southern Ocean Research Programme with NCPOR being the nodal agency.

In 2012, the Indian research team with the help of Russian Sea vessel Akademik Nikolay Strakhov discovered the Ashoka seamount, spanning over 180 sq km. Also discovered by the same Russian vessel in 2012 was the elongated Kalpataru ridge, spread over 430 sq km. Discovered by Indian ocean research vessel MGS Sagar in 2020, the Chandragupt ridge is an elongated and oval shaped body over 675 sq km.

Previously, other structures bearing Indian names include the Raman ridge (accepted in 1992) after Physicist and Nobel Laureate Sir CV Raman, Panikkar Seamount (accepted in 1993) after oceanographer NK Panikkar, Sagar Kanya seamount (accepted in 1991), among others.

-Anjali Marar is Science Communicator at Raman Research Institute

- Three underwater geographical structures located in the Indian Ocean have been awarded names proposed by India.
- Named after the rulers of the Mauryan dynasty are the Ashoka seamount and the Chandragupt ridge. Kalpataru ridge is the third structure for which the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) have recently awarded names originally proposed by India.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB-Culture-



- Project PARI (Public Art of India) is an initiative launched by the Ministry of Culture to celebrate and enhance the public art scene in India.
- This project, executed by the Lalit Kala Akademi and the National Gallery of Modern Art, coincides with the 46th World Heritage Committee Meeting in New Delhi from July 21-31, 2024.
- PARI aims to stimulate dialogue and reflection through public art that blends India's rich cultural heritage with contemporary themes.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Air-Governance(GSII)

Lok Sabha Discusses Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak 2024



Lok Sabha today took up the Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak 2024 for discussion. The Bill was moved by the Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu. While introducing the Bill, the Minister said, Aircraft Act was brought in 1934 and a lot of amendments have been made over the years. He said previously the amendments were incorporated into the Act several times. He said these amendments created a lot of ambiguity and contradictions

Lok Sabha Discusses Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak 2024

- The Bill empowers the Central Government to make rules for any aircraft or class of aircraft, and for securing the safety of aircraft operations.
- It is aimed to empower the government to make rules for the investigation of any air accident or incident.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Air-IR(GSII)

Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus Sworn In As Bangladesh's Interim Head



- Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was sworn in as the head of Bangladesh's interim government. Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin administered the oath to him at Bangabhaban in Dhaka this evening. Diplomats from various countries were present on the occasion.
- Born on 28 June 1940, Mr Muhammad Yunus is a Bangladeshi entrepreneur, banker, and economist. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for founding the Grameen Bank and pioneering the concepts of microcredit and microfinance.