

'Food spend in rural India 46.4% in 2022-23 from 53% in 2011-12'

39.2% In 2022-23 From 43% In 2011-12 In Urban Areas: Survey

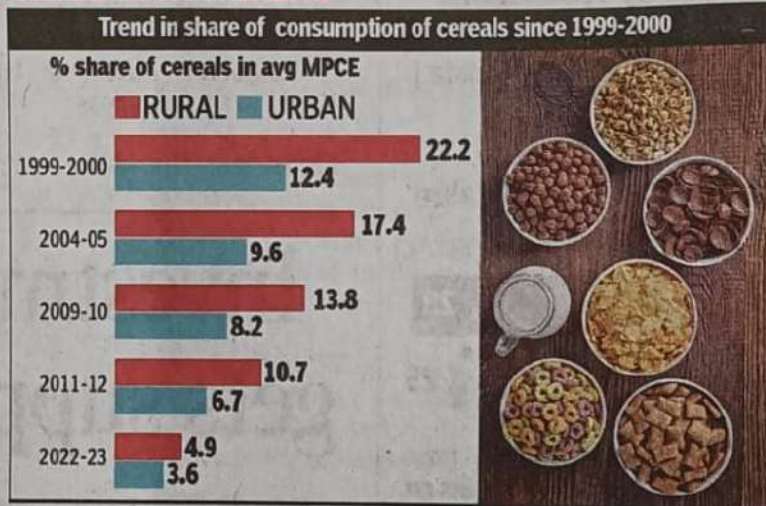
Surojit.Gupta@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Latest data on household consumption expenditure showed significant shifts in rural and urban consumption, with share of food and cereals coming down. Spending on non-food items such as fridge, television, beverages and processed food, medical care and transportation have increased in this period while expenditure on food such as cereals and pulses has slowed.

The survey showed that at current prices, rural monthly per capita consumption spending rose 164% — from Rs 1,430 in 2011-12 to Rs 3,773 in 2022-23 — while in urban centres, it shot up 146%, from Rs 2,630 in 2011-12 to Rs 6,459 in 2022-23.

In rural areas, the share of food in monthly consumption has slowed to 46.4% in 2022-23 from 53% in 2011-12 while spending on non-food items rose to 54% from 47.15%. In urban centres the same

CEREAL NUMBERS



trend was visible with spending on food slowing to 39.2% in 2022-23 from 43% in 2011-12 while non-food expenditure rose to 60.8% in 2022-23 from 57.4% in 2011-12 according to the survey.

"In food, consumption of beverages, processed food, milk and fruits is growing — an indication of more diverse and balanced consumption," said Niti Aayog CEO B V R Subrahmanyam.

He said the latest data would lead to a recasting of the consumer price index which measures retail inflation, as the share of cereals and food will go down.

"This means the contribution of food to CPI inflation will be lower and probably was lower in earlier years also. This means inflation was being overstated and is probably less as food has been a major contributor," said

Subrahmanyam, adding that this could have implications for RBI's monetary policy.

In 2014, a panel headed by ex-RBI governor C Rangarajan had estimated poverty line as monthly per capita expenditure of Rs 1,407 in urban areas and Rs 972 in rural. Latest data showed that bottom 5-10% of the population had an average monthly consumption expenditure of Rs 1,864 in rural areas and Rs 2,695 in urban centres.

"Going by Rangarajan definition, the survey data shows that poverty levels in India are now significantly lower. As per the panel's definition, a person spending Rs 47 per day in cities and Rs 32 in villages is below the poverty line. As per latest MPCE data, consumption expenditure of bottom 5-10% shows that poverty rates in India are now in low single-digit," said Soumya Kanti Ghosh, part-time member of 16th Finance Commission and group chief economic adviser of SBI.

PEACE INITIATIVES

have commenced to restore peace in State: Manipur CM

IMPHAL, Feb 25 (PTI)

MANIPUR Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Sunday said peace initiatives have commenced to address ethnic tensions in the State.

Emphasising the Government's foremost responsibility to safeguard lives, property, and the State's integrity, Singh assured citizens of appropriate security measures in place.

"We don't need to panic...I want to assure people that security forces have been appropriately deployed in all the areas to tackle the situation," he said at the Sanaroisingi Numit (Players Day) function

Manipur CM reiterated the commitment to pursuing peace through dialogue and urged people to trust the Government's efforts.

here. He reiterated the commitment to pursuing peace through dialogue and urged people to trust the Government's efforts.

"To bring about a political solution, the process for peace and talks has started so that everyone can live in peace. We need to revive our earlier lives."

Singh also addressed pressing issues such as drug abuse and demographic shifts, highlighting the government's initiatives to combat drug addic-

tion and maintain demographic balance.

"Around 1.5 lakh people out of 30 lakh are drug users. This is the primary reason why the State Government announced the war on drugs in 2018," Singh said.

"From 2006 to 2018, some 1,400 new villages have cropped up in the state out of nowhere creating demographic imbalances," he added.

Singh reiterated that the State Government will identify the

illegal immigrants with 1961 as the base year.

"We do politics to secure the present and future generation. We want to be very clear. We will fence the borders, cancel Free Movement Regime and identify all illegal immigrants in the state who came after 1961. It's our commitment," he said.

Singh also announced that all the gold medalists of the 36th and 37th National Games would be provided with government jobs.

He said Wushu player Naorem Roshibina Devi, who won silver at the 19th Asian Games at Hangzhou in China, would be appointed as a DSP.

'India to add 18 more N-power reactors'

NEW DELHI, Feb 25 (PTI)

INDIA will add 18 more nuclear power reactors with a cumulative capacity to generate 13,800 MWe of electricity, taking the total share of atomic power in the energy mix to 22,480 MWe by 2031-32.

This was announced by the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) after Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated two home-built 700 MW nuclear power reactors at Kakrapar in Gujarat last week.

Presently, the NPCIL operates 24 reactors with a total capacity of 8,180 MWe.

The Prime Minister dedicated units 3 & 4 of Kakrapar Atomic Power Station (KAPS 3 & 4) to the nation on February



22.

KAPS-4 was connected to the western power grid on February 20, two days ahead of PM Modi's visit to Kakrapar.

KAPS 3 & 4 (2 X 700 MW) are the largest indigenous Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWR) with

advanced safety features comparable to the best in the world, the NPCIL said.

"These reactors have been designed, constructed, commissioned, and operated by NPCIL, with the supply of equipment and execution of contracts by Indian industries/

companies, reflecting the true spirit of Atmanirbhar Bharat," the NPCIL said.

The Prime Minister said the role of nuclear power in electricity generation is going to increase in the 21st century and it was a matter of pride that India is Atmanirbhar in this

advanced technology.

Modi also visited the Kakrapar Atomic Power Station and took a tour of the Control Room on the occasion.

Four nuclear power plants of 1,000 MWe each are being built at Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu with Russian assistance. Four 700 MWe home-built PHWRs are coming up at Rawatbhata (RAPS 7 & 8) in Rajasthan and Gorakhpur (GHAVP 1 & 2) in Haryana. Ten 700 MWe PHWRs have been sanctioned to be built at GHAVP 3 & 4 at Gorakhpur in Haryana, Kaiga Generating Station 5 & 6 near Karwar in Karnataka, Chutka in Madhya Pradesh (CMPAPP 1 & 2) and four power units at Mahi Banswara in Rajasthan (MBRAPP 1, 2, 3 & 4).

PM inaugurates country's longest cable-stayed bridge

DEVBHUMI DWARKA, Feb 25 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated 'Sudarshan Setu', the country's longest cable-stayed bridge of 2.32 km, on the Arabian sea connecting Beyt Dwarka island to mainland Okha in Gujarat's Devbhumi Dwarka district.

Modi began his day by offering prayers at Lord Sri Krishna temple at Beyt Dwarka.

He later inaugurated the four-lane cable-stayed bridge called the 'Sudarshan Setu', which boasts a unique design, featuring a footpath adorned with verses from Srimad Bhagavad Gita and images of Lord Krishna on both sides.

The 2.32 km bridge, including 900 metres of central double span cable-stayed portion and a 2.45 km long approach road, has been constructed at a cost of Rs 979 crore, as per an official release.

The four-lane 27.20 metre wide bridge has 2.50 metre wide footpaths on each side, it said.



The bridge, which was known as 'Signature Bridge', has been renamed as 'Sudarshan Setu' or Sudarshan Bridge. Beyt Dwarka is an island near Okha port, which is nearly 30 km from Dwarka town, where the famous Dwarkadhish temple of Lord

Krishna is situated.

At present, devotees visiting the temple at Beyt Dwarka can travel only during the day by boat, while the construction of the bridge will allow them to travel at all times, officials said.

Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of mul-

multiple development projects worth more than Rs 4,150 crore in Gujarat's Dwarka on Sunday.

PM Modi was felicitated by Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel with a miniature of Dwarkadhish temple.

The project inaugurated by (Contd on page 3)

Divine experience, says PM Modi after scuba diving



DEVBHUMI DWARKA, Feb 25 (PTI)



(L) PM Narendra Modi offering prayers underwater and (above) coming out at the spot where the submerged city of Dwarka is, Gujarat, on Sunday. (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday went scuba diving off the Panchkui beach coast here in Gujarat and performed prayers as he witnessed the ancient Dwarka city of Lord Krishna, which is submerged in the waters.

To pray there was a "very divine

experience," he said.

Wearing a white diving helmet and ochre robes, Modi sat cross-legged on the sea bed, folded his hands in prayers while being helped by the Navy divers and waved peacock feathers before offering them

(Contd on page 3)

Poverty level significantly down to 5%, says Niti CEO

Cites Govt Data On 'Strong' Rural Consumption

Surojit.Gupta@timesgroup.com

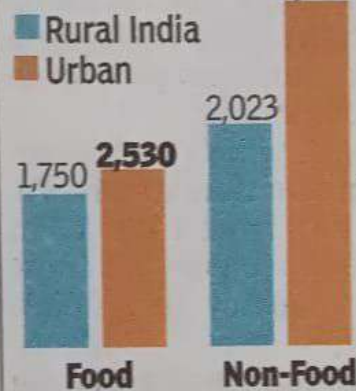
New Delhi: The latest survey of household consumption expenditure released by the statistics office has shown that rural consumption has remained robust, narrowing the gap with urban, and the

► **EDIT: Good, Can Be Better**

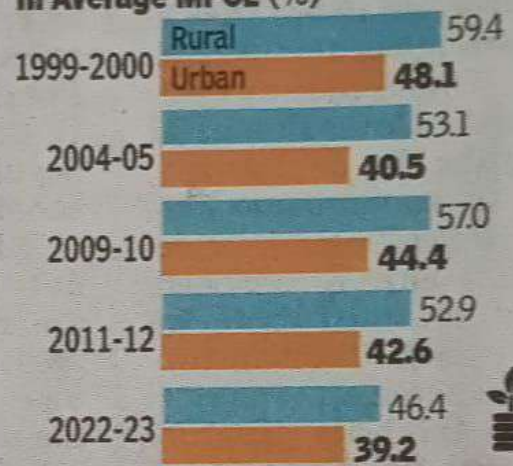
numbers could mean a sharp reduction in the poverty level in the country, the Niti Aayog CEO said. "Based on this data, poverty levels in the country could be closer to 5% or less," B V R Subrahmanyam said, adding that rural deprivation has almost disappea-

SPENDING ON FOOD DECLINING

Average Monthly Per Capita Consumer Expenditure (MPCE) 2022-23 (In ₹)



Share Of Food Consumption In Average MPCE (%)



Figures rounded off

red going by the data.

The numbers could have an implication for interest rate setting by RBI as the share of food and cereals is lower in the retail inflation index, he said, asserting the data has dispelled doubts about the state of the rural economy.

Poverty level is calculated on the basis of consumption expenditure data and there has been a sharp debate about the number of poor. Data for 2017-18 was not released, so this is the latest data after 2011-12.

► **Related report, P 18**

India, Japan kick-start 2-week military exercise

NEW DELHI, Feb 25 (PTI)

INDIA and Japan on Sunday kicked-off a two-week military exercise in Rajasthan's Mahajan field firing range to foster deeper cooperation in confronting common security challenges.

The exercise 'Dharma Guardian' between the Indian Army and the Japan Ground Self Defence Force is being conducted under the broad framework of India-Japan strategic cooperation, officials said.

It is an annual exercise and conducted alternatively in India and Japan.

The contingent of both sides comprises 40 personnel each.

The Japanese contingent is being represented by troops



from the 34th Infantry Regiment and the Indian Army contingent is being represented by a battalion from the Rajputana Rifles, the officials said. "The aim of the exercise is to foster military cooperation and enhance combined capabilities to execute joint operations," the Indian Army said. It said the exercise would focus on "high degree of physical fitness, joint planning, joint tactical drills and basics of special arms skills".