

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Out of pocket expenditure (OOPE) as a share of total health expenditure and foreign aid for health has both come down as per the findings of the National Health Accounts (NHA) estimates for India for 201718 released on Monday by Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan. As a share of total health expenditure, the OOPE has come down to 48.8% in 2017 18 from 64.2% in 201314. Even in the case of per capita OOPE, there has been a decline from ₹2,336 to ₹2,097 between 201314 and 201718. “One of the factors attributing to this decline is the increase in utilisation and reduction in cost of services in Government health facilities. If we compare NHA 201415 and 201718, there has been a decline in OOPE for Government hospitals to the tune of 50%. This is the fifth consecutive NHA report produced by National Health Systems Resource Centre, designated as National Health Accounts Technical Secretariat in 2014 by the Health Ministry. The NHA estimates are prepared by using an accounting framework based on internationally accepted System of Health Accounts 2011, provided by the World Health Organization.

The Farm Laws Repeal Bill, 2021 was passed by both Houses of Parliament without debate amid protests by Opposition MPs on being denied a debate. On the first day of the winter session, as expected, the Government had listed the Farm Laws Repeal Bill, 2021 for taking back the three contentious farm laws — Farmers’ Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020 — but it was not clear that any debate would be allowed before the repeal. Opposition leaders had expressed apprehension even before the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meetings of both Houses that the Government would want to clear the Bill without discussion. No consensus on a discussion was reached in the BAC meeting.

Twelve Opposition members of the Rajya Sabha were suspended for the entire winter session for “unprecedented acts of misconduct”, and “unruly and violent behaviour” on August 11, the last day of the previous monsoon session. This is the first time RS

JAMES WEBB SPACE TELESCOPE

1.The James Webb Space Telescope is scheduled to be sent into orbit no earlier than December 2022. The Webb telescope is said to be the scientific successor to the Hubble and Spitzer space telescopes. It is NASA’s largest and most powerful space science telescope ever constructed. The telescope will Hunt for the unobserved formation of the first galaxies, and Look inside dust clouds where stars and planetary systems are forming today. The collected data will help find answers to questions in 4 areas of modern astronomy - First light, Assembly of galaxies, Birth of stars and protoplanetary systems, and Planetary systems and the origin of life.

2.The telescope carries 4 scientific instruments. **Near-Infrared Camera Near-Infrared Spectrograph Mid-Infrared Instrument Near-Infrared Imager and Slitless Spectrograph (To study the planetary systems)** Reason to carry infrared cameras -About 13.8 billion years after the Big Bang, our universe was extremely hot and filled with dense particles. As it slowly cooled, it gave rise to the building blocks - helium and hydrogen. Studies have suggested that the first stars formed about 150-200 million years after the Big Bang. Using infrared cameras, Webb is designed to help us find the answer to the questions like, “How did the Universe’s first light or stars look like?”

3.Redshift - **Light from the first stars and galaxies formed nearly 13.6 billion years ago will have to travel through space & time before reaching the telescope.** By the time this light reaches the telescope, its colour changes, and this phenomenon is called Redshift. The visible or UV light from the first stars and galaxies shift to redder wavelengths by the time the telescope sees it. For this reason, Webb is equipped with near- and mid-infrared instruments. By studying the earliest galaxies and comparing them to today’s galaxies we can understand the growth and evolution of galaxies.

4.Communication - The Webb telescope will send data to Earth via a high-frequency radio transmitter and large radio antennas part of the NASA Deep Space Network will receive these signals. It will be forwarded to the Webb Science and Operation Center at the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, Maryland, USA.

CORTICOSTEROIDS FOR MIS-C

1.The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends using Corticosteroids for treating children who developed multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) after being exposed to the novel COVID-19 infection. Introduction of corticosteroids along with supportive care resulted in a more effective treatment than either intravenous immunoglobulin plus supportive care or supportive care alone. Treatment was also found to be effective in treating children with Kawasaki disease in association to COVID-19.

2.Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome **Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS-C) is rare but serious conditions where children with COVID-19 develop inflammation that affects the various organs of the body.** **Symptoms** - Stomach pain, bloodshot eyes, diarrhea, dizziness or light-headedness (signs of low blood pressure), skin rash and vomiting.

3.The patient develops heart problems, the severity of which may determine the line of treatment. In severe cases, children need intensive care and pacemakers. Although MIS-C is a serious condition, with the right medical care, children with this condition recover. **Diagnosis** - Blood tests, Chest x-ray, Heart ultrasound and Abdominal ultrasound.

RIVER CITIES ALLIANCE

1.River Cities Alliance, which is a collaborated effort of National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and National Institute for Urban Affairs (NIUA), was launched recently. The River Cities Alliance (RCA) is a dedicated platform for river cities in India to ideate, discuss and exchange information for sustainable management of Urban Rivers such as, Minimizing their water

members have been suspended for misconduct during the previous session.

The Government does not collect information on cryptocurrency or Bitcoin transactions in the country and has no plans to recognise Bitcoin as a currency, the Finance Ministry told Parliament on Monday. Responding to separate queries from Lok Sabha MPs on the booming trade in cryptocurrency in the country and whether the Government has legally permitted their exchanges to do business, the Ministry said “cryptocurrencies are unregulated in India” and it “does not collect information” on their trading. RBI raises concerns Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has been raising serious concerns about cryptocurrency in the context of macroeconomic and financial stability and has called for more “well informed” public discussions to understand the “far deeper issues” involved. The Government has already said it plans to introduce a Bill to regulate cryptocurrency. It might possibly ban all private cryptocurrencies and facilitate the creation of the official digital currency, in the ongoing winter session of Parliament.

The Taliban asked for help in keeping Afghanistan’s airports running in weekend talks with EU officials that also raised “grave concern” about the humanitarian situation in their country, according to an EU statement late on Sunday. Both sides sent senior officials to the Qatari capital Doha for the talks, which happened just ahead of two weeks of negotiations between the U.S. and the Taliban due to start on Monday, also in Doha. The EU’s European External Action Service (EEAS) said in its statement that “the dialogue does not imply recognition by the EU of the interim (Taliban) government but is part of EU’s operational engagement, in the interest of the EU and the Afghan people”.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has superseded the board of directors of Reliance Capital Ltd. (RCL), promoted by Anil Ambani’s Reliance Group. The regulatory action is “in view of the defaults by RCL in meeting the various payment obligations to its creditors and serious governance concerns which the board has not been able to address effectively”, the RBI said in a circular.

The net direct tax collection grew almost 68% during the April 1-November 23 period to more than ₹6.92 lakh crore, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said on Monday. “The Net Direct Tax

footprint, Reducing impacts on river and water bodies, Capitalizing on natural, intangible, architectural heritage and associated services and Develop self-sufficient, self-sustainable water resources through recycle, reuse strategy.

2.This Alliance will focus on 3 broad themes - Networking, Capacity Building and Technical Support. The Alliance cities will work towards adopting and localizing national policies and instruments with key river-related directions. They will prepare their Urban River Management Plans and develop city-specific sectoral strategies that are required for sustainable urban river management.

3.Benefits - The Alliance gives opportunities to these cities to strengthen governance aspects for river cities. It improves their liveability to attract external economic investments, access state of the art knowledge and frameworks. It provides an opportunity to serve as the site for unique demonstration projects which will be implemented by NIUA and NMCG.

POPULATION SLOWDOWN IS TRIUMPH OF INDIA’S PEOPLE

1.The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare’s National Family Health Survey (NFHS- 5) data on health and family welfare issues has given rise to a flurry of chest-thumping declarations.

2.What are the survey’s findings about population? TFR is the average number of children born to a woman during her lifetime whereas Replacement Fertility Rate is the level of fertility at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next. The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has declined from 2.2 to 2.0 at the national level, even below the replacement rate of 2.1. According to the United Nations, if women have on an average 2.1 children each over a sustained period of time, the population neither grows nor declines and thus stabilises. The credit for the drop in India’s TFR from almost 6 in the 1950s to its current levels must go to the people of India, along with successive governments, especially the bureaucracy. This drop is a sign of changing aspirations, especially among women, who are seeing the wisdom of having fewer children.

3.What efforts have been taken for population stabilisation? India’s family planning programme started in 1951 is among the world’s oldest. The campaigns sought to promote smaller families but there was little progress as India continued to see rapid population growth. In 1975, the desperation to control the population took a dark turn because a widespread mandatory sterilisation programme saw thousands of vasectomies, many of which were forced. These sterilisations became a major issue in the 1977 general elections leading to voting out of Congress government.

4.This was the the first time a strong evidence of a clear popular rejection of a coercive population-control policy was witnessed. In 1994, at the International Conference on Population Development (ICPD), 179 governments, including India, recognised and committed to a rights-based approach to family planning. The ICPD inspired India’s 2000 National Population Policy. The implementation picked pace when the National Rural Health Mission, now part of the larger National Health Mission, was launched in 2005.

5.How the family planning services changed its course? In 2016, the Supreme Court in 2016 asked the government to put a stop to sterilisation camps and focus on providing temporary methods of contraception. Increased reach of the media has changed women’s aspirations, and their desire for greater control over their lives. Girls’ education has a direct co-relation with a decrease in fertility. According to NFHS data, women who had no schooling had the highest TFR of 3.06, as compared to women with 12 or more years of education who had a TFR of 1.71. The government needs to play a pivotal role and invest in education, health and creating economic opportunities for young people. The government must provide health and life-skills education at an early age along with ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services.

POSHAN GYAN

1.It is a national digital repository on health and nutrition. Launched by NITI Aayog, in partnership with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, Ashoka University.

2.The Poshan Gyan repository is conceptualized as a resource, enabling search of communication materials on 14 thematic areas of health and nutrition across diverse languages, media

Collection figures for the FY202122 as on 23.11.2021 are at ₹6,92,833.6 crores showing a growth of 67.93% and 27.29% over the net collection figures for the corresponding period FY202021 and FY 201920," he said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

types, target audiences and sources.