

DAILY PT POINTERS

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The Hindu-Governance(GSII)-Page 1

CPPS gets green light; pensioners to get payments via any bank, branch

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Labour Ministry has cleared a proposal for Centralised Pension Payment System (CPPS) for about 78 lakh pensioners under the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995. The new system enables pension disbursement through any bank, any branch across the country.

Union Minister of Labour and Employment, and Chairperson, Central

This facility will be launched from January 1, 2025 as part of EPFO's modernisation project

Board of Trustees, Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), Man-sukh Mandaviya, said the approval of the new payment system was a significant milestone in the modernisation of the EPFO.

The CPPS would ensure

disbursement of pension throughout India without any need for transfer of Pension Payment Orders from one office to another even when the pensioner moves from one location to another, or changes the bank or branch.

'Great relief'

"This will be a great relief to pensioners who move to their hometown after retirement," the Labour Ministry said.

This facility will be

launched as part of EPFO's ongoing IT modernisation project Centralised IT Enabled System (CITES 2.01) from January 1, 2025.

"By enabling pensioners to receive pensions from any bank, any branch, anywhere in the country, this initiative addresses the long-standing challenges faced by pensioners," Mr. Mandaviya said.

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The Hindu –Economy(GSIII)-Page 1

Latest ILO study links AI to dip in labour income

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Inequality is on the rise as the share of labour income has stagnated worldwide and a large share of youth remain out of employment, education, or training, according to the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) 'World Employment and Social Outlook: September 2024 Update', released in Geneva on Wednesday.

A major reason for this fall in labour income is artificial intelligence or AI, the study stated.

The ILO analysed the impact of technological innovations in the last two decades across 36 countries and said that while these innovations have led to persistent jump in labour productivity and output, they can also reduce the labour income share.

Sounding a warning

"This is consistent with automation-based technological innovations driving the aggregate effects," the ILO said, warning that the absence of a stronger policy response across relevant domains could push



Without a strong policy response, wages will further go down, says ILO. GETTY IMAGES

the labour income further down.

To mitigate the potential adverse impacts on inequality, the benefits of

technological progress should be widely distributed, the report said.

The report also indicated slow progress on key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as their 2030 deadline approaches.

The study also revealed that the global labour income share, which represents the portion of total income earned by workers, fell by 0.6 percentage points from 2019 to 2022 and has since then remained flat.

It said the COVID-19 pandemic was a key driver of this decline, with nearly

40% of the reduction in the labour income share occurring in the pandemic years of 2020 to 2022.

Plea to take action

"Countries must take action to counter the risk of declining labour income share. We need policies that promote an equitable distribution of economic benefits, including freedom of association, collective bargaining and effective labour administration, to achieve inclusive growth," said Celeste Drake, ILO Deputy Director-General.

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What do we know about ANIIDCO?

Why has the qualifications of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation come into question after it got permission to do a ₹72,000 crore mega infrastructure project in Great Nicobar? Does the company have a proper internal environmental governance system?

EXPLAINER

Pankaj Sekhsaria
Rishika Parikh

The story so far:

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO) is the project proponent for the NITI Aayog-promoted ₹72,000 crore mega infrastructure project in Great Nicobar, the southernmost island in the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago. The project entails the construction of a trans-shipment port, a greenfield airport, a tourism and township project and a solar and gas based power plant in Great Nicobar. ANIIDCO which has been granted permission for the mega project is a little known quasi-government agency based in Port Blair.

What do we know about ANIIDCO?

ANIIDCO was incorporated on June 28, 1988 under the Companies Act. Its objective is "to develop and commercially exploit natural resources for the balanced and environment friendly development of the territory." Its main activities, according to its website, include trading of petroleum products, Indian made foreign liquor and milk, managing tourism resorts and infrastructure development for tourism and fisheries. The company's average annual turnover and profit over the last three financial years has been ₹70 crore and ₹35 crore, respectively. The corporation's mandate, history, its structure and capabilities raise serious concerns about the process and possible outcomes of making them responsible for such a high profile, high investment and high risk project as the one in Great Nicobar. The 910 sq km island is not just a biodiversity hotspot but also home to indigenous communities with special rights and is also located in one of the most seismically active zones.

When the Andaman and Nicobar administration appointed ANIIDCO as



Massive changes: An aerial view of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. GETTY IMAGES

project proponent in July 2020, ANIIDCO neither had an environment policy nor an environment cell. It did not even have the human resources needed to oversee, let alone implement and monitor the project it was tasked to implement. It was only in late 2022 more than two years after it was made the project proponent did it start a process for recruiting people with relevant expertise such as urban planners, environmental planners, architects, infrastructure specialists, and legal and financial experts.

In May, 2021, the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) under the Union environment ministry had asked ANIIDCO a number of important questions about its internal environmental governance system. The EAC asked if ANIIDCO had a corporate environment policy approved by its board of directors, an

same person who was also the Commissioner cum Secretary (Environment and Forests) of the island.

It is clear, the petition noted, that this is "a case of the project proponent certifying itself." Further, it added that the responsibility to assess compliance with the Stage I forest clearance conditions vests with the same authority that has a responsibility to ensure compliance with the conditions. This same pattern was repeated when the Chief Secretary of the islands, who is also the chairman of the board of directors of ANIIDCO, was made a key member of the high powered committee set up by the NGT to look into complaints against the project. ANIIDCO was being allowed to evaluate its own actions again. Numerous persons employed at ANIIDCO in various capacities are currently civil servants with the Andaman and Nicobar administration in charge of environmental and tribal welfare issues. We sent questionnaires to both ANIIDCO and the chairman and secretary of the EAC. None responded.

What have past administrators said?

Lt Gen A.K. Singh, Lieutenant Governor of the islands from 2013-16, said that ANIIDCO would be better suited than any other department or organisation in the ARN administration to handle this mega project, though a project of this dimension would require expert agencies from outside the islands to execute it.

Sant Kaul, chief secretary of the islands in the early 90s, had critiqued ANIIDCO's tourism operations in a book he wrote in 2015. On the current project, he said "I don't think ANIIDCO can at all manage a ₹72,000 crore project unless its upgraded vastly with much better quality staff. If the idea of the government is to use ANIIDCO because it is an existing company fully owned by the government, it will need a full revamp from what it was when I was there."

Pankaj Sekhsaria is an author/writer with his recent work being The Great Nicobar Betrayal. Rishika Parikh is a freelance environment reporter.

THE GIST

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'90% projects under Smart Cities Mission completed'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

More than 90% of projects under the Smart Cities Mission, which was launched to enhance the quality of life in urban spaces, have been completed, the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry said.

The remaining 10% projects have been delayed due to legal issues, delays in obtaining clearances from different departments, land acquisition challenges, construction in hilly areas, and challenges in vendor and resource availability in small and medium cities, it said

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Do you know ?

Smart Cities Mission was launched by the Hon' Prime Minister on 25 June, 2015. The main objective of the Mission is to promote cities that provide core infrastructure, clean and sustainable environment and give a decent quality of life to their citizens through the application of 'smart solutions'. The Mission aims to drive economic growth and improve quality of life through comprehensive work on social, economic, physical and institutional pillars of the city.

Indian Express-(Science and Tech)-Page 12

Genome mapping of Chandipura virus: findings

BRENDAN DABHI

AHMEDABAD, SEPTEMBER 4

THE GUJARAT Biotechnology Research Centre (GBRC) in Gandhinagar has published the only fully mapped genome of the Chandipura vesiculovirus (CHPV) — the viral infection that caused at least a third of the encephalitis or brain swelling cases in Gujarat during the outbreak in July-August.

What is CHPV?

Apart from encephalitis, CHPV is known to cause fever, headache, convulsions, coma, and even death, usually within days of the symptoms showing up.

CHPV most severely affects children below the age of 15. It can be transmitted by sandflies, ticks, and the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito which is also the vector for dengue and chikungunya. Sandflies were responsible for this year's outbreak.

With no specific treatment, CHPV has mortality rates of as high as 75%, as seen during India's worst ever outbreak in 2003 which killed 322 children in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. This year's outbreak has a case fatality ratio of about 45% (as per data from August 16).

What is genome mapping? Why is it important?

Genome mapping refers to the process of determining the location of genes on an organism's chromosomes. In the case

of a deadly virus like CHPV, mapping can provide clues about its origin, and significant mutations, among other things.

Importantly, the genetic sequence of a virus — especially of one in circulation — is important to help researchers develop testing kits, vaccines, and therapeutics.

What did researchers at the GBRC find?

■ The virus has not evolved much since

the 2003-04 outbreak, as well as the more recent 2012 outbreak.

When compared to the 2003-04 sample, there were four significant mutations in the glycoprotein gene — the most important of the five types of proteins that make the structure of the virus, responsible for binding to

human cell receptors and eliciting an immune response.

There was only one significant mutation in the glycoprotein G from 2012. For comparison, new variants and sub-variants

of Covid-19 detected every few months would have 20 or 30 mutations compared to their predecessor.

According to the researchers, this suggests "that the virus has not been under selection pressure to escape immunity", possibly because a significant proportion of the population did not develop antibodies against CHPV, unlike the fast-spreading Covid-19 which has infected a majority of the

global population. CHPV also does not yet have a vaccine and antibodies developed due to it, unlike Covid-19.

■ The Cycle Threshold (or Ct value) for the samples tested was high. In an RT-PCR test, the Ct value is the number of times the genetic material of the sample has to be amplified in order to detect the pathogen. A high Ct value implies that the viral load — the amount of virus in the sample — is quite low. "The Ct value of most of the patients was high. This means that the viral load was very less. But even this was enough to cause severe symptoms," the researchers said.

■ Upon tracing the genome sequence of the 27-strain family tree of the virus, they found the strain to be related to ones isolated during previous outbreaks in India, and very different from strains isolated in Europe or Africa. "This means that the virus that infected patients in this outbreak was the one circulating in India and was not imported from other countries," a health department official said.

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- **What is Chandipura?**
- **Chandipura is a viral infection** that can lead to outbreaks of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) or brain swelling. It is known to cause fever, headache, and encephalitis leading to convulsions, coma, and death, usually within a few days of the symptoms showing up. The disease's rapid progression is one of its defining features.
- Children who tested positive and died of Chandipura during this year's outbreak reported high grade fever, severe rashes from sandfly bites, convulsions, brain swelling, liver problems, and multi-organ failure usually within 72 hours of symptoms showing up.

Indian Express-History(GSI)-Page 12

WHY INDIA CELEBRATES TEACHERS' DAY ON SEPTEMBER 5

INDIA CELEBRATES Teachers' Day annually on September 5, the birth anniversary of former President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975). Here is why.

Philosopher of Hinduism

One of India's most recognised and influential thinkers of the 20th century, Radhakrishnan's life and work was dedicated to defining, defending, and disseminating the Hindu religion. He is seen in philosophy circles as a bridge-builder between India and the West, and credited for his role in shaping the West's understanding of Hinduism.

Radhakrishnan was among the foremost proponents of the non-dualist Advaita Vedanta tradition in the 20th century, and re-interpreted Adi Shankara's philosophy for modern times. In doing so, he defended Hinduism against what he said was "uninformed Western criticism".

Respected teacher

By the 1920s, Radhakrishnan had established himself as one of India's most respected academics. He held the prestigious King George V Chair at the Calcutta University from 1921 to 1932, was the second vice-chancellor of Andhra University from 1931 to 1936, and the fourth vice-chancellor of Banaras Hindu University from 1939 to 1948. He also held the Spalding Chair of Eastern



September 5 is the birth anniversary of S Radhakrishnan. Archive

Religion and Ethics at University of Oxford from 1936 to 1952. Radhakrishnan was knighted in 1931.

Radhakrishnan was also a brilliant teacher, who developed deep personal bonds with students. He thought highly of the profession of teaching, and is recorded as having said several times that "teachers should be the best minds in the country".

He became the first Vice President (1952-62), and the second President of India (1962-67). In 1962, after he became president, some old students expressed their wish to celebrate his birthday. Radhakrishnan refused a personal celebration, and instead requested his students to honour teachers across the country on his birth anniversary.

Thus began the tradition of celebrating Teachers' Day on September 5. **ENS**

- India celebrates National Teachers' Day every year on September 5 on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan.
- As a tribute to the first Vice-President and the second President of India, the country commemorates the great philosopher, scholar and educationist on this day.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Air-IR(GSII)

PM Narendra Modi To Hold Talks With His Singaporean Counterpart Lawrence Wong Today



- PM Narendra Modi to hold talks with his Singaporean counterpart Lawrence Wong today
- Singapore is India's largest trade partner in ASEAN, and it is a leading source of foreign direct investment. Singapore is India's sixth-largest trade partner worldwide and the largest source of FDI during the last financial year.