Prioritise collection of public health data: Panel

Ambika.Pandit
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The parliamentary standing committee on finance in its report tabled in Parliament on Wednesday on the statistics collection machinery in the country, has sought prioritisation of data collection related to public health for better policy formulation against the backdrop of the ongoing pandemic.

The 31-member panel chaired by Jayant Sinha states that "in the aftermath of the global Covid-19 pandemic, public health as such has become all the more crucial, requiring government support and active intervention".

"The committee would, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation that health-related data collection and surveys be taken up by the ministry of statistics and programme implementation (MoSPI) on priority basis, as such statistical inputs would be of immense help to both the central and state governments in formulating appropriate policy responses," the panel stated.

The report adopted by the committee in September last year was tabled in both Houses of parliament on Wednesday. On the action taken in this regard, MoSPI had informed the committee that besides regular surveys, NSSO takes up other subjects as and when requested by ministries. The health ministry itself is conducting some health-related surveys on regular basis. MoSPI cited the survey conducted by NSSO during July, 2017 to June, 2018 on 'Social consumption: Health' as the recent initiative to build on data on the subject.

Further, the committee observes with concern that as on November 30, 2019 there were 785 vacant positions in the grade of senior statistical officer and junior statistical officer. While calling for urgently filling up all vacancies, the parliamentary panel has recommended that a study be conducted to figure out the reasons for high level of attrition from this sector.

JUST LIKE THAT AJIT NINAN

Feeding time

Times View: Honest statistics may taste bitter, but they provide an accurate reflection of the ground reality, essential for sound policy making. The government must invest in adequate and quality manpower for statistics collection. Short cuts can lead to bad data and hence misguided policy.

Govt mopped up 80% more from fuel cess than expected

Dipak.Dash@timesgroup.com

TOI/ Photo for representation


The government has hiked the allocation for the Jal Jeevan Mission in rural areas by five times to ensure tap water connection to every rural household in India. The entire allocation of Rs 50,000 crore for the scheme will come from road and infrastructure cess

New Delhi: The government has mopped up nearly 80% more road and infrastructure cess levied on petrol and diesel compared to what it had estimated for 2020-21. According to the Budget documents, the receipts on this account increased to nearly Rs 2.3 lakh crore in the revised estimates compared to the nearly Rs 1.3 lakh crore, which was projected in the Budget.

While this increased flow of revenue has pinched vehicle owners, it has come as a big help to the government to increase expenditure in some sectors. For example, the entire allocation of Rs 50,000 crore for Jal Jeevan Mission in rural areas for 2021-22 will come from road and infrastructure cess. The government has hiked the allocation by five times for this scheme to ensure tap water connection to every rural household.

Similarly, around 65% of the entire budgetary allocation for the road transport and highways ministry will come from this cess. Earlier the cess from fuel, known as Central Road Fund, was primarily used for development of highways and rural roads. But since the government renamed this fund as Central Road and Infrastructure Fund in 2019, it has been earmarking portions of the fund for other infrastructure sectors such as ports, shipyards, inland waterways, airports, railways, urban public transport, energy, water and sanitation, communication infrastructure.

Govt set to rope in pvt partner to operate iconic Ashok Hotel

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The government is set to rope in a private partner to manage and run the Capital's iconic Ashok Hotel as it seeks to make the operations efficient.

Several attempts have been made in the past to sell the hotel run by the ITDC but the plans had to be abandoned due to a string of factors including labour issues, dues and past contracts that the iconic hotel in the heart of the diplomatic area in New Delhi had signed. The disinvestment department under the then minister Arun Shourie in the Atal Behari Vajpayee government had tried to sell the property as part of its wider policy to get out of the business of running hotels. But he had to abandon the plans.

Sources told **TOI** that the department of investment and public asset management is ready with the plan to "virtually privatise" the hotel and an approval from the Cabinet will be sought soon.

The idea is to offer the hotel on a long-term lease and also allow hiving off the land and monetising it by building serviced apartments and other such properties to maximise revenues from the hotel property. Niti Aayog had proposed offering the hotel, set up in 1956, on a 60-year lease. While the hotel owned by ITDC is hoped to be revived through this route, Samrat Hotel on the adjoining plot will be retained due to security considerations since it overlooks the PM's residence complex on Lok Kalyan Marg.

613 detained in J&K since Aug '19; 430 freed: MHA

New Delhi: As many as 613 people, including separatists, overground workers and stone-pelters, were detained in J&K since August 1, 2019, of which 430 were released, the home ministry informed Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. No person was currently under house arrest in the Union Territory, said minister of state for home G Kishan Reddy. TNN

'Govt's focus is to borrow, build, monetise and repay'

Anurag Singh Thakur, junior minister for finance, has been in the thick of action as the Centre responded to the economic challenge posed by the slowdown and the pandemic. He tells Sidhartha & Surojit Gupta that the economy will see double-digit growth next year due to a massive capital expenditure. Excerpts from the interview:

"If taxpayers' money goes into paying salaries and bearing expenses of Air India and other entities that require funding every year, then the government needs to evaluate if it can run them successfully or let someone else run it

Rahul Gandhi has said that the Budget is for 1% of the population and the government should have given money to the people.
■ If Rahulji had heard the Budget speech for an hour and 40 minutes, he would have understood what's there in the Budget. His advisers should certainly tell him that on Budget day, everyone praised it, the stock markets have responded positively. This shows that the Modi government has done what the country wanted, resulting in a positive sentiment among people.

There is a criticism over the government selling family silver to manage its expenses. How do you respond to that?
■ If taxpayers' money goes into paying salaries and bearing expenses of Air India and other entities that require funding every year, then the government needs to evaluate if it can run them successfully or let someone else run it. We have made it very clear that there will be strategic, with a minimum one and maximum four PSUs, and in non-strategic sectors, there will be no PSUs. Those in the non-strategic sector will be privatised over a period of time, depending on the market situation. It will also help these companies grow. For example, we have pumped in close to Rs 5 lakh crore into banks.

If a better management takes over some of them, it will also help the government avoid some recapitalisation.

TOI INTERVIEW

The government should spend money earned through taxes on social welfare schemes, create infrastructure and in other priority areas, whether national security or providing good quality healthcare, education or water. The government's focus is very clear: borrow, build, monetise and repay.

Earlier there was discussion around merger, now you have decided to sell two banks and an insurance company. It is facing opposition?
■ You have four general insurance companies in the public sector. If the private players are profitable then why aren't the government-owned ones making profit? Do we need four of them? We will still have three PSU players, just as we will have 10 public sector banks even after two are privatised. We are also setting up a development financial institution (DFI). So, we are putting money where it is required.

Will you privatise the weaker banks?
■ We will decide in due course. Niti Aayog will work on it and the Cabinet will decide. We can consider converting IIFCL into a DFI.

Do you expect opposition from bank unions? Have they been consulted given that you are facing criticism that there was inadequate consultation on farm laws?
■ If banks earn more profits, the employees will benefit. In case of agriculture, there have been discussions for 20 years. There was committee with former CMs Bhupinder Singh Hooda (Haryana), Parkash Singh Badal (Punjab) and (former agriculture minister) Sharad Pawar as members that had supported it. Congress had it in its manifesto. In Lok Sabha, the concerns were addressed. We have made it clear that we have paid more towards minimum support price, we have increased procurement. When it comes to banks, there were concerns when we merged some of them. Today, they are performing better. We will speak to whoever needs to be spoken to.

Several individuals are unhappy with the steps on PF and ULIP taxation.
■ The scheme (PF) is for workers, who are paid 8% tax-free. If someone invests Rs 2 crore, is it fair to provide (annual) tax-free interest income of Rs 15-16 lakh to them? People contributing up to Rs 2.5 lakh do not have to pay tax, less than 1% will be affected.

There have been several mini budgets since you came in. Do you expect that to continue into the next fiscal?
■ I don't think so. Things seem to be coming back on track, GST collections are better, supply side issues are getting better. The only issue is services but that is also improving as most sectors are opening up.

Govt may act tough to streamline old-age homes

Ambika.Pandit
@timesgroup.com

Times View: Elders are the most vulnerable section of any population. According to the 2011 census, India had 104 million elderly, those of 60 years and over. Their number has grown since. The numbers of old age homes too has increased in recent years. In this backdrop, strict monitoring of such homes is imperative. Imposing a penalty should act as a deterrent.

New Delhi: With the rise in the population of the aged, the government is proposing to include a penalty clause in the revised version of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizen (Amendment) Bill, 2019 to ensure minimum standards at seniorcare institutions and provide for action against those that fail the registration norms.

It is learnt that the ministry of social justice and empowerment has proposed the inclusion of a stringent penalty clause that could invite a jail term of one year for those working without registration or providing poor services.

This proposal will require the approval of the law ministry and then will have to be sent to the Cabinet before the revised bill can be tabled in Parliament. Since the bill is listed among others as part of the business to be taken up in the ongoing budget session , it is likely that the revised bill may soon make it to the Cabinet for approval.

The 2019 bill proposed to make not just biological children but adoptive children, step sons and daughters, son-in-law and daughter-in-law and minors through legal guardians, responsible for care of and providing maintenance to parents.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh, vide memo no. LC-2523-V/JE(DS)/2021/1994 dated 27.01.2021 has accorded in-principle approval for surrender of part area measuring 0.3875 acres of licence no. 59 of 2011 dated 28.06.2011, forming part of residential plotted colony, in Sectors 91 & 92, Gurugram. Earlier approved & revised layout plans can be perused at the office of undersigned on 1st Floor, Gateway Tower, DLF City Phase III, Gurugram. Layout plans are also available on the website of the company i.e. www.dlf.in for perusal. Vide this public notice, objections are hereby invited from allottees of the said area. Objections may be filed within 30 days of publication of this notice in the office of District Town Planner, Sector 14, Gurugram, with a copy to the undersigned, failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the proposed revision of layout plan of the said residential plotted colony.

Gurugram
February 04, 2021 (NEELU GOEL)
For M/s DLF Utilities Limited
CIN No. U01300HR1989PLC030646

Office of Mission Director, National Health Mission, Uttarakhand
Uttarakhand Health & Family Welfare Society, DoMHFW, Uttarakhand Govt.
Danda Lakhond, Sahastradhara Road, Dehradun-248001
Email- info.nhmuk@gmail.com, Phone/Fax -0135-2608646

Ref. No. - 4052/HR/NHMUK/2020-21/371 Date-03.02.2021

National Health Mission, Uttarakhand invites applications for the following state level vacant post from eligible candidates for a contractual appointment till 31st March, 2022 (as per approval in RoP 2021-22, initially upto 31st March 2021) and further renewal shall be subjected to continuation of NHM/Approval from GoI/Performance Appraisal. This appointment shall purely be on contractual basis.

Sr. No.	Name of Post	Qualifications	Monthly Consolidated Remuneration	No. of posts
1	State Finance Manager, NHM	Chartered Accountant OR ICWA with experience of at least two years in a reputed organization in finance or accounts profile- Candidate must have demonstrable proficiency in use of MS Word, MS Excel, MS Powerpoint, Tally, Internet etc. Preference will be given to the candidate having relevant experience of working in any Govt. projects/ organization/PSU.	Rs. 60,000	1

For details and related stipulations, please refer website www.ukhfws.org. Last date of receipt of applications through Indian Speed Post/Indian Registered Post is 18 February, 2021 by 04:00 PM

Mission Director,
National Health Missi, Uttarakhand

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh, has granted Licence No. 59 of 2011 dated 28.06.2011 for development of a residential Plotted colony over an area measuring 101.218 acres, in Sectors 91 & 92, Gurugram. In pursuance of our application for transfer of area measuring 4.50625 acres of the said licence, the Director Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh, vide memo no. LC-2523-V-JE(DS)-2021/1997 dated 27.01.2021, has accorded in-principle approval for transfer of the said area from Collaborators in favour of M/s DLF Utilities Limited. Vide this public notice, objections are hereby invited from the allottees in the said area, on the proposed transfer of the said land. Objections may be filed within 30 days of publication of this notice in the office of Senior Town Planner, Sector 14, Gurugram, with a copy to the undersigned, failing which, it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the proposed transfer.

Gurugram
February 04, 2021 (NEELU GOEL)
For M/s DLF Utilities Limited
CIN No. U01300HR1989PLC030646