



SPRINGLIGHT

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First time ever: SJEC conducts online preparatory exam

By Staff Reporter

For the first time in history, St Joseph's Evening College (Autonomous) conducted online preparatory exam for II and III year UG students and II year PG students from October 27, 2020 to November 6, 2020. The College decided to hold online test to ensure the safety of the students during the pandemic.

The exam was conducted online through Microsoft Teams platform. The students logged into the platform and took the exam that was administered by the invigilator.

The invigilators monitored the students online. Mr Joswin Rodrigues, Assistant Controller of Examination said, "SJEC for the first time has organised online exam. This was a learning experience not only for students, but also for the teachers. I believe that this is the much needed change in terms of examinations keeping in mind the future."

Noel from V semester BA EJP who attended the online exam said that experience of attending online exam was

good. "I felt the measures taken by the college were good. Extending the time by 30 minutes helped me recheck my answer scripts and upload them on time." Abdul Waheed from V Semester BA JPS said, "The mode of conducting exam was good. It was similar to writing exam offline as the students' home turned into exam hall."

"This was a new experience for us," said Evangeline from III Year BA JPS.

America dumps Trump



Joe Biden beats Trump in US Election to become the 46th President of the United States, and Kamala Harris, first woman of colour elected as the vice president.

Source: *The Guardian.com*

OPINION

By Albert Joseph Smith



The promise of a free Covid vaccine in exchange for votes by the BJP in its election manifesto in Bihar is outrageous. It can be considered as one of the most irrational and disgraceful offer ever made by any national party or Union Minister.

It is beyond comprehension as to how immunisation can become an election promise. However, the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman continues to assert that the announcement is 'perfectly in order' and that her party can announce whatever it desires to do in case it comes to power. This indicates the barefacedness of Indian politics even in times of fear, disease and death, just to win votes and elections.

Covid Vaccine in exchange for votes in Bihar

The announcement of a free vaccine is in clear violation of the Election Commission's Model Code of Conduct (MCC) as promises made must provide details of the source of finance and revenue for implementation. As para 3 of the MCC dealing with the guidelines of election manifestos points out: "In the interest of transparency, level playing field and credibility, it is expected that manifestos reflect the rationale of promises and indicate the ways and means of meeting such financial requirements. The trust of voters is to be sought on promises which could be fulfilled."

All the same, the Election Commission had claimed that the BJP's promise of providing free Coronavirus vaccine in its manifesto for the Bihar assembly polls is not in violation of the model code. It goes on to mention that the Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in the Constitution directs the State to frame various

welfare programmes for its citizens. Therefore, it has no objection to the promises of welfare measures listed in election manifesto.

The record of the BJP in dealing with the Covid crisis makes its promise of free vaccine less trustworthy. For instance, the government's delay in releasing Rs.50 lakh compensation to the family of the deceased doctors, who lost their lives while treating Covid patients is hardly promising. Further, the government's refusal to accept martyr status to the deceased doctors, and the delay in paying salaries to the striking doctors who work in Covid hospitals are issues to be pondered over.

The promise of free Covid vaccine has also become hollow in the context of the Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. As he had blocked trains carrying millions of migrant workers from different states entering into Bihar. Besides that he had also in-

structed the closure of quarantine centres meant for people coming from different states.

If the BJP or Nitish Kumar had to follow the example of the Odisha Government in treating all Covid patients free of cost, be it in government or private health care centres and had granted Martyr status to doctors who had lost their lives while treating Covid, then, the idea of free Covid vaccine to people of Bihar would have gained some degree of credibility.

If the Centre now wants to provide free vaccine to the entire nation, then it will have to bring it under the flagship Universal Immunization Program (UIP), National Health Mission which will have to be extended to the entire adult population. The UIP is a fully funded Central government scheme that currently provides free vaccination to all children including 2.67 crore new-born and 2.9 crore pregnant women annually. At present, under the

UIP, free vaccines are provided for nine diseases at the national level: Diphtheria, Pertussis (whooping cough), Tetanus, Polio, Measles, Rubella, a severe form of childhood Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B, and Meningitis & Pneumonia. Regionally, and in select endemic districts, free vaccines are provided for three more diseases: Rotavirus diarrhoea, Pneumococcal Pneumonia, and Japanese Encephalitis. Bringing Covid into this list will require a lot of effort on the part of the Health Ministry.

In hindsight, nowhere in the world immunisation is traded at government health care centres. But if the vaccine were to come it will belong to the people of India, and not to any party or government. All the same, the Modi Government is under constitutional obligation to make the vaccine available to the entire population, and also nurture for a safe and healthy nation.

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