

NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS

(17.06.2024)

*(Read only those articles which are discussed here and it will be enough
The Hindu & Indian express is covered)*

ON FM'S TABLE AHEAD OF BUDGET IN JULY THIRD WEEK

Govt looks at tax rate cut to boost demand, trigger private investment

Income limit at which tax kicks in may be raised beyond Rs 3 lakh a year

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 16

AS THE INDIAN economy grapples with the problem of flagging consumption, policymakers in the government are in favour of rationalising the existing income tax structure, especially at lower income levels.

According to two government officials *The Indian Express* spoke with, it is likely that tax rate cuts for those earning less may likely take precedence over freebies or

excessive welfare spending given the focus on fiscal consolidation.

The tax cuts may be a more efficient measure to enhance disposable income, which in turn would result in higher consumption, and give a fillip to economic activities, the officials said.

A boost to consumption is being seen as crucial for reviving demand, which in turn is central to restarting the investment cycle, especially rekindling private capital expenditure in consumer-focused sectors, an official explained. Of course, this could also

PFCE IN GDP		
	Value in GDP	Growth rate
2021-22	87,32,573	12%
2022-23	93,23,825	7%
2023-24	96,99,214	4%

Private Final Consumption Expenditure, an indicator of consumption; absolute numbers in Rs cr; source MoSPI

add to GST collections, he said.

"This way (tax rationalisation), you will unlock consumption. There would be greater disposable income, means greater

EXPLAINED Why not higher welfare spend

WHILE WELFARE spending comes with leakages, a tax rate cut at the lower income levels often leads to higher consumption. It boosts demand, which is critical for kickstarting investment, especially by the private sector, which has remained moribund for years now.

consumption, greater economic activities, more GST collection. So you may be actually activating more direct and indirect revenue

collection. It would also mean more direct tax collection, also for corporations, because they would be having more income to report," another official said.

The discussions have taken note that the rise in marginal income tax is "too steep" in the existing tax structure. "Right now, in the new tax system, your first slab of 5 per cent starts at Rs 3 lakh. By the time it goes to Rs 15 lakh, which is five times, the marginal tax rate jumps from 5 per cent to 30 per cent — a six fold jump. So while income goes up five times, the marginal tax rate goes up six times, which is quite steep," the official said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

How Tax Cuts Boost Demand and Private Investment

Tax cuts are a common policy tool used by governments to stimulate economic growth by boosting demand and encouraging private investment. Here's an explanation of how tax cuts can achieve these goals:

1. Boosting Consumer Demand

Disposable Income Increase:

- **Mechanism:** When personal income taxes are reduced, individuals have more disposable income. This increase in after-tax income allows consumers to spend more on goods and services.

- **Impact:** Higher consumer spending boosts aggregate demand in the economy, which can lead to increased production, higher employment, and overall economic growth.

Consumption Multiplier Effect:

- **Mechanism:** The initial increase in consumer spending can have a multiplier effect. As businesses experience higher demand, they may increase their orders for supplies and raw materials, leading to further spending by suppliers.
- **Impact:** This cascading effect amplifies the initial boost in demand, leading to more significant overall economic growth.

Consumer Confidence:

- **Mechanism:** Tax cuts can also improve consumer confidence. When people feel more financially secure, they are more likely to make larger purchases, such as homes and cars, and to spend more on discretionary items.
- **Impact:** Increased consumer confidence can sustain higher levels of spending over time, supporting ongoing economic expansion.

2. Encouraging Private Investment

Increased Business Profits:

- **Mechanism:** Corporate tax cuts increase the after-tax profits of businesses. Higher profitability enhances companies' cash flow and their ability to finance new investments without relying on external borrowing.
- **Impact:** With more available capital, businesses are likely to invest in new projects, equipment, technology, and expansion activities, stimulating economic growth.

Improved Investment Returns:

- **Mechanism:** Lower corporate taxes increase the return on investment for businesses. Higher expected returns make more investment projects viable and attractive to companies.
- **Impact:** This can lead to increased capital expenditure, which not only boosts economic growth but also can lead to innovations and productivity improvements.

Business Confidence:

- **Mechanism:** Tax cuts can improve overall business sentiment. When businesses are confident about their financial future and the economic environment, they are more likely to undertake long-term investments.
- **Impact:** Higher business confidence can result in sustained investment and expansion activities, contributing to job creation and economic growth.

Enhanced Competitiveness:

- **Mechanism:** Reducing taxes can make a country more attractive for both domestic and foreign investors. Lower corporate taxes can lead to higher returns on investment compared to other countries with higher tax rates.
- **Impact:** Increased foreign direct investment (FDI) and the expansion of domestic businesses can further drive economic growth and development.

Examples and Empirical Evidence

United States:

- **2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act:** This Act reduced the corporate tax rate from 35% to 21%. Following the tax cuts, there was a notable increase in corporate earnings and business investments. Some companies expanded their operations and increased capital expenditures, contributing to economic growth.

India:

- **2019 Corporate Tax Cuts:** The Indian government reduced the corporate tax rate from 30% to 22% for existing companies and to 15% for new manufacturing companies. This policy aimed to boost investment in the manufacturing sector, stimulate economic growth, and make India an attractive destination for foreign investment.

Potential Limitations and Considerations

Short-term vs. Long-term Effects:

- **Short-term Boost:** While tax cuts can provide an immediate boost to demand and investment, the long-term effects depend on various factors, including how the tax cuts are financed and the overall economic context.

- **Budget Deficits:** If tax cuts lead to significant budget deficits, governments might have to cut spending or increase borrowing, which can offset the stimulative effects of the tax cuts.

Income Distribution:

- **Equity Concerns:** Tax cuts, especially those benefiting higher-income individuals or corporations, may exacerbate income inequality. Ensuring that tax cuts are inclusive and benefit lower and middle-income groups can enhance their effectiveness in boosting overall demand.

Supply-side Constraints:

- **Capacity Limits:** If the economy is already operating near full capacity, tax cuts may lead to inflationary pressures rather than real growth. In such cases, targeted tax cuts and complementary policies (like infrastructure spending) might be more effective.

Conclusion

Tax cuts can effectively boost consumer demand and private investment by increasing disposable income, enhancing business profitability, and improving confidence among consumers and businesses. However, the overall impact of tax cuts depends on the broader economic context, how they are implemented, and how any resultant budget deficits are managed. When designed and executed thoughtfully, tax cuts can play a significant role in stimulating economic growth and development.

SWISS PEACE SUMMIT

Flagging need for Russia to be in, India opts out of Ukraine declaration

Only options acceptable to both parties can lead to abiding peace: New Delhi

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, JUNE 16

WITH RUSSIA not attending the Swiss summit on peace in Ukraine and calling it a "waste of time", India decided to not sign the joint communique by saying that "only those options acceptable to both parties can lead to abiding peace".

Representing India at the two-day summit that concluded



MEA's Secretary (West) Pavan Kapoor during the Summit in Switzerland on Sunday.

Pradhan Mantri

Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

To provide solar energy to one lakh poor families of Haryana, subsidy of up to **Rs 1.10 lakh** will be given by the Central and State Government

<p>Beneficiaries with annual income of up to Rs. 1.80 lakh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Up to 2 kW, subsidy of up to Rs. 60,000 will be given by the Central GovernmentAdditional subsidy of Rs. 50,000 by the State GovernmentFree production of up to 300 units on an average monthly basis	<p>Beneficiaries with annual income from Rs. 1.80 to Rs. 3 lakh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Up to 2 kW, subsidy of up to Rs. 60,000 will be given by the Central GovernmentAdditional subsidy of Rs. 20,000 by the State GovernmentFree production of up to 300 units on an average monthly basis
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AAKASH JOSHI

HIGH COST OF CONVENIENCE

Insensitive oath in Amazon warehouse shows there is no fair play in gig economy

THEY WANT YOU to think they care. As north India suffers a debilitating heatwave, the apps that have made the lives of the better-off so much easier, implore customers to offer delivery “boys” a glass of water. For men and women chasing targets, rushing from home to home so that we do not have to step out of our air-conditioned cocoons, it is a fair ask.

But what are the Blinkits, Zomatos, Zeptos and Swiggys of the world doing for their “partners”? In Delhi, at least six of these partners confirmed that they do not get hazard pay, nor any help from the companies that use their labour as the basis for their much-touted “innovation”. But then, our homegrown startups are just learning from the best in the world.

Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon and now body-builder and space taxi provider for his rich pals, is worth nearly \$200 billion (or about Rs 1.7 lakh crore). A worker at Amazon’s warehouse often earns less than Rs 11,000 per month. At that pittance, several workers at its five warehouses in Manesar, Haryana, have been made to take an oath that they will not “drink water” or use the toilet unless they meet their daily targets — a demand that is practically impossible if labour laws around workday lengths and timings are followed. Amazon, of course, is notorious for its inhuman treatment of labour, including in the US. But it, at least, has employees. Others just have “partners”.

A combination of guaranteed deliveries, quick sorting and sourcing and the abundance of a vast army of labour to carry out this task

What allows companies to keep workers casual, celebrating their ‘partners’ for PR purposes while ignoring protests demanding basic rights? In his book, ‘What Went Wrong with Capitalism’, investor Ruchir Sharma looks at America and finds, in essence, that the consolidation of a few companies and the socialisation of losses (through bailouts and bad regulation) and inequality — between companies and within society — is a major culprit.

underpins India’s delivery-led “innovation”. Delivery partners are not employees — they have no job security, no recourse when mistreated, and no benefits. This “partnership” model has been used to the greatest effect by Uber, globally. It undercuts labour costs, while forcing (the jargon MBAs use is “incentivising”) “partners” to work longer hours — driven not by a boss but by the sunk costs of purchasing vehicles, and other investments made to become “gig workers”.

What allows companies to keep workers casual, celebrating their “partners” for PR purposes while ignoring protests demanding basic rights? What makes it so easy for them to push people to the indignity of “oaths” that are dehumanising? In his book, *What Went Wrong with Capitalism*, investor Ruchir Sharma looks at America and finds, in essence, that the consolidation of a few companies and the socialisation of losses (through bailouts and bad regulation) and inequality — between companies and within society — is a major culprit.

Then, there’s the fact that many of the plutocrats of today are no Henry Ford. Like Bezos and Deepinder Goyal, Ford, too, took existing technologies and innovated on the process. And while neither Bezos nor Goyal “invented” GPS or basic programming languages, they did create sourcing and delivery infrastructure. Ford, however, insisted that a worker in his factory be paid enough to afford the product they were manufacturing. Can the same be said today? At Rs 11,000-13,000/month,

there are likely few Amazon products being delivered to those who have taken the “oath”. Such a wide gap between the purchasing power of the producer and the consumer does not bode well in the long term — politically, socially and even economically.

Third, India has an abundance of cheap labour. The desperation for any employment means that people will flock to whatever work is available. And that’s a crucial difference. Gig workers may have work, they do not have jobs. One argument — popular among economists of a certain stripe — is that some work is better than none. Issues of decency and dignity will be addressed with growth, that as the “pie gets bigger, wealth will trickle down”, and the market will fix all. This ignores the role of the state, and perhaps even society. Since the fight for the eight-hour workday in the late 19th century, it has been the norm that certain laws are put in place to ensure a lack of exploitation. That’s why dignity and equality find place in the Constitution as fundamental rights.

Finally, the impunity and apathy. The Amazon “oath” story will come and go, Bezos will continue to joyride in orbit. And “people like us” — unaware, perhaps, that our White-Collar jobs could become a “gig” at a whim — will make all the right noises at a party. Then, perhaps, you’ll crave an ice cream, or chilled coconut water. Delivered in 10 minutes.

Don’t forget to offer water.

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THE SKILL GAP

Andhra CM Chandrababu Naidu's call for a skill census is important, draws attention to a growing concern

SOON AFTER TAKING charge, Andhra Pradesh's new Chief Minister, N Chandrababu Naidu, announced a flurry of decisions such as an increase in pensions and revoking the Land Titling Act. Possibly the most noteworthy decision, however, has been the order for a skill census. On the campaign trail, Naidu had said that through a skill census, he would gauge the skill levels of people and compare it to the global skill requirements. "This will help us address the skill shortcomings and make people more employable. Thus, it will automatically lead to welfare," he said. There are many reasons why Naidu's call for a skill census should be welcomed.

For one, it brings the state of unemployment in Andhra Pradesh in sharp focus. While it is well-known that India has been facing considerable unemployment related stress, most of the attention is centred around the so-called BIMARU states such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. But data from the official Period Labour Force Survey for 2022-23 — the last full-year report — shows that Andhra Pradesh is worse-off than many such states. For instance, at 4.1 per cent, Andhra Pradesh has a significantly higher unemployment rate (for all aged 15 years and more) than not just the national average (3.2 per cent) but also many states like Bihar (3.9 per cent), UP (2.4 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (1.6 per cent). Moreover, the unemployment gets worse when one zeroes in on the youth cohort (15 to 29 years). Youth unemployment rate in Andhra was 15.7 per cent — much higher than the national average of 10 per cent as well as states like Bihar (13.9 per cent), UP (7 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (4.4 per cent) and Rajasthan (12.5 per cent). Further, data suggests that getting higher education doesn't seem to help matters. At 24 per cent, the unemployment rate among graduates in Andhra Pradesh was higher than Bihar (16.6 per cent), UP (11 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (9.3 per cent) and Rajasthan (23.1 per cent).

However, the unemployment crisis in India is not just about unemployment — it is also a crisis of unemployability. And this is not a secret. The 2015 policy of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship said: "Our country presently faces a dual challenge of paucity of highly trained workforce, as well as non-employability of large sections of the conventionally educated youth, who possess little or no job skills." The skill census is a step towards addressing, what a 2018 NCAER report calls, "India's skilling paradox": Dwindling opportunities in agriculture, much potential for jobs in manufacturing and services, but not enough people with the right skills. It will have important takeaways for course correction in the education system as well.

Another home for cheetahs

Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in western MP is set to become the second home for cheetahs in India. It has been described as 'perfect' cheetah habitat, but introducing the feline predator will come with its challenges

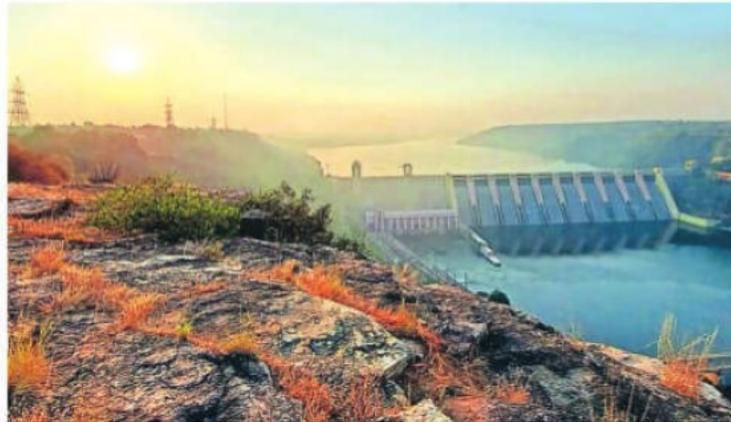
ANAND MOHAN J

BHOPAL, JUNE 16

THE GANDHI SAGAR Wildlife Sanctuary will be the second home for cheetahs in India, after the Kuno National Park. The Madhya Pradesh government has announced that it has completed its preparations for the ambitious project.

The final call on when the cheetahs will be imported from Namibia and South Africa will be made after the monsoons, during which the cats may be vulnerable to infection, especially with their winter coats on.

What makes Gandhi Sagar an ideal habitat for cheetahs?



A new way to predict El Niño, La Niña

ANJALI MARAR
BENGALURU, JUNE 16

HYDERABAD-BASED Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) has developed a new product to predict the emergence of El Niño and La Niña conditions — they are different phases of El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) — up to 15 months in advance. The product is known as the Bayesian Convolutional Neural Network (BCNN).

What is ENSO?

ENSO is a climate phenomenon which involves changes in the temperature of waters in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, coupled with fluctuations in the overlying atmosphere. It can alter the global atmospheric circulation, which, in turn, influences weather across the world.

ENSO occurs in irregular cycles of 2-7

years and has three different phases — warm (El Niño), cool (La Niña), and neutral. In the neutral phase, the eastern side of the Pacific Ocean (near the northwestern coast of South America) is cooler than the western side (near the Philippines and Indonesia). This is due to the prevailing wind systems that move from east to west, sweeping the warmer surface waters towards the Indonesian coast. The relatively cooler waters from below come up to replace the displaced water.

In the El Niño phase, however, wind systems weaken, leading to lesser displacement of warmer waters. As a result, the eastern side of the Pacific becomes warmer than usual. In the La Niña phase, the opposite happens.

What is BCNN?

The new product uses the latest technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), deep

learning, and machine learning (ML) to improve forecasts related to the ENSO phases.

The model's prediction relies on the fact that El Niño or La Niña are connected to the slow oceanic variations and their atmospheric coupling, which gives sufficient lead time to issue early forecasts. It calculates the Niño3.4 index value — used to determine the different phases of ENSO phases — and makes the forecast.

Why is BCNN significant?

There are largely two kinds of weather models used for forecasting. One is the statistical model, which generates forecasts based on various information sets received from different countries and regions. The other is the dynamic model, which involves a 3D mathematical simulation of the atmosphere done using high performance computers.

The BCNN, however, is a combination of the dynamic model with AI. This helps it fore-

cast the emergence of El Niño and La Niña conditions with a 15-month lead time — unlike other models which can give a prediction up to six to nine months in advance.

What were the challenges?

Typically, researchers need historical weather data — spanning several decades, and even centuries — to feed into models to generate forecasts. While rich data are available for land, there is a scarcity when it comes to seas and oceans. This gap has hampered the weather and climate prediction accuracy.

The INCOIS addressed the issue by taking data from historical runs (1850-2014 period) from the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project phases 5 and 6 (CMIP5 and CMIP6), thus augmenting the training dataset. CMIP is an experimental framework, which allows climate modellers to simulate various scenarios to test the past climate and project the future climate situations.

**EXPLAINED
SCIENCE**

El Niño and La Niña: Impact on India's Climate

El Niño and **La Niña** are climatic phenomena associated with variations in the temperature of the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. These variations have significant impacts on weather patterns across the globe, including in India.

El Niño

Definition: El Niño is characterized by the unusual warming of sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean.

Impact on India's Climate

1. Monsoon Disruption:

- **Weakened Monsoon:** El Niño often leads to weaker-than-normal monsoon rains in India. This happens because the warming of the Pacific Ocean affects atmospheric circulation patterns, reducing the moisture flow into the Indian subcontinent.
 - **Drought Conditions:** The reduction in monsoon rainfall can cause drought conditions, particularly in agricultural regions dependent on the monsoon for irrigation.
2. **Temperature Anomalies:**
 - **Higher Temperatures:** El Niño is associated with higher than average temperatures in India. This can exacerbate heatwaves and lead to uncomfortable and sometimes dangerous weather conditions.
 3. **Agricultural Impact:**
 - **Crop Yields:** Reduced rainfall and higher temperatures can negatively impact crop yields. Important crops like rice, wheat, and pulses can suffer, affecting food supply and farmer livelihoods.
 4. **Water Resources:**
 - **Water Scarcity:** Lower rainfall can lead to reduced water levels in reservoirs, rivers, and groundwater. This affects drinking water supply, hydropower generation, and irrigation.
 5. **Cyclonic Activity:**
 - **Decreased Cyclones:** The frequency of cyclones in the Bay of Bengal tends to decrease during El Niño years, which can reduce the risk of cyclone-related disasters.

La Niña

Definition: La Niña is characterized by the unusual cooling of sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean.

Impact on India's Climate

1. **Enhanced Monsoon:**
 - **Stronger Monsoon:** La Niña typically strengthens the monsoon rains in India. The cooling of the Pacific Ocean enhances the moisture flow into the Indian subcontinent, leading to heavier rainfall.
 - **Flooding:** Excessive rainfall during the monsoon season can lead to flooding, particularly in river basins and low-lying areas.
2. **Temperature Anomalies:**
 - **Lower Temperatures:** La Niña is often associated with cooler than average temperatures in India. This can lead to more temperate weather conditions and reduce the occurrence of heatwaves.

3. **Agricultural Impact:**

- **Positive Effect on Crops:** Increased rainfall can benefit agricultural production, particularly for rain-fed crops. Enhanced water availability can lead to better crop yields and improved farmer incomes.
- **Flood Damage:** However, excessive rainfall and flooding can also damage crops and agricultural infrastructure.

4. **Water Resources:**

- **Improved Water Supply:** Higher rainfall can replenish water resources, including reservoirs, rivers, and groundwater. This is beneficial for drinking water supply, hydropower, and irrigation.

5. **Cyclonic Activity:**

- **Increased Cyclones:** The frequency of cyclones in the Bay of Bengal tends to increase during La Niña years, raising the risk of cyclone-related disasters.

Recent Examples and Effects

- **2015-16 El Niño:** This strong El Niño event led to one of the weakest monsoon seasons in India, causing severe drought conditions in many parts of the country. Agricultural output was significantly affected, leading to higher food prices and economic stress for farmers.
- **2010-12 La Niña:** This period saw enhanced monsoon rainfall in India, which generally benefited agricultural production. However, some regions experienced excessive rainfall and flooding, leading to displacement and damage to infrastructure.

Conclusion

El Niño and La Niña have profound impacts on India's climate, primarily through their influence on the monsoon season. While El Niño tends to weaken the monsoon and increase temperatures, leading to drought and heatwaves, La Niña strengthens the monsoon, often resulting in heavier rainfall and cooler temperatures. Understanding these phenomena is crucial for weather forecasting, agricultural planning, and disaster management in India. Effective strategies and policies can help mitigate the adverse effects and leverage the benefits associated with these climatic events.

children. Capsaicin is the chemical which makes chili peppers spicy.

**EXPLA
SCIEI**

Fiery mind trick

Capsaicin is most abundantly found in the "placenta" (white membrane to which seeds are attached) of some chili peppers – fruits of plants of genus *Capsicum*, which were introduced to the rest of the world from South and Central America by Christopher Columbus.

The chemical binds to TRPV1 receptors in humans' nose, mouth, skin, and insides. These receptors help in detecting heat (and pain), and are most commonly activated by

INSIDE



India to host first multinational air exercise in Aug.

NEW DELHI

The Indian Air Force's first multinational air exercise, Tarang Shakti-2024, will be held in August, and is likely to see the participation of 10 countries, in addition to a few others acting as observers. It was earlier planned to be held at the end of 2023, but was deferred. » [PAGE 4](#)

Elon Musk, former Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar argue on EVM security

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Former Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar got into a brief dispute with Tesla founder and CEO Elon Musk over the security of electronic voting machines (EVMs). In a post on X, formerly Twitter, Mr. Musk had commented on the unreliability of EVMs in response to reports of irregularities in EVMs in Puerto Rico.

Mr. Chandrasekhar responded that these concerns did not apply to Indian voting machines.

Mr. Musk was referring to a report on software issues with EVMs supplied by the American firm Dominion Voting Systems, which faced a flood of scrutiny in the aftermath of the 2020 presidential elections in the U.S.

The company settled a multi-million dollar defamation suit brought by it on *Fox News*, whose anchors had cast doubts on its voting machines' integrity.

Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory, had been holding primary elections for gubernatorial polls due in November. Mr. Musk had said, "We should eliminate



Former Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar and Tesla founder Elon Musk had the tiff on social media platform X. FILE PHOTO

electronic voting machines. The risk of being hacked by humans or AI, while small, is still too high."

"This is a huge sweeping generalization statement that implies no one can build secure digital hardware," Mr. Chandrasekhar

Row erupts over 'unlocking' of EVM in Mumbai

MUMBAI
A row erupted in Maharashtra on Sunday over allegations that a relative of Mumbai North West MP and Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena leader Ravindra Walkar generated a One Time Password that "unlocked" an EVM during counting on June 4. » **PAGE 4**

responded, after the post started making the rounds in India. "Wrong. @elonmusk's view may apply to U.S. and other places

where they use regular compute platforms to build Internet connected voting machines ... but Indian EVMs are custom designed, secure and isolated from any network or media ... Electronic voting machines can be architected and built right as India has done." "Anything can be hacked," Mr. Musk responded.

'Agree to disagree'
Mr. Chandrasekhar then conceded that while "any level of encryption" on a computer system can be broken with sufficient power, EVM integrity was "a different type of conversa-

tion," adding "we can agree to disagree".

The Supreme Court had, during the elections, refused to mandate the Election Commission (EC) to manually count the voter-verified paper audit trail (VVPAT) slips that were issued when voters used EVMs to cast their preference. The EC has insisted that EVMs are secure due to administrative safeguards in their transport and implementation, as well as due to the pre-programming done on the machines at the factory level.

The EC was not immediately available for comment.

India ready to host its first multinational air exercise 'Tarang Shakti' in August

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

The Indian Air Force's first multinational air exercise, Tarang Shakti-2024, will be held in August, and is likely to see the participation of 10 countries, in addition to a few others acting as observers.

"Enriched with the Red Flag exercise experience, the IAF keenly looks forward to hosting the participating contingents from other countries during Tarang Shakti-2024, which is the first ever Indian multinational air exercise to be held later this year," the IAF said on Sunday in a statement on the just concluded Red Flag exercise hosted by the U.S. Air Force.

The plan is to invite friendly foreign countries with whom the IAF interacts regularly and has a certain degree of interoperability, officials said. Tarang Shakti was earlier planned to be held at the end of 2023 but got de-



Two IAF Rafale jets being refuelled mid-air by an IL-78 aircraft on their way to Exercise Red Flag in Alaska.

ferred. The exercise is now scheduled to be held in two phases.

The first will be held in southern India in the first two weeks of August and the second will be in the western sector from the end of August to mid-September, officials said. Some countries will participate in both phases, while others will join one of the two phases, it has been learnt.

Among the countries sending contingents are Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, the Unit-

ed Kingdom, and the United States. Germany will deploy fighter jets and also an A-400M transport aircraft, as reported by *The Hindu* earlier. The A-400M aircraft will be on showcase for the IAF, given that it is a contender for the open tender for medium transport aircraft.

U.S. event

The Red Flag exercise, hosted by the U.S. Air Force (USAF) from June 4 to 14, concluded at the Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska. This was the second edition of Red Flag this year; the exercise is hosted four times a year by the USAF. Apart from the IAF, this edition saw the participation of the Singapore Air Force, the U.K.'s Royal Air Force, the Royal Netherlands Air Force, and the German Luftwaffe. The IAF deployed eight Rafale fighters, a first at Red Flag, supported by IL-78 mid-air refuellers for the transatlantic ferry, as well as C-17 Globemaster aircraft.

Canada and India are committed to working together on some 'important issues': Trudeau

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

India and Canada agreed to "work together" to deal with some "very important issues", Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Saturday. Mr. Trudeau's statement comes after he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G-7 Outreach Summit in Italy.

This is the first time the two have met since the Canadian Prime Minister went public with his allegations that Indian "government agents" planned the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian citizen and Khalistani separatist wanted on terror charges in India.

U.S. NSA visit

On Monday, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan is expected to arrive in Delhi to discuss India-U.S. cooperation – in strategic, technological, and intelligence areas – with his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval. The NSAs will meet for the first time since the U.S. released details of a case al-



Shaky ties: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on the sidelines of the G-7 Summit. PTI

legedly involving Indian security officials in a plot to assassinate Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, another Khalistani separatist wanted in India.

The Modi-Trudeau meeting came just a few days before the one-year mark since Mr. Nijjar was shot dead outside a gurdwara at Surrey in Canada on June 18, which sent bilateral ties into a downward spiral. Neither Mr. Trudeau nor Mr. Modi referred directly to the investigation into the killing and the allegations by Canada, which the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has

called "absurd" and "motivated".

"I'm not going to get into the details of this important, sensitive issue that we need to follow up, but this was a commitment to work together, in the coming times, to deal with some very important issues," Mr. Trudeau told mediapersons in Fasano, Italy on Saturday.

The MEA did not issue any statement on the exchange that took place just after the group photo for the G-7 Outreach leaders, and was captured in a single photo released on PM Modi's X account that

simply said that he had "met" the Canadian Prime Minister.

Both the U.S. trial on the alleged Pannun plot and the Canadian trial on Nijjar's death are expected to begin in the next few months.

MEA stand

While the MEA announced a "high-level" inquiry into the U.S. allegations more than six months ago, it has consistently refused to accept the Canadian charges.

"To date, we have never received anything which is specific and worthy of being pursued by our investigative agencies, and I'm not aware anything has changed in the last few days, in that regard," External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said at an interaction in May this year, reacting to news that Canada had announced a fourth arrest of an Indian for Nijjar's killing.

He also drew a negative comparison between the U.S. and "another country in the same continent, [a] little bit to the north" (referring to Canada), on the

issue of dealing with Khalistani groups. According to officials, India was informed of the arrests, but said that all four Indians arrested have not so far requested consular access.

In an email exchange, Canada's Foreign Ministry, called Global Affairs Canada, contested Mr. Jaishankar's contentions. "Since Canada became aware of the credible allegations, we have consistently provided all the information we can to India on the Nijjar case, through multiple channels," said spokesperson Charlotte MacLeod, in response to a number of questions from *The Hindu* that Global Affairs Canada did not answer.

Unlike the U.S. justice system, the Canadian system does not reveal evidence in the case prior to the trial in "public indictments".

Even so, several Canadian media reports indicate a consistent drip of information on leads that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Canadian Department of Justice (DoJ) are following.

Amid opposition, V-P inaugurates Prerna Sthal on Parliament premises

'Drugs in parcel' ploy being used to dupe people: Centre

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Stepping in to act against the rampant "narcotics drugs in parcel" extortion scam, the Revenue Department of the Union Finance Ministry on Sunday advised the public to stay vigilant, and stressed that Customs officials never contact individuals over phone or by email to remit Customs duties in private accounts.

"Various incidents have come to light through news portals/social media platforms of fraudulent persons posing as Indian Customs officers cheating the public of their hard-earned money across the country. These frauds are primarily done using digital means like phone calls or SMS, and are focused on extracting money through the

CBIC has urged the public to report such cases on the govt. website or helpline number 1930

purported fear of immediate penal action," the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said.

The CBIC has launched a multi-modal campaign to spread awareness of such fraudsters' *modus operandi* and urged people to immediately report such cases on www.cybercrime.gov.in or its helpline number 1930. Advising people to disconnect calls from people posing as courier staff or Customs officials, if there is any suspicion of fraud or irregularities, the CBIC also shared some of the common tricks deployed to

carry out such scams. "Fraudsters posing as courier officials contact via calls, text messages or emails claiming that Customs have held a package or parcel and requires payment of Customs duties or taxes before it can be released," a CBIC statement said.

As a pressure tactic, fraudsters impersonate Customs/Police/CBI officials and demand payment of Customs duty/clearance fees for packages/gifts that purportedly have been received from a foreign country and require Customs clearance," it added. The targeted individuals are asked to make payments for release of their goods, or informed that their package has been seized due to illegal content such as drugs, or violations of Customs regulations.

...that may be possible by dismantling the all-pervasive Kafala system – a complex of laws and practices that ensure state and citizens hold all the power, while individual migrants are treated as temporary even if the dependency on their labour is near-permanent. This is why any announcement by Kuwait promising action must be scrutinised minutely.

Kuwait (foreigners comprise

What is SWM cess and why is it levied on waste generators?

How has the SWM cess fared so far and why has it hit the headlines suddenly? How has Bengaluru been handling its solid waste management and what is about to change going forward?

Pushkara S.V.

The story so far:

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has proposed a Solid Waste Management (SWM) Cess of ₹100 per month for each household. While the proposal has sparked debate and criticism among residents and stakeholders, it is important to understand the rationale behind SWM cess, its intended use, and the broader context of solid waste management challenges faced by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in India.

Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) levy user fees or SWM cess as per the provisions of Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016. According to these guidelines, ULBs must collect user fees/cess for SWM services provisions provided. ULBs typically charge about ₹30-50 per month as SWM cess, which is collected along with property tax. ULBs are now considering revising these rates and imposing higher

charges on bulk waste generators to meet a portion of the costs incurred in providing SWM services.

What are the costs?

Offering SWM services is complex and resource-intensive. ULBs typically deploy about 80% of their manpower and up to 50% of their annual budgets to provide SWM services to city residents.

In a city like Bangalore, an urban resident generates about 0.6 kg of waste per day, totalling 0.2 tonnes per person per year. Overall, Bangalore generates about 5,000 tonnes of solid waste per day. Managing this volume of waste requires around 5,000 door-to-door waste collection vehicles, 600 compactors, and about 20,000 Paurakarmikas.

SWM services comprise four components: collection, transportation, processing and disposal. ULBs package collection and transportation together, and processing and disposal together. Collection and transportation are

resource and labour-intensive and come up to 85-90% of the SWM budget, whereas only about 10-15% is spent on processing and disposal of waste.

What are the challenges?

Solid waste generated in Indian cities consists of about 55-60% wet biodegradable material and 40-45% non-biodegradable material. The portion of recyclable material in the dry waste is minimal, only about 1-2%, with the rest being mostly non-recyclable and non-biodegradable waste. Although 55% of the wet waste can be converted into organic compost or biogas, the yield is as low as 10-12%, making both composting and biogas generation from solid waste financially unviable. Typically, operational revenue from waste processing facilities covers only about 35-40% of operational expenses, with the rest subsidised by the ULB.

Apart from financial challenges, ULBs face other challenges associated with SWM services, such as extra work of

Solid Waste Management (SWM)

Solid Waste Management (SWM) refers to the systematic administration of activities that provide for the collection, storage, transportation, processing, and disposal of solid waste. It aims to reduce the adverse effects of waste on human health, the environment, and aesthetics.

Major Types of Solid Waste

1. Municipal Solid Waste (MSW):

- **Description:** Waste generated from households, commercial establishments, institutions, and small businesses.
- **Examples:** Household garbage, packaging materials, food scraps, paper, plastics, and glass.
- 2. **Industrial Solid Waste:**
 - **Description:** Waste produced by industrial activities and processes.
 - **Examples:** Manufacturing waste, chemical waste, scrap metals, ash, and sludge.
- 3. **Biomedical Waste:**
 - **Description:** Waste generated from healthcare facilities like hospitals, clinics, and laboratories.
 - **Examples:** Syringes, bandages, pharmaceuticals, and anatomical waste.
- 4. **Hazardous Waste:**
 - **Description:** Waste that poses a significant threat to public health or the environment due to its toxic, reactive, corrosive, or flammable nature.
 - **Examples:** Chemicals, batteries, paints, pesticides, and solvents.
- 5. **E-Waste:**
 - **Description:** Discarded electronic appliances and devices.
 - **Examples:** Computers, mobile phones, televisions, and electronic components.
- 6. **Agricultural Waste:**
 - **Description:** Waste generated from agricultural activities.
 - **Examples:** Crop residues, manure, and pesticides.

Major Types of Solid Waste Management

1. **Collection and Transportation:**
 - **Description:** Involves gathering waste from various sources and transporting it to processing or disposal sites.
 - **Methods:** Door-to-door collection, community bins, transfer stations, and compactor trucks.
2. **Segregation and Sorting:**
 - **Description:** Separation of waste into different categories for efficient processing and recycling.
 - **Methods:** Source segregation (household level), mechanical sorting, and manual sorting.
3. **Recycling and Resource Recovery:**
 - **Description:** Converting waste materials into new products or resources.
 - **Methods:** Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), composting, anaerobic digestion, and mechanical recycling.
4. **Composting:**
 - **Description:** Biological decomposition of organic waste to produce compost, a nutrient-rich soil conditioner.
 - **Methods:** Windrow composting, vermicomposting, and in-vessel composting.

5. Incineration:

- **Description:** Controlled combustion of waste to reduce its volume and generate energy.
- **Methods:** Mass burn, refuse-derived fuel (RDF), and pyrolysis.

6. Landfilling:

- **Description:** Disposal of waste by burying it in engineered landfill sites.
- **Methods:** Sanitary landfills, secure landfills (for hazardous waste), and open dumps (not recommended).

7. Waste-to-Energy (WTE):

- **Description:** Converting waste materials into energy, usually in the form of electricity or heat.
- **Methods:** Incineration, gasification, and anaerobic digestion.

Government Initiatives in Solid Waste Management in India**1. Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM):**

- **Launch:** October 2, 2014.
- **Objective:** To clean up the streets, roads, and infrastructure of India's cities and rural areas, focusing on sanitation and solid waste management.
- **Components:** Promotion of household toilets, community toilets, solid waste management practices, and awareness campaigns.

2. Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016:

- **Description:** Comprehensive guidelines for the management of solid waste in India.
- **Key Provisions:** Mandatory source segregation, processing of biodegradable waste, setting up waste processing facilities, and promoting recycling and reuse.

3. Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016:

- **Description:** Guidelines for the management of plastic waste.
- **Key Provisions:** Ban on certain single-use plastics, extended producer responsibility (EPR), and promotion of recycling.

4. National Green Tribunal (NGT):

- **Role:** The NGT addresses environmental issues, including solid waste management, through orders and directives to ensure compliance with environmental laws.
- **Examples:** Orders related to landfill management, waste segregation, and banning of plastics.

5. Waste-to-Energy Plants:

- **Initiatives:** Several waste-to-energy plants have been set up across the country to convert waste into electricity.
- **Examples:** Waste-to-energy plants in Delhi, Mumbai, and Hyderabad.

6. **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):**

- **Description:** Policy approach where producers are given significant responsibility for the treatment and disposal of post-consumer products.
- **Application:** EPR is applied to e-waste and plastic waste management to ensure producers take back and recycle their products.

7. **Smart Cities Mission:**

- **Launch:** 2015.
- **Objective:** To promote sustainable and inclusive cities that provide core infrastructure and give a decent quality of life to citizens, including effective solid waste management.
- **Components:** Integrated solid waste management systems, smart bins, and real-time monitoring of waste collection and disposal.

8. **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT):**

- **Launch:** 2015.
- **Objective:** To improve infrastructure and services in urban areas, including solid waste management.
- **Components:** Development of waste processing and disposal facilities, improving urban sanitation, and ensuring proper waste collection.

Conclusion

Solid waste management is a critical aspect of urban and rural development, aimed at reducing the environmental and health impacts of waste. Effective SWM involves a combination of collection, segregation, recycling, composting, incineration, and landfilling. The Indian government has launched several initiatives and enacted comprehensive rules to enhance solid waste management practices, promote recycling, and ensure sustainable waste disposal. These efforts are crucial for improving public health, protecting the environment, and ensuring sustainable development.