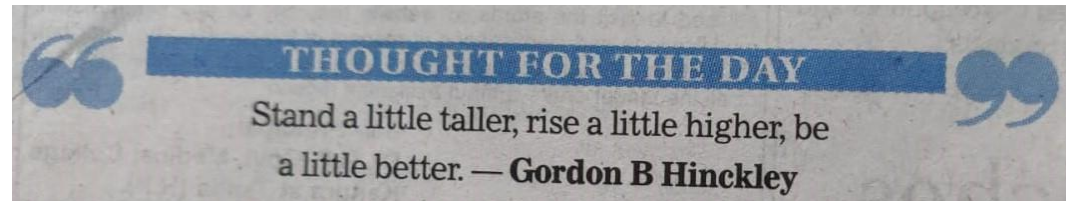




BASAI News Updates

August 8, 2022



Nitish, KCR skip NITI Aayog meet; modernise farm sector, says PM

Oppn-ruled states rake up GST dues, lack of consultation on NEP

MUKESH RANJAN
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

Even as the government today claimed that PM Narendra Modi heralded the collective efforts of all states in the spirit of cooperative federalism as the force that helped India tackle the Covid pandemic, the seventh governing council meeting of NITI Aayog was marked by a "boycott" by Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and the absence of Bihar CM Nitish Kumar.

Besides, the CMs of Opposition-ruled states raked up several contentious issues, including the extension of GST compensation for another five years, early release of Central dues and support for improving the irrigation facilities. These states also accused the Centre of not consulting them



RECAST MSP COMMITTEE: PUNJAB CM TO PM INSIDE

before rolling out New Education Policy (NEP).

Though the Telangana CM had announced his "boycott", Nitish was conspicuous by his

absence. NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Suman K Bery, while briefing the media, said Nitish "was not well". But, speculation is rife in political

JD(U) WON'T JOIN UNION CABINET AGAIN

Patna: Bihar CM Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) on Sunday made it clear that the party would not join the Union Council of Ministers again, but rebuffed speculation on a rift with ally BJP, asserting "all is well". JD(U) national president Rajiv Ranjan Singh, alias Lalan, who addressed a press conference here, dismissed queries about Nitish Kumar's absence at the NITI Aayog meeting, with the terse remark: "You should ask the Chief Minister". **BACK PAGE**

<< Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann at the meeting, ANI

circles that the Bihar CM's absence "has a lot to do with former Union Minister RCP Singh's resignation from the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Millets offer opportunities

MANAV MANDER

WITH 2023 being the UN-designated International Year of Millets, there is a need to promote and strengthen the value chain for millets and millet-based products, including the ready-to-eat category. Millets are being increasingly recognised as climate-smart crops with enormous nutritional and health benefits.

"Rigorous efforts are needed to mainstream millet farming to improve the ecological balance and the health system of the population, using the 'super grain' as health foods. Incentives should be provided to people growing and procuring nutri-cereals, besides enhancing domestic consumption by creating awareness among the consumers. Farmers should be educated about millet-growing techniques and their processability," says Dr Ruchika Bhardwaj, Millets Breeder, Department of Plant Breeding and Genetics, Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana.

Millets are traditional grains grown and consumed in the Indian subcontinent since ages. They are classified on the basis of their seed size. Major millets include sorghum (*jowar*) and pearl millet (*bajra*); the minor ones are finger millet (*ragi*), foxtail (*kangni*), little millet (*suanki*), kodo millet (*kodou/kodra*), barnyard millet (*samvatke chawal*), proso millet (*chena*) and browntop millet (*hari kangni*).

Gurmukh Singh, a farmer from Rangilpur village in Gurdaspur district, has been involved in millet farming for the past five years. Also a member of the Kheti Virasat Mission, he says millet farming is the solution to major agricultural problems being faced by Punjab.

"Our state is under severe water crisis as the cultivation of rice has led to a steep fall in the water table. Millets require far less water to produce 1-kg grains as compared to rice. Pearl millet has the potential to

survive at a temperature of up to 46°C," he says. Gurmukh, who distributes seeds free of cost on the condition that the person will grow the crop organically, says millets should be made a key element of the crop diversification programme.

"The revival of millet cultivation is needed to break the monoculture and erasue food, health, nutrition and economic security as well as soil health maintenance. Versatile millets provide an option for sustainable agriculture amid climate change," says Dr Bhardwaj. Millets, known as 'nutri-cereals/wonder grain/super grain' are highly nutritious and non-glutinous; they are rich in dietary fibre. They have many nutraceutical and health-promoting properties and have three times more calcium as compared to rice; they are also rich in antioxidants and score over rice and wheat.

"The glycemic index of millet-based products is lower, which ensures slower release of carbohydrates and control of the blood sugar level. Thus, millets are a very good source of nutrition for

diabetic people. Millets are gluten-free and can be a substitute for wheat or gluten-containing grains for coeliac patients," says Dr Neerja Singla, Associate Professor, Department of Food and Nutrition, PAU.

Assured Minimum Support Price (MSP) and public procurement are virtually non-existent in Punjab for crops other than wheat and paddy; so, farmers in the state are reluctant to opt for crop diversification. The MSP has been announced for many crops, including millets, but to no avail. "Lack of demand and marketability of millets is a hindrance to the adoption of these crops, thus leading to wastage of the produce due to infrastructural inadequacies," says Raminder Singh, a farmer from Milkwal village in Ludhiana district.

Gurmukh says the de-husking of millets is another challenge as very few machines are available in Punjab.

STATE-WISE PRODUCTION

(in thousand tonnes)



Farmers' tentative steps

DEEPIKHA DESWAL

MILLETS, including bajra and jowar, are among the kharif crops grown in dry and semi-dry areas of Mahendragarh, Bhiwani, Gurgaon, Hisar, Rohtak, Jhajjar and Rewari districts of Haryana. According to Agriculture Department figures, Haryana has 483.1 hectares under bajra during 2021-22. Jowar is sown mainly as fodder for cattle.

For farmers, millets are not good enough to sustain a livelihood and thus they have to sow paddy, cotton and other crops, depending upon availability of water. Satya Naryana, a cotton farmer of Bahbalpur village in Hisar, says it does not make sense to sow bajra, which has an input cost of about Rs 15,000-16,000 per acre and then harvest the produce which could fetch a maximum of Rs 20,000. "I sow bajra for my consumption on a small piece of land. It is not an economically viable crop," he adds.

A report by Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University (HAU), Hisar, mentions that the area under bajra has shown a decreasing trend even though its productivity has improved with the adoption of hybrid seeds. Bajra production fluctuates, depending upon the quantum of precipitation as large areas are confined to rainfed conditions. The HAU report states that bajra's average net returns in Haryana are Rs 1,338 per acre.

The HAU Vice Chancellor, Dr BR Kamboj, says millets are the most resilient and climate-adaptable crops in harsh, hot (up to 50°C) and drought conditions. "In response to the current public health crisis in terms of rising Non-Communicable Diseases and healthcare costs, governments are looking at traditional staple foods for ensuring the daily recommended nutrition," he says.

Dr Kamboj says millets were traditionally consumed across India, but due to the push given to food security during the Green Revolution in the 1960s, these were rendered 'orphaned crops'. Before the Green Revolution, millets made up around 40% of all cultivated grains; this

Promoting nutri-cereals

India is a major millet-producing country in the world. The Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has been implementing the Sub-Mission on Nutri-Cereals (Millets) under the National Food Security Mission from 2018-19 to enhance area, production and productivity of millets.

The United Nations declared 2023 as International Year of Millets after India's resolution in this regard, supported by 72 countries, was adopted by the UN General Assembly.

The gov't's action plan focuses on strategies to enhance millet production, consumption, export and branding.



share has dropped to around 20% over the years, compromising agricultural, nutritional and environmental concerns. "Its consumption and sowing area have declined, with farmers shifting to commercial crops, oilseeds, pulses and maize. These crops are profitable and their production is supported by several policies through subsidised inputs, incentivised procurement and inclusion in the public distribution system. This has resulted in changes in dietary patterns with preferential consumption towards calorie-rich cereals," the VC says, adding that due to reduced focus, millets suffered on the R&D front.

Director General, state Agriculture Department, Hardeep Singh says though Haryana has sufficient area under bajra and good productivity, "we need to make people aware of the nutritional richness of millets. Their consumption can be increased by setting up processing units."

Send your feedback to letters@tribune

CSIR gets first woman director gen in Kalaiselvi

Press Trust of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Senior electrochemical scientist Nallathamby Kalaiselvi has become the first woman director general of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, a consortium of 38 state-run research institutes across the country.

Her appointment is for a period of two years with effect from the date of assumption of charge of the post or until further orders, whichever is earlier, an order of the personnel ministry said on Saturday.

Kalaiselvi succeeds Shekhar Mande, who superannuated in April. Rajesh Gokhale, secretary, Department of Biotechnology was given the additional charge of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) upon Mande's retirement.

Known for her work in the field of lithium ion batteries, Kalaiselvi is at present director of the CSIR-Central Electrochemical Research Institute at Karaikudi in Tamil Nadu.

She will also hold the charge as secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Kalaiselvi has risen through the ranks in CSIR and had broken the proverbial glass ceiling



Nallathamby Kalaiselvi

by becoming the first woman scientist to head the Central Electrochemical Research Institute (CSIR-CECRI) in February 2019.

Congratulations poured in from across the scientific community and science administrators on her appointment to the key post.

"Heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Dr N Kalaiselvi," Ajay Sood, principal scientific adviser to the government said.

Sood's predecessor K VijayRaghavan, former Department of Biotechnology secretary Renu Swarup, former Earth Sciences secretary Madhavan Rajeevan and fellow scientists also greeted Kalaiselvi. Kalaiselvi has made key contributions to the National Mission for Electric Mobility.

She has more than 125 research papers and six patents to her credit.

CLIMATE CRISIS MAKING WEATHER FORECASTS VERY DIFFICULT: IMD DG

Press Trust of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Climate crisis has hampered the ability of forecasting agencies to accurately predict severe events and the India Meteorological Department is installing more radars and upgrading its high-performance computing system to meet the challenge, IMD director general Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said.

He also said that though the monsoon rainfall has not shown any significant trend in the country, the number of heavy rainfall events has increased and that of light rainfall events has decreased due to climate change.

The impact-based forecast will improve to become "more granular, specific and accurate" by 2025 and IMD will be able to provide forecasts up to panchayat level clusters and specific areas in cities in the coming years, the IMD chief told PTI in an interview.

"Climate change has increased the instability in the atmosphere, leading to an increase in convective activity -- thunderstorms, lightning and heavy rainfall. The severity of cyclones in the Arabian Sea is also increasing.

"This increase in the frequency of extreme weather events is posing a challenge to forecasters. Studies show that the ability to predict heavy rainfall is hampered due to climate change," he said.



Biological Agri Solutions Association of India

What the new data law must focus on

It must facilitate the innovative spirit behind the digital economy, and align with the vision of inclusive growth and Digital India. In addition, the new law's roll out should be born digital, and it must be comprehensible to all

The mode of economic and social interactions worldwide has considerably shifted from offline to online. In India, this trend is noticeable on several parameters. More than 6.28 billion digital banking transactions were made in June. There are more than 1.17 billion telecom subscribers and more than 760 million active internet users. The user base of social media and messaging apps is expected to cross 1 billion by 2025. There are more than 75,000 start-ups in India and 105 unicorns. These start-ups have created more than 7.5 lakh jobs in the past seven years.

The digital economy, comprising information technology (about six million jobs), electronics manufacturing (about three million jobs), and telecom (about a million jobs) employs

more than 10 million people in India today. In addition, three times as much indirect employment is generated by the digital economy.

India's IT industry plays a key role in the economy. The financial year 2021-2022 marked a tipping point for the IT industry in India as the sector clocked revenue of \$227 billion (more than ₹18 lakh crore) and crossed an important landmark of employing 5.5 million people. The world trusts the competence and responsible conduct of the Indian IT industry when it comes to handling data.

The digital economy enabled the country to address the challenges of Covid-19. Remote working, online education, the vaccination drive, and delivery of benefits were made possible by digital technologies. Thus, the emergence and sustained growth of digital interactions have brought about a massive transformation in society and the economy.

Laws concerned with the digital landscape should be consistent with the transformational changes in technology and its usage. Such laws should be focused on approach and scope. Laws must be adaptable to keep pace with changing times and technological advancements.

Protecting personal data has been a subject of discussions for a considerable time. Through this discussion process, certain core principles of per-

sonal data protection have emerged. The government is committed to upholding these principles.

Our country needs a comprehensive set of laws to holistically address the digital landscape. The regulation on personal data protection should form a consistent and seamless part of such a comprehensive set of laws. Further, the law on personal data should facilitate and nurture the innovative spirit behind the digital economy. Such a law should enable our start-up ecosystem to go from strength to strength.

From the stage of conceptualisation, the role of people who understand technology should be acknowledged. The voice of such professionals should be given due weight. This will enable a healthy evolution of a law that caters to the requirements of today's interconnected world.

The ease of implementation of the law needs to be given due thought. In line with the changing times, the implementation structure should be born digital, ie, designed to be implemented digitally. To ensure ease of implementation, the structure and organs of the process should be compact.

An implementation structure that contains numerous tiers should be avoided in the interest of easy execution. A grievance redressal mechanism should be accessible for an indi-



Laws concerned with the digital landscape should be consistent with the transformational changes in technology

vidual to meaningfully exercise his/her rights. The mechanism should not be unnecessarily complex, resulting in delays and expenditure. Further, the grievance redressal mechanism should be digital by design in line with the changing nature of interactions. Comprehensibility of the law is a basic expectation of citizens. A law should be drafted in a plain and simple language that everyone can understand. This is all the more important in the law on personal data protection, which concerns every citizen of the country.

Comprehensibility of the law enables all parties concerned to understand their obligations and rights under the law. It is generally accepted that a law needs to consider the societal experience and economic imperatives. Therefore, the Indian experience with the adoption of IT must be reflected in the law on personal data. Further, the law should facilitate and nurture the innovative spirit behind the digital economy.

Penalties for non-compliance with the law should be commensurate with the harm suffered by individuals and the gravity of non-compliance. Further, the focus should shift from criminalisation of non-compliance.

All parties concerned should be allowed reasonable opportunity to make necessary efforts to rectify errors and comply.

The new law needs to be aligned with the vision of inclusive growth. The Digital India Programme is a crucial tool for realising this vision. The objective of the Digital India is to ensure that programmes for public welfare are accessible even to those at the bottom rung of the ladder. This is being achieved through direct benefit transfer, utilising the Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile trinity. The new law on personal data needs to be consistent with the framework of Digital India. This would enable the government to extend services and benefits to citizens. Our laws should benchmark a focused approach, ease of implementation, and comprehensibility. The law on personal data should incorporate global best practices. Such law should also be rooted in the realities of our vibrant digital economy that is enabling development for all.



Ashwini Vaishnaw

Ashwini Vaishnaw is Union minister for electronics and IT, communication, and railways

The views expressed are personal

Lumpy skin disease alarm in Y'nagar, 22 head of cattle dead, 4,705 infected

18 teams formed to spread awareness, guide livestock farmers to tackle outbreak

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

YAMUNANAGAR, AUGUST 7

As many as 22 head of cattle have died of lumpy skin disease in the past six days in Yamunanagar district.

Besides, as many as 4,705 head of cattle (mostly cross-breed cows) have been infected with this viral disease.

According to information, the disease has been reported from 275 villages — 120 of Radaur, 80 of Jagadhri and 75 of Bilaspur subdivision — of the district. The highest deaths have been reported from Jagadhri subdivision (11), followed by Radaur (10). However, the death rate is low in Bilaspur subdivision, where only one casualty has been reported after the outbreak of the disease.

Also, 2,755 head of cattle were found infected with the disease in Radaur subdivision, followed by Jagadhri (1,357) and Bilaspur (593). As per the information, the first case of lumpy skin disease was reported in Ghilaur village of the Radaur area in mid-July and the first death was in Sudhail village of the district on August 2.

The disease outbreak has led to stress among dairy



A cow infected with lumpy skin disease in Karnal. TRIBUNE PHOTO

DOS & DON'TS TO BE KEPT IN MIND

“ Besides paying special attention to sanitation, the dairy farmers should isolate the infected cattle immediately. The disposal of the dead animals should be done properly by burying the carcass in pits. Dr Satbir Singh, SDO, JAGADHRI & BILASPUR, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY DEPARTMENT

farmers. “With the spread of the disease, the milk yield is reducing. Besides, the death toll is also increasing. It is difficult to buy cattle for a dairy farmer as the rates of milch variety are skyrocketing at the moment,” said a dairy farmer.

When contacted, Dr Satbir Singh, SDO, Jagadhri and Bilaspur subdivisions, Animal Husbandry Department, said, “In all, 18 teams

have been formed. These teams are visiting villages to give medicines to sick animals and to spread awareness and guide dairy farmers to tackle the disease.”

He said the disposal of the dead animals should be done properly by burying the carcasses and digging pits. “Also, the milk produced by the infected cattle is safe for human intake, but it should be boiled before use.”

Scare in Karnal too, 15 cases reported

KARNAL, AUGUST 7

Several animals, particularly cattle, are showing symptoms of lumpy skin disease (LSD) in the district.

The Animal Husbandry Department has claimed that only 15 cases have been reported so far, but sources said the number was higher than the reported.

“The cases are pouring in every day. Trend says that mainly cows are getting infected with the virus and buffaloes have a marginal infection rate,” a veterinary expert said, adding that the number could get higher in the coming days.

Meanwhile, no death has been reported due to this virus in the district, but the disease spread among bovine, livestock farmers are a worried lot as they are suffering losses.

“My two cows have been infected with this virus and I am worried about the health of the remaining cattle at my farm. I have isolated the infected cattle and started their treatment,”

Advisory issued

said a farmer.

Dr Dharmendra Kumar, Deputy Director, Animal Husbandry, said 15 cases had been detected in the district. An advisory has been issued to the farmers.

“The farmers should start the treatment of the infected cattle after they show symptoms like fever, discharge from eyes and nose, salivation from mouth, soft blisters like nodules on body, drop in milk production and reduction in feed intake,” he said, adding that “it is a contagious disease and spreads easily through mosquito, ticks and flies”.

He further said dairy farmers need not panic and should abide by the recommendations of the department to keep the animals hygienic. Dr Kumar advised the farmers to sanitise livestock sheds by eliminating vector by spraying insecticides and disinfectants. “They must use mosquito net for the safety of animals.” — TNS



Biological Agri Solutions Association of India

Lumpy skin disease hits cattle in Kangra, Una

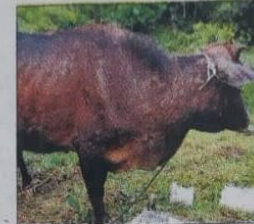
OUR CORRESPONDENT

UNA/NURPUR, AUGUST 7

Residents of the state are alarmed as lumpy skin disease (LSD) is spreading in the areas bordering Punjab, where the infection is growing at an alarming rate. A spike in the number of cases was witnessed in Una district today as 54 new cases were recorded from 20 more villages. A cattle head has succumbed to the infection in the district.

In Una, 101 cattle heads had been infected by the disease in 47 villages, said Dr Rakesh Bhatti, Senior Veterinary Officer at the Una Veterinary Polyclinic, who is also the District Nodal Officer for LSD. He said LSD had been reported in three cattle shelters located at Tatehra in Gagret sub-division, Beetan in Haroli sub-division and Kotla Kalan in Una sub-division.

In Kangra district, 12 cases were reported in Indora sub-division till Saturday. The first case in the sub-division was reported four days ago



An infected cow in Indora, Kangra.

NO SPECIFIC VACCINE

“ While there is no specific vaccine for LSD, the vaccine used to immunise goats against the goatpox disease works for cows and buffaloes for this disease too, as the causative virus is almost the same. Dr Rakesh Bhatti, UNA DISTRICT NODAL OFFICER, LSD

at Raja Khasa village. It soon spread to the surrounding gram panchayats.

The department Deputy Director, Sanjiv Dhiman, said a team from Veterinary Polyclinic, Shahpur, collected blood samples of five infected animals on August 5. These had been sent to the

ICAR-National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, he added.

To combat the growing disease, the department may soon launch a vaccination drive. Dr Bhatti said while there is no specific vaccine for LSD, the vaccine used to immunise goats against the goatpox disease works in cows and buffaloes for LSD since the causative virus is almost same. He informed that 10,000 vials of the goatpox vaccine have been requisitioned from the state directorate.

The department in Kangra has also sprung into action. “To effectively check the infection, the department has placed an order to procure vaccination doses for 55,000 animals in the district. Once it's delivered, we will launch a special vaccination drive,” Dhiman said. He urged the farmers not to panic and take preventive measures such as regular cleaning of cow sheds, and isolating cattle if the disease's symptoms appear.

Rajya Sabha MP Chadha launches helpline, seeks suggestions from public

RUCHIKA M KHANNA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, AUGUST 7

In what seemingly seems an attempt to assert his authority in Punjab, Aam Aadmi Party's Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha on Sunday released a number on which Punjabis can "suggest" issues they want him to raise in Parliament.

The announcement comes close on the heels of a meeting of party MLAs called by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann last week. Chadha, who otherwise is present in all important party meetings, was in Delhi the day this meeting was called by the CM. Since no minister or any other officer was present in that meeting of the CM with party MLAs, it was again viewed in political circles as the CM's attempt to come out of the shadow of his party's political bosses.

Both CM Mann and those

RAISE YOUR ISSUES HERE

- After releasing the helpline number 9910944444, Chadha said through this number, people of Punjab can send their suggestions and feedback on the issues they wish should be raised in Parliament.
- People can also share videos or documents through WhatsApp on this number



THREE CRORE PUNJABIS ON HIS MIND

“The aim is to seek suggestions and address the concerns of three crore Punjabis, whose voice is rarely heard in Parliament. I will be the medium through which the people of Punjab can voice their concerns. I vow to consider every suggestion that we receive on this helpline. Raghav Chadha, AAP MP



close to Chadha have denied that there is any rift between the two leaders in the wake of resignation by former AG Anmol Rattan Singh Sidhu. While the CM categorically said rumours of a rift between him and Chadha were being spread by political rivals in AAP,

those close to Chadha, too, dismissed these as baseless political speculation.

Party insiders, however, say that though there was no rift, a fine balance of power was being created between the two leaders by the party top brass, so as to avoid any centralisation of power.

It may be mentioned that it was exactly a month ago that the Punjab Government's Department of General Administration had announced that a temporary Advisory Committee would be set up. It was believed that Chadha would be the chairperson of this committee. This had then led to a widespread political mudslinging, with the Opposition parties accusing the CM of handing over the affairs of the state to his political bosses.

A writ was also filed in the Punjab and Haryana High Court challenging this appointment, but this was disposed of with the direction to the state government to decide on a representation by the petitioner in this regard. Inquiries made by *The Tribune* reveal that to date, the notification of this appointment has not been issued by the state government.



Biological Agri Solutions Association of India