DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE Day

Tuesday 201901210

UNDP Human Development Index report

India ranks 129 in UNDP Human Development Index report (The Indian Express: 201901210)

https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-ranks-129-in-undp-human-development-index-report-6159026/

India's HDI value has marginally increased from 0.643 in 2017 to 0.647 in 2018, shows the report, titled 'Beyond Income, Beyond Averages, Beyond Today: Inequalities in Human Development in the 21st Century'.

The report shows that India's annual HDI growth has slowed down in recent years. Between 1990 and 2000, India's average annual HDI growth was 1.43 per cent which increased to 1.57 per cent during 2000-2010 but came down to 1.34 per cent between 2010 and 2018.

India climbed one spot to take the 129th rank among 189 countries on the 2019 report on Human Development Index (HDI) released by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on Monday. India was at the 130th place on this index in last year's report.

India's HDI value has marginally increased from 0.643 in 2017 to 0.647 in 2018, shows the report, titled 'Beyond Income, Beyond Averages, Beyond Today: Inequalities in Human Development in the 21st Century'.

Globally, Norway, with a HDI value of 0.954, is at the first rank while Burundi (0.423) is at the bottom. As far as India's neighbouring countries are concerned, China ranked 85 and Bangladesh and Pakistan ranked 135 and 152, respectively. Sri Lanka ranked 71 and Maldives ranked 104.

"India's HDI value has increased by 50 per cent from 0.431 in 1990 to 0.647 in 2018, which places it above average for countries in the medium human development group (0.634) and above the average for other South Asian countries (0.642)," Shoko Noda, UNDP India Resident Representative, said after releasing the report.

Why the report is significant

The Human Development Report 2019 is significant because it focuses on inequalities in development. It shows inequalities beyond income which exist in society. It also measures loss in the human development progress due to inequalities. The report also highlights the gender gaps in development.

The report shows that India's annual HDI growth has slowed down in recent years. Between 1990 and 2000, India's average annual HDI growth was 1.43 per cent which increased to 1.57 per cent during 2000-2010 but came down to 1.34 per cent between 2010 and 2018.

HDI is calculated taking into consideration performance of countries on four broad parameters — life expectancy at birth; expected years of schooling; mean years of schooling; and per capita gross national income (PPP).

"For countries like India, which have shown great success in reducing absolute poverty, we hope that the 2019 Human Development Report sheds light on inequalities and deprivations that go beyond income…India's development initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and Ayushman Bharat are crucial in ensuring that we meet our promise to leave no one behind and fulfil the Prime Minister's vision of development for all," she said.

The report has also given the Gender Development Index (GDI). With a score of 0.829, India is at the 122nd place out of 162 countries.

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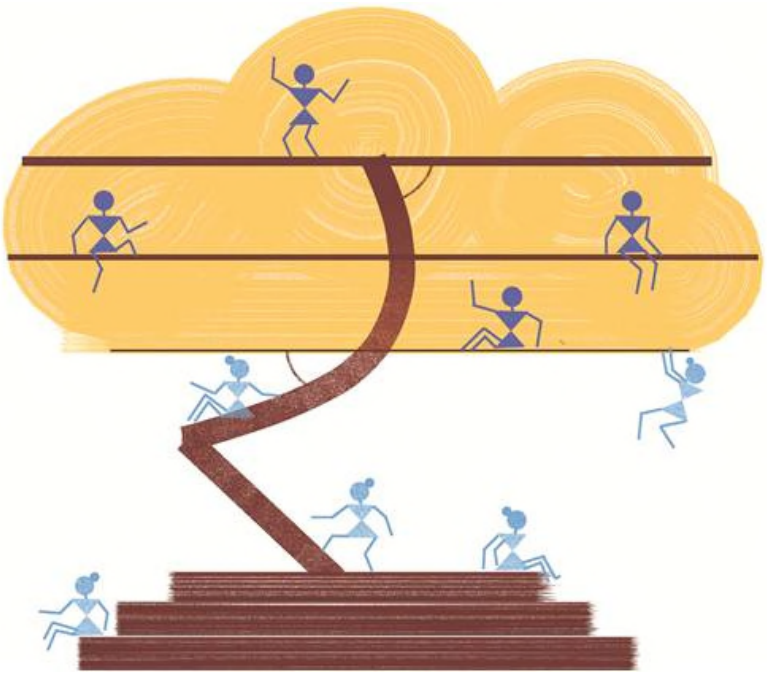
Pervasive inequality

India is a country with pervasive inequality, pockets of deep deprivations and vulnerable populations (The Indian Express: 201901210)

https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/2019-human-development-report-india-inequality-poverty-economic-growth-6158809/

The 2019 Human Development Report points to the limits of economic growth in lifting all boats. It also offers a way forward.



Today, the odds are clearly stacked, in a wide range of ways, along gender, linguistic, class and sexual orientation lines. (Illustration by C R Sasikumar)

Grappling with Delhi's poor air quality for these last couple of months, I have become aware of a stark difference in the way I cope with air pollution, and the way many others do not — because they cannot. Despite the growing evidence detailing the catastrophic impact of air pollution on human health, only those privileged enough to have the knowledge and the means to protect themselves can take measures to do so. Many other people, most of whom provide essential services to the privileged, either lack the information on the level of threat they face, or the freedom to act on it. Unable to afford a day off, or an effective mask, let alone air purifiers, they are forced to subject themselves and their children to Delhi's toxic air. Consequently, they face a greater risk of respiratory disease and heart problems, and the children are deprived of a healthy childhood.

This is inequality at play in daily life. For me, it is a harsh reminder of pervasive and pernicious inequities that hit the poorest and most marginalised hardest. In that sense, air pollution is an apotheosis of 21st century challenges: The climate crisis, technological change and inequality. And India, home to nearly a fifth of the world's population, is at the frontline of these battles.

India has made so much progress over the past 30 years — and the improvements have been substantial. Yet, there are significant concerns today, borne out by data, that the dramatic strides made in reducing extreme poverty did not reduce inequality. In fact, inequality has widened. A flurry of recent estimates, ranging from income inequality data from the India Human Development Survey and wealth inequality numbers by Credit Suisse to distributional

income accounts by economists Lucas Chancel and Thomas Piketty, indicate that economic disparities have grown along with the GDP. To put it simply, while the poor have indeed benefitted from India's economic success, the rich have garnered a greater share of the spoils. Indeed, Oxfam's inequality estimates from earlier this year suggest the top 10 per cent of the Indian population holds 77 per cent of the total national wealth.

Inequality is not just about disparities in wealth distribution. A large number of Indians not only have very low income, but their opportunities for healthcare, education and social security are dreadfully inadequate. UNDP's 2019 Human Development Report (HDR) explores precisely these inequalities in human development, by going beyond income and identifying the deep-rooted systemic drivers of inequality. In so doing, the report reminds decision-makers of the importance of providing basic services to their people, and of equipping them to live with dignity. Further, the report underlines that poor people should be protected from the fallout of climate change and benefit from modern breakthroughs in artificial intelligence and robotics.

Today, the odds are clearly stacked, in a wide range of ways, along gender, linguistic, class and sexual orientation lines. The HDR finds, for instance, that in India the share of both men and women biased against gender equality has risen, indicating a backlash against women's empowerment. While traditionally vulnerable communities, such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, are catching up with the rest of society in primary education, they are falling further behind when it comes to advanced (12 years or more) education. Most now have access to mobiles but few have computers. And too many people are still just one illness away from poverty.

As the HDR argues, climate change will only exacerbate this inequality. The climate crisis is already hitting the poorest communities hardest and earliest. Millions of Indians in low-lying coastal areas are exposed to a rise in sea levels. Around two-fifths of the population subsist on agriculture that relies on increasingly erratic rainfall and fluctuating temperatures. A soon-to-be-released UNDP study on the impact of climate change on human development in India finds that across the country, from the hills of Uttarakhand to the coasts of Odisha, communities with greater power have, consciously or not, shifted some of the environmental consequences of their consumption onto poor and vulnerable people, onto marginalised groups, and onto future generations. We see this with air pollution, a problem to which the rich, with their carbon-intensive lifestyles, contribute more. However, they can secede from the consequences of that lifestyle — a choice not available to precisely the people who've done the least to create the problem.

With the scale and scope of the challenges mapped out, how should we respond? We don't have to look far for inspiration. India has already embraced policies that aim to transform social norms and eliminate discrimination through education, awareness and changing incentives. The 2019 Multidimensional Poverty Index — produced by UNDP and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative — finds that over 270 million Indians were taken out of multidimensional poverty in the decade between 2005-06 and 2015-16. Encouragingly, the territories that were lagging behind, notably Bihar and Jharkhand, were able to catch up quite significantly.

Similarly, since the turn of the century, per capita income has nearly tripled; life expectancy at birth has increased by nearly seven years; and children are staying in school for at least two years longer. India has invested in important building blocks to equip its people to thrive rather

than just survive. A focus on rights-based entitlements (for instance, work through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee) and technological innovations (such as to open bank accounts and facilitate digital payments to beneficiaries) has gone some way towards improving living standards. New insurance schemes for universal health coverage, crop-failure and accidents reflect a momentum for action to tackle inequality. These measures are absolutely crucial in reaching those left furthest behind.

Today, India is no longer a country languishing largely in extreme poverty. It is a country with pervasive inequality, pockets of deep deprivations and vulnerable populations. India is, of course, pivotal to the world's achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. To achieve the SDGs, we must recognise existing inequality and continuously eliminate the structural factors that create inequality. UNDP stands ready to support India to devise its own solutions to provide all its people — now and in the future — with a fair and dignified lot in life, powered by technology, shielded from prejudice and protected from an increasingly unforgiving climate.

This article first appeared in the print edition on December 10, 2019 under the title 'Inequality and its discontents'. The writer is the UNDP India Resident Representative.

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New Mediterranean diet

New Mediterranean diet lets you eat meat without any guilt (The Tribune: 201901210)

https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/new-mediterranean-diet-lets-you-eat-meat-without-any-guilt/872406.html

Researchers have developed a new version of Mediterranean diet that includes meat to cater to Western tastes and also deliver health benefits.

A typical Mediterranean diet includes extra virgin olive oil, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes, wholegrain breads, pastas and cereals, moderate amount of fish and red wine, and low consumption of red meat, sweet and processed foods.

The new version of the Mediterranean diet includes 2-3 serves (250g) of fresh lean pork each week.

The findings published in the journal Nutrients showed that the Mediterranean-Pork (Med-Pork) diet delivers cognitive benefits.

"The Mediterranean diet is widely accepted as the healthiest diet and is renowned for delivering improved cardiovascular and cognitive health, but in Western cultures, the red meat restrictions of the diet could make it hard for people to stick to," said Alexandra Wade from University of South Australia.

"By adding pork to the Mediterranean diet, we're broadening the appeal of the diet, while also delivering improved cognitive function," Wade said.

This study compared the cognitive effects of people aged 45-80 years and at risk of cardiovascular disease following a Med-Pork or a low-fat diet (often prescribed to negate risk factors for cardiovascular disease).

The results showed the Med-Pork intervention outperformed the low-fat diet, delivering higher cognitive processing speeds and emotional functioning, both markers of good mental health.

"Improving people's processing speed shows the brain is working well," Wade said.

"Then, when you add the fact that pork production emits only a fraction of the greenhouse gases compared with beef, and the Med-Pork diet is really ticking all boxes -- taste, health and environment," Wade said. IANS

Mortality

Vigorous exercise lowers mortality risk in women (The Tribune: 201901210)

https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/vigorous-exercise-lowers-mortality-risk-in-women/871911.html

Brain differences detected in kids with depressed parents

Vigorous exercise lowers mortality risk in women

Women who exercise vigorously are at significantly lower risk of dying from heart disease. Source: iStock.

Women who exercise vigorously are at significantly lower risk of dying from heart disease, cancer and other causes, reveals a new study.

The study, presented at EuroEcho 2019, a scientific congress of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC), examined exercise capacity and heart function during exercise in women and their links with survival.

The study included over 4,000 adult women referred for treadmill exercise echocardiography because of known or suspected coronary artery disease.

"Exercise as much as you can. Fitness protects against death from any cause," said study author Jesus Peteiro from University Hospital A Coruna in Spain.

For the findings, participants walked or ran on a treadmill, gradually increasing the intensity, and continuing until exhaustion.

Images of the heart were generated during the test. Fitness was defined as a maximal workload of 10 metabolic equivalents (METs), which is equal to walking fast up four flights of stairs or very fast up three flights, without stopping.

Women who achieved 10 METs or more (good exercise capacity) were compared to those achieving less than 10 METs (poor exercise capacity).

During a median follow-up of 4.6 years there were 345 cardiovascular deaths, 164 cancer deaths, and 203 deaths from other causes.

After adjusting for factors that could influence the relationship, METs were significantly associated with lower risk of death from cardiovascular disease, cancer, and other causes.

The annual rate of death from cardiovascular disease was nearly four times higher in women with poor, compared to good, exercise capacity (2.2 per cent versus 0.6 per cent).

Annual cancer deaths were doubled in patients with poor, compared to good, exercise capacity (0.9 per cent versus 0.4 per cent).

The annual rate of death from other causes was more than four times higher in those with poor, compared to good, exercise capacity (1.4 per cent vs 0.3 per cent).

"Good exercise capacity predicted lower risk of death from cardiovascular disease, cancer, and other causes," Peteiro said.

The researcher noted that most study participants were middle aged or older women: the average age was 64 and 80 per cent were between 50 and 75.

"The results were the same for women over 60 and less than 60 although the group under 50 was small," said Peteiro.

Regarding imaging of the heart, the researchers assessed function of the left ventricle (one of the heart's pumping chambers) during the exercise test.

Patients with poor heart function during exercise had a higher probability of death from cardiovascular disease during follow-up.

Heart function during exercise did not predict the likelihood of death from cancer or other causes.

"Looking at both examinations together, women whose heart works normally during exercise are unlikely to have a cardiovascular event. But if their exercise capacity is poor, they are still at risk of death from cancer or other causes," Peteiro said.

"The best situation is to have normal heart performance during exercise and good exercise capacity," Peteiro added. — IANS

Air pollution

Air pollution killed 12.4L Indians in 2017: ICMR (The Tribune: 201901210)

https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/air-pollution-killed-12-4l-indians-in-2017-icmr/872409.html

New govt study shows seven in 10 exposed to double the permissible levels of pollutants

More than seven in every 10 Indians were exposed to lethal air pollutants through 2017, says a new government study on the impact of air pollution on national health.

Air pollution killed 12.4 lakh people in the country in the year of study. This adds up to as much as 12.5 per cent of total deaths in India in 2017.

“Of the total 1.24 million (12.4 lakh) deaths due to air pollution, 0.67 million (6.7 lakh) are attributable to ambient particulate matter pollution (PM levels) and 0.48 million (4.8 lakh) to household air pollution,” the study by Health Ministry and the Indian Council of Medical Research says.

What’s alarming is – of all deaths from air pollution, a little over half (51.4 pc) involved people younger than 70 years.

“The annual population-weighted mean exposure to ambient particulate matter PM 2.5 in India was 89.9 µg/m³ (micro grams per cubic metre of air). Most states and 76.8 per cent of the population of India were exposed to annual population-weighted mean PM 2.5 greater than 40 µg/m³ which is the limit recommended by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards in India,” researchers say.

India contributes 18.1 per cent of the global population it has 26.2 per cent of the global DALYs (one lost year of healthy life) in 2017. Researchers say ambient particulate matter pollution DALY rate was the highest in north Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, Punjab and Rajasthan and the household air pollution DALY rate was the highest in the Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, MP and Assam.

Damning figures

12.5% of total deaths in India were caused by air pollution in 2017

4.8 lakh deaths were caused by the household air pollution

51.4% of the deaths involved people younger than 70 years

26.2% India accounts for global DALY (one lost year of healthy life)

The study found Delhi had the highest levels of PM2.5 in 2017, followed by Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Haryana in north India

All these states had mean PM2.5 pollutant values greater than 125 µg/m³ as against 40 micro gram per cubic metre, which is permissible for zero impact on human health

Particulate matter 2.5 refers to fine particles of dust that can settle in the lungs, interrupting respiratory function and proving fatal in the long term

Pharma marketing,

Beyond trade margin caps, patient groups call for legal oversight of pharma marketing, promotion (The Indian Express: 201901210)

https://indianexpress.com/article/business/economy/beyond-trade-margin-caps-patient-groups-call-for-legal-oversight-of-pharma-marketing-promotion-6158885/

The bodies have written to Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers DV Sadananda Gowda, calling for a statutory code to prevent corruption and unethical marketing practices in these industries.

The patient groups asked DoP to “immediately” replace the voluntary UCPMP with a statutory instrument to regulate pharmaceutical and medical device marketing and promotion.

As the government works on finalising a policy to cap margins taken on medicines and medical devices across the supply chain, a group of civil society bodies have said that the move alone will not help make these products affordable.

The bodies have written to Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers DV Sadananda Gowda, calling for a statutory code to prevent corruption and unethical marketing practices in these industries

“We … submit that TMR (trade margin rationalisation) regulation will not be successful as an isolated policy. The government must bring a statutory instrument for legal oversight of marketing and promotion of pharmaceuticals and medical devices,” stated the group consisting of the All India Drug Action Network (AIDAN), Third World Network (TWN), Partners in Change, Praxis: Institute for Participatory Practices and Prayas, Rajasthan.

pharmaceuticals and medical devices, pharmaceuticals trade margin, price cap stents, medical devices price cap, DV Sadananda Gowda

The group, in its letter dated December 7, claimed that “numerous” instances of “corrupt” promotional activities and “failure” of the industry to self-regulate using the Department of Pharmaceuticals’ (DoP) Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) have been brought to the government’s attention.

The UCPMP is a code of marketing practices for the Indian pharma industry which was to be voluntarily adopted and implemented from January 1, 2015.

The code was to be reviewed after a period of six months and, if it was found not to be implemented effectively, the code stated that the government “may” consider making it a statutory code.

“We are dismayed that, in spite of repeated requests, the government has not brought out a statutory code, which we can only presume is due to pressure against such an initiative from the pharma industry lobby,” stated the group in its letter to the Minister.

The patient groups asked DoP to “immediately” replace the voluntary UCPMP with a statutory instrument to regulate pharmaceutical and medical device marketing and promotion.

This regulation should have “strong” penal and enforcement provisions and cover “all relevant actors”, including pharma and medical device companies, their agents, medical professions, medical associations and health institutions, demanded the group in its letter.

“Care must be taken specifically to ensure escape routes are closed for companies to organise the same unethical practices in a ‘legitimate’ way,” it stated.

The activist bodies have further alleged that TMR as the primary form of regulation is "inadequate" to meet the government's objective of affordability for critical medical devices and is also "poorly adapted to addressing secondary objectives of curbing profiteering and corruption."

The letter to the minister follows a recent study on promotional practices of India's pharma industry by Arun Gadre and Archana Giwate of Pune-based public health group SATHI.

The study, which focussed on interviewing medical representatives, stated that trends in promotional strategies have changed from providing scientific information to doctors to "only focussing on generating business by any means". Its findings also highlight unethical practices such as bribes and, in certain instances, pharma companies catering to demands by doctors for "women for entertainment".

This study has been opposed by the Indian Medical Association (IMA), which has reportedly asked the Maharashtra Medical Council to take action against the researchers.

"The report contains no generalising or sweeping statements and has quotations from MRs (medical representatives) whom it has interviewed. The report also states that a section of doctors is very ethical," stated SATHI Monday in response to IMA's move.

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United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

India rises a spot to 129(Hindustan Times: 201901210)

https://epaper.hindustantimes.com/Home/ArticleView

India climbed one spot to 129 among 189 countries in the 2019 human development index, according to a report released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on Monday.

In 2018, India's human development index (HDI) value of 0.647 had put it at 130 rank.

In India, 27.1 crore people were lifted out of poverty from 2005-06 to 2015-16, UNDP India resident representative Shoko Noda said while releasing the UNDP's development report 2019 "Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: inequalities in human development in the 21st century".

Noda said the steady progress of India was due to nearly three decades of rapid development, which had seen a dramatic reduction in absolute poverty, along with gains in life expectancy, education, and access to health care.

As per the HDI, no other region has experienced such rapid human development progress, she said.

"India's HDI value increased by 50%, which places it above the average for countries in the medium human development group (0.634) and above the average for other South Asian countries (0.642)," Noda said.Despite India's significant progress, it accounts for 28% of the

1.3 billion multi-dimensional poor. The report also found that despite progress, group-based inequalities persist in India, especially affecting women and

Climate Crisise (The Asian Age: 201901210)

http://onlineepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=14252475

As climate crisis grows, all of us should act now

Indranil Banerjie

Few Indians would be aware that the deliberations of a motley group of little-known experts in an European capital, thousands of miles away, could directly impact their future. But that is precisely what is happening now. Climate experts, environmentalists and other experts in related fields are huddled at a conference venue in distant Madrid, the capital of Spain, to decide on the urgent steps necessary to pull the planet out of its perilous descent into ecological catastrophe.

The United Nations Conference on Climate Change, or COP 25 as it is being called, is being attended by representatives from virtually every country on earth, with the notable exception of the United States, whose President has pulled out of the global climate change negotiations.

An unofficial 15-member American delegation headed by House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi has, however, come forward to represent their country. In contrast, the European Union has publicly declared climate change policy as a key priority.

The conference, which stretches from December 2 to 13, is being attended by 29,000 delegates and visitors from 200 countries, proving just how important people across the globe think the climate change issue is. The urgency of the situation was emphasised by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who warned that "the point of no return was no longer

The world is already 1.1°C warmer than it was at the onset of the Industrial Revolution. If "current trends persist, then global temperatures can be expected to rise by 3.2 to 3.9°C this century, which would bring wide-ranging and destructive climate impacts". This is the threat, and most countries are aware of it. All countries signed the Paris Agreement which pledged to keep global temperature rise to two degrees Celsius. The immediate goal is to contain the rise to 1.5 degrees till the end of 2050.

The problem is how to meet greenhouse gas emission and related targets. Many countries lack money, expertise, technology or feasible alternatives to reduce emissions.

The 25th UN Climate Change Conference will help address some of these issues and share ideas, experiences and expertise. This exercise alone is expected to generate ideas and give fresh impetus to governments and corporates in their slow path towards zero net emissions.

India is among the countries that have taken the environmental challenge seriously despite its economic problems. Newspaper headlines in recent times have highlighted how vulnerable India's huge and relatively backward population is to extreme weather events.

Unprecedented rainfall this year in parts of the country have not just wrecked infrastructure and crops but also killed hundreds. Air and water pollution news grabs headlines every day. And now we are told that bly return us to hunger, famines and an economic dead end.

Fortunately, India's political leadership is very aware of the threats from climate change and has pledged to keep their part of the bargain. Before the Madrid Conference, Prime Minister Narendra Modi convened a Cabinet meeting to discuss the COP25 agenda and decide on what stand India should take.

The most important decision taken at this meeting was the need to compel the developed world to do more instead of just talking and blaming poorer countries such as India for not doing enough.

The World Resource Institute (WRI) has estimated that the world's top three emitters — the United States, China and the EU — contribute more than 50 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. India is in the list of the top 10 emitters, but its per capita emission levels are amongst the lowest in the world.

The two chief problem countries are the United States and China, where increases in emission levels continue to rise instead of declining over time as is happening in large parts of the European Union. The United States has contributed a cumulative 397 giga tonnes of CO2 since 1750 while China's share is 214 GT, Russia's 180 and the EU's collectively far more than the latter two. India is way down, at 51 GT.

The United States, despite being the world's worst polluter, has pulled out of climate control negotiations and tossed aside the Paris Agreement it signed in 2015. This is an example of colossal irresponsibility. The silver living is that many American politicians, opinion

Today, there is global awareness of the planet's

makers, states as well as corporations believe in the climate goals and negotiations rejected by their President and are prepared to move in tandem with the rest of the world.

The Indian government, instead of shying away from negotiations that could put further curbs on its industries, has decided to go with the global consensus but with a caveat. New Delhi will tell the world that different countries have varying capacities to address the emissions issue — the richer, more developed nations who also happen to be the primary emitters have to do the heavy lifting.

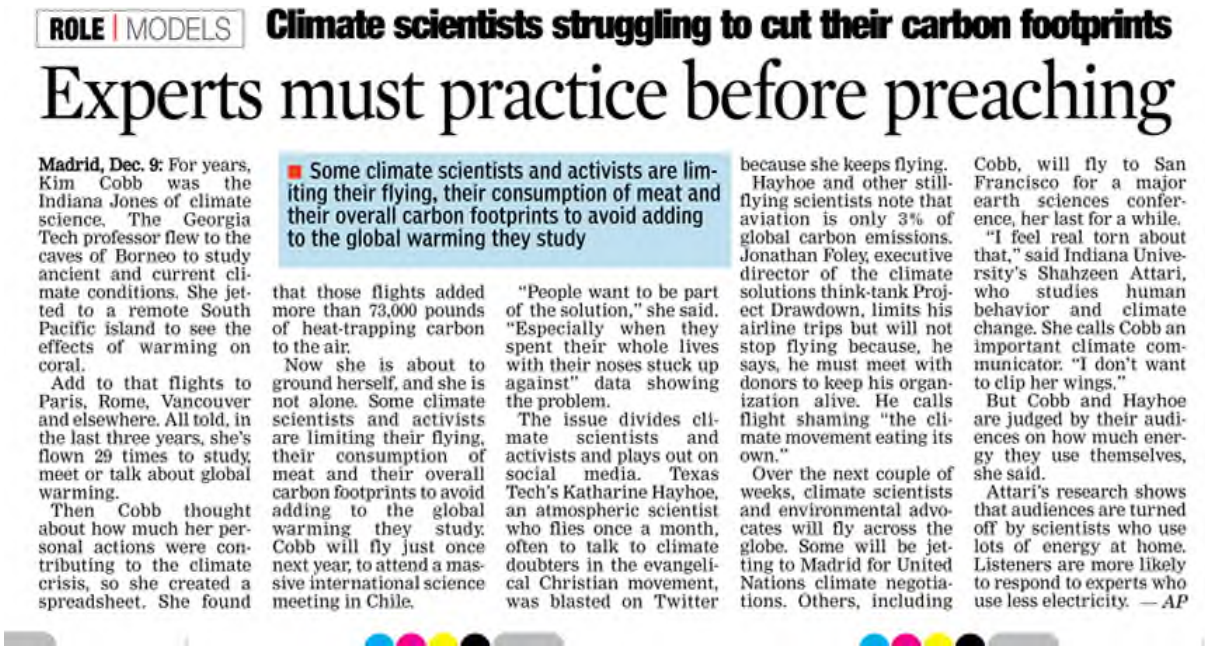
"India has emphasised that developed countries should take a lead in undertaking ambitious actions and fulfil their climate finance commitments of mobilising $100 billion per annum by 2020 and progressively and substantially scale up their financial support to inform parties for future action through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). India will further stress upon the need for fulfilling pre-2020 commitments by developed countries and that pre-2020 implementation gaps should not present an additional burden to developing countries in the post-2020 period," the official Indian statement ahead of the Madrid conference said.

Previous climate change negotiations had recognised the need to provide financial support to those developing countries that lacked the means to effectively implement policies to reduce emissions. Unfortunately, not much has been done on that front chiefly because the rich nations do not wish to part with their money.

Today, there is global awareness of the planet's problems. What is lacking is greater collective will at all levels — in Western capitals, in

Climate Scientiest (The Asian Age: 201901210)

http://onlineepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=14252546



ROLE | MODELS

Climate scientists struggling to cut their carbon footprints

Experts must practice before preaching

Some climate scientists and activists are limiting their flying, their consumption of meat and their overall carbon footprints to avoid adding to the global warming they study

Madrid, Dec. 9: For years, Kim Cobb was the Indiana Jones of climate science. The Georgia Tech professor flew to the caves of Borneo to study ancient and current climate conditions. She jetted to a remote South Pacific island to see the effects of warming on coral.

Add to that flights to Paris, Rome, Vancouver and elsewhere. All told, in the last three years, she's flown 29 times to study, meet or talk about global warming.

Then Cobb thought about how much her personal actions were contributing to the climate crisis, so she created a spreadsheet. She found that those flights added more than 73,000 pounds of heat-trapping carbon to the air.

Now she is about to ground herself, and she is not alone. Some climate scientists and activists are limiting their flying, their consumption of meat and their overall carbon footprints to avoid adding to the global warming they study. Cobb will fly just once next year, to attend a massive international science meeting in Chile.

"People want to be part of the solution," she said. "Especially when they spent their whole lives with their noses stuck up against" data showing the problem.

The issue divides climate scientists and activists and plays out on social media. Texas Tech's Katharine Hayhoe, an atmospheric scientist who flies once a month, often to talk to climate doubters in the evangelical Christian movement, was blasted on Twitter because she keeps flying.

Hayhoe and other still-flying scientists note that aviation is only 3% of global carbon emissions. Jonathan Foley, executive director of the climate solutions think-tank Project Drawdown, limits his airline trips but will not stop flying because, he says, he must meet with donors to keep his organization alive. He calls flight shaming "the climate movement eating its own."

Over the next couple of weeks, climate scientists and environmental advocates will fly across the globe. Some will be jetting to Madrid for United Nations climate negotiations. Others, including Cobb, will fly to San Francisco for a major earth sciences conference, her last for a while.

"I feel real torn about that," said Indiana University's Shahzeen Attari, who studies human behavior and climate change. She calls Cobb an important climate communicator. "I don't want to clip her wings."

But Cobb and Hayhoe are judged by their audiences on how much energy they use themselves, she said.

Attari's research shows that audiences are turned off by scientists who use lots of energy at home. Listeners are more likely to respond to experts who use less electricity. — *AP*

Hit by the flu

Hit by the flu: Although what a winding road it was to get hit, officially hit (The Times of India: 201901210)

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/toi-edit-page/hit-by-the-flu-although-what-a-winding-road-it-was-to-get-hit-officially-hit-f0-9f-98-8a/

When we were kids we got flu and we went to the doctor and he said, say aaaah and he tapped our chest and bobbed the 'scope on the back, you gave him a deep breath or two and he and you were on the same page cos he said, you have flu. And you went home and had chicken soup and an aunt said nothing like turmeric in warm milk and the whole room smelled of VapoRub and three days later you were fine and it was an opportunity to get a teaspoonful of brandy and feel adult and wicked.

Now, you wait 100 minutes in the emergency room then they call your name and make you fill forms and it is finally your turn and you say, i have the flu and the doc says, whatever, we will have to first eliminate Anthrax, Lyme Disease and infective endocarditis.

Then he tells you to get this shopping list of tests done. Room 13 for swab, room 8 for blood test (RBCs, WBCs, C-Protein count), room 9 for BP and height (why height, i am seventy years old, i will not grow any taller even if i have my milk), room 4 for chest x-ray. Doc, doc, i don't need rapid influenza diagnostic tests (RIDTs), i know i have the flu.

After the bloodletting and eleventy eleven payments you have now made it to Accounts, a room full of strangers, all of them exhaling gusts of bacteria and viruses and it is two hours for the results to come even though you paid for urgent and as you sit there, sick as a dog desperately avoiding the man heaving through coughing fits, these are the pleasures of a medical waiting room. Just about when you feel you might as well go home and shoot yourself, the nurse calls your name and you follow her with simpering gratitude and the doctor looks solemn and you sit down and your mind is going whirr whirr because maybe you have Scrub Typhus or Rocky Mountain spotted fever or as Google told you while you were sleepless last night it might be cat scratch, even though we do not have cats.

And then the doctor, as doctors are inclined to do, he shuffles all the papers and the reports and there is one report that has Influenza A-positive underlined and ticked by the lab and the doc looks wisely at you and says, you have flu. I know, doc, it is written there, i can see it, i told you eight people in the house have it, but you wouldn't listen. Thank goodness, though, we are on the same page.

DISCLAIMER : This article is intended to bring a smile to your face. Any connection to events and characters in real life is coincidental.

Pollution

Pollution can be linked to mortality (The Hindu: 201901210)

https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/pollution-can-be-linked-to-mortality/article30259220.ece

Why Prakash Javadekar's comments are untenable

Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said last week that no Indian studies have shown a "direct correlation" between pollution and mortality. International studies estimating that thousands have died from causes linked to air pollution have caused a "fear psychosis among people" when the situation is actually not so bad, Mr. Javadekar said.

Gene bank (The Navbharat Times: 201901210)

http://epaper.navbharattimes.com/details/79934-64459-1.html

देश का पहला जीन बैंक, जन्म से पहले ही बीमारी बता देगा

भारतीयों के जीन की हो रही मैपिंग, प्रोजेक्ट का नाम है–IndiGen

■ ईटी, नई दिल्ली

कुछ साल पहले एक तीन महीने की गर्भवती महिला केरल के एक मेडिकल कॉलेज पहुंची। उनकी छह साल की बच्ची को एक दुर्लभ बीमारी थी। महिला को पता लगाना था कि उनके होने वाले बच्चे को तो इससे नहीं जूझना पड़ेगा। महिला इंस्टिट्यूट ऑफ जिनोमिक्स एंड इंटिग्रेटिव बायॉलजी में डॉ. गीता गोविंदराजा से मिलीं। महिला के कुछ सैंपल हैदराबाद के संस्थान में भेजे गए। टेस्ट में पता चला कि जन्म लेने वाले बच्चे को ऐसी कोई बीमारी नहीं है। डॉ. गीता ने बताया, 'महिला ने एक स्वस्थ बच्चे को जन्म दिया। हम लोगों की जिंदगी में बदलाव ला सकते हैं। इसके पीछे कारण हैं हमारे जिनोम।'

काउंसिल ऑफ साइंटिफिक एंड इंडस्ट्रियल (CSIR) के डायरेक्टर जनरल शेखर कहते हैं कि करीब सात करोड़ भारतीय दुर्लभ जेनेटिक बीमारियों से जूझ रहे हैं। इनमें से कई लोगों को पता ही नहीं है कि उन्हें कोई बीमारी है। इस वजह से इलाज भी नहीं करवा पाते। इसके अलावा एक परेशानी यह है कि भारत में जेनेटिक डेटा की कमी है। वह कहते हैं, 'भारतीयों के जीन की कोई विश्वसनीय जानकारी रिसर्च के लिए हमारे पास नहीं है।'

देश बदल रहा है

आखिर जिनोम क्या है?

जिनोम किसी व्यक्ति के डीएनए का एक पूरा सेट होता है। जिनोम में सभी जींस के सेट और करीब 300 करोड़ डीएनए होते हैं। इनकी मदद से शोधकर्ता जीन की कार्यप्रणाली को आसानी से समझ सकते हैं। इससे कैंसर और दूसरी बीमारियों की वजह भी सामने आ पाएंगी। जीन डेटा को अति सुरक्षित सुपर कंप्यूटर में रखा जाएगा। किसी व्यक्ति की आनुवांशिक जानकारी से कोई समझौता नहीं होगा। इस डेटा का विश्लेषण करना सबसे मुश्किल काम है। एक जिनोम में करीब 120 जीबी डेटा होता है। CSIR के डीजी कहते हैं, 'संस्थान ज्यादा से ज्यादा लोगों को इसकी ट्रेनिंग देने की योजना बना रहा है ताकि जिनोम डेटा पर काम किया जा सके।'

हालांकि अब देश के कई संस्थान इस दिशा में काम कर रहे हैं। भविष्य में जीन की जानकारी से दुर्लभ जेनेटिक बीमारियों के इलाज में मदद मिलेगी।

भारत का अपना जीन प्रोजेक्ट

जीन रिसर्च में आने वाली परेशानियों को अब दूर किया जा रहा है। भारत ने जीन मैपिंग पर छह महीने से चल रहे प्रोजेक्ट को हाल में खत्म किया है। इस प्रोजेक्ट का नाम है– IndiGen। इस प्रोजेक्ट के तहत करीब 1,008 लोगों के जिनोम की मैपिंग की जा रही है। इससे मेडिकल साइंस के विशेषज्ञों को कैंसर और दूसरी जेनेटिक बीमारियों के इलाज में मदद मिलेगी। गर्भ में पल रहे शिशु को भी क्या बीमारी हो सकती है इसकी भी पहचान की जा सकेगी। इस प्रोजेक्ट के प्रमुख श्रीधर शिवासुब्बु कहते हैं, 'इस मैपिंग से पैरंट्स को बच्चे में होने वाली दुर्लभ बीमारियों का पता चल पाएगा। हमें यह जानने में मदद मिलेगी कि क्यों कुछ लोगों में किसी दवाई को लेकर कोई प्रतिक्रिया नहीं होती। हर व्यक्ति को जरूरत के मुताबिक इलाज मुहैया कराया जा सकेगा।'

Cancer (The Navbharat Times: 201901210)

http://epaper.navbharattimes.com/details/79934-64460-1.html

बचपन में कैंसर को हराया, आज ओलिंपिक की रेस में

बेड़ियों से जंग

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■ **नई दिल्ली :** यह कहानी जम्मू शहर की उस लड़की की है जिसे एक समय कैंसर जैसी घातक बीमारी ने घेर लिया था। आज वही लड़की तोक्यो ओलिंपिक्स में जगह बनाने से चंद फासले पर खड़ी है। अगर वह ओलिंपिक के लिए क्वॉलिफाई करती है तो उसका नाम हमेशा के लिए इतिहास में दर्ज हो जाएगा। हम बात कर रहे हैं शिवानी चरक की जो आज भारत की नंबर वन स्पोर्ट्स क्लाईंबर हैं। स्पोर्ट्स क्लाईंबिंग को तोक्यो ओलिंपिक्स में शामिल किया गया है। वैसे तो यह खेल बहुत ही पुराना है लेकिन यह पहली बार है जब इस खेल को ओलिंपिक्स में जगह मिली है।

कई इंटरनैशनल इवेंट में अपना परचम फहरा चुकीं 19 वर्षीय शिवानी भी बखूबी यह बात जानती हैं कि वह इन खेलों में भारत की ओर से ओलिंपिक्स में भाग लेने वाली पहली ऐथलीट बनने के बहुत करीब हैं।

बीमारी के बारे में पता चल गया।' एशियन यूथ चैंपियनशिप (2017 चीन) में सबसे कम उम्र में भारत का प्रतिनिधित्व करने का रेकॉर्ड बनाने वाली शिवानी बताती हैं, 'इलाज के दौरान मेरे बाल उड़ गए थे। मैं बहुत कमजोर हो गई थी। सच कहूं तो मैं बहुत डर गई थी।

और मजूबत बनकर निकलीं

शिवानी कहती हैं, 'पापा के विश्वास ने मेरे अंदर भी विश्वास भरा। मेरी बहन क्लाइंबिंग करती थी और ऑपरेशन के एक साल बाद ही क्लाइंबिंग के खेल में हाथ आजमाने का मैंने मन बना लिया। डॉक्टर ने मुझे इजाजत दे दी, लेकिन मेरी मां मेरी बहुत फिक्र करती थी इसलिए उन्होंने मना कर दिया। हालांकि यहां भी मेरे पापा ने मेरा साथ दिया। कैंसर से लड़ाई ने मुझे बहुत मजबूत बना दिया था और क्लाईंबिंग को प्रफेशन बनाने में मुझे ज्यादा दिक्कत नहीं हुई।'

समाज की बेड़ियां तोड़ीं