

DAILY PT POINTERS

1st May, 2024



HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu-Health (GSII)-Page 6

Make EPI an 'Essential Programme on Immunisation'

The year 2024 marks a significant milestone for immunisation programmes, both globally and in India. It commemorates 50 years since the launch of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1974. The EPI was introduced as the eradication of smallpox virus was on the horizon, and a need to leverage the then immunisation infrastructure and a trained workforce was recognised to expand the benefit of available vaccines. Following the announcement, nearly every country across the world initiated its national immunisation programme. India launched the EPI in 1978, which was later renamed as the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) in 1985. In India, this year is also two decades since the country conducted the last nationwide independent field evaluation of the UIP, in collaboration with international experts. This is an opportune moment to assess the progress made and envision the future.

Globally, and in India, there has been significant progress in terms of the impact of immunisation and vaccines. While in 1974, there were vaccines to prevent six diseases, five decades later, there are vaccines against 13 diseases which are universally recommended; and vaccines against 17 additional diseases are recommended for a context-specific situation. There is research in progress to develop vaccines against nearly 125 pathogens – many would prevent diseases prevalent in low- and middle-income countries.

A success story

The children with three doses of DPT, a tracer indicator of coverage, has been rising over these



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a medical doctor, has 15 years of work experience with the World Health Organization in its India Office, Regional office for Africa, Brazzaville, and Headquarters in Geneva



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the government sector. For instance, in India, the share of the private sector in overall health services is nearly two thirds; however, nearly 85% to 90% of all vaccines are delivered from government facilities. Experts often argue that the immunisation coverage is a tracer indicator of the possible highest coverage any government intervention can achieve in a given setting.

Yet, it is not without challenges. In early 2023, the UNICEF's 'The State of the World's Children' report revealed a concerning trend: for the first time in more than a decade, the childhood immunisation coverage had declined in 2021. In 2022, globally, an estimated 14.3 million children were zero dose (did not receive any recommended vaccine) while another 6.2 million children were partially immunised. Over the years, the vaccination coverage in India has increased, both nationally and State-wise. However, there are persisting inequities in coverage by geography, socio-economic strata and other parameters, which demand urgent interventions.

From childhood focus to life course

It is interesting that when it comes to vaccination, people often (and wrongly) believe that the vaccines are only for children only. The truth is that in nearly 225 years since the availability of the first vaccine against smallpox in 1798, vaccines have always been available for individuals of all age groups, including adults. The first anti rabies vaccine, cholera, and typhoid vaccines developed between 1880s to mid 1890s were primarily for adults. The first vaccine ever developed in any part of the world against plague (in 1897) was from India and meant for individuals across all age groups. The BCG vaccine (against tuberculosis) was first introduced

First, there are some initial policy and technical discussions regarding expanding immunisation coverage in additional populations. The recent announcement on HPV vaccines for teenage girls is a good start.

However, the Indian government needs to consider providing recommended vaccines for a wider section of adults and elderly population. Considering that vaccines are highly cost effective, once recommended by the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI), vaccines for all age groups should be made available as free at the government facilities.

Second, the NTAGI in India, which provides recommendations on the use of vaccines should start providing recommendations on the use of vaccines in adults and the elderly. We need to remember that once a vaccine is recommended by the government body, the coverage is likely to be far greater than if the vaccines are not recommended by the government.

Third, the prevailing myths and misconceptions about vaccines must be proactively addressed to tackle vaccine hesitancy. The government must consider the help of professional communication agencies to dispel myths (and in a layperson's language and with the use of social media). This also requires citizens to learn and educate themselves about these vaccines from reliable sources.

Fourth, various professional associations of doctors – community medicine experts, family physicians and paediatricians should work to increase awareness about vaccines among adults and the elderly. Physicians treating patients with any disease should use the opportunity to make them aware of vaccines.

Fifth, medical collaboe and research

- The Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), an initiative launched by the World Health Organization in 1974, stands as a global endeavor to ensure equitable access to life-saving vaccines for every child, regardless of their geographic location or socioeconomic status. Over the past five decades, EPI has evolved and achieved remarkable milestones that reshaped the global health landscape.
- The 50th anniversary of EPI in 2024 provides a pivotal occasion to celebrate the programme's achievements, highlight its impact on lives saved, and catalyze renewed efforts to strengthen routine immunization initiatives.
- EPI was initiated with the goal of providing universal access to life-saving vaccines for children worldwide. This programme, which is now commonly referred to as the Essential Programme on Immunization, seeks to safeguard individuals of all ages through comprehensive immunization efforts.

The Hindu-Governance(GSII)/Economy(GSIII)-Page 7

Implementing the Street Vendors Act

A decade has passed since the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act came into effect on May 1, 2014, marking a significant milestone after nearly four decades of legal jurisprudence and the tireless efforts of street vendor movements across India. Celebrated as a progressive legislation, the Act now faces numerous challenges in its implementation. Looking back, the mere enactment of a law did not ensure the protection and security of street vendors in Indian cities; there was much to be desired in its execution.



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Provisions of the law
Street vendors, estimated to

and mandates that street vendor representatives must constitute 40% of TVC members, with a sub-representation of 33% of women street vendors. These committees are tasked with ensuring the inclusion of all existing vendors in vending zones. Additionally, the Act outlines mechanisms for addressing grievances and disputes, proposing the establishment of a Grievance Redressal Committee chaired by a civil judge or judicial magistrate. Its provisions set a crucial precedent for inclusive and participatory approaches to address street vending needs in cities, at least in theory.

Three broad challenges
However, the Act has faced three broad challenges. First, at the

prevailing image of the 'world class city tends to be exclusionary. It marginalises and stigmatises street vendors as obstacles to urban development instead of acknowledging them as legitimate contributors to the urban economy. These challenges are reflected in city designs, urban policies, and public perceptions of neighbourhoods.

The way forward
While the Act is progressive and detailed, its implementation requires support, possibly (and ironically) necessitating top-down direction and management starting from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. This needs to be decentralised over time to ensure effectiveness in addressing the diverse needs and

- A decade has passed since the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act came into effect on May 1, 2014, marking a significant milestone after nearly four decades of legal jurisprudence and the tireless efforts of street vendor movements across India.
- It was aimed to 'protect' and 'regulate' street vending in cities, with State-level rules and schemes, and execution by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) through by-laws, planning, and regulation.

Street vendors, estimated to constitute 2.5% of any city's population, play multifaceted roles in city life. Local vegetable sellers and food vendors are essential providers of daily services. Vending offers many migrants and the urban poor a source of modest yet consistent income. The vendors also make city life affordable for others by providing vital links in the food, nutrition, and goods distribution chain at reasonable prices.

Street vendors are also integral to Indian culture

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu-Economy(GSIII)-Page 8

About the redistribution of wealth

What is the debate surrounding the redistribution of wealth that has piqued interest during the ongoing election campaigns? Where does it fit in the constitutional framework? How has the judiciary ruled on the topic from the start?

EXPLAINER

Introduction, R

The story so far:

There have been heated exchanges between the ruling government and the Opposition with respect to the redistribution of wealth during the ongoing election campaign. The Supreme Court has also constituted a nine-judge bench to interpret the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) with respect to ownership and control of material resources.

What does the Constitution provide? The Preamble to the Constitution aims to secure to all citizens social and economic justice, liberty and equality. Part III of the constitution lists down the fundamental rights that guarantee liberty and equality while Part IV contains the DPSP. These are principles that the central and state governments should follow to achieve social and economic justice in our country. Unlike the fundamental rights in Part III, the DPSP is not enforceable in court. They are nevertheless fundamental to the governance of the country. Article 31(b) and so in Part IV contain principles that are aimed at securing economic justice. They provide that ownership and control of material resources of the country should be distributed to serve the common good and that the operation of the economic system does not result in concentration of wealth to the common detriment.

What is the historical context?

The Constitution originally guaranteed right to property as a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(f). It provided under Article 31 that the state shall pay compensation in case of acquisition of private property. It is pertinent to note that at the time of independence, the main property rights related to agricultural and other land. The government had to acquire the rights in such estates for carrying out land reforms and construction of public assets. Considering the inadequate resources with the government and in order to provide greater flexibility in acquiring land for public welfare, various amendments were carried out curtailing the right to property. Notable among them are exceptions under Articles 31A, 31B and 31C that are briefly explained in Table I.



At the time of Independence, the main property right was related to agricultural and other estates. The government had to acquire the rights in such estates for carrying out land reforms and construction of public assets. (ISTOCK/1470)

The Gist

The Preamble to the Constitution aims to secure to all citizens social and economic justice, liberty and equality. Part III of the Constitution lists down the fundamental rights that guarantee liberty and equality while Part IV contains the Directive Principles of State Policy that talks about ownership and control of material resources. These are principles that the central and state governments should follow to achieve social and economic justice in our country.

The Supreme Court in various cases has interpreted the relationship between fundamental rights and the DPSP. In 1968, in order to curb executive legislation directly in the Supreme Court by the President of India, the 24th amendment was enacted that gave the right to property as a fundamental right and made it a constitutional right under Article 300A.

The Supreme Court has now constituted a nine-judge bench to interpret the Directive Principles of State Policy.

Exceptions to fundamental rights

Considering the inadequate resources with the government and to provide greater flexibility in acquiring land for public welfare, various amendments were carried out curtailing the right to property. Notable among them are exceptions under Articles 31A, 31B and 31C.

Article	Amendment & year	Kind of exception
31A	1st amendment, 1951	Provided that laws made for acquisition of estates shall not be void on the ground that it violated fundamental rights including right to property.
31B	1st amendment, 1951	Made laws placed under the Ninth Schedule immune from judicial review on the grounds of violating any fundamental rights. In Coelho case (2007), the SC held that laws placed under Ninth Schedule after April 1978 would be subject to judicial review.
31C	24th amendment, 1971	Provided primacy to the DPSP under Article 31B and 31C. Laws made to fulfil these principles shall not be void on the ground that it violated fundamental rights including right to property.

The manifesto for the current Lok Sabha elections of the Congress, the principal Opposition party, promises various measures for the poorer sections including payment of ₹1 lakh per annum to a woman from every poor family. Rahul Gandhi had also mentioned in his campaign that there would be a financial survey to ascertain the distribution of wealth among the people in the country and address the issue of inequality. The ruling party campaigners led by the Prime Minister have targeted the Opposition on this matter. They claim that the Opposition, if voted to power, would bring back inheritance tax laws that would tax even the poorer sections. The Supreme Court meanwhile has constituted a nine-judge bench to interpret whether material resources under Article 300A include private resources as well.

The Supreme Court has also constituted a nine-judge Bench to interpret the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) with respect to ownership and control of material resources.

What does the Constitution provide?

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The Hindu-Health(GSII)-Page 12

AstraZeneca submission over COVID vaccine nothing new, say doctors

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Following pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca's admission in U.K. court documents that its vaccine against COVID-19 has the potential to cause Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS), a rare side effect associated with blood clotting, doctors in India said this is not new information and that they are "well aware of the warning which has been available in India as an insert with the vaccine since the time it was introduced for general public here".

They added that any adverse event associated with the vaccine would have occurred within 21 days to a month of the first dose.

A report in British newspaper *The Daily Telegraph* stated that in a legal document submitted to the High Court in London in February for a group action being brought by 51 claimants, AstraZeneca admitted that the vaccine de-



Doctors say any adverse event would have occurred within a month of the first dose.

veloped with the University of Oxford to protect against COVID-19 may cause TTS in "very rare cases".

"It is admitted that the AZ vaccine can, in very rare cases, cause TTS. The causal mechanism is not known. Further, TTS can also occur in the absence of the AZ vaccine (or any vaccine). Causation in any individual case will be a matter for expert evidence," the newspaper quoted the legal document.

The consequences of TTS are potentially life-threatening including

strokes, brain damage, and heart attacks.

Both the Union Health Ministry and COVID-19 vaccine Covishield's manufacturer Serum Institute of India on Tuesday issued no statement regarding the development. The Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is sold under the brand name Covishield in India.

Product information

In India, the product information with the vaccine clearly mentions TTS in its special warnings and special precautions for use section while adding that a "majority of the events occurred within the first 21 days following vaccination and some events had a fatal outcome".

Doctors here said that the court admission now is "no secret".

Rajeev Jayadevan, co-chairman of the National Indian Medical Association (IMA) COVID Task Force, said: "The court admission is nothing new. In fact,

these are well documented facts validated since early 2021 (soon after vaccine rollout). The World Health Organisation (WHO) wrote about it in May 2021 and updated it in 2023."

He added that clotting was an issue for persons who were administered the first dose of the vaccine and in the first month afterwards.

"Therefore, in 2024, people are not at risk of TTS. Also, heart attacks and strokes we see in practice are not caused by TTS, which is an exceptionally rare immunological reaction that leads to clots in certain locations," he added.

"The clotting side effect of this vaccine is already known and is extremely rare. This is not the first time AstraZeneca admits risk of clotting events (again rarest side effect) associated with COVID," Cyriac Abby Phillips, hepatologist from Kerala, wrote in a social media post.

(With PTI inputs)

What is Thrombosis Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS)?

TTS is characterized by blood clots (thrombosis) combined with low levels of platelets (thrombocytopenia), which are necessary for blood clotting. It often involves unusual blood clot locations, such as in the brain (cerebral venous sinus thrombosis) or abdomen.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu-Geography (GSI)-Page 18



Mount Ruang seen erupting from Tagulandang island in Sitaro, North Sulawesi, on Tuesday. Ruang's eruption prompted authorities to order an evacuation and forced a nearby airport to close. The remote Indonesian volcano sent a tower of ash spewing into the sky on April 19. - Photo: AFP

- **Mount Ruang** seen erupting from Tagulandang island in Sitaro, North Sulawesi
- **Ruang** is among about 130 active volcanoes in Indonesia. The archipelagic nation is prone to volcanic eruptions and earthquakes because of its location on the Pacific “Ring of Fire” — a series of fault lines stretching from the western coasts of the Americas through Japan and Southeast Asia.

Indian Express-Health (GSII)-Page 3

Mumps cases spike from 'almost zero' to 5-6 a week, low vaccination due to Covid a factor

ANKITA UPADHYAY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

FOR THE last two months, hospitals in the city have been witnessing five to six cases of complications due to mumps – a far cry from earlier when negligible cases were reported every year.

According to experts, a drop in vaccination rate due to the Covid pandemic could be a major reason for the spike.

Most of the patients landing in hospitals are 6-7 years of age.

A senior doctor from Lok Nayak hospital said, "Prior to the pandemic, we would hardly see any mumps cases; the whole year would pass before we could see any case. But now we are seeing cases of mumps-related complications every week."

Caused by paramyxovirus, a member of the Rubulavirus family, mumps usually affect the parotid glands, which make saliva, on each side of the face.

The disease spreads through infected saliva.

"The Centre provides vaccines to states only for measles and rubella and not for mumps. However, during regular immunisation drives, Delhi has been providing vaccines for mumps as well. But during the pandemic, a major part of the population was left unvaccinated leading to compromised immunity," said a health department official.

Health Secretary SB Deepak remained unavailable for comment.

In a special campaign last year, held between February 6 and March 6, the Centre had instructed the states to provide measles and rubella vaccine.

"However, the officials are now mulling over mumps screening and vaccination as well due to an increasing number of Parotitis – the medical term for a swollen parotid gland," an official said.

Sources at Lok Nayak hospital

THE ILLNESS

MUMPS is an illness caused by paramyxovirus, a member of the Rubulavirus family. It usually affects the parotid glands on each side of the face. The disease spreads through infected saliva.

SYMPTOMS

These include swollen, painful salivary glands; sore throat; fever; headache; fatigue; and appetite loss

said the hospital has been seeing 5-6 cases of complications every week when it was zero before the pandemic. "These cases are related to stroke, paralysis, encephalitis, brain damage etc.," said a senior doctor.

"From November-December,

the cases started increasing in the paediatric, ENT and regular OPD," said a senior doctor at the hospital, adding that the number has dropped in the last one week.

According to Dr Shalu Gupta, Director Professor at Community Medicine department at Lady Hardinge Medical College and Kalawati Saran Children's Hospital, "Normally, mumps is a mild, self-limiting disease that disappears in 5-6 days."

He said at Kalawati Saran hospital, while the admission rate is not very high, children between the ages of four and eight were visiting the OPD.

A senior doctor at Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalaya confirmed that the number of cases has increased in the last two months.

Dr Gupta said while there is no treatment, the care is focused on symptom relief. The disease can be prevented by the MMR

vaccine.

According to Dr Karunesh Kumar, Senior Consultant, Paediatric Gastroenterology, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, "During Covid, some children missed their vaccination."

He said that in many areas in the country, only Measles and Rubella vaccination was provided. "Until and unless we take steps to protect all our children, we won't be developing herd immunity," he added.

According to Indian Pediatrics, a journal writing on child health, an increasing number of mumps outbreaks has been reported from several parts of the country in the recent past. Calling it a matter of concern, the journal concluded that inclusion of mumps component in MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) vaccine in the Universal Immunisation Programme along with strengthening of surveillance is required to tackle the situation.

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- mumps usually affect the parotid glands, which make saliva, on each side of the face. The disease spreads through infected saliva.

Indian Express-Geography (GSI)-Page 9

South Asia to receive 'above normal' rain this year : SASCOF

ANJALI MARAR
BENGALURU, APRIL 30

ABOVE NORMAL rainfall is predicted along most of the South Asian countries during the upcoming monsoon season, commencement of which is little over a month away.

The forecast was shared at the 28th South Asian Climate Outlook Forum (SASCOF) meet which is underway in Pune.

"Except some northern and north, east and northeastern parts, above-normal rainfall is expected over South Asia during June to September season this year. The seasonal rainfall is most likely to be normal," the SASCOF rainfall outlook 2024 consensus stated.

This year's southwest monsoon outlook consensus statement was jointly prepared by weather scientists representing nine national meteorological and hydrological services in

this region.

The SASCOF rainfall forecast is in line with the first stage southwest monsoon rainfall forecast released by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) a fortnight ago.

Most of Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh and central Bhutan will receive normal or above rainfall during the southwest monsoon season.

Normal rainfall is predicted along Afghanistan, remaining areas of Bhutan and large parts of Myanmar, except its southwest coast, the experts who participated in SASCOF-28, said.

Aiding good rainfall in the upcoming season, the SASCOF forum said, were multiple favourable ocean-atmospheric factors. The ongoing El Nino conditions, which commenced in June last year, was weakening.

"Currently, moderate El Nino conditions are prevailing along the equatorial Pacific Ocean. The conditions are likely to weaken



Silt outside a house after flood water receded at Chogal Handwar in Kupwara district of North Kashmir Tuesday. PTI

further and El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) neutral conditions shall develop during the early part of the monsoon season. Thereafter, La Nina conditions

are likely to develop during the second-half of the monsoon season," SASCOF statement said. El Nino is the warmer than normal sea conditions prevail-

ing along the equatorial Pacific Ocean and is known to suppress the summer monsoon rainfall over India.

On the contrary, La Nina is the cooler sea conditions over the same region and is associated with normal or above rainfall during the southwest monsoon season.

There is a strong likelihood that the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) – the counterpart of the Pacific Ocean's ENSO in the Indian Ocean – would enter a positive phase, which positively influences the southwest monsoon over the region.

At present, IOD is in its neutral phase.

The sea surface temperatures naturally swing from El nino, ENSO neutral and La Nina from time-to-time.

Along with India and Bangladesh, many South Asian countries are experiencing extreme heat.

The SASCOF forecast on

temperatures suggested that during the ongoing summer season, above normal day temperatures will be recorded over most regions.

West Afghanistan, northern and eastern Pakistan and adjoining Gujarat-Rajasthan, northern Maharashtra, coastal Karnataka and Kerala, Lakshadweep, southwest Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan along with central and southern Myanmar will be among the worst affected areas.

Along with officials from IMD, other participants in the Pune meet included experts from the World Meteorological Organization, Japan Meteorological Agency, Korean Meteorological Agency, Office, UK, International Research Institute for Climate and Society, Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early-warning System, Lead Centre of LRFMME and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology.

- 'Above normal' rainfall is predicted in most of the South Asian countries during the upcoming monsoon season, which is little over a month away.
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Indian Express-Governance(GSII)/Economy (GSIII)-

Page 13

Why banks can't seek LOCs to stop debtors from going abroad

OMKARGOKHALE
MUMBAI, APRIL 30

THE BOMBAY High Court has held that public sector banks (PSBs) cannot recommend or request the issuance of Look Out Circulars (LOCs) against loan defaulters and has set aside the provisions of the central government's Office Memoranda (OM) that empowered PSBs to do so.

On April 23, a division Bench of Justice Gautam S Patel (who has since retired) and Justice Madhav J Jamdar quashed LOCs issued to restrain PSB debtors from travelling abroad, saying they are "strong-arm tactics" used to get around legal processes, and violative of fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution.

The legal challenge

The LOCs under challenge were issued by the Bureau of Immigration of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), and allowed the authorities at any port of departure to prevent

a debtor to a PSB from leaving India. The LOCs were based on OMs issued by the Ministry from October 27, 2010 onward.

In September 2018, a ground was introduced to issue an LOC to restrain a person from going abroad if their departure was detrimental to the "economic interest" of the country. The following month, a new clause was introduced empowering the chairperson of the State Bank of India (SBI) and the managing director and chief executive officers of all other PSBs to request immigration authorities to issue LOCs against default borrowers.

The default borrowers included not only the borrowers but also the guarantors for repayment of loans, and the principal officers or directors of corporate entities in debt.

Petitioners' argument

The aggrieved petitioners contested the portion of OMs that allowed PSBs to request an LOC against a "defaulting borrower".

Senior advocate Birendra Saraf (who is now Advocate General for Maharashtra) ar-

gued that the OMs infringed upon the petitioners' fundamental rights, including the right to life with dignity under Article 21.

The petitioners argued that the "economic interest of India" cannot be the same as "financial interests" of a PSB, and that the government's action was a "classic case" of "improper and impermissible" classification between public sector and private banks, both of which are regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Centre's submission

Senior advocate Anil Singh, who was Additional Solicitor General at the time, argued for the MHA that deprivation of life or personal liberty can be done only through procedure established by law, and the impugned circulars contained such "checks and balances".

Singh argued that the steps were taken after a surge in the number of wilful defaulters and economic offenders, some of whom had fled the country after "usurping" public money.

What the court said

The court observed that the government had failed to show that debt had been recovered because the person had been denied permission to travel abroad. "The LOCs boil down to nothing but a strong-arm tactic to bypass or leapfrog what public sector banks clearly see as inconveniences and irritants—the courts of law," it said. (Vinj Chetan Shuh v Union Of India & Anr)

EXPLAINED LAW

The court held that the fundamental right to travel abroad cannot be curtailed by executive action without any government statute or controlling statutory provision:

"The fact that the public sector bank is directly concerned with the recovery of debt and is yet armed with this unilateral power only makes matters worse... The right to Article 21 cannot be abrogated in this fashion. Here, the public sector bank becomes judge and executioner at once.

"...In effect, the Chairpersons, MDs and CEOs have been elevated to the same status

as high-ranking police officers. This is simply incomprehensible," the court said.

The court noted that except SBI, there is no PSB among India's top five banking companies. It noted that "If a borrower arranges it or her or his affairs so that the dealings are only with non-public sector banks, no LOC can ever be issued against the borrower... But if there is even one public sector bank, then there is a risk of an LOC being issued."

It is not that only PSBs were affected, the court said. The entities that Nirav Modi and Vijay Mallya, whom the Centre had mentioned in its written submissions, controlled "also had exposure to other banks", it said.

The court disagreed with the "wholly artificial distinction between those who borrow from one or more public sector banks and those who borrow only from private sector banks".

Thus, the "inclusion of only PSBs is ultra vires Article 14 as being an impermissible and invalid classification, and being manifestly arbitrary", the court held.

What happens now

The court clarified that its order would not affect any existing restraint order issued by a competent authority, court, Debt Recovery Tribunal, or investigative or enforcement agency. "The invalidation of the present LOCs cannot and will not affect such orders," it said.

The court said banks were "always at liberty" to apply to any court or tribunal for an order against an individual borrower, guarantor, or indebted person, restraining them from travelling overseas. Banks can also invoke their powers under the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018, where applicable.

The Bench turned down the Centre's request to stay the operation of the verdict, but the Centre has the option of challenging the judgment in the Supreme Court.

The HC also clarified that its judgment will not prevent the central government from framing an appropriate law and establishing procedure consistent with Article 21 of the Constitution.

- 'The Bombay High Court has held that public sector banks (PSBs) **cannot recommend or request the issuance of Look Out Circulars** (LOCs) against loan defaulters and has set aside the provisions of the central government's Office Memoranda (OM) that empowered PSBs to do so.
- The LOCs under challenge were issued by the Bureau of Immigration of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), and allowed the authorities at any port of departure to prevent a debtor to a PSB from leaving India.
- In September 2018, a ground was introduced to issue an LOC to restrain a person from going abroad if their departure was detrimental to the "economic interest" of the country.
- The following month, a new clause was introduced empowering the chairperson of the State Bank of India (SBI) and the managing director and chief executive officers of all other PSBs to request immigration authorities to issue LOCs against default borrowers.

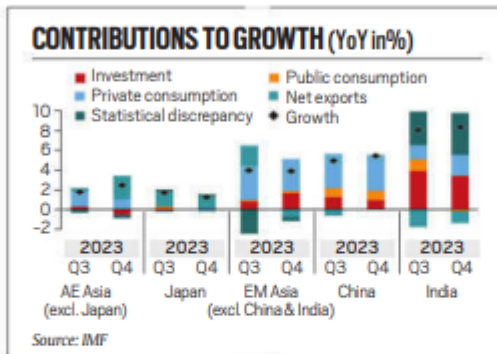
Indian Express-Economy (GSIII)-Page 15

Public investment remains an important driver for India's growth, says IMF

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

PUBLIC INVESTMENT remains an important driver for India, making it the world's fastest growing major economy, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in its latest remarks on the Regional Economic Outlook for Asia and Pacific released Tuesday. The IMF also said that headline inflation may see further reductions due to lower energy prices in several economies in the Asia and Pacific region, but food price pressures – especially for rice – may slow headline disinflation in India.

The IMF had earlier this month raised India's growth forecast for the financial year 2024-25 to 6.8 per cent from 6.5 per cent earlier and retained the growth forecast for 2025-26 at 6.5 per cent. India and the Philippines have been the source of repeated positive growth surprises, supported by resilient domestic demand, the IMF said. The IMF has also raised the regional growth forecast for



Asia and Pacific to 4.5 per cent, up 0.3 percentage point from six months earlier, reflecting up-grades for China, where policy stimulus is expected to provide support. But the growth forecast for the region is slower than 5 per cent growth in 2023.

Global disinflation and the prospect of lower central bank interest rates have made a soft landing more likely, hence risks to the near-term outlook are now

broadly balanced, Krishna Srinivasan, Director, Asia and Pacific Department said in a blog post. Asian central banks should continue to focus firmly on domestic price stability and "avoid making policy decisions overly dependent" on anticipated interest rate moves by the US Federal Reserve, Srinivasan added.

In a still subdued external environment, robust private consumption will remain the main growth

driver in Asia's other emerging market economies, he added. For inflation, the IMF said it is already at or close to target in emerging markets and there is heterogeneity in inflation drivers going forward. "Core inflation is largely expected to remain contained. As for headline inflation, several economies may experience further reductions due to lower energy prices while in others (for example, India), food price pressures – especially for rice – may slow headline disinflation," the IMF said.

Asian countries are better placed than before to cope with exchange rate movements, with fewer financial frictions and better macro-fundamentals and institutional frameworks and should continue to allow the exchange rate to act as a buffer against shocks, he said. Advancing fiscal consolidation is an urgent priority both to lessen the burden of higher debt levels and interest costs and to rebuild the fiscal space needed to address medium-term structural challenges. **FULL REPORT ON**

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- Public investment remains an important driver for India, making it the world's fastest growing major economy, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in its latest remarks on the Regional Economic Outlook for Asia and Pacific released.
- The IMF also said that headline inflation may see further reductions due to lower energy prices in several economies in the Asia and Pacific region, but food price pressures – especially for rice – may slow headline disinflation in India.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB-Energy (GSIII)

Ministry of Power

NHPC Limited to collaborate with Norwegian company for implementation of Floating Solar Energy Technology in India

Posted On: 30 APR 2024 12:10PM by PIB Delhi

- NHPC Limited, the largest organization for hydropower development in India, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with M/s Ocean Sun, a Norwegian company operating as a technology provider to the floating solar industry.
- As per the MoU, NHPC and Ocean Sun will explore key areas of cooperation for demonstration of Ocean Sun's floating solar energy technology based on photovoltaic panels.
- The panels would be mounted on hydro-elastic membranes, at relevant sites to be identified by NHPC.