CPRG NEWSLETTER FOR THE WEEK 18-23 OCTOBER 2021

This week's newsletter by CPRG throws light on current events ranging from public policy in housing to the latest development in education systems in India as well as Globally. The newsletter aims to broaden the horizons of your outlook on current events as it brings contemporary news to you and providing analysis from a fresh perspective.

This week we discuss- The digital divide created due to the pandemic and its implications as it created financial inequity among the already marginalize groups, further imploring this topic NITI Aayog chief executive officer Amitabh Kant's statement on affordable internet access and ways to strengthen the education system. While reforms have been demanded in Ghana's legal education system. Accoring to reports Dharmendra Pradhan, the Education minister has shared plans of the NEP with RSS leaders.

In other news according to the policy of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna 40 lakh houses provided to people from lower income background in Uttar Pradesh, while a decrease in the pace of construction of rural houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin has been noted due to the lockdown.

Kushinagar International Airport has been inaugurated to increase tourism while in another report according to Shripad Naik, Union Minister of State for Tourism, International tourists may be able to visit India if the country reopens. After an 18-month pause, India is reopening its borders to tourists.

Read on to learn that Congress has decided to give 40% tickets to women in the upcoming Assembly Elections in Uttar Pradesh and what the new report published by National Crime Records Bureau says.

1. Digital-divide and education

The digital divide is defined as the difference between those who have regular and effective access to devices, instruction, and knowledge about computational resources and those who do not (Swain & Pearson, 2001). It reveals profound differences in how people use technology in society by demonstrating how social inequalities are perpetuated through technology. While the word has a wide range of meanings and implications, the concept of degrees of digital divide was first suggested by Attewell (2001) and expanded upon by Kelly (2008) and depicts social disparities in the use of computers in educational settings on three levels. It now encompasses access to internet among other things.

Digital Divide is not a novel issue instead has been further exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic. It's important to reduce it so as to perpetuate digital inclusion and equity in education. According to the Key Indicators of Household Social Consumption on Education in India report, based on the 2017-18 NSSO, fewer than 15% of rural Indian households have internet access (as opposed to 42% urban Indian households). A mere 13% of people surveyed (aged above five) in rural areas — just 8.5% of females — could use the internet.

Lopsided distribution of digital services across the country is concerning, as it threatens to perpetuate a cycle of financial inequity among the already marginalised elements of society. Due to their lack of access to digital resources, future generations of the privileged have been pushed further behind those who are underprivileged. Access to digital technology must be democratised. The government should concentrate on ensuring that every region of India has access to the necessary digital infrastructure. Because Covid-19 has already exposed India's digital divide, future approach ought to be to overcome any barrier as opposed to disregarding the basic issue.

https://www.livemint.com/news/india/affordable-internet-connectivity-key-to-education-amitabh-kant-11634900606201.html

2.Affordable internet connectivity key to education: Amitabh Kant

According to NITI Aayog chief executive officer Amitabh Kant, affordable internet access and technology-based infrastructure are the only options to strengthen the country's education sector, and entire reliance on physical infrastructure will not be sufficient. To address the structural inequality leading to digital divide, the integration of technology and education is imperative.

https://www.livemint.com/news/india/affordable-internet-connectivity-key-to-education-amitabh-kant-11634900606201.html

3.Crime rate in India increases in 2020

India's overall crime cases were increased by 28 percent in 2020 in comparison with the previous year as per the reports published by the National Crime Records Bureau. Under the 'environment-related offenses', cases increases by 78.1 percent in the country in 2020. India has reported 61,767 cases in 2020 under the environment crime category. Tamil Nadu reported the country's highest number of environment-related crimes. In 2020, the state registered 42,756 cases, which was more than three times the number of cases registered in 2019. Rajasthan came second among the states, with 9,543 cases registered in 2020; in 2019, this number was 10,782 cases. Uttar Pradesh (UP) came to third with 2,981 cases in 2020.

https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/environment/amp/environment-related-offences-recorded-78-increase-in-2020-79041

4.INDIA LOOKING TO OPEN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

The global virus Covid-19 had a significant impact on various sectors of the economy. The novel coronavirus disease first made headlines in mid-December in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, before spreading to the United States and reaching across the world. This increasing global transmission is what we call a pandemic. COVID-19 has a significant detrimental impact on the tourism sector. According to the report, travel and tourism account for 9.2 percent of India's GDP (in 2018). In 2018, the tourism industry employed 26.7 million people. The coronavirus's cascading effect has been found to weaken the Indian tourism and hospitality industry at an alarming rate. According to a National Council of Applied Economic Research study on the impact of coronavirus on tourism, the pandemic resulted in "significant" job losses in the tourism sector. After the lockdown was imposed, 14.5 million jobs were lost in the first quarter, 5.2 million in the second quarter, and another 1.8 million in the third quarter of 20-21. In both Europe and the Americas, international arrivals fell by 68 percent. Foreign arrivals are expected to fall by 70% to 75% for the entire year of 2020, based on current trends. The predicted decline in international tourism in 2020 will result in a loss of nearly 1 billion visitors and US$ 1.1 trillion in tourist revenue. This decline in foreign tourism could result in a global economic loss of more than US$ 2 trillion in 2019, accounting for more than 2% of global GDP. After an 18-month pause, India is reopening its borders to tourists. India is planning to reopen the travel industry. As the pandemic decreases, we will begin national and international tourism, said Shripad Naik, Union Minister of State for Tourism. International tourists may be able to visit India if the country reopens.

4.INDIA LOOKING TO OPEN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM (contd.)

The Indian government will allow fully vaccinated foreigners with tourist visas to enter the country on chartered flights beginning Friday; they will be able to arrive on regular flights beginning Nov. 15. It is the first time India has welcomed foreign tourists since March 2020, when the Indian government imposed its first COVID-19 lockdown. There are no restrictions on who can enter, as long as they have been fully vaccinated and have tested negative for COVID within 72 hours of their flight. India has fully vaccinated approximately 27% of its adult population and is set to administer the billionth dose in the coming days. However, the country will most likely fall short of its goal of immunizing its entire adult population by the end of the year; it is more likely to achieve that goal by March or April of 2022. Unvaccinated Indians and those who are only partially vaccinated increase the risk of getting the virus on their own; allowing tourists to enter will only increase the chances of a third wave, according to Amit Dutt, principal investigator, and scientist at India's Tata Memorial–ACTREC, a Mumbai-based research institute. Indian health officials have also warned people to follow COVID protocols, especially during the religious festival season, Diwali in November. However, a surge in people's movement during the festival season could lead to an increase in COVID infections and disrupt the economic recovery, according to the industry body.

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/travel-news/india-might-open-for-international

5. 40 lakh houses provided to needy under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna in Uttar Pradesh

On the auspicious occasion of Krishna Janmashtami CM released financial assistance of Rs 1341.17 crore to 2.853 lakh beneficiaries in the state Uttar Pradesh under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Under the scheme, almost 1 lakh people got the first instalment, 34,369 received the second and 68,250 beneficiaries got the third instalment. Previously, when the money was shared without DBT, the beneficiary received only Rs 15 out of Rs 100, now out of Rs 100 for example, Rs 85 used to go into the pockets of the middlemen. However, now PMAY, the entire amount directly gets deposited in the beneficiaries account.

https://www.opindia.com/2021/08/janmashtami-uttar-pradesh-cm-yogi-adityanath-40-lakh-poor-people-given-homes/

6.Lockdown has retarded the pace of construction of rural houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin

According to data of the rural development ministry, out of the allocated target of 2.63 crore till financial year 2021-22, only 1.51 crore houses have been constructed including 33.9 lakh houses built during 2020-21. The ministry has issued an advisory to all states and UTs to resume activities under PMAY-G with due Covid-19 protocol and undertakes regular review of progress to ensure timely completion of targeted houses.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/pace-of-construction-of-rural-houses-slowed-under-pradhan-mantri-awas-yojana-gramin-minister/articleshow/85206132.cms

7.40% tickets to women in UP: Congress aiming to regain lost ground?

While the Congress' decision to give 40% tickets to women in the upcoming Assembly Elections in Uttar Pradesh next year adds to the movement for greater inclusive and role of women in politics, whether or not it will benefit the GOP remains to be seen. The move is aimed at targeting a section of the society that pervades class, caste and religious chasms and is sure to have an impact on women's representation in politics possibly setting other parties on the path to make similar decisions in UP and in other states. However, India's grand old party which is unable to appeal to constituency and has lost significant ground since the rise of caste based regional parties and the ideologically aggressive BJP, needs to do a lot more if it wants to increase its current tally of just 7 seats (two of them women) in the 403 seat UP Assembly.

https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/congress-to-give-40-of-tickets-to-women-in-uttar-pradesh-assembly-polls-says-priyanka-gandhi/article37072048.ece

8.Kushinagar Airport and India's bid to regain Buddhist credentials

The recent inauguration of Kushinagar International Airport is a larger part of the central government's efforts to push India's Buddhist credentials on the international tourism scape. The Buddhist Circuit, announced in 2016 is an effort to boost India's tourism infrastructure capabilities in sites associated with Buddhism in order to attract international tourism.

India is the birth place of Buddhism but less than 1% of international Buddism related tourism is directed towards the country. Through this circuit, the government is focusing on improving the infrastructure capabilities of India and connecting it with other Buddhist centers in South Asia such as in Sri Lanka and Nepal in order to create a larger network and attract more international tourists.

https://indianexpress.com/article/india/centre-plans-a-major-infrastructure-push-for-the-buddhist-circuit-7557762/

8.Call for Reforms in Ghana's Legal Education System

Aggrieved law students from the National Association of Law Students (NALS) recently failed in their entrance exam to the Ghana School of Law. They blame such failure on the General Legal Council. Students have begun protesting and organising demonstrations in order to push for reforms in the country's legal education system. By failing these students, the State of Ghana has not fulfilled its duty under Article 37(1) of the 1992 Constitution, which provides that the State shall endeavour to secure and protect a social order founded on the ideals and principle of freedom, equality, justice, probity, and accountability as enshrined in Chapter 5 of this Constitution; and in particular, the State shall direct its policy towards ensuring every citizen has equality of rights, obligations, and opportunities before the law. Students are arguing that all the rules and guidelines governing the conduction of the examination were not clarified prior to the examination, and were only communicated after the exam results were released. To uphold Article 37(1) of the 1992 Constitution, it is imperative that an investigation is launched to confirm whether the scores given to students were based on their actual performance, or were fabricated in order to cover up the lack of adequate infrastructure to accommodate such large numbers of appearing students.

https://mobile.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Today-in-History-Law-students-demonstrate-over-legal-education-1375228

9.Education minister shares NEP road map at RSS meet

The Education minister, Dharmendra Pradhan, shared the expeditious implementation plan for the NEP (New Education Policy) with RSS leaders. The plan continues with the NEP's thrust on promoting education in regional languages. The plan also envisages changes in the textbook material and format of board exams in light of the pandemic.

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/87173069.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

THANK YOU

Contributors -

- Abhigya
- Damini
- Ishika
- Meenakshi
- Taniya
- Vaishnavi
- Yachana