

Headlines at a Glance - 25th February 2021

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Union Cabinet approves a proposal to impose President's Rule in Puducherry

The Union Cabinet recently approved a proposal to impose President's Rule in Puducherry, days after a Congress-led government in the union territory lost power during a vote of confidence. Announcing the Cabinet decision, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar told reporters that the decision was taken as no party claimed to form a government in Puducherry following the resignation of the chief minister there.

Subsequently, the Lieutenant General had recommended President's Rule in Puducherry and the Union Cabinet had approved the same, the minister said. After the President's assent, the assembly will get resolved, Javadekar said, while adding that further necessary steps for administrative work in Puducherry would be taken soon. He also noted that the model code of conduct was expected to come into effect soon after the Election Commission announces the dates for elections there, along with four states.

SOURCE: *Business Standard*

Vijay Sampla is new Chairman of National Commission for Scheduled Castes

Vijay Sampla on February 24, 2021, took the charge of Chairman National Commission for Scheduled Castes- NCSC. He has been a former Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment from 2014-2019. The Union Minister Som Prakash, Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Krishna Pal Gurjar, former Chairman of NCSC, BJP MP Hans Raj Hans as

well as other members of the Commission were also present during the occasion. Vijay Sampla assumed the position of Chairman of NCSC after being appointed by the President of India. NCSC is an Indian Constitutional body that has been established to provide safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes and for promoting and protecting their economic, educational, social, cultural interests and other provisions in the Constitution.

SOURCE: *Jagran Josh*

Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill passed

The Uttar Pradesh Assembly recently passed the controversial law against religious conversion through marriage. The bill outlaws conversions through marriage, deceit, coercion, or enticement. The Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Bill, 2021, was passed after a voice vote in the state Assembly. The draft law will replace an existing ordinance, and will now be sent to the Upper House of the Assembly, according to the *Hindustan Times*. After this, it will go to Governor Anandiben Patel for her assent. The ordinance, "Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance" was promulgated on November 24. Uttar Pradesh's new law on forced conversions delivers a promise by Chief Minister Adityanath to tackle "love jihad" - a conspiracy theory espoused by right-wing Hindu activists, alleging that Hindu women are forcibly converted by Muslims through marriage. The new law in the state makes religious conversion a non-bailable offence, inviting penalties up to 10 years in prison if found to be guilty of using marriage to force someone to change religion.

SOURCE: *The Scroll*

Cabinet approves Production Linked Incentive Scheme for pharmaceuticals

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Pharmaceuticals over a period of Financial Year 2020-21 to 2028-29. The Scheme will benefit domestic manufacturers, help in creating employment and is expected to contribute to the availability of wider range of affordable medicines for consumers. The scheme is expected to promote the production of high value products in the country and increase the value addition in exports. Total incremental sales of Rs.2,94,000 crore and total incremental exports of Rs.1,96,000 crore are estimated during six years from 2022-23 to 2027-28.

The scheme is expected to generate employment for both skilled and unskilled personnel, estimated at 20,000 direct and 80,000 indirect jobs as a result of growth in the sector. It is expected to promote innovation for development of complex and high-tech products including products of emerging therapies and in-vitro Diagnostic Devices as also self-reliance in important drugs.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry launches National Urban Digital Mission

The Central government recently launched National Urban Digital Mission' to create a digital infrastructure for cities in the country, a statement stated. The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry (MoHUA) said the move will institutionalise a citizen-centric and ecosystem-driven approach to urban governance and service delivery in cities by 2022, and across all cities and towns by 2024. Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and Minister of Electronics

and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad launched the National Urban Digital Mission' (NUDM) at a virtual event. Other initiatives — India Urban Data Exchange (IUDX), SmartCode, Smart Cities 2.0 website, and Geospatial Management Information System (GMIS) — were also launched at the event.

SOURCE: *Business Standard*