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### 1. Funds for Beti Bachao Andolan used in advertisement ( Dec. 11, 2021 )

According to a report submitted in Parliament on 9th December, by the committee on **Empowerment of Women**, out of a total of **Rs 446.72 crore released under the scheme between 2016 and 2019, 78.91 percent was spent on media advocacy**, and not on sectoral intervention on health and education for women.

- The committee is chaired by **Heena Vijaykumar Gavit** and the report is titled **“Empowerment of women through education with special reference to Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao(BBBP).”**
- Committee found that the total utilization under the scheme was also poor.
- Since the inception of **BBBP in 2014-15 till 2019-20**, the **total budgetary allocation** under the scheme was **₹848 crore**, excluding the COVID-19 stricken financial year of 2020-21.
- During this period, **₹622.48 crore was released to the States** but only **25.13% of the funds, i.e. ₹156.46 crore**, had been spent.

#### **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) Yojana**

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao is a campaign of the Government of India that aims to generate awareness and improve the efficiency of welfare services intended for girls in India.

- The scheme was launched with an initial funding of ₹100 crore (US\$13 million).
- It mainly targets the clusters in **Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Bihar** and **Delhi**.

Launched on: **22nd January 2015** by **PM Narendra Modi**

Related Ministries:

**Ministry of Women and Child Development**

**Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**

**Ministry of Education**

### 2. No proposal under consideration to scrap Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) ( Dec. 11, 2021 )

Stating the Government of India position, Law Minister Kiren Rijiju informed the Lok Sabha that the section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code(IPC) 1860 which deals with sedition in sub-judice before the Supreme Court and the government has no intention of scrapping the section.

**Sedition law in India**

**Section 124 A which defines sedition was introduced by the British in 1870 by amending the Indian Penal Code (IPC) 1860.**

**It defines sedition as :**

"Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the Government established by law in [India], shall be punished with [imprisonment for life], to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added."

- The law was used by the British to target the freedom fighters like Mahatma Gandhi , Bal Gangadhar Tilak etc and to crush the freedom struggle .
- After Independence there was demand to scrap the section as it was against the spirit of democracy and liberty.
- In 1961 the Punjab High Court held that the sedition law violated the freedom of speech guaranteed under article 19 and declared it unconstitutional.
- In the Kedar Nath Vs State of Bihar 1962 supreme court upheld the constitutional validity of the section 124 A.

**3. Nagaland Government demands withdrawal of AFSPA from Nagaland ( Dec. 6, 2021 )**

- Nagaland Chief Minister Mr. Neiphiu Rio has demanded the withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special powers Act from the state following the death of 14 civilians in the Army operation against the Naga insurgents in the Mon district of Nagaland on 4 December 2021.Nagaland's Mon district
- Nagaland's Mon district borders Myanmar from where members of the NSCN (Khaplang-Yung Aung) are said to carry out hit-and-run operations.
- The Konyak Union, the apex body of the Konyak Naga Tribe from the Mon district of Nagaland has also demanded the repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act or, AFSPA, from the entire Northeast of India and withdrawal of Assam Rifles from the Mon district of Nagaland .
- The Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma has also demanded the withdrawal of AFSPA from Manipur .
- The Nagaland government has two member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate the circumstances leading to the killing of the civilians by the armed forces.

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#### **4. Opening day of Summit for Democracy ( Dec. 10, 2021 )**

**Theme of the Summit: “combating authoritarianism, fighting corruption and promoting human rights”**

It has been organised by the State Department of the United States.

While inaugurating the summit the US President Joe Biden said that

**“Democracy doesn't happen by accident. We have to renew it with each generation,”** in a message, which will bring together leaders of 100 countries, civil society and private sector representatives.

Sitting beside his Secretary of State **Antony Blinken**, and addressing over **50 Countries**, **Biden** said, “We have to stand for justice and the rule of law for free speech, free assembly, a free press, freedom of religion, for all the inherent human rights of every individual,”.

- Biden announced plans for the U.S. to spend up to \$424 millions around the world to support **Independent media, anti-corruption work and more.**

Indian Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi also participated in the summit virtually .

The PM said that the “four pillars of Indian democratic governments” are “**sensitivity, accountability, participation and reform orientation**”.

Major countries like Russia, China, Saudi Arabia have not been invited to the summit.

Pakistan was invited to the summit but it chose to back off from the summit over the fear that it will offend its close ally China.

##### **Summit for Democracy**

This is a virtual summit hosted by the United States of America to “renew democracy at home and confront autocracy abroad”.

- 111 nations were invited to join this Summit Virtually.
- Dates : 9-10 December 2021

#### **5. Rajya Sabha passes Pharma Education Bill ( Dec. 10, 2021 )**

1. Rajya Sabha passed the **National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (Amendment) Bill, 2021** which amends the **National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research Act, 1998**.
2. **It has already been passed by the Lok Sabha .**
3. The **1998 Act** established the **National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Mohali, Punjab**, and declared it as an **Institution of National Importance**.

4. The Bill declares six additional National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research as Institutions of National Importance. These institutes are located in:

**(i) Ahmedabad,**

**(ii) Hajipur,**

**(iii) Hyderabad,**

**(iv) Kolkata,**

**(v) Guwahati,**

**(vi) Raebareli.**

- The **Bill provides for a Council** to coordinate the activities among the institutes under the Bill to ensure the development of pharmaceutical education and research and maintenance of standards.
- An Institution of National Importance refers to an autonomous institute established under an Act, with the power to hold examinations, grant degrees, diplomas and other academic distinctions or titles.
- **These institutes of national importance receive funding from the central government.**

## **6. Government of India extends PMGAY-G till March 2024 ( Dec. 10, 2021 )**

The Government of India has extended the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin(PMAY-G) beyond March 2021 till March 2024 so as to provide financial assistance for the construction of the remaining 155.75 lakh houses under the scheme. .

The scheme was launched on 20 November 2016 to 2 crore 95 lakh houses by 2022.

Out of this 155.75 lakh houses are to be constructed and it will require Rs 2,17,257 crore, with a central share of Rs 1,25,106 crore and a state share of Rs 73,475 crores .

The continuation of the scheme till March 2024 will ensure that the remaining 155.75 lakh households within the overall target of 2.95 crore houses would be provided assistance for construction of pucca houses with basic amenities to achieve the objective of 'housing for all' in rural areas.

As of November 29 this year, 1.65 crore PMAY-G houses have been constructed out of the total target of 2.95 crore houses.

Under the PMAY-G yojana the cost of the scheme is shared in a 60 :40 ratio between the Central Government and the State Government .

In the Hilly states, Union Territory and in the North- Eastern States the ratio is 90:10 between Centre and States.

## **7. International flights to be resumed after 31st Jan. 2022 ( Dec. 10, 2021 )**

Directorate General of Civil Aviation announced on 09th December that full resumption of international flights stands postponed at least till January 31,2022.

**Highlights:**

- Authority has decided to extend suspension of scheduled commercial international passenger services to/ from India till 2359 hours IST of 31st January, 2022”.
- However, the flights under the air-bubble agreement with 32 countries would continue as before.
- Travelers from Singapore will no longer be subjected to on-arrival RT-PCR test and 7 days mandatory quarantine after the government removed Singapore from its list of “at-risk” countries.
- The Union Health Ministry updated the list of at-risk countries that now includes those in Europe including UK, South Africa, Brazil, Botswana, China, Ghana, Mauritius, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Hong Kong and Israel.

Unlike several countries like Germany, France, the UK, US, Canada and UAE that have had an air bubble with India during the pandemic allowing eligible categories of people to travel, **Singapore and India created a vaccinated travel lane from November 29, 2021. The arrangement has started with six daily flights from Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai and Singapore Changi.**

**8. IAF has ordered tri-service investigation into chopper crash ( Dec. 10, 2021 )**

**The Indian Air Force (IAF)** has ordered a **tri-service investigation led by Air Marshal Manavendra Singh, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief Training Command**, in the **Mi 17 V5 chopper crash in Tamil Nadu** on 8th December in which **Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat, his wife Madhulika Rawat and 11 officials of the Armed Forces were killed.**

Black box of the ill-fated chopper has been recovered by the investigation team.

**What is a tri-service inquiry?**

It is a kind of an inquiry, in which the representatives of three armed forces - **Army, Navy and Air Force**--will be included..

- The inquiry will also include a thorough investigation of the **black box** and the **remaining debris of the helicopter.**
- Such kind of an inquiry includes four important points: **Human error, mechanical error, weather conditions and terror attack."**

Normally a chopper crash inquiry is done by the Air Force officials only, but since the list of deceased includes the CDS, a tri-service inquiry has been ordered.

**Black Box**

A black box is a device (Similar to a hard disk) that is installed in aircraft to help investigators in case of unfortunate accidents.

- It is a highly protective machine that records all flight data and conversations in the cockpit. Apart from recording cockpit conversations, the recorder also holds information on automatic computer announcements, radio traffic, discussions with the crew and announcements to the passengers.
- There are two types of flight recording devices:
  - Flight Data Recorder (FDR) that stores all the recent history of the flight through the recording of dozens of parameters collected multiple times per second
  - Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) that records cockpit sound including pilot conversations.

**Why is it called Black Box?**

The term “black box” was first used by the British during World War Two and referred to the secret development of radar and electronic navigational aids in British aircraft. These secretive devices were housed in non-reflective black boxes.

- The black is usually of **bright orange colour**, which makes it easier to spot amid the wrangled mess of the crash.

While crashes can happen anywhere both on land and over seas, the flight recorder is designed in a way that it can be recovered from underwater locations as well. The device sends out a signal on contact with saltwater that can be picked up within a radius of about two kilometres. The device can withstand water pressure found in depths of up to 6,000 meters.

**Double wrapped in a corrosion-resistant stainless-steel container with high-temperature insulation, the black box is designed to withstand the harshest crashes -- on the land and seas.**

**9. India amongst the most unequal countries in the world ( Dec. 9, 2021 )**

As per the 'World Inequality Report 2022' by **World Inequality Lab**, which **aims to promote research** on global inequality dynamics., India is among the most unequal countries in the world, with rising poverty and an 'affluent elite'.

**Highlights of the report:**

- **Distribution of Wealth:**
  - The average national income of the Indian adult population is Rs 2,04,200. Here, the bottom 50% earns Rs 53,610 while the top 10% earns Rs 11,66,520, over 20 times more. In India, the top 10% and top 1% hold 57% and 22% of the total national income respectively while the share of the bottom 50% has gone down to 13%.
  - The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are the most unequal regions in the world, whereas Europe has the lowest inequality levels.

- **Gender inequality:**

- in India is also considerably on the higher end of the spectrum. The share of female labour income share in India is equal to 18% which is significantly lower than the average in Asia (21%, excluding China) & is among the lowest in the world. Although, the number is slightly higher than the average share in the Middle East (15%).
- **Women's share of total incomes** from work (labour income) was about 30% in 1990 and is less than 35% now

- **Wealthy Countries Poor Governments:**

- Countries across the world have become richer over the past 40 years, but their governments have become significantly poorer.

- **Impact of COVID crisis:**

- The Covid-19 pandemic and the economic crisis that followed hit all world regions, but it hit them with varying intensity.
- Europe, Latin America, and South and Southeast Asia recorded the largest drops in national income in 2020 (between -6% and -7.6%) while East Asia (where the pandemic began) succeeded in stabilizing its 2020 income at the level of 2019.

### **World Inequality Lab**

- It is a research laboratory focusing on the study of inequality worldwide. The WIL hosts the World Inequality Database, the most extensive public database on global inequality dynamics.
- It gathers social scientists committed to helping everyone understand the drivers of inequality worldwide through evidence-based research.
- **Missions:**
  - The extension of the World Inequality Database.
  - The publication of working papers, reports and methodological handbooks.
  - The dissemination in academic circles and public debates.

## **10. UK, Canada joins diplomatic boycott of Beijing Winter Games ( Dec. 9, 2021 )**

Canada will join the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia in a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics over human rights concerns, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on December 8.

### **Highlights:**

- The United States was the first to announce the boycott, saying its government officials would not attend February's Beijing Olympics because of China's human rights "atrocities".