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How to achieve universal health coverage across India



**SPEAKING OF
SCIENCE**

D. Balasubramanian

In the book *Mission Possible* by Swami Subramanian and Aparajithan Srivathsan (Notion Press, Chennai), they suggest ways to pave the road to Universal Health Coverage. It is a positive book that suggests paving the way to universal health coverage, with particular focus on India, which has a population of 143 crores (of which children account for 38% and senior citizens 11%). To offer universal health coverage to these people is no easy task, and the authors suggest ways to achieve this.

Thanks to the advances in modern methods of analysis, using information technology appears doa-

ble, as the article "Reimagining India's Health System" from *The Lancet* pointed out. This effort needs to be spearheaded by leaders from academia, the scientific community, civil society, and private healthcare. The Public Health Foundation of India had proposed the creation of an Integrated National Health System in India through the provision of universal health insurance, the establishment of autonomous organisations to enable accountable and evidence-based good-quality healthcare practices, and the development of appropriately trained human resources, the restructuring of health governance to make it coordinated and decentralised, and legislation of health entitlement for all Indian people.

Improving quality
This involves strengthen-



Ophthalmology institutions in South India connect village and town eyecare workers with research centres in hospitals. GETTY IMAGES

ing the public health system as the primary provider of promotive, preventive, and curative health services in India, to improve quality and reduce the expenditure on health care through the integration of the private sector within the national healthcare system. In fact, the Bhore Committee report of 1946 (when the modern electronic communication system was unavailable) laid the foundations for India's public

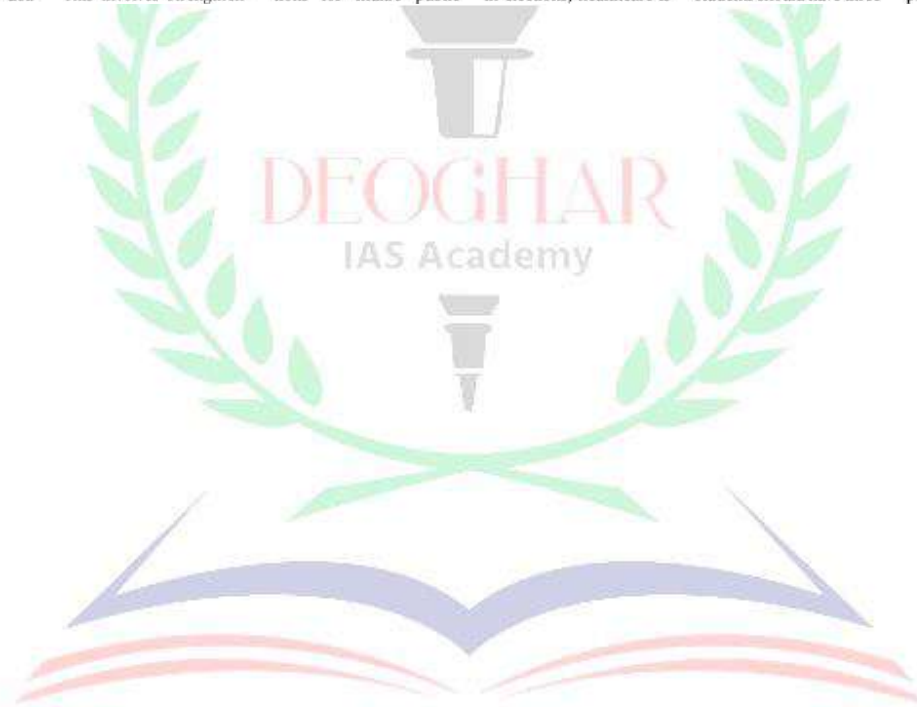
health system. It recommended establishing a three-tier health care system that emphasised integrating preventive and curative services and ensuring access to medical care regardless of ability to pay. It also suggested major changes in the medical education system.

The book *Mission Possible* points out that just as Aadhar cards are used for personal identification and voter identifications used in elections, healthcare is

best delivered by teams of healthcare workers using modern information technology methods. The team involves a local physician who is supported by a group of 'community health workers' who can do almost 75% of what the doctor can do (except in emergencies) and use tools such as mobile phones and electronic medical records of patients. As the author states, 'Technology is the glue that binds a team'. The team consists of community health workers all the way up to the specialist in a hospital. Each community health worker caters to a population of about 40,000 people and should work with a 75-bed district hospital which provides specialised tertiary care. Each State should have a world-class medical facility (e.g., AIIMS, Delhi; NIMS, Hyderabad). All MBBS (and MSc biotech) students should have three

months of training in community medicine.

The authors further suggest that an Indian Medical Service should be created, mirroring the role of the IAS in district administration. Those with advanced certification (MD) can cater to a whole State. Further, private medical centres and foundations should be allowed to coexist and offer modern quality healthcare. Indeed, several ophthalmology institutions in South India are already doing this, using a pyramidal four-tier model, connecting the village and town eyecare workers with the world-class eye research centres in hospitals; here, the patient does not even go to an eye hospital for diagnosis, the latter watches the patient's eye at home through advanced technology methods. Thus, the road to universal health coverage can be paved.



Present tense, future dangerous

Paris Agreement

President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw the U.S. from the climate deal, which requires most countries to take steps to limit the temperature increase, is a blow to the available efforts to fight climate change in a warming, divided world

Yasudevan Mukunth

In January 2015, the Ile-de-France region suffered three shooting incidents perpetrated by terrorists. Twenty people were killed, including three assailants. On November 12 the same year, suicide bombers attacked a suburb of Beirut in Lebanon, killing 43 people. The next day, terrorists struck in three places in Paris, killing 130 people in all. France promptly declared a three-month emergency and escalated its own war against terror.

But just two weeks later, in a city still indignant with grief and trauma, representatives and leaders from 196 countries around the world gathered to hammer out what eventually became the Paris Agreement. In the face of the world's fondness for fossil fuels and against the backdrop of uncertainty and apparently imminent chaos, the Paris Agreement was hailed by its negotiators as a triumph of political engagement.

A decade later, the world presents a very different face. An interregime conflict grids on in Eastern Europe while West Asia mulls a tense stability after a war that invited allegations of genocide. Both inflation and right-wing nationalism are on the rise. Four UN summits on environmental matters flopped in 2024 alone. And a new U.S. President signed an executive order to pull the country out of the Paris Agreement on his first day in office.

The Paris Agreement has nearly 200 parties but the U.S., with the world's largest and highly industrialised economy, is particularly important. After analysing multiple climate models, Carbon Brief concluded Donald Trump's second term as U.S. President could add 4 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (or 4 GtCO_{2e}) more to what the country is already expected to emit by 2030. This is reportedly "equivalent to the combined annual emissions of the EU and Japan, or the combined annual total of the world's 140 lowest-emitting countries".

His predecessor, Joe Biden, had pledged to lower U.S. emissions by half



Global warning: Water drips from melting ice in the Ilulissat Icefjord, Greenland. REUTERS

from 2005 levels by 2030. Under Mr. Trump, it's expected to drop by around a quarter.

Republicans in the U.S. government have also declared plans to undermine the Inflation Reduction Act, 2022, weaken the Environmental Protection Agency, do away with incentives for electric vehicles, scrutinise individual states' ability to adopt emissions standards at odds with federal ones, and increase the extraction of fossil fuels (including reversing a ban on offshore drilling). On January 24, Mr. Trump blocked federal approvals for new wind farms. The effects of these changes are expected to allow U.S. emissions to expand by 27 GtCO_{2e} by 2050, even if they depend to a non-trivial degree on subnational climate action and global market response.

China for one will be happy to overtake the U.S. in the development of green technologies, including electric vehicles, whereas Europe may retaliate with its Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism – already controversial among developing economies – should the U.S. hike

tariffs on imports from the bloc.

Threats of climate feedback

The world just before the U.S. presidential elections last year was in no position to meet the Paris Agreement's goals nor was Mr. Biden instituting radical (by necessity) climate policies in his country. Instead, Mr. Trump's decision to withdraw from the Agreement has simply rendered worse possibilities more likely. As the temperature records reset in 2024 attest, the world is already doomed to shoot past 1.5° C. Still, clawing back every fraction of a degree is crucial because of the threats of climate feedback – natural responses to global warming that increase the rate of warming – and irreversible change.

The Agreement holds the vast majority of the world's countries to keeping "the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2° C" and to endeavour to "limit the temperature increase to 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels". Parties to the Agreement have decided to achieve this via Nationally Determined

Contributions (NDCs); how each contribution adds up to the Agreement's goal will be determined through the 'Global Stocktake'. However, the NDCs aren't legally binding while governments' reports for the Stocktake are expected to have data gaps.

1.5° C is a figure of convenience, yet for its arbitrary origins it became significant when the Alliance of Small Island States pushed countries to include it in the Paris Agreement because the alliance's members would be devastated by the effects of a world 2° C warmer. This contention, however, ignored the latent heat accumulating in the oceans – which is released slowly and could add half a degree to current measurements – plus the idea that the planet is objectively "safe" under 1.5° C of warming rather than "less unsafe".

As such, then, the Paris Agreement was really only a political victory, but even then of the sort the world has since found lacking. To its credit, it has been used as the basis for litigation in many countries to force errant corporations and governments to

restore reducing emissions as a policy priority and for sidebar deals to restrict methane emissions, improve the prospects of "green hydrogen", and protect biodiversity.

But the fulfilment of its aspirations currently desperately needs legally binding commitments and implementation targets, which the Agreement itself doesn't provide for. At the UN COP27 climate talks in Egypt, for example, the decision to have a "loss and damage" fund was followed by considerable disagreement over its setup and management. At COP28 UAE, countries agreed to move away from fossil fuels but without meaningful commitments. And at COP29 Azerbaijan, the talks' format itself came under criticism for its vulnerability to being "fajacked" by the reluctance of a few countries to commit to steeper financing and emissions targets.

Distrust towards wealthy nations

In the course of trying to meet their commitments under the Paris Agreement, less wealthy countries' resentment of and distrust towards wealthier nations has increased. The world hasn't exactly come together.

At present, rich countries have committed to providing \$300 billion a year to poor ones until 2035, after missing their previous commitment to provide \$100 billion by 2020 by two years. Mr. Trump has now withdrawn from the Paris Agreement, thus ending at least for four years U.S. participation in the contentious processes that determine these targets for the world. These four years also lead up to 2030, a deadline year for many countries' commitments.

The withdrawal is thus a blow, no matter that it creates opportunities for other countries to step up depending on their political will and acumen and economic ability. However, if it also creates pressure on other countries to strengthen the Paris Agreement, such as incentivising governments to keep their promises when new parties take power or sanctioning them when they pull out, that can only be good for a vital instrument that also has considerable room for improvement.

THE GIST

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Why has the U.S. often exited climate pacts?

What have the Presidents done in the past on global agreements? What were the reasons offered for withdrawing the U.S. from the Kyoto Protocol or the Paris Pact? How will another withdrawal impact the developing world? Where does the U.S. stand on greenhouse emissions?

Jacob Koshy

The story so far:

Among the first executive orders that Donald Trump signed after taking over as President on January 20 was to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Agreement of 2015. This makes it the third time the U.S. has withdrawn from a treaty signed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

What is the history of U.S. engagement with climate treaties?

The first time the U.S. withdrew from a climate agreement was in 2001 when President George W. Bush exited the Kyoto Protocol, adopted in 1997. This agreement was significant as it was the first time 37 industrialised countries had binding targets to lower carbon dioxide emissions. However, Mr. Bush withdrew the U.S., on the grounds that it cramped the economy. "I oppose the Kyoto Protocol because it exempts 80% of the world, including major population centres such as China and India, from compliance, and would cause serious harm to the U.S. economy," he wrote in a letter to Republican senators.

When Mr. Trump first withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Agreement in 2017, his reasons were similar: "I was elected to represent the citizens

The U.S. is critically short of achieving its target of greenhouse gas emissions

of Pittsburgh, not Paris," he said. "The Paris deal hampers the U.S. while empowering some of the world's top polluting countries... That is not going to happen while I am President." Exiting the agreement meant the U.S. would cease to implement its targets to cut emissions and contribute to the 'green climate fund,' – a corpus to help climate-vulnerable countries adapt to climate change. In the new order, eight years later, he says that the Paris Agreement "...steered American taxpayer dollars to countries that do not require, or merit, financial assistance in the interests of the American people."

However, when the U.S. withdrew in 2017, it did not practically result in an ejection. Technicalities in the drafting of the Paris Agreement meant that it would take a signatory country three years to withdraw and an extra year, intimating the United Nations governing body. This meant that by the time the withdrawal took effect in November 2020, Joe Biden had already been elected the 46th U.S. President; and in January 2021, he promptly signed the U.S. back in. The Paris Agreement committed all countries to collectively strive to keep temperatures from exceeding 1.5 degrees Celsius or pre-industrial times, failing which to certainly keep it below 2 degrees Celsius. Unlike Mr. Trump's 2017 order, his latest order will withdraw the U.S. within a year.

How does the U.S. view climate agreements?

Until 2006, the U.S. was the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases. As the world's largest economy, its general attitude towards the European Union-backed climate pacts has been to project itself as solving the climate crisis but being non-committal towards taking the legally binding emission cuts that this entailed. Right from the first Conference of Parties in Bonn in 1995, the U.S. expressed discomfort with a fundamental axiom of the UNFCCC – the mother convention that gives treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement meaning. This is because carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere were largely due to historical emissions by developed countries, it was incumbent on them to pay the bulk of the costs for clean-up.

It also translated to developing countries continuing on a fossil-fuel pathway. Due to discomfort expressed by major fossil fuel economies – the U.S., Australia, and Canada – ideas such as joint implementation (where countries earn credits for implementing clean energy projects in developing countries) surfaced. The U.S., despite having walked out of climate agreements, continues to send large delegations to the conference as 'observers' and be closely involved in negotiations.

In 2005, at COP II in Montreal, Canada, the head of the U.S. delegation, as reported by *The New York Times*, walked out of the negotiations despite the U.S. not being part of the Kyoto Protocol at the time. To cut to the present, there is bipartisan support for not crimping oil and gas production in the U.S. Oil and gas production has risen under the Biden administration. The U.S. remains the world's largest crude oil producer and achieved record production in 2023. The country is also the largest producer of gas and, in 2022, became the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas. Mr. Trump has committed to adding to this already substantial base.

Despite all this, the U.S. is critically short of achieving its greenhouse gas emissions target. As of 2022, the U.S. has achieved only about one-third of its 2030 emissions reduction goal. In the last weeks of his presidency, Mr. Biden increased the U.S. emissions reduction commitments to 61%-66% of 2005 levels by 2035.

What will be the fallout of the U.S. exit?

The U.S. has only exited the Paris Agreement, not the overarching UNFCCC. Several analysts have pointed out that the scale of investments in renewable energy, including private finance from the U.S., have vastly grown since 2017. Unlike India, China, and Indonesia – large developing economies dependent on coal – the U.S. is less reliant on it. The U.S. has historically supported the EU on anti-coal positions in climate negotiations.

Mr. Trump's espousal of a 'Drill, baby, drill!' motto encourages more fracking and oil-and-gas drilling, which previous dispensations have only modestly slowed.

A U.S. exit might lead to developing countries taking on less ambitious targets, but given that climate targets have not managed to slow down global emissions, the U.S.'s exit at this point means little.



Global outcry: A projection by activists onto the wall of the U.S. Embassy in Berlin against the withdrawal from the Paris Pact, on January 21. REUTERS



Nano-urea reduced grain yield: study

Research by Punjab Agricultural University scientists finds reduced protein content in the grain of the two crops; the plants were unable to use the urea sprayed, it finds; since its commercial release in 2022, the evidence for nano-urea as a reliable substitute of conventional variety has been thin

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

One of the largest and most sustained trials analysing the impact of nano-urea on crop yields has concluded that its continued use could reduce yields of paddy and wheat, which collectively constitute about 70% of India's annual foodgrain output.

Promoted by the fertilizer company IFFCO and the government's Department of Fertilizers, the application of nano-urea, in the manner prescribed by the company, led to the protein-content in the rice and wheat grain reduce by 35% and 24%, respectively, the study said.

Premature adoption

"Premature and long-term adoption of such nitrogen-management practice may lead to yield losses besides reduction in grain and

straw-nitrogen content," say the authors from Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana in their peer-reviewed study in the journal *Plant Soil* this month.

"...a rational understanding on the long-term impacts is required else it might inadvertently harm the economic benefits and livelihoods of the growers."

Urea, a solidified nitrogen fertilizer, is critical to India's agricultural economy. India needs about 350 lakh tonnes of it annually with 40 lakh tonnes imported.

However, urea in India is heavily subsidised with a 45-kg bag that cost around ₹3,000 sold at ₹242 to farmers. In 2023-24, the government spent ₹1.3 lakh crore on urea. A bag of urea provides about 20 kg of nitrogen in a form usable by plants.

Into this came a technological innovation called "nano urea". A half-litre so-



Nano-urea has been touted as a solution to the high costs incurred by the government on conventional urea. VIJAY SONEJI

lution of it contains 4% (w/v) nitrogen equivalent to 20 grams of nitrogen, or about one-thousandth of the nitrogen in a bag.

IFFCO, however, claims that one spray of a 500-ml solution of nano-urea can substitute more than 52 kg of nitrogen as commercial urea in a number of crops, irrespective of soil and climatic conditions. This is because the nano-urea is

converted to nano-particles – and therefore made more bio-available – and if applied in a prescribed manner at appropriate stages of the paddy and wheat plant development, can substitute for the conventional bag. Moreover, unlike conventional urea which is applied to the roots, nano urea is sprayed on to the leaves at two critical flowering stages of the

plants. Thus, rather than farmers use two bags of urea on a hectare of paddy, they could instead use one bag and substitute the other bag with liquid nano-urea with no loss of yield, it says.

A bottle of urea costs a little more than a 45-kg bag, or around ₹260. The claim is that this will eventually reduce aggregate urea consumption and save on the import bill.

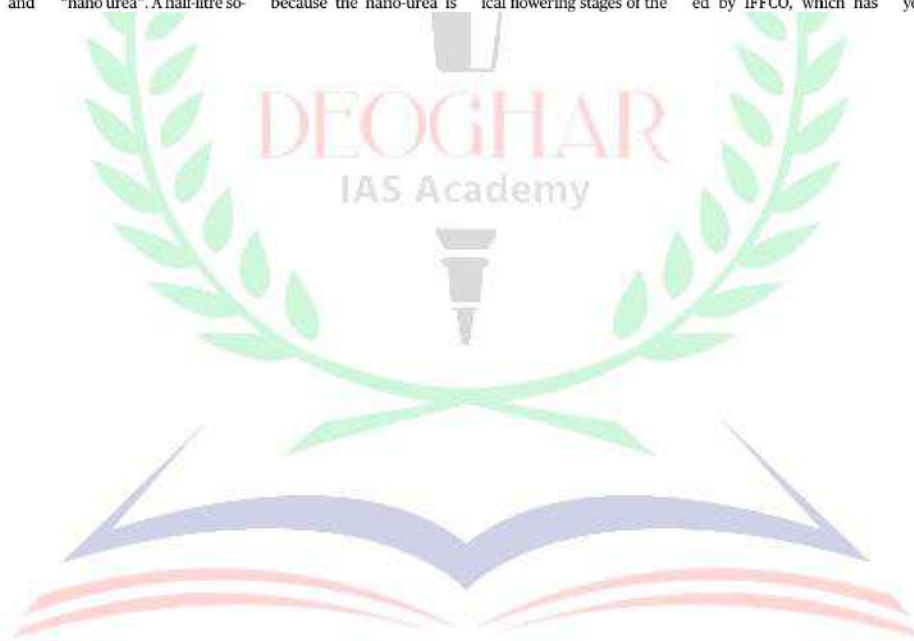
However since its commercial release in 2022, the evidence for nano-urea as a reliable substitute has been thin.

"Despite previous positive results in trials conducted by IFFCO, there has been mixed evidence and so we felt it was necessary to conduct a careful trial," said Rajeev Sikka, who led the study and is a senior soil chemist at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. His study was funded by IFFCO, which has

also funded several other trials in other institutions. Yield gains, as plant physiology suggested, were correlated with uptake of nitrogen in the soil from the roots. However in their studies, they showed a "reduction" in root attributes (length and dry weight) and nutrient content.

"What's happening is that in the two years (2021 and 2022) we conducted our studies, the plants were unable to use the urea sprayed as nano-urea. So whatever was available was from the soil, so naturally this will reduce yields," he told *The Hindu*.

Newer formulations of nano-urea, which had 8% N and 20% N, were being brought out by the company and these too had failed to increase yields, according to tests conducted at his institute, said Professor Sikka. But the latter results have not been published yet.



Seven get Padma Vibhushan, 19 named for Padma Bhushan

23 of the 139 Padma awards announced on the eve of Republic Day go to women; Bibek Debroy, Pankaj Udhas, Shekhar Kapur, P.R. Sreejesh, Anant Nag, Jatin Goswami to get Padma Bhushan

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Former Chief Justice of India Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar (retired), who gave a dissenting opinion in the Supreme Court Bench that outlawed triple talaq in 2017, was selected for Padma Vibhushan, the country's second highest civilian award, as the Padma awards were announced on Saturday, the eve of Republic Day.

Gastroenterologist D. Nageshwar Reddy, Kathak dancer Kumudini Rajnikant Lakhia, and violinist L. Subramaniam were among the Padma Vibhushan winners. Iconic writer M.T. Vasudevan Nair, Japan's Suzuki Motor leader Osamu Suzuki, and Bhojpuri and Maithili singer Sharda Sinha have been named for Padma Vibhushan posthumously.

Economist Bibek Debroy, ghazal singer Pankaj Udhas, former Maharashtra Chief Minister Manohar Joshi and former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi have been named for the Padma

Distinguished service

The Padma awards celebrate the contribution of stalwarts in various fields. **Below are the Padma Vibhushan winners:**



Duvvur Nageshwar Reddy

Field: Medicine

State:
Telangana



Justice J.S. Khehar (retd.)

Public Affairs
Chandigarh



Kumudini Rajnikant Lakhia

Art
Gujarat



M.T. Vasudevan Nair (Posthumous)

Literature
Kerala



Lakshminarayana Subramaniam

Art
Karnataka



Osamu Suzuki (Posthumous)

Trade
Country: Japan



Sharda Sinha (Posthumous)

Art
Bihar

Bhushan posthumously. Filmmaker Shekhar Kapur, double Olympic bronze medal-winning hockey player P.R. Sreejesh, actor Anant Nag, Assam's folk

culture exponent Jatin Goswami, and Indian-American engineer Vinod Dham, widely known as the "Father of the Pentium chip", are among those selected

for Padma Bhushan. Sadhvi Rithambhara, who participated in the Babri Masjid demolition, has been named for Padma Bhushan.

Pawan Kumar Goenka, Chairman of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre; malaria researcher Chetan Chitnis; Ashutosh Sharma, President of the Indian National Science Academy; Ajay V. Bhatt, creator of the Universal Service Bus (USB); physicist M.D. Srinivas; agriculture scientist Surinder Kumar Vasal; Sethuraman Panchanathan, Director of the U.S. National Science Foundation; singer Arijit Singh; cricketer R. Ashwin; and Libia Lobo Sardesai, who played an important role in Goa's freedom movement; will get Padma Shri.

For 2025, the President has approved 139 Padma awards – seven Padma Vibhushan, 19 Padma Bhushan and 113 Padma Shri awards. Twenty-three awardees are women and the list includes 10 persons from the category of foreigners/NRI and 13 posthumous awardees.

'Simultaneous polls will prevent policy paralysis'

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The proposal to synchronise election schedules in the country is a reform measure that promises to "redefine" the terms of good governance, President Droupadi Murmu said on Saturday, while addressing the nation on the eve of the 76th Republic Day.

"The 'One Nation One Election' plan can promote consistency in governance, prevent policy paralysis, mitigate resource diversion, and reduce the financial burden, apart from offering many other benefits," Ms. Murmu said.

She stressed the Union government's efforts to "eliminate remnants of a colonial mindset that have lingered" and, in that context, mentioned the replacement of the British-era criminal laws with three new modern laws.

New criminal laws

The President said that the decision to replace the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act with the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, which are based on Indian traditions of jurisprudence, is the most noteworthy effort.

"...the new criminal laws place the delivery of justice instead of punishment at the centre of the criminal justice system. Moreover, the new laws grant top priority to countering crimes against women and children. Reforms of such magnitude



President Droupadi Murmu addresses the nation on the eve of Republic Day 2025 in New Delhi on Saturday. ANI

Former CJI among seven Padma Vibhushan awardees

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Former CJI Jagdish Singh Khehar, known for his dissenting opinion on triple talaq, was selected for Padma Vibhushan.

Gastroenterologist D.

Nageshwar Reddy, dancer Kumudini Lakhia, late writer M.T. Vasudevan Nair and violinist L. Subramaniam were among the seven winners.

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require an audacity of vision," she noted.

Ms. Murmu underscored the importance of inclusive growth and the government's commitment to welfare by ensuring basic necessities like housing and access to clean drinking water. She also pointed to the persistently high economic growth rate in recent years that has generated job opportunities, increased income for farmers and labourers.

Efforts to support marginalised communities, particularly those belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC), were also highlighted in her speech.

She mentioned various initiatives, including pre-matric and post-matric scholarships, national fellowships, and flagship schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana and the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan.

The President's speech dwelt upon various issues: from the steps taken to achieve financial inclusion, use of technology in financial transactions, sporting achievements and giant leaps in space research by the Indian Space Research Organisation to the transformation in the education sector in terms of quality of learning, physical infrastructure and digital inclusion.



India, Indonesia stress peace in ASEAN region

President Subianto invites Indian business groups to invest in key infrastructure, and promises to expedite bilateral projects; he says, talks were 'very intensive', 'very frank'; Indonesian govt. to send high-level defence delegation to India; prior to the statements, the two leaders led their delegations in an in-depth discussion at the Hyderabad House

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India and Indonesia are committed to upholding peace, security and freedom of navigation in the Southeast Asian region, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday.

He was speaking after delegation-level talks led by him and visiting Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, who is the chief guest in this year's Republic Day celebrations, at Hyderabad House here.

Mr. Subianto said the talks were "very intensive and very frank". He declared that bilateral projects would be expedited by "cutting bureaucracy". Indonesia would send a

high-level defence delegation to India, he added.

"Indonesia is our important partner in the ASEAN and Indo-Pacific regions. Both countries are committed towards maintaining peace, security, prosperity and rules-based order in this entire region. We agree that freedom of navigation must be ensured in accordance with international laws," Mr. Modi said. President Subianto recollected that the then Indonesian President, Sukarno, was the chief guest at the first Republic Day celebrations in 1950.

Thanks India's support

He noted that his presence at the Republic Day celebrations on Sunday was a continuation of the close



Close partners: Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets President Prabowo Subianto in New Delhi on Saturday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

bilateral ties between the two sides.

He recollected the support that India had extended to Indonesia in resisting the Dutch attempts at recolonising the archipelago after the end of the Second World War. "History tells

us that India was one of the first strong supporters of our independence struggle. India sent financial aid, medical aid in our struggle for independence. Even now the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia is on a land donated by the

Indian government before we were recognised by many other countries. Indonesia will never forget that support," he said.

He invited Indian groups to participate in the infrastructure sector of Indonesia. "We have ratified our defence cooperation agreement recently and now we will send a high-level defence delegation as soon as possible at your convenience," said Mr. Subianto, welcoming Indian business groups to engage Indonesia.

Mr. Subianto linked India's current championing of South-South cooperation with the India-Indonesia consensus during the 1955 Bandung conference, and appreciated New Delhi's recent support for In-

donesia's membership in the BRICS grouping. Indonesia joined BRICS formally on January 7 this year.

Prior to the statements, the two leaders led their respective delegations in an in-depth discussion at the Hyderabad House where various MoUs were sealed covering sectors such as health sector, culture, traditional medicine, maritime safety and security between the coast guards of both sides.

The Secretary (East) of the Ministry of External Affairs Jaideep Mazumdar said Mr. Subianto was keen to replicate Indian developmental and social schemes in the Indonesian context.

"Indonesia is not only keen to cooperate at the

policy level but also wants to attract Indian hospital (chains) to open hospitals in Indonesia. They would like to have their doctors trained and get exposed to our health systems, to undergo internships, to train students and technicians," said Mr. Mazumdar. "The President offered the entire infrastructure sector of Indonesia open to Indian business."

Mr. Modi, in his remarks, also laid out the scope of cooperation between India and Indonesia that included defence manufacturing and supply chain, and marked out "maritime security, cyber security, counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation," as areas of mutual cooperation.

