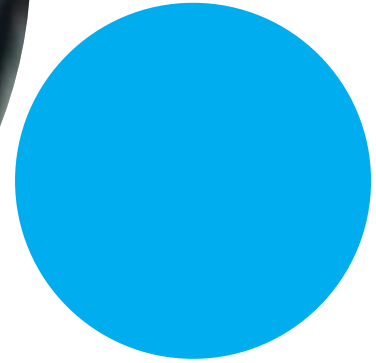


2024



# **WEEKLY** **HINDU EDITORIAL** **COMPILATION**

**25 AUG TO 31 AUG**



# BOARD EXAM MARK INFLATION

The article discusses the recurring allegations of mark inflation in Indian board exams, its impact on education, and the need for transparency in the evaluation process.

The editorial addresses the widespread perception that Indian school boards inflate marks in classes 10 and 12, leading to concerns about the credibility of board examinations. Despite a consistent increase in pass percentages across various boards, the editorial highlights the variation in students scoring above 60%, which indicates mark compression—particularly in high-achieving students. This compression is seen as detrimental, as it clusters marks at the higher levels, reducing their value.

The editorial also emphasizes the flaws in the current system, where marks are increasingly seen as an inadequate measure of a student's knowledge and potential. The focus shifts to entrance exams for higher education, which are becoming more significant as a result. The article calls for a standardized approach to board exams, suggesting the adoption of scientific assessments like the National Achievement Survey (NAS) to provide a more accurate reflection of student performance.

Furthermore, the editorial advocates for transparency in the awarding process, urging for a reformation in the publication of marks, consideration for difficult questions, and the establishment of a fair moderation system. Ultimately, the article stresses the need for educational reforms that ensure fairness and credibility in evaluating students, preventing mark inflation and fostering genuine academic achievement.



# VISION **2047** FOR INDIAN AGRICULTURE

**The article outlines the challenges and strategic initiatives needed to transform Indian agriculture by 2047, focusing on sustainability and growth.**

The editorial discusses India's goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047, emphasizing the importance of transforming agriculture to achieve this vision. Achieving the target requires a significant increase in Gross National Income (GNI) and a comprehensive development approach, particularly in agriculture. Sustainable practices like precision farming, micro-irrigation, and genetically modified crops are highlighted as key to enhancing long-term productivity and environmental health. Government schemes like Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) and Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) are noted for their role in promoting efficient water use and agricultural risk management.

However, the sector faces significant challenges, including climate change, land degradation, and market access issues. The editorial warns of a looming imbalance, where agriculture employs nearly 30% of the workforce but contributes only 18% to GDP. To address these issues, the government has launched several initiatives, such as Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) and the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, aiming to boost productivity and ensure sustainable growth.

The article concludes by stressing the need for continued investment in agricultural research, infrastructure, and policy support to meet future demands and foster sustainable growth in Indian agriculture.

26-08-2024

# REALITY OF EXPLOITATION



**The Hema Committee report highlights the exploitation and gender discrimination faced by women in the Malayalam film industry, calling for structural reforms and greater government intervention.**

The Justice K. Hema Committee report, released by the Kerala government in August 2024, exposes the deep-rooted exploitation and gender discrimination prevalent in the Malayalam film industry. The report identifies two primary issues: the sexual exploitation of women, where refusal to comply with demands often results in career sabotage, and discriminatory practices, including the lack of basic facilities for women. These issues, reflective of broader societal problems, are exacerbated by patriarchal norms and the objectification of women, which perpetuate a culture of sexual assault and workplace harassment.

The report questions the effectiveness of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) in the film industry, suggesting that it is vulnerable to influence by powerful individuals. Instead, it advocates for the creation of an independent forum, overseen by the government, to address these issues. Furthermore, the report underscores the need for the government to lead structural reforms, focusing on improving working conditions, ensuring accountability, and addressing the specific challenges faced by women in lower strata of the industry.

The findings of the Hema Committee are seen as a crucial step toward empowering women in the workplace, urging society and the government to take collective responsibility in combating gender inequality and exploitation.



## NEW-AGE HEALTH RISKS

New-age gateway devices like e-cigarettes and vaping pens, initially marketed as healthier alternatives to smoking, have led to a public health crisis, particularly affecting children and adolescents.

New-age gateway devices such as e-cigarettes, vaping pens, and other Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), originally promoted as safer alternatives to traditional smoking, have instead triggered a new public health crisis. These devices have become popular among children and adolescents, leading to increased nicotine addiction and associated health risks. The targeted marketing of these products, often using appealing flavors and colorful imagery, lures young users by promising social acceptance and happiness. However, these devices contribute to physical harms like lung damage and psychological issues such as loneliness, social isolation, and mental health challenges. Studies have shown that e-cigarettes are highly addictive, particularly for adolescents, and may lead to other substance abuse issues. Despite being portrayed as tools to help quit smoking, these devices have instead created a new generation dependent on nicotine, highlighting the urgent need for awareness and regulation to protect vulnerable populations.

27-08-2024

# CASTE CENSUS DELAY

The editorial discusses the implications and urgency of conducting the delayed Census, emphasizing that caste enumeration should not cause further delays.



The editorial addresses the Union government's consideration of including caste enumeration in the long-delayed Census, a demand strongly pushed by several political parties. However, it cautions against rushing into this inclusion due to the previous issues with the 2011 Socio-Economic and Caste Census, which was deemed inaccurate and unusable. The government is urged to set a clear time frame for the Census rather than using the caste enumeration as a reason for further delays. The editorial criticizes the government for not conducting the Census yet, noting that India is one of the few countries globally that hasn't done so in this decade, citing the pandemic as a reason. However, 143 other countries managed to conduct their Census post-2020 despite facing various challenges.

The editorial emphasizes the critical role the Census plays in public policy, administrative boundary determination, and various social welfare schemes. The continued delay is leading to outdated data, affecting surveys and public policies, as well as fueling debates over methodology. The reliance on outdated 2011 Census data is seen as inadequate for addressing current socio-economic issues like migration, urbanization, and suburbanization. The Union government is urged to expedite the Census process without further delay, ensuring that caste enumeration does not hinder the overall progress.



# HEALTH WORKERS SAFETY

**The editorial discusses the urgent need for comprehensive reforms in the safety and working conditions of healthcare workers, focusing on deeper systemic issues like corruption and inadequate infrastructure.**

The editorial highlights the recurring issue of violence against healthcare workers, with the 2017 protests by resident doctors in Maharashtra serving as a significant example. Despite various incidents and superficial responses, including boosting security and swift justice measures, the deeper problem remains unaddressed. The tragic death of a resident doctor in Kolkata underscores this crisis, leading to the Supreme Court's intervention and the West Bengal government's initiatives like the 'Rattireer Saathi' program to enhance the safety of healthcare workers, particularly women. However, these measures are seen as reactive and insufficient, failing to address the underlying issues like systemic corruption and inadequate funding in the healthcare sector.

The World Health Organization estimates that corruption in healthcare worldwide costs around \$455 billion annually, severely impacting health outcomes and contributing to the fragility of health systems. The editorial criticizes the focus on individual cases of medical corruption while overlooking broader systemic failures. It calls for a national task force to devise a comprehensive road map to tackle corruption in healthcare, involving inputs from various sectors, including public health, legal, and administrative. The editorial also emphasizes the need for modernizing India's healthcare infrastructure and governance, taking inspiration from global examples like Brazil, to ensure long-term safety and efficiency in the healthcare sector.

28-08-2024

# ADVANCING EQUITY IN HEALTH



**The article discusses global efforts to address the Mpox outbreak by leveraging COVID-19 lessons to ensure equitable access to vaccines and strengthen international health cooperation.**

Less than five years after the COVID-19 pandemic, the world faces the threat of another global health crisis with the resurgence of Mpox. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared Mpox a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), marking the first time regional and global health emergencies have been declared concurrently for the same disease. The declaration emphasizes the importance of international cooperation, the need for coordinated responses, and the inclusion of equity as a core principle in global health regulations.

The Mpox outbreak presents an opportunity to apply lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic by scaling up vaccine production in the Global South, particularly in India, which is well-positioned to lead these efforts. Ensuring technology transfers, especially for low-cost production and equitable access, is critical. The collaboration between international organizations, governments, and non-governmental organizations is essential for effective responses. The article highlights the need for comprehensive technology transfer and the sharing of knowledge beyond just vaccine doses to support long-term preparedness. Indian manufacturers, with experience from COVID-19, can play a crucial role in ensuring equitable vaccine distribution. Regulatory authorities and international cooperation will be key in navigating the challenges posed by the ongoing Mpox outbreak, emphasizing the importance of a coordinated global response to future health emergencies.

## FREE SPEECH LIMITS

**The article critiques the laissez-faire approach to content moderation by platforms like Telegram, emphasizing the need for reasonable limits to protect public safety.**

The article discusses the notion that free speech is not absolute and must be subject to certain restrictions to maintain public order, morals, and public health, as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Pavel Durov, the founder of Telegram, is known for his strong stance on absolute free speech, allowing the platform to be used by dissidents and anti-establishment figures. However, his laissez-faire approach to content moderation has also led to the platform being associated with extremism, drug dealers, scammers, and child pornography.



Durov's recent detention by French authorities, linked to criminal activity on Telegram, raises concerns about the balance between protecting free speech and ensuring public safety. The article questions whether Telegram's lax content moderation policies can continue without causing harm. It highlights that while Telegram does not fully use end-to-end encryption, it can monitor and act on certain types of illegal content when requested by law enforcement.

The article further argues that despite Durov's stance, platforms like Telegram must not become havens for criminal activity. The need for reasonable limits on free speech in digital spaces is emphasized, especially in light of the harmful effects of misinformation and disinformation on social media platforms like WhatsApp. Ultimately, the article calls for Telegram and similar platforms to adopt more responsible content moderation practices to ensure safety without entirely sacrificing the principles of free speech.

29-08-2024

# STRENGTHENING INDIA'S TB FIGHT

## **India must innovate and utilize new treatments and technologies to eliminate tuberculosis (TB) efficiently.**

India bears a significant global burden of tuberculosis (TB), with political commitment driving efforts to combat the disease. The recent focus is on eliminating TB, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging citizens to participate in this mission. The editorial emphasizes the need to adopt new shorter treatment regimens for drug-resistant TB, as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). These regimens, like the BPaL/M, are more effective, require fewer tablets, and have higher success rates, with countries already beginning to roll them out. The savings from transitioning to BPaL/M could be substantial, with global health systems potentially saving \$740 million annually. The article further stresses the importance of advanced diagnostic tools, including AI-driven portable X-rays and rapid molecular tests, to quickly identify and treat TB cases. With these advancements, India can improve treatment outcomes, especially in vulnerable and underserved populations. The editorial concludes by advocating for a focused and proactive approach to eliminating TB, aligning new technologies and treatments with public health strategies to ensure timely and accurate diagnosis and care.

## **Judicial Focus on Fair Trials**

### **The judiciary urges agencies to prioritize fair trials over prolonged imprisonment of political figures.**

The Supreme Court's decision to grant bail to Bharat Rashtra Samithi leader K. Kavitha highlights concerns over the misuse of judicial processes to detain political opponents. The case revolves around accusations that the Delhi government's liquor policy was influenced by a financial deal with a lobby, necessitating thorough investigation and prosecution. However, the focus of the Centre and its agencies seems skewed towards keeping political figures in jail before their trial.

. The Bench, comprising Justices B.R. Gavai and K.V. Viswanathan, questioned the fairness of this approach, especially since some witnesses in the case are also accused who turned approvers. This strategy of using the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act (PMLA) to prolong incarceration is being scrutinized, with the Court now increasingly granting bail, as seen in cases involving Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia. The editorial emphasizes that rather than focusing on denying bail, the agencies should aim to build strong cases and ensure trials are conducted swiftly and fairly. The criticism extends to the failure to apply legal provisions that could benefit accused women like Kavitha. The article concludes by stressing the importance of concentrating on evidence-based prosecutions and timely trials to uphold justice, rather than relying on prolonged detentions based on accusations alone.

# STRENGTHENING STATE ELECTION COMMISSIONS

30-08-2024



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**Empowering and reforming State Election Commissions (SECs) is essential for safeguarding grassroots democracy in India.**

State Election Commissions (SECs) play a crucial role in overseeing elections for local government bodies, such as panchayats and urban local governments. Established by constitutional amendments, these commissions have faced increasing interference and disempowerment by state governments, resulting in delayed elections and reduced autonomy.

Regular and timely local elections are essential for ensuring effective grassroots democracy and delivering services at the local level. SECs must be empowered with greater independence, including the establishment of a multi-member commission to ensure impartiality. Regular review and delimitation of electoral boundaries and reservation of seats every ten years are necessary to prevent manipulation by state governments.

SECs should also be responsible for overseeing the elections of local officials, such as mayors and council heads, to prevent undue influence from state authorities. These reforms are vital for enhancing transparency, accountability, and the effective functioning of local self-governance, thereby strengthening the democratic framework at the grassroots level in India.

# COMBATING FAKE MEDICINE

Courts should focus on addressing fake medicines rather than just controlling misleading advertisements.

On August 27, the Supreme Court of India revisited the issue of misleading advertisements related to ayurveda, siddha, and unani products. Earlier, another Bench had ordered a company to publish apologies for unproven medicinal claims. State-level regulatory agencies have begun acting against these misleading claims, but the Court expressed frustration over the lack of substantial action.

India's drug manufacturers and regulators face challenges in balancing high-quality production with affordable consumer prices. Unfortunately, regulatory bodies and manufacturers have not adequately protected patients. The AYUSH Ministry's actions have further complicated matters by allowing products to be registered as "Ayurvedic" even when they do not meet quality standards, leading to the evasion of regulatory rules.

The Ministry's recent attempt to sidestep Rule 170 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules 1945, which penalizes misleading advertisements, highlights a persistent problem. While the Court has demanded advertisers self-declare their adherence to truth in advertising, the real issue lies in ensuring the quality and safety of medicines. The most effective outcome would involve the Court addressing past declarations and strengthening the regulatory framework to protect the public from fake medicines and ensure accountability.



## COLLAPSE OF CATEGORIES

31-08-2024

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**The article explores the fluidity of gender and identity categories and their implications on societal norms and individual autonomy.**

The editorial delves into the evolving and increasingly fluid nature of categories such as gender and identity, challenging the rigid boundaries that have traditionally defined individuals and their roles in society. It discusses instances from the 2024 Paris Olympics, where athletes faced disqualification based on outdated gender classifications, and examines how gender, once seen as a biological fact, is now viewed as a spectrum, particularly in Western societies. The article highlights the debate over sex as a choice, influenced by social, legal, and medical interpretations, and reflects on how individual autonomy has shifted from mind-body unity to a preference for mental over physical identity. It also discusses the broader implications of this shift on societal norms, political ideologies, and the law, emphasizing the tension between maintaining traditional categories and embracing a more fluid understanding of human identity. The article concludes by considering the impact of these changes on liberalism, societal structures, and the ongoing debate over gender affirming treatments.

# India's 2036 OLYMPIC AMBITION

**India's dream of hosting the 2036 Olympics hinges on national collaboration, infrastructure development, and strategic planning.**

In his Independence Day address, the Prime Minister announced India's ambition to host the 2036 Olympic Games, marking a significant national objective. Hosting an Olympic event is a monumental task that requires extensive infrastructure, careful planning, and broad consensus within the country. The process of selecting the future host city is rigorous, involving confidential discussions led by the Future Host Commission (FHC) of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), with an election expected by 2026. India's journey toward this goal began with the successful hosting of the 2010 Commonwealth Games, leading to reforms in sports associations and a focus on grassroots development through initiatives like the Khelo India scheme. This program identifies and nurtures young talent, contributing to the nation's growing sports ecosystem. Tamil Nadu, in particular, has made significant investments in sports infrastructure, positioning itself as a strong contender for hosting international events. For India to succeed in its Olympic bid, there must be a collaborative effort among various governments, agencies, and stakeholders, leveraging existing infrastructure to present a unified and competitive proposal to the IOC.

