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AUDIT

BUSINESS LINE, APR 21, 2014

CAG in the wheel

The apex court's judgment is a throwback to the days of mistrust of private enterprise. The Supreme Court's ruling that the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) is empowered to audit the accounts of private telecom companies expands the power of the public auditor well beyond that originally envisaged. Although the order is limited to the telecom sector, it will dampen already weak investor sentiment, besides raising serious doubts over the future of public-private partnerships (PPP). In upholding an earlier Delhi High Court judgment, the Supreme Court has interpreted Section 16 of the CAG Act extremely liberally — to mean that the national auditor has the “duty” to audit “all receipts which are payable into the Consolidated Fund of India” and “to make for this purpose such examination of the accounts as he thinks fit”. This would include revenues through licence fees and radio spectrum charges from telecom service providers. So even though these operators are private players, the public through Parliament has every right to ascertain whether the revenues due have been fully realised without any “unlawful loss” to the exchequer.

The judgment runs the risk of opening up a Pandora's Box as the sheer logic of it implies that CAG audits should be mandatory in all contracts where private entities enter into revenue-sharing arrangements with the Centre. These could be in exchange for the rights obtained and for such activities as developing hydrocarbon blocks, highways, airports and ports. There are many such projects in PPP mode that both the Centre and State Governments are actively promoting — and for good reason. Governments today have neither the cash nor the managerial resources to undertake massive infrastructure investments. Bidding out projects to private parties and entering into income/profit-sharing agreements is the only way to go. But this system cannot work by treating private concessionaires or licencees as public sector undertakings and making them subject to compulsory CAG audit, even for the “limited purpose” of securing the state's revenue interests.

It hardly needs reiteration that the Centre must not be denied its legitimate share of revenues from licensed service providers or PPP projects. But this is something that should be addressed in the licence agreements themselves. The existing agreements with telecom firms, in fact, provide for special audits in the event the Centre feels that the statements and accounts submitted by the licencees are inaccurate or misleading, even when duly certified by its auditors. The special auditors appointed have the same powers and access to the company's books as its auditors. Moreover, such audits can even be conducted through the CAG. A basic mistrust in the private sector arises when CAG audits are made mandatory, as they are for government companies. There are reasons to believe, as the Supreme Court obviously does, that a venal executive worked hand in glove with private interests to rob the exchequer in some spectrum auctions. But the remedy prescribed for this is wrong.

CIVIL AVIATION

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, APR 16, 2014

Bids for privatisation of six airports postponed to June

Bids for the privatisation of six Indian airports have been postponed once again, making it the fourth deferral since November last year. The delay has been attributed to the ongoing general elections, said officials of the Airports Authority of India (AAI), the nodal agency overseeing the bidding process.

A new round of bidding will now take place sometime in June, the date for which is not fixed yet, said a senior AAI official.

The due date for the Requests for Qualification (RFQ) for the Chennai, Kolkata, Lucknow and Guwahati airports had earlier been pushed from January-end to February 17, and to February 12 for Jaipur and Ahmedabad airports. These dates were further pushed to March 17 and then to April 15.

Several private infrastructure firms – both local and international ones – such as IL&FS Transportation Networks, Essar Projects India, Cochin International, Essel Infraprojects, GVK, Fraport, Saudi Arabia, GMR Airports, Sahara Group and Turkish firm Celebi Habacilik Holding AS have expressed their interest to develop these airports.

“We currently have about 30 bidders, both domestic and international players, who are interested to bid for the airports,” said the AAI official.

However, the revenue-sharing agreement between the private operators, who are set to run these airports, and AAI, which will hold at least 26% in each of the airports under hammer, is currently not yet finalised.

While the officials from the civil aviation ministry favour predetermined rates that would bring in certainty in the amount of charges that will be levied on passengers, floating tariff rates with Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) revising tariffs every five years could also be considered.

“The issue is still to be resolved and will be reflected on the Model Concession Agreement (MCA). We will share MCA with the bidders once its finalized. Whether it will be a pre-determined tariff or decided by AERA after five years is a contention AAI is still working on,” the AAI official added.

Aviation ministry will take both aero and non-aero revenues into account while determining the revenue-sharing arrangement between AAI and the private players.

Private operators run four of the country's six metro airports — Mumbai, New Delhi, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru. The AAI recently modernised two of the six airports which are up for bids, Kolkata and Chennai, for a whopping Rs 2,325 crore and Rs 2,015 crore, respectively.

CIVIL SERVICE

HINDUSTAN TIMES, APR 21, 2014

Training period for IAS officers may be reduced

In its first attempt to overhaul the structure of training for the country's premier civil service, a committee has asked the government to slash the duration down to 75 weeks. This would give young trainee officers more time to learn on the job as sub-divisional magistrates and field postings in the districts with independent charge.

The panel headed by retired IAS officer Kiran Aggarwal was constituted in 2012, making it the second effort during the last decade to tweak the existing structure and syllabus of training for the premier civil services. The two-year long induction training has been in operation since 1969.

Arguing for recasting the training structure, Aggarwal said socio-economic and political developments over the last few decades had fast outpaced the "incremental changes" introduced by the government from time to time.

Aggarwal has prescribed competency-based induction training which takes domain knowledge of the trainees into account, tweaks in the syllabus and fostering greater adult and participant-centred learning.

The panel has taken a dim view of the existing 54-week district training where the trainees are attached with different units, pointing that it had received a strong feedback about the "relatively sub-optimal effectiveness of attachments in the district."

In contrast, it was felt that independent charges for on-the-job learning had a much higher utility for the young officers.

While it called for reducing this duration to 33 weeks, the panel also recommended for introducing a system of mentorship and giving the district collector's assessment of the young trainees greater weightage. The foreign study tour for the young officers introduced by the UPA government in 2010 also did not find favour with the panel.

"The committee observes that the first four-five years of service would be better devoted by IAS officers to knowing their sub-division, district, state and country," it said, arguing that the two-week study tour could be conducted after 4-5 years in service.

It is at this stage that the officers – who would be familiar with the ground situation in the country – would be better placed to appreciate how things are done differently elsewhere and replicate the best practices.

ASIAN AGE, APR 16, 2014

All govt offices to have biometric devices

The Delhi government has issued a direction asking all department heads to install biometric attendance machines at their offices to improve efficiency and maintain punctuality in government offices. For contractual employees, however, the government will continue to follow the registry attendance system. The order is aimed at inculcating strict discipline among government officials and initiating punitive actions against late comers and those found not completing their hours of duty. The penalty for such officials is yet to be decided.

The directive, which was ordered by Delhi chief secretary S.K. Srivastava, is in line with the earlier order issued by former law minister Somnath Bharti during the AAP's 49-day reign in the state that had also ordered installation of such devices.

The process to install such biometric systems had been halted following the resignation of Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government. "The chief secretary has revised the circular and asked for a swift implementation on the order," a senior Delhi government official said.

Biometric machines had already been installed in Food and Civil Supplies department, but according to the new order, all departments have been asked to provide the number of biometric machines to be installed at the entry gates. "The general administration and the information technology department will look after the entire biometric system. The administrative department is also working on penalties against employees who do not work properly according to their shifts," the official said, adding that upon receiving confirmation from the departments, the government will float a tender for biometric machines.

The entire system is likely to be installed by the end of this year.

TIMES OF INDIA, APR 16, 2014

SC nod for 2-year leave for childcare

A bench of justices S J Mukhopadhaya and V Gopala Gowda set aside an order of the Calcutta HC which had held that the central civil services (leave) rules did not permit uninterrupted CCL (childcare leave) for 730 days.

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday held that a woman employee of the central government can get uninterrupted leave for two years for childcare, which also includes needs like examination and sickness.

A bench of justices S J Mukhopadhaya and V Gopala Gowda set aside an order of the Calcutta HC which had held that the central civil services (leave) rules did not permit uninterrupted CCL (childcare leave) for 730 days.

"On perusal of circulars and Rule 43-C, it is apparent that a woman government employee having minor children can avail CCL for a maximum period of 730 days i.e. during the entire service period for taking care of upto two children," it said.

The court passed the order on a petition filed by one Kakali Ghosh challenging the government's decision not to grant her leave of 730 days for helping her son prepare for examinations.

COMMUNICATION

TIMES OF INDIA, APR 18, 2014

MTNL to manage confidential government network

Kalyan Parbat,

KOLKATA: The telecom department has asked Mahanagar Telephone Nigam to take over the management and maintenance of the long-awaited government network for confidential intra-departmental communications, after the Centre for Development of Telematics failed to execute the project on time.

The state-owned Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd (MTNL), which provides landline and mobile services in Mumbai and Delhi, will now have the additional responsibility of operating the 'secured and dedicated communications network', or SDCN, for confidential calls among government departments, an official said.

The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DoT), a state-run telecom research firm, was mandated to execute the secure communications network three years ago but is yet to even conclude field trials, according to government documents.

In a recent review meeting, the telecom department asked C-DoT to wrap up all "acceptance testing formalities" by the end of this month and hand over "operations and maintenance of the secure communications network" to MTNL, according to an internal note reviewed by ET.

Top officials of the telecom department's security wing, C-DoT and MTNL attended the meeting.

The telecom department has also asked MTNL to come up with an internal directory of central ministers, bureaucrats and top officials of India's security agencies who will use the secured network.

The network will use handsets developed by C-DoT which are impossible to wire-tap, said a DoT official aware of the matter.

C-DoT will also draft a user manual for the 1,400-strong SDCN user group who will be assigned unique numbers and handsets that will be distributed by MTNL.

MTNL officials have said that it would be a challenge to launch SDCN in the next two months because the network remained unstable and a plethora of critical tests were pending at the C-DoT end.

"Network testing by C-DoT on security issues like encryption levels, intrusion

safeguards, and operator passwords are still pending and the power systems also remain unstable," an MTNL official said, according to the minutes of the meeting.

C-DoT has assured the telecom department's security arm that it will "take corrective action to conclude acceptance testing across critical points".

The telecom research agency missed the January 1, 2014, rollout deadline as it was unable to fix the network's biometric authentication system, which potential users had found "unfriendly and unreliable" during recent trials.

Subsequently, C-DoT was asked to incorporate a code-based authentication system for all potential users in addition to biometrics for increased reliability.

Senior bureaucrats and central ministers will use the secured network for classified inter-ministerial communication.

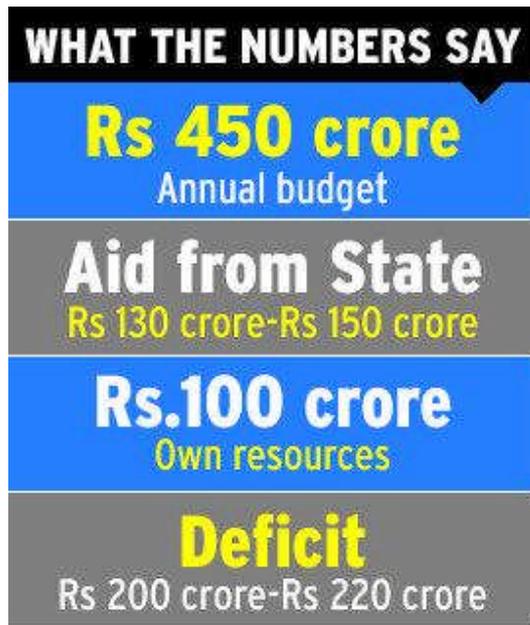
EDUCATION

HINDU, APR 23, 2014

Fund crunch for AU; Central University status the way out?

SUMIT BHATTACHARJEE

‘Converting it into a Central varsity only solution’



Post bifurcation of the State, the oldest university in the residuary state of Andhra Pradesh, Andhra University will not only face severe fund crunch, but many senior professors feel that its very existence may be threatened, unless it is upgraded into a Central university. As of now the university has been running on a deficit of about Rs. 200 crore-Rs 220 crore per year, for the last couple of years. The annual budget of AU is about Rs. 450 crore and it gets an assistance of about Rs. 130 crore to Rs. 150 crore from the State government and another Rs. 100 crore is pooled up from its resources. “We have been running on a deficit budget of about Rs. 200 crore- Rs.220 crore for last couple of years,” said Registrar K. Rama Mohana Rao. Of the Rs. 230 crore to Rs. 250 crore revenue that it generates annually — from State aid and own resources — about Rs. 90 crore is spent on pension and Rs. 100 crore on salaries. There is hardly any fund left for development or upkeep of the university.

Moreover, due to the fund crunch the university has not been able to recruit the 508 teaching staff for which the sanction has been made. Every department is facing shortage of teaching staff. “The recruitment is pending due to financial approval,” said the Registrar. In such a scenario, post bifurcation the hardship is likely to aggravate and the solution lies in converting it into a Central university, said a professor from the College of Arts. Acquiescing with the popular sentiments, Prof. Mohana Rao said, “In the first year after bifurcation we may not face any problem, as the Central government has agreed to meet the State’s deficit budget. But subsequently it may be a problem. But it all depends on the priorities and the political will of the ministers concerned.” The Registrar

said there was proposal to start a Central university, an IIM and an IIT in the residuary part of the state. But where will they come is yet not decided. "We have already pitched in for converting the university into a Central University and the engineering college into an IIT. But again it depends on the political will and the clout of the local political leaders, as both the proposals have to be approved by an act of Parliament," said Prof. Mohana Rao.

TRIBUNE, APR 16, 2014

Sealing of DUSU office: ABVP activists seek VC resignation

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) today on the North Campus demanded resignation of the Vice-Chancellor for sealing DUSU office and for conspiring against the DUSU.

This protest was held at the Arts Faculty, North Campus. Raising slogans like "DU VC Sharm Karo!", "Hitlershahi nahi chalegi!", "Chhatrahiton ka hanan hua to khoon bahega sadkon par!", the students later took out a rally in the North Campus.

The students accused the university administration of malafide intention against the ABVP activists and conspiring against DUSU joint secretary Raju Rawat to rusticate him. Students have demanded that Rawat be reinstated immediately.

Condemning the university's handling of the situation, ABVP's national secretary Rohit Chahal called it a direct attack on campus democracy and democratic institutions. "This reminds of the Emergency days when students' unions across the country were attacked. Contrary to its stature and assumed neutrality, the DU administration took shameful steps in a revengeful mood after the incident on April 7. In the garb of this incident, the DU administration immediately sealed the office of DUSU, which has been at the forefront to oppose the Four Years' Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) and to make it a national issue," he stated.

ABVP's Delhi state secretary Saket Bahuguna said that the DU administration has accepted its mistake of sealing DUSU office and has reopened it this morning, but the administration should unconditionally apologize to the DU student community for attacking the campus democracy and for obstructing the work of a democratically elected union.

"The administration is constantly acting as an agent of the Congress and by its partial and unjustified actions against the DUSU representatives belonging to our organisation ABVP it has proved it once more. By forcefully and undemocratically implementing the semester system first and then the FYUP, the VC has only served the Congress policies which aim to destabilise DU," he said

STATESMAN, APR 21, 2014

Sisodia reiterates stand on quota for local students in DU

NEW DELHI, 19 APRIL: Though Delhi University turned down the proposal of the Aam Aadmi Party-led Delhi government on reserving 85 per cent seats for Delhi'ites in the state-funded colleges, former state education minister, Manish Sisodia, reiterated that AAP would ensure the quota for Delhi students if it gets an absolute majority in Delhi in the event of a fresh election.

"It is not the issue of reservation only. Delhi University does whatever it wants to do. But our stand is very clear, when we come to power in full majority we will definitely try to implement the proposed scheme."

Raising the issue of quality of education in the state, Sisodia said, "DU hasn't that kind of infrastructure to cope with the swelling number of students from various schools."

"Nearly five lakh students pass out from various schools in Delhi every year. Only 90,000 manage to get admission. What about the rest of the students? So, we need to open up more colleges and expand the infrastructure so that we can accommodate maximum number of students in the colleges," he said. The DU administration and AAP might not be on the same page but various educationists in the city differ with DU's decision.

The principal of Modern School, Barakhamba Road, Ms Lata Vaidyanathan, emphasised on building a consensus to find an amicable solution. "I am not against or in favour of reservation but the central character of the university should be maintained and we need to put corrective procedure so that every one gets equal opportunity," she said.

Mr L V Sehgal, principal, Bal Bharati Public School, said, "I think Delhi students should get preference in admission to government-funded colleges but at the same time it should not be in isolation. There has to be some balance. On the other hand, these days the cut-of list is very high for the students. So we need more colleges to open up so that the quality of education will improve".

Students also seem to be divided on the issue. "I am not in favour of reservation. Only unethical political parties do this to attract voters. It has nothing to do with education policies. It would rather create a negative image," said Vikas Kumar Verma, third year law student from north campus. Harpeet Kaur, a Delhi resident and third year student of history honours, said, "DU should consider some reservation because people are coming here from outside. Being Delhi'ites we get an opportunity to interact with them. The reservation should be in fixed proportion like 6:4 ratio". The issue was raised after the DU assistant registrar (academic), in response to a letter by principal secretary R K Verma, department of IT, wrote: "I am directed to convey that the

University of Delhi, being a Central university, the proposal submitted by you for reservation of seats in admission in DU colleges for students passing XII from the schools in Delhi cannot be acceded to." Twelve out of more than 80 Delhi University colleges are completely funded by the state government. Sixteen other colleges receive almost half their funding from the state.

ELECTIONS

HINDU, APR 23, 2014

By the ruling class, for the ruling class

ANAND TELTUMBDE

In the next few weeks the gigantic exercise of conducting elections in India will be over. The nation will pat itself on the back for being crowned yet again the world's greatest functional democracy while most people will get back to their struggle for survival. The long dance of democracy would come to an end, leaving the elected representatives to do the business of recovering their huge investments. A fortune is spent to conduct elections in India, rivalled only by the United States (it is said that in this election, Indian politicians would spend upwards of \$5 billion as against \$7 billion spent in the 2012 U.S. presidential election). All kinds of intrigues and foul play come into motion for acquiring money to fight elections. By any logic, these amounts can only be raised through plutocracy and crime. That being closer to the truth, one wonders whether this process of election needs to be probed for being at the centre of what ails India.

Trajectory of corruption

In a liberal framework, direct democracy is not possible. Elections are meant to get peoples' representatives to operationalise democracy. Peoples' choices however are restricted to the candidates put up by political parties, and to some independents, most of whom contest to help the electoral arithmetic of the main political parties as dummy candidates. This results in the same set of people getting elected election after election without any evidence of performance. The entire process has a kind of barrier of entry. For instance, the official expenditure allowed for a candidate for the Lok Sabha election is Rs.70 lakh that only mainstream political parties can afford. The actual investment is several times more. If this is the quantum of risk capital one invests in elections, there should be a theoretical return on this investment. Since there is none, it inevitably manifests itself as growing corruption. This has turned politics into a big ticket business with unrivalled returns. The elected leader becomes a feudal lord and the constituency his fiefdom, fortified by musclemen and money power.

The data on politicians who participate in elections are in the public domain, thanks to the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), that picks it up from their affidavits filed with the Election Commission and presents them in a manner that is comprehensible. These self-sworn data, likely to be a gross understatement, nonetheless reveal the rapidly growing number of crore *patis* among these representatives. In the 15th Lok Sabha election, there were 1,249 crore *patis* candidates, of whom over 300 reached Parliament. The crime record closely correlates with their riches, and both exist across parties. The parliamentarians with criminal cases belonging to the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party, the two main political parties, were 24 and 29 in 2004 respectively, which went up to 44 each in 2009. These are the so-called representatives of the people, a vast majority of whom live off Rs.20 a day!

More interesting is the incredible growth of their wealth before every election. The analysis by ADR and National Election Watch (NEW) has found that the wealth of 304 re-contesting MPs had grown by 289 per cent. These rates are almost unheard of even in the corporate world. A person of average calibre, ostensibly in service of poor people, outbeats the best of fund managers. In an ordinary case, such evidence would alarm the income tax and anti-corruption authorities; but the political connections of these worthies provide them immunity from such mundane risks. There are no prizes for guessing the sources of wealth here when it is known that the entire machinery works for corporate houses and other moneybags in the name of the people.

Method of election

When India became independent, the biggest challenge the new rulers faced was in fulfilling the aspirations of the people — the aspirations they helped build during the freedom struggle. These were further amplified by developments such as the dazzling progress made by the post-revolution USSR, the welfarist ethos of the post-War world, and the ongoing revolution in neighbouring China. The communal flare-up in the wake of the transfer of power, the integration of nearly 600 political fragments in the form of princely states within India, the communist-led armed struggles in certain pockets in the country, and the awakening of the lower castes collectively posed a formidable challenge to the new rulers. The republican constitution they created reflected these aspirations. However in real terms, the Congress Party that assumed the reins of power, represented the interests of the bourgeoisie and had to skilfully promote them. This tension between the need to appear addressing peoples' aspirations — but in reality furthering the interests of capital — necessarily showed up in a series of its deceitful acts. Launching Five-Year Plans to display socialist orientation but clandestinely adopting the Bombay Plan created by the then eight top capitalists of the country, or to initiate land reforms but ensuring that they remained throttled so as to create a class of rich farmers as an ally in the vast countryside, or to push the Green Revolution to spread capitalist relations in countryside in the name of removing hunger, are just a few examples. It was politically imperative to adopt such a method for operating democracy to ensure that they remained in full control of power.

The First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) type of election system (in which the winner is the person with most votes) was chosen as a means to fortify the political power of the ruling classes. This system as such was inherited from the colonial regime like all other former colonies of the British Empire. But there was nothing that could have prevented India to discard it for the one better suited to its specific situation. The rulers ignored these considerations and rather focussed on their own interests which would be best served by this system. Most of the evils that we find ourselves engulfed in today stem from the FPTP system. A single winner in elections with such extraordinarily diverse polity could not come without the support of the majority party. It followed that most interest groups would be forced to come to terms with the majority party, paving ways for co-option and other manipulations. The diversity of interests in the country may still throw up many parties, which could only aggravate the inherently competitive FPTP elections. That in turn would only mean increasingly huge expenditure, to be met by big businesses, and the

use of existing fault lines like caste, community and religion. It necessarily evolved into an oligopolistic power structure of all ruling classes, irrespective of parties, fortified by multilayered defences such as the police and the military.

Another model

Was there no alternative to FPTP? The diverse polity would point to a different model of election, say, the Proportional Representation (PR) system, which is followed in most European democracies and many others that have had far superior democratic records. While there are many practical variants of the PR system, essentially it entails voting for parties or social groups (rather than for individuals), that get representation in proportion to their share of votes. For example, Dalits in India are 17 per cent but being in the minority in every constituency, one of them would never get elected independently in the FPTP system; not even from the so-called reserved constituencies. The PR system would assure them their share in Parliament and legislatures and may even create a centripetal force to expand their constituency. What is euphemistically called bahunjan today was possible to be created through this process. The social identities would make way for class consciousness and impart class orientation to the entire politics. There would be no cut-throat competition as every interest group would be reasonably assured of its share of representation. The competition would then shift to the ring of Parliament to shape the policies in the interests of the majority of the people. In the FPTP system, once the elections are over, there is no motivation for debate in Parliament on policy content. The most material policies of the government that impacted people (such as the imposition of Emergency and the neoliberal economic reforms) were never discussed in Parliament.

The theoretical fallacy in the FPTP elections that the elected representatives hardly enjoy consent of even half the voters is overcome in the PR system that ensures most interest groups their due share of representation. The intense competition of the FPTP elections leading to huge resource expenditure and consequent rise of corruption would also be eliminated in the PR system. Most importantly, in the context of India, it would curb the vile motives in the ruling classes to divide people on the lines of caste and community.

For instance, there would not be any need for the reserved constituencies for Dalits and hence even the Dalit tag, thereby eliminating the salience of castes from politics. Although, no system may prevent the black sheep being black, the PR system would surely eliminate the structural spaces by promising them their dues. Dalits lamented for years the Gandhian blackmail in the Poona Pact but did not understand that it was pivoted on the FPTP system. It would lose its relevance in the PR system. The same could even be extended to any need of preserving caste identities and vexatious problems they have created.

Indeed, India would hugely gain. But then, what will happen to the ruling class?

The electoral system in its current avatar is not serving India's democracy

ECONOMIC TIMES, APR 16, 2014

Lok Sabha polls: Rs 9,426 crore separate the five richest and poorest candidates

By Gangadhar S Patil

NEW DELHI: Declaration of assets by the candidates for the Lok Sabha elections mirrors a stark Indian reality, with nearly Rs 9,426 crore separating the five richest and five poorest candidates.

While the richest five as per nominations filed by more than 3,000 total candidates until now have declared assets of about Rs 9,426 crore, the poorest five together own assets valued at just Rs 24,000, according to data compiled by election watchdog Association for Democratic Reforms.

Former chief executive officer and co-chairman of InfosysBSE -2.77 % Ltd and Congress candidate from Bangalore South Nandan Nilekani tops the list with Rs 7,710 crore. He is followed by a JD (U) contender from Jahanabad, Anil Kumar Sharma, who is CMD of real estate company Amrapali and has declared assets worth Rs 849 crore.

Congress leader Naveen Jindal is next, with assets of Rs 308 crore.

In addition to these well-known entrepreneurs, there are two candidates from small towns such as Tejpur and Bijnor. Former Congress MP Moni Kumar Subba, who is contesting independently from Tezpur in Assam and BSP's candidate from Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh Malook Nagar have declared assets worth Rs 289 crore and Rs 306 crore respectively.

While Subba is into lottery business, 48-years-old Nagar, who declared an income of over Rs 11 crore during the last financial year, runs a milk dairy company.

Contrastingly, the bottom two candidates - BSP's B Ramudu from Bellary in Karnataka and AITC's Ashok Mittal in Bargarh, Odisha - have declared "nil" assets in their affidavits. For Ramudu, it is an experiment. A tailor by profession, he said he was running his campaign from donations received from his well-wishers.

"My total poll expenditure will not exceed Rs 50,000 and even if I manage to get 50 votes, I will be happy," he said.

However, the other three candidates in the list, all from BSP, are better off. While Sreeni Jacob, who is contesting from Kottayam, Kerala owns assets worth Rs 4,000, Syed Arif in Koppal, Karnataka and Debendra Kumar Mallik in Jajpur, Odisha each have assets valued at Rs 10,000. Mallik, who declared "nil" income for 2012-13 is confident of getting at least 50,000 votes. ..

ECONOMIC TIMES, APR 18, 2014

Minority Report: Is Muslim voting behaviour changing?

By A K Verma

The "Muslim vote" is often thought of as tactical voting to defeat the BJP. But that behaviour seems to be changing in UP. The traditional beneficiary of Muslim votes in the state, Samajwadi Party (SP), has fallen from grace post-Muzaffarnagar. While Congress, BSP, SP, RLD and AAP vie with each other for Muslim votes, the BJP has complicated the scenario by trying to access them too. Its efforts got some impetus via Muslim clerics who warned non-BJP parties not to instil fear among Muslims in the name of the BJP.

Muslims are rethinking. And their rethink is driven by sociological, economic and political considerations. The sociological expression — "Muslim voting behaviour" — is based on questionable logic that seems to suggest en bloc voting on the premise of Muslims being a homogenized community. But that subsumes poor, exploited and marginalised Muslims under the rubric of "Muslim identity".

When concerns of azlaf (backward) and arzal (dalit) Muslims are different from those of ashraf (upper caste/class), how long will they vote alike? The upsurge of pasmanda Muslims is redefining Muslim identity and giving it a class-orientation. Their grouse is that despite the 85% share of backwards, like ansari, ghosi, dhobi, idris, etc, among Muslims, the political leadership is grabbed by upper-caste Muslims like Salman Khurshid (Congress), Naseemuddin (BSP) and Azam Khan (SP). Their ire is also directed against ulema and Muslim organizations that ignore their concerns.

Backward Muslims are better placed vis-a-vis ashrafs to win. In 2009, the BSP gave tickets to 17 Muslims in UP; three to backwards, out of which two won, and 14 to ashraf Muslims, out of which, again, two won. So, if non-BJP parties refuse to provide them due space, they may turn to the BJP. The plight of Muslims may not, actually, apply to all Muslims, especially ashrafs, many of whom are landlords, educated, employed and politically empowered. But a large section of pasmanda Muslims may be really deprived.

The "Muslim picture" is changing at the grassroots: Muslim representation has gone up in assembly and municipal bodies in Uttar Pradesh.

Muslim representation in the assembly may be 17.1%, close to the Muslim population (18.5%), but at the district level, we find a Muslim upsurge. In 13 out of 70 districts, the share of Muslim MLAs is 10-25%; in 21 districts, it is 25-50%; and in five districts (Moradabad, Rampur, Amroha, Balrampur and Shrawasti), there are 50-70% Muslim MLAs. In municipal bodies, there are 3,681 Muslims elected out of a total of 11,816 members, pushing their representation to 31.5%. Political empowerment of Muslims is a result of neo-liberalism that has created a neo-rich middle class of Muslims. As the political space in

Congress, BSP, SP or established regional parties is occupied by upper-caste Muslims, the BJP may become an attractive destination for them.

Backward Muslims may also look at the secular-communal discourse differently. Their experience in BJP-ruled states like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Bihar (in

coalition with Nitish Kumar) made them realize that life there was no different from non-BJP-ruled states. On the contrary, in some such states, better governance may have brought some prosperity.

Gujarat 2002 riots and the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue are usually raised during elections. But are Muslims still interested? Using these issues, non-BJP parties try to create fear among Muslims. But insecurity among Muslims, if any, may be akin to that faced by Hindus, though the latter's insecurity does not figure in the secular-communal discourse due to their greater numbers.

Muslims, including pasmanda Muslims, may still vote tactically to defeat the BJP, but a small section may vote differently. Such voters may renounce the "marriage model" of relationship with a party that warrants voters to be wedded to a party. Instead, they may go for a "stock exchange model" that permits voting for a party that promises better returns. Modi's backwardcaste status may play a key role in this.

Recent CSDS studies substantiate this. While 3% and 7% Muslims voted BJP in 2007 and 2012 respectively, their support may go up to 11% in this election. This signals a paradigm shift making the BJP more inclusive and Muslims more autonomous in their voting behaviour.

INDIAN EXPRESS, APR 18, 2014

An election without end

India's well-oiled poll machinery is capable of completing the process much faster. Earlier the Indian state was fragile and its instruments of control were relatively weak. Yet elections were held within the time frame of a week or two from 1962 to 1989.

By: Jawid Laiq

Ever since the election schedule was announced on March 5, the poll campaign has become more and more abusive by the day, routine administrative decisions have been put on hold and government functionaries have used the model code of conduct as an excuse to minimise their duties even further. Some municipal authorities have even ordained that potholed roads cannot be repaired, as this may be in violation of the model code of conduct.

At least part of the blame for the additional burdens foisted on hapless citizens can be directly attributed to the inordinately long period — 63 days — set aside by the Election Commission for the poll process. Starting from March 5, it will carry on till May 16, when the votes polled in the 16th Lok Sabha election will be counted. Over the last three Lok Sabha polls, in 1999, 2004 and 2009, the EC increased election periods and became more intrusive in its diktats during those periods.

The current election is being held in nine phases, extending from April 7 to May 12, even longer than the last Lok Sabha election, which was held from April 16 to May 13, 2009.

The 2004 election was held between April 20 and May 10. In sharp contrast, Lok Sabha elections from 1957 to 1998 were completed within short spans of four to 18 days. The exceptions were the 1991 election, which was interrupted by the Rajiv Gandhi assassination, and the 1996 election, which was prolonged by the megalomania of T.N. Seshan, then the chief election commissioner.

While refining the electoral process, he also promoted himself to the position of commanding generalissimo during polls. He ended up as the Shiv Sena's candidate for the 1997 presidential election and got few votes in the contest against K.R. Narayanan, who was chosen as head of state by an overwhelming majority. Traces of that megalomania seem to have rubbed off on some subsequent election commissioners.

This country has conducted 15 generally free and fair national elections since the first poll in 1951-1952, which did take four months. The credit goes to humble government functionaries, from schoolteachers and postmasters who update electoral rolls and supervise polling booths, to district magistrates who double as district polling officers, and finally to the election commissioners who successfully operate a well-oiled election machinery. There is no need for this experienced and efficient system to prolong the electoral process.

Security concerns and the growing size of the electorate are trotted out as excuses for lengthening poll schedules. It should be remembered that in the earlier decades of independence, the Indian state was fragile and its instruments of control were relatively weak, compared to the present robust Indian state with its hugely expanded bureaucracy and security forces. Yet elections were held within the time frame of a week or two from 1962 to 1989.

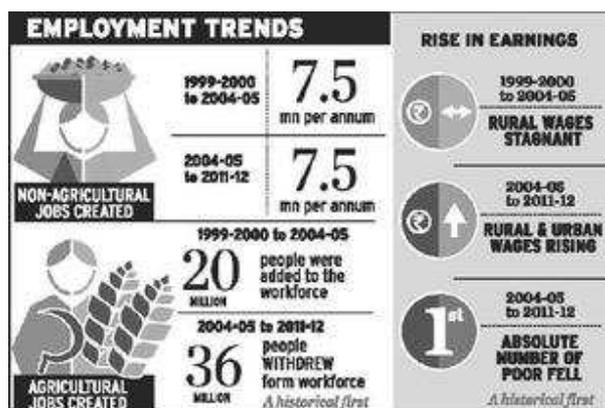
With phenomenal technological advances in modern communications and improvements in transport networks, our election machinery could now easily complete the entire process within a fortnight or less, if the spirit was willing to help us personalise your reading experience. Indonesia, the world's third largest democracy after India and the United States, smoothly completed elections for its national and regional legislatures on April 9, a single day. Its previous elections, in April 2009, were also held on a single day. Geographically, Indonesia's territory is far more daunting than India's terrain.

The former is a vast archipelago of 6,000 inhabited islands, sprawled across 5,100 kilometres. India is mostly a land mass which extends 3,050 kilometres, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. Like India, Indonesia is a polyglot nation with a vast array of ethnicities, cultures, religions and languages. Brazil, a country with a forbidding terrain of remote forests and huge rivers, and almost three times the size of India, will also hold elections to national and state legislatures on a single day, October 5, 2014. The last such elections there were held on a single day as well, in October 2010. Brazilian and Indonesian polls are reputed to be as free and fair as our elections.

EMPLOYMENT

HINDU, APR 17, 2014
'Jobless growth' no more
SANTOSH MEHROTRA

Since 2004-05, for the first time in the history of India, more workers have left agriculture for productive work in industry and services



Higher than normal inflation, high current account deficit, a depreciating rupee and slowing GDP growth might hold true in recent times. However, when it comes to employment, the facts are quite different as between 2009-10 and 2011-12, non-agricultural employment grew rapidly.

Between 1999-2000 and 2004-05, National Sample Survey (NSS) data reveal that nearly 12 million joined the labour force. However, the number of non-agricultural jobs created per annum was much lower — 7.5 million. Non-agricultural employment increased between 1999-2000 and 2004-05 (which coincides with the time the National Democratic Alliance was in power) by 37.5 million over the five-year period, i.e., 7.5 million new jobs in industry (manufacturing and construction) and services per annum.

Growth of non-agricultural jobs

The number of non-agricultural jobs between 2004-05 and 2011-12 increased by 52 million over seven years, i.e., by 7.5 million per annum again. However, since 2004-05 fewer people joined the labour force. This meant that fewer people were looking for work, but the number of non-agricultural jobs created was as many as before; the open unemployment rate fell.

The important point is that millions left agricultural work after 2004-05 on account of many new opportunities. Although 37 million persons left agriculture during the periods 2004-05 and 2011-12, they found work in non-agricultural activities, both rural and urban. In comparison, 20 million new workers joined agriculture between 1999-2004. At India's stage of development, more workers joining agriculture at a time when agricultural productivity is very low is exactly the opposite of what is expected, since

agricultural productivity is already lower than comparator countries. Incomes fall when a sector has more workers than needed. Development implies that workers leave agriculture for more productive work in industry and services, and total factor productivity increases in the entire economy. Every developing country is supposed to undergo this structural transformation.

Since 2004-05, this transformation has been happening for the first time in the history of India. Of the 60 million additions to the workforce between 1999-2000 and 2004-05, a third (20 million) joining agriculture indicated growing rural distress, on account of the slow growth in agriculture between 1996 and 2005.

Agriculture has grown much faster since 2005. In fact, during the 11th Plan, agricultural output grew at 3.2 per cent per annum (2007-12) on average, despite crippling drought in 2009-10. The share of agriculture in the workforce has been in decline for decades (falling to 49 per cent in 2001-12). However, the absolute numbers in agriculture have always grown till 2004-05. So, fewer workers were producing more output in agriculture, farm mechanisation increased, and productivity grew.

There was another development. Unskilled workers who left agriculture flocked to construction employment. Such employment increased by only eight million (17 to 25.6 million) during 1999-2000 to 2004-05. But it grew sharply to 50 million by 2011-12. This was an increase from under two million a year to seven million a year. While a part of this increase in construction employment was in housing real estate, it was infrastructure (roads, bridges, airports, ports, energy projects) investment which drove most of the employment growth.

Rural areas also saw significant growth in non-farm construction-related employment: government investment in rural housing for the poor (Indira Awas Yojana) grew, as did rural roads and other rural construction investment (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act). In addition, \$475 billion worth of infrastructure investment materialised during the 11th Plan period.

Increasing employment was accompanied by rising wages. Wages were stagnant between 1999-2000 and 2004-05, especially rural wages. However, two factors drove wages upward after 2004-05. First, as a result of MGNREGA and rising minimum support prices for government procured cereals, a floor wage was created in the rural areas. This along with an increasing demand for labour in construction led to a tightening of the labour market, both rural and urban. This led to a knock-on effect on urban unskilled wages as well. A second reason for the rise in wages for unskilled/semi-skilled workers was the demand for labour in construction — which is treated as non-manufacturing industry.

The prophecy of a recent CRISIL report that employment in industry will fall in the next five years, and that workers will go back to agriculture is baseless. If anything, the 12th Plan projects an investment of \$668 billion in infrastructure over 2012-2017, which should sustain employment growth.

Growth in service jobs

Most importantly, services jobs grew by 11 million, and manufacturing employment increased by a remarkable nine million in two years alone (2009-10 and 2011-12), although manufacturing employment fell in absolute terms by three million between 2004-05 and 2009-10. It is crucial to understand why non-agricultural employment has risen rapidly between 2009-10 and 2011-12. After 2004-05, demand for a number of consumer goods has grown sharply, which is reflected in the rise in consumption expenditure to 2011-12. This rise of consumption expenditure shows that the numbers of poor fell from 407 million (Tendulkar line) in 2004-05 to 356 million in 2009-10, and further to 269 million (2011-12).

For the first time in the history of India, there was a decline in the absolute numbers of the poor after 2004-05; until then for nearly 30 years (1973-74 to 2004-5), there was a fall in the percentage, but not in the absolute numbers of the poor (322 million poor in 1973-74 and 302 million poor in 2004-05, by the Lakdawala poverty line). The decline in poverty was driven by a rise in real wages. This rise in real wages and an increase in consumption expenditure have driven demand for goods to the bottom of the pyramid, as poor people have emerged out of poverty.

The new non-poor demand simple manufactured consumer goods: processed food (biscuits, milk), leather goods (shoes, sandals), furniture (plastic chairs/tables, wooden furniture), textiles, garments and mobiles. All these product areas and services saw a dramatic increase in employment between 2009-10 and 2011-12, primarily because these simple, low-end products (at least those consumed by the new non-poor) are produced in the unorganised sector, using labour-intensive methods.

A new inclusive dynamic is in place in the Indian economy, which is difficult to reverse. There is a feedback loop between increasing demand, and production to meet that demand, that generates employment among those who will consume the products that are produced.

(Santosh Mehrotra is Director-General, Institute of Applied Manpower Research, Planning Commission, New Delhi.)

For the first time in India, there was a decline in the absolute numbers of the poor after 2004-05; until then for nearly 30 years, there was only a fall in the percentage

BUSINESS LINE, APR 16, 2014

Create jobs where the job-seekers are

G KRISHNA KUMAR

Enhanced farm productivity can create a thriving agro-industrial economy

A recent TV programme that reviews the work of MPs in their constituencies threw up an interesting fact — the chief concern raised by people across constituencies was the lack of job opportunities — not corruption nor infrastructure issues. A clear message that people need jobs rather than freebies.

The finance minister recently said the unemployment rate has fallen and is about 5.5 per cent. Chidambaram added that the UPA has fared much better than the NDA, though the absolute number of jobs created had not increased during the UPA regime. How? Perhaps the reduced unemployment rate can be attributed to people taking up jobs out of desperation — jobs with no relevance to their field of study or specialisation.

Instances of engineering graduates joining the insurance sector and educated people in the rural areas taking up manual labour are common these days. A labour ministry report says many people in employment are actually overqualified for the job they are doing and, therefore, society is losing valuable skills and forfeiting stronger productivity growth than would have been achieved.

Employability

India produces over 7 lakh engineering graduates every year; over 60 per cent of them don't find relevant jobs. Questions have been raised on the quality of graduates, their employability. On an average, over 10 lakh people will enter the job market every month over the next decade and this number is expected to rise. The much-hyped demographic dividend must be used effectively, before it is too late. But where are the jobs?

The job market is primarily a factor of demand (for skilled people) and supply (availability of the right people). Reports suggest that the situation is quite alarming, with over 25 per cent of under-30 degree, diploma or other certificate holders unemployed. In contrast, it has been argued in recent reports that unavailability of the "right" talent is costing the economy a whopping Rs 53,000 crore and that India's talent adaptability ranking is among the lowest. The new government will have to quickly address this severe demand-supply mismatch.

India's biggest challenge has been the low-productivity agriculture sector that employs 50 per cent of the people, but accounts for just 14 per cent of GDP. There has been a constant decline in agriculture-based employment over the past two decades, with people shifting to non-farm jobs in labour-intensive areas, such as manufacturing and construction.

The MGNREGA and the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojna are only helping more people take up non-farm jobs. But a CRISIL report states that incremental non-farm employment is expected to decrease more than 25 per cent to 38 million in FY 2013-19 as the economy has been treading a lower-growth path.

High productivity services sectors such as finance, insurance and business services, including the IT sector, provide employment for only 3 per cent of the population, yet

account for about 20 per cent of GDP. However, these industries have limitations in adding millions of jobs every year in a highly competitive global environment.

What needs to be done?

India needs a multi-pronged ‘rural-oriented’ strategy to improve the employment scenario. First, the Government should focus on improving farm productivity. With over two-thirds of the population living in the rural hinterland, the focus must be on using science and technology to improve farm output.

Countries like Australia and New Zealand spend heavily on farm R&D. Seventy per cent of the value of farm output in such countries arises from the various sources of productivity growth, such as improvements in infrastructure and communications, higher quality inputs, and new technologies from research and extension activities.

Some advanced countries are even encouraging urban agriculture as a key theme, including production, processing and distribution of agricultural produce.

Considering India’s demography, just replicating ideas from other countries may not work; instead, the concepts must be adapted to improve productivity.

India also needs major changes in rural infrastructure — better roads, and a reliable power supply and communications set-up.

Second, it is time policy was tweaked to enable indigenous manufacturing and thereby generate significant job opportunities. Isn’t it intriguing that India does not have the infrastructure to manufacture mobile phones indigenously?

There is certainly an opportunity for India to become a dominant player in the global manufacturing sector. Should it adopt the German model, in which public and private sectors work together and generate jobs? Or focus on creating a good ecosystem for cottage/ small-scale industries to flourish — maybe with learning from Japan? There is an urgent need for the right government policies and impetus to spur job creation in the large manufacturing sector.

Placement targets

Third, skill development initiatives such as the National Skill Development Corporation’s (NSDC) programme to create employment-ready people are very important. Although NSDC has not met the job skilling and placement targets so far, this initiative must be pursued with greater vigour going forward to achieve the skilling target of 350 million by 2022.

The Government formed the National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) to support the NSDC by coordinating with it to create a framework for skill development. Eventually, the success of any such initiative is determined solely by employability.

It is imperative that the government accords the right priority to removing policy hurdles to create job opportunities, mainly in the rural areas. This, along with an increased focus on skill development, is urgently needed to address the serious demand-supply mismatch.

The writer is Advisor, Centre for Educational and Social Studies. Views are personal

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EUNUCHS

ASIAN AGE, APR 16, 2014

Eunuchs are '3rd gender' in landmark ruling by SC

In a groundbreaking ruling, the Supreme Court Tuesday recognised transgenders or eunuchs as a third category of gender, and emphasised that steps must be taken to uplift them from social backwardness and bring them into society's mainstream.

In two concurring orders, a bench of Justices K.S. Radhakrishnan and A.K. Sikri directed the Centre and all states to include the transgender community in "other backward castes" category, and extend reservations for admission in educational institutions and appointment to government jobs to them.

The judges said if transgenders were not recognised as a third gender, it would violate their rights to equality, job opportunity, life and personal liberty as guaranteed by the Constitution.

The rulings also said discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation was like discrimination on the basis of sex, prohibited by Article 15 of the Constitution. The judges recognised the transgender rights issue as a matter of human rights rather than as a medical or social issue. It directed the Centre and all states to frame social benefit schemes for the third sex, saying their social and economic condition was far from satisfactory.

The Supreme Court also noted that Section 377 IPC was being misused by the police and other authorities against transgenders.

HEALTH SERVICES

INDIAN EXPRESS, APR 16, 2014

Lok Nayak, GTB hospitals to be turned into model healthcare centres: Govt

Lt-Governor Najeeb Jung on Tuesday issued instructions for converting Lok Nayak hospital in Central Delhi and Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) hospital in East Delhi into model hospitals, passing orders for modernisation of infrastructure and sanitation facilities, as well as expediting ongoing projects at both centres.

On a visit to LN Hospital on Tuesday, among other suggestions, Jung is learnt to have voiced concern over the catering facilities and the food being served to patients.

“We recently roped in the Delhi Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology to help us improve our catering services and suggest new options in diets prescribed for our patients. We informed the L-G about this,” an official said.

The L-G is also learnt to have directed the authorities at LN Hospital to expedite the opening of a seven-floor OPD building, which has been under construction for the last three years, to ease the crowd at the existing OPD building.

The building will have a dedicated floor for major specialties: medicine, gynaecology, orthopaedics and a pharmacy on the ground floor.

During his visit, Jung said, “Hospitals are critical for any city, but more so for a city like Delhi, which caters not just to the residents of Delhi, but to thousands of patients who come from outside the capital, seeking medical help. It becomes all the more necessary for hospitals to be equipped, so that they can live up to the growing needs of patients.”

Jung also highlighted the need to provide a comfortable ambience to patients and suggested that the hospital construct a dedicated area for patients, especially children.

On March 16, the L-G had conducted a meeting to review the functioning of hospitals after which he constituted a committee under secretary (finance) — with secretary (health) and secretary (PWD) as members. It was directed to convert LN Hospital and GTB Hospital into model hospitals.

Under the plan, LN Hospital will be the first to shift its entire records to computers, maintaining records of every patient attending the OPD or admitted for treatment, hospital laboratories and radio-diagnostics like X-ray and CT scans. GTB hospital will adopt a similar software to promote a good referral system between hospitals, where consultants at different hospitals can easily access patient records.

The L-G also issued instructions to expedite the start of specialty units at GTB hospital like a diabetes and endocrinology block, and make its mother and child unit fully functional.

“Since the opening of the adjoining Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital is getting delayed, specialty units like cardiology, neurology, gastroenterology and neurology, which were planned to be started here, are getting delayed. So, we are trying to speed up the inauguration of the specialty block planned at GTB Hospital,” an official said.

Officials said the model hospital plan was conceptualised by the L-G with a view to improve “patientcare facilities, OPD facilities, drug availability, general upkeep and sanitation, and security and infrastructure of the hospitals”.

JUDICIARY

DECCAN HERLD, APR 22, 2014

Gorla Rohini is Delhi HC's first woman chief justice

The Delhi High Court got its first woman chief justice in Justice Gorla Rohini, who was on Monday administered the oath of office by Lieutenant Governor Najeeb Jung.

Chief Justice Rohini (58), a former judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, will head a court that already has nine woman judges. The total strength of judges in the high court is 40.

Soon after the oath-taking ceremony, Jung said the appointment of a woman chief justice was a virtual milestone for the capital's highest court. "Her (Chief Justice Rohini) appointment symbolises women's empowerment," he told reporters.

"We need many more role models like her who can inspire young girls across the country to aspire for top positions in all walks of life," Jung said, according to a statement issued by Raj Niwas.

The swearing-in ceremony was attended by senior members of the judiciary, the chief secretary and other senior officers of the Delhi government.

Chief Justice Rohini hails from Visakhapatnam and studied at the Osmania University in Hyderabad before joining College of Law, Andhra University, in her hometown.

She practised as a lawyer after enrolling with the bar in 1980. Fifteen years later, she was appointed government advocate in the high court. She became additional judge in 2001 and was made a permanent judge in 2002. Chief Justice Rohini succeeded Justice N V Ramana, who got elevated to the Supreme Court earlier this year.

HINDU, APR 22, 2014

For a fair and open system

K. SUBRAMANIAN

The election manifesto of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has promised to "accord high priority to judicial reforms to address the issue of appointment of judges ..." It also proposes "to set up a National Judicial Commission for the appointment of judges to the higher judiciary." The Indian National Congress has promised that a Judicial Appointments Bill it introduced in Parliament will be enacted "after consultation and consensus building over the mechanism proposed in the Bill."

The Constitution (One Hundred And Twentieth Amendment) Bill 2013 was passed by the Rajya Sabha on September 5, 2013. It seeks to replace the collegium model of judicial

appointments with a Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC). For a Constitution amendment to become law when it seeks to make any change in the “Union Judiciary,” it has to undergo these three steps: the Bill has to be passed in each House by a majority of total membership of that House and also by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting; the amendment also requires to be ratified by the Legislature of not less than one half of the States by a resolution to that effect; and assent by the President.

The Bill gives JAC the powers to appoint judges to the Supreme Court and the High Court. The said Bill introduced a new Article 124-A to constitute a JAC to make recommendations with respect to the appointment of judges of the higher judiciary. The Constitution Amendment Bill does not define who the members of the JAC are but leaves this for Parliament to determine in an ordinary Statute. This accompanying Bill, known as the JAC Bill 2013, provides that JAC will comprise six members, i.e. the Chief Justice of India, two most senior judges of the Supreme Court, the Law Minister and “two eminent persons.” The two eminent persons are supposed to be appointed by a collegium comprising the Prime Minister, the leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India. However, before the Constitution Amendment Bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha, the BJP staged a walkout since the demand for the Bill being referred to the Standing Committee was not conceded. The Standing Committee Report was only on the JAC Bill and not the Constitution Amendment Bill. The report recommended that the structure, functions or the composition of the JAC should be reflected in the Constitution itself and not in ordinary legislation so that the composition of JAC cannot be altered without a constitutional amendment. As the Bill stands today, the composition of JAC is in the hands of Parliament. To change the composition of JAC, a Parliamentary Statute is enough which is more flexible than an amendment of the Constitution.

Mr. Ram Jethmalani, a member of the Standing Committee, also argued that the composition of JAC by an ordinary legislation would give scope for substitution with a Judicial Commission which will consist of only the Law Minister. However, to implement this recommendation of the Standing Committee on the JAC Bill, it may require an amendment to the Constitution (One Hundred and Twentieth Amendment) Bill 2013.

For a representational judiciary

Thus, even though at the instance of the UPA government led by the Congress Party, the Constitution (One Hundred and Twentieth Amendment) Bill 2013 was passed by the Rajya Sabha, in order to become law, the said amendment has to be passed by the 16th Lok Sabha by a majority of the total membership of the House and also by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of the Lok Sabha present in voting. It also requires ratification by the legislature of not less than one half of the States in India.

It is therefore a million dollar question as to whether the Constitution (One Hundred and Twentieth Amendment) Bill 2013 would become law after the 16th Lok Sabha is constituted subsequent to the general election as the subject of appointing judges through

a Judicial Commission requires more consultation and consensus-building over the mechanism proposed in the Bill.

The U.K. example

It is in this context and also in view of the recent decision of the collegium of the Supreme Court withdrawing the 12 names recommended for Judgeship at the Madras High Court based on “unprecedented opposition” that the 16th Lok Sabha as well as the new Union Government accord the highest priority to the proposal for the setting up of a National Judicial Commission and decide whether the composition of JAC be reflected in the Constitution itself. Suitable measures to make the judiciary representative of the diversity of our society with respect to gender, region, religion and caste may have to be initiated. Public interest demands a quick decision in this regard. They may also consider putting into practice, the procedure whereby members of the Bar who are eligible for being appointed as a Judge of the High Court apply for Judgeship through a “Public Notification.” Such a practice is in vogue in the United Kingdom.

In the U.K., the candidates for Judicial Office in courts up to and including High Court level, Tribunals in England and Wales are selected by JAC. The JAC is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Ministry of Justice. Membership is drawn from the judiciary, the legal profession, non-legally qualified judicial office-holders and the public. (JAC does not select judges to the U.K. Supreme Court. The U.K. Supreme Court was established on October 1, 2009 and assumed the formal judicial functions of the House of Lords which were removed by the Constitutional Reform Act 2005. Judges of the Supreme Court of U.K. are appointed by the Queen by the issue of Letters Patent on the advice of the Prime Minister to whom a name is recommended by a Special Selection Commission. The Prime Minister is required by the Constitutional Reform Act, 2005 to recommend this name to the Queen and not permitted to nominate anyone else.) The Selection by JAC for High Courts, Tribunals is based on merit through fair and open competition from among the widest range of eligible candidates possible. The appointment process is not only clearer but more accountable. The selection process starts when JAC receives a vacancy request from Her Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals Service or the Ministry of Justice. Thereafter, it advertises all selection exercises on its website and in the email newsletter. JAC also tailors the application form for each selection exercise and prepares an information pack and the applications are submitted to JAC electronically. Thereafter, the process of shortlisting commences. Candidates are required to identify referees they know personally and professionally. Shortlisted candidates are invited for a selection day for a panel interview, role play interview and presentation, etc. (Role play usually simulates a court or tribunal environment. Candidates are asked to take on the role of judge and respond to a simulated situation.) The technique of situational questioning is also adopted which involves questions concerning a hypothetical situation based on challenging, real-life, job-related occurrences and asks the candidate how they would handle the problem. JAC also carries out consultation as part of each selection exercise as required by the Constitutional Reform Act 2005. For High Court selection, the Lord Chief Justice and one other person are consulted. Financial, criminal and professional background checks are carried out.

After this exercise, the Commissioners make the final decision on which candidates to recommend to the appropriate authority (Lord Chancellor, Lord Chief Justice or Senior President of Tribunals) for appointment. Thus, the process of appointment of judicial officers in the U.K. is clear, open, fair and accountable.

However, in the present system of appointments to High Court Judges in India, unless the Chief Justice of the High Court concerned or any other senior judge of the High Court recommends the name of a particular practising lawyer, there is no way to get included in the list of prospective candidates.

This system is perceived to be discriminatory because it is inherently impossible for the collegium judges to personally know everything about all the eligible practising members of the Bar. Thus, the procedure of selection by inviting applications through notifications which is followed in the U.K. may well be adopted in India also so that transparency in the appointment of High Court Judges is achieved, eliminating the charge of discrimination.

(K. Subramanian is a senior advocate and former Advocate-General of Tamil Nadu.)

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the United Kingdom may well be adopted in India so that transparency in the appointment is achieved, eliminating

the charge of discrimination

LIBRARIES

HINDU, APR 16, 2014

He kept library movement afloat

P. SUJATHA VARMA

'Kalaprapoorna' Paturi Nagabhusanam heralded the library movement in Andhra Pradesh

A file picture of the boat library provided by the Paturi family. It was published in a newspaper in the late 1930s.

For centuries, the power of the written word has proved to be something incontrovertibly sublime.

It was perhaps this power that enticed the doyen of library movement in Andhra Pradesh, 'Kalaprapoorna' Paturi Nagabhusanam to circulate his powerful ideas and start a new tradition to redefine knowledge.

Innovative concept

Besides heralding the library movement in Andhra Pradesh, he introduced an innovative concept of 'boat libraries' in 1935.

A boat was the only means of transport for interior villages in Guntur those days and a good number of people who embarked on a journey would kill time chit-chatting or playing cards. It so happened one day while on board,

Mr. Nagabhusanam was reading aloud some literature for women.

He was immersed in the book and didn't realise that a good number of women had surrounded him and were all ears.

When he finished, they wanted him to read more such stuff to them.

The idea of starting a 'boat library' flashed in his mind and it did not take too long for him to translate it into reality.

He started a boat library between Pedavadlapudi and Kolluru with a small collection of books that were read aloud with an aim to bring into the fold even the unlettered persons onboard.

The books that floated from one end to the other became an effective tool for educating the rural masses. After entrusting the upkeep of this floating library to a sweet vendor onboard the boat, he introduced another Kolluru-bound 'boat library' and successfully ran the mobile libraries for seven years.

"His romance with books started quite early when he, along with a few other like-minded friends, restored a library established in his village in 1905 but had been lying defunct.

He was elected secretary of Andhra Pradesh Library Association in 1938 and was committed to the cause for the rest of his life,” says his daughter Raavi Sarada, who is the current secretary of the Library Association.

World of books

In his youthful days, he created a world of books through Andhra Library Movement which won him national acclaim.

The city recently witnessed the centenary celebrations of Andhra Pradesh Library Association by Paturi Nagabhushanam Centenary Celebrations Committee.

Born on August 20 in 1907 at Pedapalem village in Guntur district of the erstwhile Madras Presidency, Mr. Nagabhushanam was way ahead of his times.

Paturi Nagabhushanam started a boat library service between Pedavadlapudi and Kolluru with a small collection of books that were read aloud

HINDU, APR 17, 2014

Shifting of library to be delayed

The shifting of Kannur University Central Library from a rented building here to the new library building on the campus at Thavakkara here has to wait for one more month as the ongoing works in the new facility are still incomplete. Though the university authorities earlier stated their plan to shift the central library to the new building in April, the delay in getting the finishing works completed has forced them to reschedule the opening of the new building having a total area of 1,20,000 sq. ft.

POLICE

HINDUSTAN TIMES, APR 16, 2014

New York police disband unit that spied on Muslims

New York police said on Tuesday that they had disbanded a deeply controversial and heavily criticised unit that sent undercover officers to spy on local Muslims.

Civil liberty groups welcomed the move, but called on New York authorities to address the damage exerted by unjustified spying based solely on religion.

The decision by America's largest police force is the first sign that new commissioner William Bratton is moving away from some of the post-9/11 intelligence-gathering practices of his predecessor, The New York Times reported.

Police said that the Zone Assessment Unit, previously known as the Demographics Unit, had been largely inactive since January and that personnel had now been reassigned to other duties within police intelligence.

"Understanding certain local demographics can be a useful factor when assessing information regarding potential threats coming to the attention of the New York City Police Department," it said in a statement.

"It has been determined that much of the same information previously gathered by the Zone Assessment Unit may be obtained through direct outreach by the NYPD to the communities concerned," it added.

Bill de Blasio, who in January took office as New York's first Democratic mayor in 20 years, welcomed the move.

"This reform is a critical step forward in easing tensions between the police and the communities they serve, so that our cops and our citizens can help one another go after the real bad guys," he said.

Civil liberty groups said the decision was an important first step but warned against its activities being transferred to other police units.

"We hope that the Demographics Unit's discriminatory activities will not be carried out by other parts of the NYPD," said Donna Lieberman, executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union.

Hina Shamsi, director of the American Civil Liberties Union's National Security Project, said the disbanded unit was only one part of "a huge, discriminatory surveillance programme" that sent informants and police officers to spy on New York Muslims.

"We look forward to an end to all aspects of the bias-based policing that has stigmatised New York's Muslim communities and done them such great harm," she said.

Muslims in New York filed a lawsuit challenging the spy programme, arguing it stigmatised hundreds of thousands of innocent New Yorkers.

Police officials acknowledge that the program never generated a criminal lead, said the New York chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

"The damage of unconstitutional mass spying on people solely on the basis of their religion has already been carried out and must be addressed," said board president Ryan Mahoney.

"We need to hear from the mayor and NYPD officials that the policy itself has been ended and that the department will no longer apply mass surveillance or other forms of biased and predatory policing to any faith-based community."

POLITICAL PARTIES

TELEGRAPH, APR 21, 2014

MANIFEST VAGUENESS

Political parties' manifestos mean little for the armed forces

Brijesh D. Jayal

The eagerly awaited election manifesto of the principal opposition party is now in the public domain and it is natural for students of national security to look at it in some depth since opinion polls tend to indicate that the next government at the Centre could possibly be led by that party. Whether or not this indeed happens is for political pundits and psephologists to ponder over, but viewed from the perspective of the national security community and more so the armed forces, the document was eagerly anticipated.

The chapter on security is titled "Secure Indians — Zero Tolerance on Terrorism, Extremism and Crime". Within it are proposals under the broad headings of Internal Security, External Security, Defence Production and Independent Strategic Nuclear Programme. The chapter's title and the definition of comprehensive national security within it would appear to indicate that not just the traditional national security components of power — namely, military, economic, cyber and energy — but even those related to terrorism, extremism and crime are proposed to be brought under the national security umbrella. Further, even social ones like food, water and health have been added for good measure.

In general terms 'national security' refers to the country's external national security interests and is hence broadly associated with defence, foreign affairs and intelligence. Internal security issues like law and order, terrorism and extremism, on the other hand, come under the home ministry. Whilst there are bound to be some overlapping areas, the message coming out now is that there would be a much broader national security architecture extending beyond just the two. The problem one sees with this definition is that management of traditional national security will then encompass diverse sections of the government, thus diluting the focus of higher defence management. This at a time when there already exist serious organizational and management challenges, which have defied solution precisely because of divergent

interests and views.

The manifesto has attempted to pre-empt this reservation with the rider — that national security cannot be compartmentalized with multiple power centres and needs a clear road map to address it head on which, in turn, involves radical systemic changes. Since neither the prescriptive systemic changes nor the associated road map have been further articulated, it is difficult not to draw the conclusion that these are good intentions yet to undergo the rigour of in-depth study and analysis. Since these are issues of wider complexity, for the present, the discussion is limited to the external security aspects and will touch on other aspects only peripherally.

The ills affecting our national security establishment and management are not only well known but have been the subject of many a recent expert study covering higher defence management, defence research, defence production and other allied subjects. Rather than draw on these for possible prescriptions and offer preferred policy options, the manifesto chooses the middle path — possibly because there continue to be sectional interests and divergent views at play. Here are some obvious examples. On the long deliberated and vital issues like the appointment of a combined defence services/permanent joint chief of staff, ensuring greater participation of the armed forces in the decision-making process and the integration of the services headquarters with the ministry of defence, whilst the need has been accepted, the political will has been wanting. It is disappointing to see that the manifesto is silent on any definitive prescriptions. More so, as many of these were thought processes that owe their birth to the post -Kargil conflict period when the last National Democratic Alliance government was in saddle.

The manifesto talks about modernizing the armed forces, fast tracking defence purchases and increasing research and development in defence with the goal of developing indigenous defence technologies. These are mantras that have been played over and over again and have never been in dispute. What has been missing is the will and the innovative solutions to meet these complex challenges. Modernization of the armed forces is an immediate operational imperative because of decades of neglect and ever worsening external security challenges. Enhancing defence R&D and promoting indigenization are equally important, but can bear fruit only in the longer term after we have taken steps to overcome current weaknesses, such as, prioritizing investment in selected areas of defence R&D, rationalization of defence production by streamlining defence public sector units, taking on board the private sector which has been straining at the leash for nearly a decade and innovative technology sharing and partnership arrangements with international leaders in the field. Again, no prescriptions are forthcoming.

Whilst many of the above issues of greater indigenization would need structural reforms and will mature in the longer term, the immediate modernization needs of the armed forces need fulfilling. If these urgent modernization wish lists of the armed forces, along with making good serious deficiencies in combat equipment, are taken together, one fact that will stare even the uninitiated in the face is that the bill is simply not affordable. The manifesto obliquely admits that “with the financial situation worsening, the issue of national security can acquire a horrifying dimension”. What it fails to admit is that this horrifying dimension is already upon us, presumably because then it would need to offer some bitter though inevitable tonic. And that is not the stuff of sweet-smelling manifestos.

The proposal to revisit India’s nuclear doctrine and revise and update it, to make it relevant to the challenges of current times is unexceptionable for two primary reasons. The first is that the international security scenario is highly dynamic and no security doctrine worth its while can remain static and yet expect to remain relevant. The second is the changed scenario of Pakistan that has inducted tactical nuclear missiles alongside its existing ‘first use’ policy. Any Pakistani belief that tactical nuclear weapon use to

neutralize a superior Indian conventional force will not, in international and even Indian eyes, amount to nuclear escalation, needs to be belied through urgent review and modification of the doctrine.

One hopes that the commitment to “maintain a credible minimum deterrent that is in tune with changing geo strategic realities” also includes a review of the need for further verification and testing of our thermo nuclear device, considering that serious differences exist in our scientific community on the complete success of our only test. In any such decision-making, it is also imperative that the military is involved, as it is they who are responsible for the final operational use should such an occasion arise.

One of the biggest challenges facing the national security edifice is actually the very poor state of civil-military relations bordering on lack of trust and even occasional hostility. That the armed forces continue to be pushed down the ladder in terms of their status compared to their civil service counterparts and that the veterans have been deprived of whatever little respect is due to them are prime reasons that the youth of India, of the calibre that the armed forces need, are not coming forward to join. One can only regret that the manifesto is silent on the issue of civil-military relations — issues on which will finally rest the entire edifice

of democratic India’s national security.

The recognition that the increasing shortage of commissioned officers in the armed forces needs to be addressed is a welcome development. Unless, however, the underlying causes of why the armed forces are not attractive any more are analysed and recognized, this will remain a pious intention. The armed forces are short of the right calibre of officers primarily because we have by our own shortsighted policies made this an unattractive option. Let us pause and reflect. What significant respect or honour are we according to the right-minded youth whom we would want to spend months on the lonely Siachen heights, or in submarines and combat aircraft that have outlived their lives and yet be willing to give their life for flag and country? Again, there are no thoughts on how this fundamental weakness is proposed to be handled.

It is also surprising that the solution being offered to make good the shortage of officers is to “set up four dedicated defence universities”. In military parlance defence universities are places of higher professional learning in matters of security strategy and resource management and are for senior military and civil officers who will then shoulder higher level national security policy, planning and management responsibilities. Only a very few countries have one such university each. Our own National Defence University has been over a decade in making, and its foundation stone was laid only in 2013. Does one sense that the specialists formulating the manifesto were unaware of what a defence university signifies?

Finally the commitment to build a “war memorial to recognize and honour the gallantry of our soldiers” is welcome, but a firm pledge to do so on the Central Vista in New Delhi is sadly missing. It is a crying shame that the *babus* of the ministry of urban development

and assorted *jholawala* interests have had a veto on this very natural location for the national war memorial.

As a historic national election gets going and political parties prepare for the mother of all political battles, a perusal of party manifestos and promises of the two principal political parties conveys the impression that 'national security' is an unwanted baby and the armed forces the orphaned child.

The author is a retired air marshal of the Indian Air Force

PRIME MINISTERS

BUSINESS STANDARD, APR 16, 2014

A K Bhattacharya: The PMO and the PM

A K Bhattacharya

How distinct or distant can the [prime minister](#) be from the prime minister's office? In an ideal world, the prime minister's office, or the [PMO](#), is an extension of the prime minister, or the [PM](#). The two should be almost indistinguishable as they supplement each other in achieving the objectives and purposes the PM sets out for the government. The PM is the chief conductor of an orchestra, and the PMO should consist of various players of different instruments in that team.

Indeed, the relationship between the PM and the PMO is much deeper. The success or failure of the PM largely depends on the effectiveness and efficiency with which the PMO manages to get his or her ideas and policies implemented. This is not to say that the PM's own ability as a leader is irrelevant. But there is no denying that a strong, focused and efficient PMO can make a big difference. It certainly empowers the PM and helps him achieve his goals with minimum fuss. Take the PMO away and the PM would feel helpless and ineffective, unless he relies on the Cabinet secretariat or builds some other institution to implement his agenda.

[Manmohan Singh](#), who will next month complete his 10-year-long tenure as prime minister, ran a PMO that many believe did not entirely belong to him. Two recently published books - one by his former media advisor [Sanjaya Baru](#) and the other by former Coal Secretary [P C Parakh](#) - have shed some light on the kind of PMO Dr Singh ran. Much of what these books reveal in their pages validate the earlier views on the lack of firmness Dr Singh showed in dealing with the PMO or even recruiting its key senior staff.

For instance, Dr Singh did not get a free hand in recruiting the most crucial man in the PMO - the principal secretary to the prime minister. His first choice in 2004 was veteran bureaucrat [N N Vohra](#) (at present governor of Jammu and Kashmir), but that proposal was turned down by the Congress leadership. The man who finally got the nod of approval, [T K A Nair](#), was also Dr Singh's choice but was clearly seen to be much less effective than almost all his predecessors in that job. Several other senior officials in Dr Singh's PMO also did not owe their allegiance to the PM and instead were beholden to the Congress leadership or to the Gandhi family. There are even serious doubts as to whether the two other media advisors Dr Singh had got after the departure of Dr Baru were chosen by the prime minister.

Mr Parakh's account of the PMO that he saw as coal secretary (Dr Singh at that time was also in charge of the coal ministry) shows how the PM and the PMO were virtually powerless in bringing to book a minister keen on browbeating civil servants into flouting the rule book. A PM with strong support from his PMO would have nipped such ministerial misdemeanours in the bud.

Contrast this with the way Dr Singh's political guru, [P V Narasimha Rao](#), ran his PMO in the early 1990s. With [Amar Nath Verma](#), the formidable Indian Administrative Service officer, as his principal secretary, Narasimha Rao ran his PMO with complete independence and made it the key driver of policies for the government. It is perhaps unfair to compare Narasimha Rao with Dr Singh. The former was an astute politician, who ran both the Congress party and the government without brooking any interference from any quarters, while the latter's political skills are relatively limited and he is acutely conscious of how he owes his job to the Congress president. But there is little doubt that the PMO under Narasimha Rao was in complete harmony with him as the PM and that did go a long way towards furthering his government's policy agenda.

Even the [Atal Bihari Vajpayee](#)-led government of the National Democratic Alliance from 1998 to 2004 had a powerful PMO. Mr Vajpayee led an alliance government and he too would come under immense pressure from leaders and ministers belonging to the alliance partners. The key difference was that he kept a tight control over his government through his PMO, which was led ably by his principal secretary, [Brajesh Mishra](#). Imagine the Vajpayee government's PMO without Brajesh Mishra and you will realise what difference that would have made to the economic or political goals that Mr Vajpayee succeeded in realising for his government.

If history were to judge the role played by Amar Nath Verma, Brajesh Mishra and T K A Nair as principal secretaries to their three respective prime ministers, the verdict would be pretty obvious. If Narasimha Rao and Mr Vajpayee succeeded in running the government with a firm hand, it was largely because of the help they received from their principal secretaries in the PMO and, of course, the manner in which they empowered their PMO. In sharp contrast, Dr Singh ran a weak PMO with a principal secretary who would be not a patch on either Verma or Mishra. This was made worse by some officers who owed their entire allegiance not to the prime minister but to the Congress president.

There is an obvious lesson from all this for the new prime minister who would move into South Block next month. It will be important for him to put in place a strong, effective and powerful PMO. Even more important will be the need to select a principal secretary

for the PMO who can work in close coordination with the prime minister and make the government effective and efficient.

DECCAN HERALD, APR 16, 2014

Absentee PM

The revelations in two books released in the last few days about the working of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) under Manmohan Singh confirm what is already known.

One is written by the prime minister's press advisor during the UPA I years and the other by a retired bureaucrat.

Both had seen the functioning of the government from close quarters and their revelations have posed serious questions about the relationship between the government and the party, the functioning of ministers in relation to the prime minister and how decisions were taken on important issues of state.

They have lowered the stature of the prime minister and his office.

Much of what has been detailed relate to the way the PMO functioned during the UPA I term but there is no need for another account to show that the unhealthy trends only strengthened later.

The basic thrust of the revelations is that the prime minister was being remote-controlled by the party, headed by Sonia Gandhi, on policy matters and on details of administration, and that he had no control even on some of his ministers and their decisions.

In effect, he was reduced to the status of a figurehead who only reigned but did not rule.

This effectively undermined the cabinet system of government where the prime minister is supreme.

The circumstances of Manmohan Singh's elevation to his office do not justify his abdication of real power in favour of centres outside the government, which remain extra-constitutional in a real and legal sense.

The relationship between the party and government is complex in a parliamentary democracy.

But the oath of office and the demands of constitutional government give the Prime Minister responsibilities and powers which unfortunately do not seem to have been taken seriously or respected.

Much of the lack of governance and the huge cases of corruption which are now haunting the UPA government could be attributed to this situation.

The compulsions of coalition politics is a poor excuse.

The prime minister may be known as a person untainted by corruption but that does not absolve him of responsibility for the damage he did to the system.

He is guilty of not asserting the power and authority of his office and allowing it to be usurped.

The motives of the writers and the timing of the revelations have been questioned, but it is not relevant in the face of their substance which cannot be seriously contested.

RAILWAYS

HINDU, APR 17, 2014

Delhi Metro might see change of guard

SHUBHOMOY SIKDAR

NEW DELHI: In a recent proposal sent to the Union Home Ministry, the Urban Development Ministry is learnt to have recommended that the Delhi Police was more suited to securing the Delhi Metro than the Central Industrial Security Force which took over soon after metro services were launched in the Capital.

However, the proposal itself is not in sync with the meeting between all the stakeholders last November where it was unanimously agreed upon that status quo be maintained as far as security was concerned, said sources. The meeting was attended by representative of both the ministries and the two security agencies.

In the recommendation, the UD Ministry had written that it “is of the view that law and order is a State subject. Accordingly, assigning security duties to Delhi Police would be better -- in view of better integration, coordination with local police, crowd management and overall law and order besides economies of scale”.

As per the existing arrangement, the 129 metro stations in the city are manned by nearly 5,000 CISF personnel while the mandate of the Delhi Police is to investigate crimes committed in the wagons or station premises. A source told *The Hindu* that the total number of Delhi Police personnel deployed at the stations is nearly a tenth of the ideal strength that it would need to perform the limited roles that it has been assigned at present.

It is also learnt that in the November meeting, too, the Delhi Police had brought up the issue of manpower shortage and sought permission to bolster its strength. Asked if the local police, which is already battling a manpower shortage, will be able to manage the additional responsibility in the event of the Home Ministry accepting the recommendation, Delhi Police spokesperson Rajan Bhagat said they had been doing it before the CISF arrived on the scene.

In the first few months after the launch of metro services, the Delhi Police looked after the overall security but later paved the way for the CISF. What has changed between then and now is the network has widened and the footfall has increased, both factors vital for the security aspect.

Then there is the issue of specialised training that the CISF, over the years, has provided to its personnel. The CISF has special units such as its own dog and bomb disposal squads.

(with inputs from agencies)

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

TIMES OF INDIA, APR 16, 2014

LG nod to make registration of marriage a must

[Ambika Pandit](#)

NEW DELHI: Lieutenant governor Najeeb Jung cleared the order for compulsory registration of marriage, on Tuesday. Those who fail to do so within 60 days will have to pay up to Rs 1,000 as penalty. A dedicated e-registration portal is in the works for online submission of applications. A "tatkal" option is available for priority registration on payment of Rs 10,000.

The draft order has been uploaded on the Delhi revenue department's website with a specimen of the form for couples seeking to register their marriage. The order will be officially signed and cleared for notification by the secretary, revenue, on Wednesday. The notification is expected to be out in 10 days.

The Delhi (Compulsory Registration of Marriage) Order, 2014, will be applicable to all marriages solemnized in the capital irrespective of caste, creed and religion. The order says the directions are being issued in compliance with the Supreme Court judgment of February 2006, where it was mandated that states and union territories make marriage registration a must. The order lays down a uniform procedure.

Any marriage solemnized between a man aged 21 years and a woman of 18 years, with at least one of them an Indian citizen, will be compulsorily registered. Within 60 days, excluding the day of the final ceremony, the couple will have to jointly apply in Form-A, which will be addressed to a marriage officer. Retired gazetted officers below 65 years can also be appointed for speedy disbursal. The officer's tenure cannot be more than five years. Proof of age, place of residence after marriage, citizenship and a fee of Rs 200, along with the application form, will have to be submitted to the marriage officer, who will scrutinize the documents and register the details in Form-B. The officer will then fix a date for appearance of the couple, along with two witnesses, to certify the marriage, after which a certificate will be issued.

The penalty can be remitted only by an additional district magistrate or district magistrate of the district on application by the parties explaining the cause for delay in registration. To facilitate online submissions an e-registration portal is planned to be created under the order. Here couples will be able to submit their applications and documents online and seek a prior appointment for marriage registration. A unique ID number stating along with the date of appointment will be generated by the computer and this the couple will need to carry with them to the marriage officer.

The move would ensure justice especially for women, who have been seen to be abandoned by husbands in the absence of any marriage proof.

TRANSPORT

PIONEER, APR 17, 2014

WOMEN PILLION RIDERS CAN'T TAKE LAW FOR A RIDE IN CITY

Despite opposition by certain quarters, the Delhi Transport Department has finally decided to make helmets mandatory for women riding pillion on two wheelers in the Capital. Citing the risks involved in riding pillion without a helmet, the department has sought permission from the Election Commission of India for issuing a gazette notification about making it mandatory for women riders to wear the protective headgear.

The Delhi Government's decision came after the Delhi High Court verdict making helmets compulsory for pillion riders irrespective of their gender and religion. However, the Government has been delaying implementation of the order following opposition from Sikhs. Expressing concern over the number of accidents taking place on the city's road, the Transport Department said each day two persons driving two wheelers die and helmets will help save lives.

WASTE TREATMENT

HINDU, APR 22, 2014

'Kolkata among top e-waste producers'

Study strongly advocates legislation to prevent children's entry into the sector



Source: Study by ASSOCHAM and Frost & Sullivan
*figures in percentage

Kolkata figures among top electronic waste generating cities in India, with a 'garbage output' of 35,000 tonnes annually, a study on 'Electronic Waste Management in India' revealed.

The study was jointly conducted by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and Frost & Sullivan.

The phenomenon poses an environmental hazard, but more importantly, it poses a grave risk to children as the informal recycling industry tasks them with the job of dismantling the waste.

According to the study, computer equipment accounts for almost 68 per cent of electronic waste material, followed by telecommunication equipment (12 per cent), electrical equipment (eight per cent) and medical equipment (seven per cent).

Other equipment, including household-generated electronic waste, accounts for the remaining five per cent.

Stating that the informal recycling industry usually employs children to dismantle electronic waste, Secretary General, ASSOCHAM, D.S. Rawat said the report strongly

advocated a legislation to prevent children's entry into the labour market and collection, segregation and distribution of electronic waste.

Due to poor infrastructure, legislation and framework only four per cent of India's electronic waste gets recycled.

"About 30,000-40,000 labourers in Kolkata work in collecting and distributing electronic waste," Additional Director of ASSOCHAM Manju Negi told *The Hindu*. "We plan to present the study to the Environment and the Child Development Ministries soon," she added.

As per the study, India produces nearly 12.5 lakh tonnes of electronic waste every year. Mumbai tops the list of cities generating the most electronic waste, with Delhi and Bangalore featuring next on the list.

Most of the products generated as electronic waste can be recycled, refurbished and redeployed going down the value chain and reused by a bit of construction process, reducing the overall on the environment, said Mr. Rawat.

Over 70 per cent of e-waste contributors are government, public and private industries, while household waste contributes about 15 per cent. Televisions, refrigerators and washing machines make up the majority of e-waste, while computers account for another 20 per cent and mobile phones 2 per cent, adds the report.

"Domestic e-waste including computer, TV, mobiles and refrigerators contains over 1,000 toxic material, which contaminate soil and groundwater. Exposure to it can cause headache, irritability, nausea, vomiting and eye pain. Recyclers may suffer liver, kidney and neurological disorders," said Dr. B K Rao, Chairman of ASSOCHAM Health committee.

WATER SUPPLY

BUSINESS STANDARD, APR 17, 2014

Asit K Biswas & Peter Brabeck-Letmathe: **The Third World's drinking problem**
International organisations recognise the impending shortage of potable water but their approach is entirely wrong

During this year's gathering in [Davos](#), the [World Economic Forum](#) released its ninth annual [Global Risks](#) report, which relies on a survey of more than 700 business leaders, government officials and non-profit actors to identify the world's most serious risks in the next decade. Perhaps most remarkably, four of the 10 threats listed this year are [water](#)-related.

These risks include water crises stemming from droughts and floods, the deterioration of water quality, and poor [water management](#); failure to mitigate and adapt to climate change; higher incidence of extreme weather events; and food crises, driven at least partly by water shortages. But the report fails to highlight the most pressing water-related concern: ensuring enough potable water. Moreover, while international organisations recognise the problem, their approach to address it is entirely wrong.

In 2012, the United Nations (UN) announced that the Millennium Development Goals' target of halving the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water had been achieved well ahead of schedule, with only 783 million people still lacking access to clean water. But the Third World Centre for Water Management estimates that at least three billion people worldwide still drink water of dubious quality. AquaFed, which represents private water companies, puts this figure at 3.4 billion - nearly half the world's population. This suggests that the UN's declaration of victory was premature, to say the least.

There is no [shortage](#) of evidence. In 2011, more than half of China's largest lakes and rivers were deemed unfit for human consumption. Last year, China's Ministry of Environmental Protection admitted that "toxic and hazardous chemical pollution has caused many environmental disasters, cutting off drinking-water supplies and even leading to severe health and social problems, such as 'cancer villages'."

India's situation is not much better, with the state-run Central Pollution Control Board reporting last year that nearly half of the country's 445 rivers are too polluted in terms of biochemical oxygen demand (an indicator of the organic quality of water) and coliform bacteria to be safely consumed. If other pollutants - such as nitrates, fluorides, pesticides,

and heavy metals - were considered, the figure would be significantly higher.

Likewise, Pakistan's National Assembly was informed last year that 72 per cent of samples collected from the country's water-delivery systems were unfit for human consumption, with 77 per cent of groundwater in urban areas and 86 per cent in rural areas deemed hazardous. In Nepal, the Department of Water Supply and Sewerage has concluded that 85 per cent of its traditional water-supply systems are seriously contaminated with bacteria, iron, manganese, and ammonia. Meanwhile, in Mexico, 90 per cent of the country's nearly 25,000 water utilities were operating in a state of bankruptcy in 2013.

The problem with international organisations' approach is that they conflate the vague notion of "improved water sources" with genuinely clean and safe drinking water.

In the same way, they have diluted the goal of "improved sanitation" - the process of collecting, treating, and safely discharging wastewater - by applying it to indoor toilets in people's homes.

This glosses over a major discrepancy between sanitation and adequate wastewater management. While nearly 90 per cent of the households in the Indian region of Delhi are said to have adequate sanitation, because they have indoor toilets, nearly all of the untreated wastewater is discharged to the Yamuna river - a source of drinking water for cities downstream. Likewise, Mexico City is considered to have a high level of sanitation, even though it transports untreated wastewater, loaded with pathogens and toxic chemicals, to the Mezquital Valley, where it is used to irrigate crops.

In fact, the Third World Centre for Water Management estimates that only about 10 to 12 per cent of domestic and industrial wastewater produced in Latin America is properly managed. The situation is probably very similar in developing countries in Asia, and likely worse in Africa.

In 2011, a survey by the [Central Pollution Control Board of India](#) indicated that only 160 of 8,000 towns had both a sewerage system and a sewage-treatment plant. Furthermore, most government-owned sewage plants are non-functional or closed most of the time, owing to bad management, poor maintenance, faulty design, lack of regular electricity supply, and absent, untrained, or uncaring employees.

Similarly, China's Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development reported in 2012 that while 640 of 647 cities and roughly 73 per cent of counties had wastewater-treatment

facilities, 377 plants built in the course of one year did not meet national requirements, and that the average operating efficiency was less than 60 per cent. The ministry also found that only 12 per cent of the plants met Grade 1A standards.

This does not reflect a dearth of knowledge, technology, or expertise. Nor can it be blamed on a lack of investment. China spent \$112.4 billion on water infrastructure in the 2006-2011 period, and India has channelled massive amounts of public funds towards cleaning up the Yamuna. Yet both countries' water supplies remain highly polluted.

The world's water and sanitation challenges are by no means insurmountable.

Resolving them will require sustained political will, with governments building strong water institutions and ensuring that public funds are used as effectively as possible. At the same time, the public must recognise that they can have better water services, if they are willing to contribute through taxes, tariffs, and transfers.

For their part, the media must stress the benefits of functional water-delivery and wastewater-management systems - and hold politicians and bureaucrats accountable if they fail to do their part. Finally, water professionals need to shift their focus from providing more water to providing better water more sustainably.

Given that failing to address the water challenge would, within a generation, bring about a global crisis of unprecedented proportions, such efforts could not be more urgent.

Asit K Biswas is the founder and president of the Third World Centre for Water Management in Mexico and distinguished visiting professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School for Public Policy in Singapore and the Indian Institute of Technology, Bhubaneswar, India. He was a founder of the International Water Resources Association and World Water Council.

Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, chairman of Nestle, is chairman of the global public-private partnership 2030 Water Resources Group (WRG)

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

PIONEER, APR 16, 2014

ZOO ANIMALS MUST EXERCISE FOR FOOD & FITNESS

Every summer, visitors to the Delhi zoo are left disappointed with sleepy animals' disappearing act. But this summer promises to be different as zoo officials have lined up a series of activities for the animals to keep them active and healthy. With ropes and swings tied from trees, the animals will be kept busy in the daytime making it an enjoyable experience for onlookers.

For animals like chimpanzee, lion-tailed macaques and Hulloek Gibbon, the authorities have planned stretching activities. "Summers are here and the animals tend to get very lazy and refuse to move. These are not only techniques to keep them engaged but also to increase their endurance levels. The complex combinations will help sharpen their mental abilities," said zoo curator RA Khan.

For lion-tailed macaques, zoo officials have designed a triangular pattern with ropes, whereas chimpanzees will only have ropes strung across trees leading from their caves on a hilltop. Veterinarians recommend minimum two hours of physical activity for such animals to stay fit. "At least two hours is essential. Just like humans, controlling the weight of animals too is of utmost importance. Any kind of physical activity on a daily basis will help increase their longevity. It also makes them less susceptible to infections," he added.

For tigers, lions, jaguars and other big cats, zoo officials have changed their way of getting food. "Till now they used to get food on a platter. Now they will have to hunt for their food. We have put at least eight to nine covered baskets in each cage. The animals will now have to pick the food from the basket on their own," he added. The move is also aimed to ensure equal distribution of food among animals. "When the food is served in open, the stronger ones always get the lion's share. But now everyone will have to pick food from the holes in the basket," said Khan. For giraffe, chimpanzee, monkeys and other animals who can reach out to trees, food shall be hung on branches.

Meanwhile, with day temperature soaring, zoo authorities have begun making adequate arrangements for the inhabitants. "Coolers are being repaired and will be put in the cages by next week. The wooden platforms which were put for winters have been removed and windows and open roofs which are largely exposed to sunlight are being covered," said Khan.