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AGRICULTURE

STATESMAN, APR 25, 2014

92% of cold storage units in India suitable only for potatoes: Study

Despite the fact that India has been trying to woo investors to promote its food processing industry, it has so far been able to create roughly 7,000 cold storage units, over 92 per cent of which are only suitable to store potatoes, says a PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) study.

According to the current status of cold storages, their total capacities have reached 31 million MT even though India allows 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) in setting up of its cold chains with the proposed 30 mega food parks to propel demand for cold storage and transportation.

Multipurpose cold storage capacity created by India so far stagnates at 7.63 per cent against 92.82 per cent for potato and 1.07 per cent for fruit and vegetables. Cold storage capacity for fish stays at 0.73 per cent and that of meat remains at 0.15 per cent, dairy and milk products 0.68 per cent and others at 0.36 per cent, said chamber president Sharad Jaipuria.

The total cold chain market, according to the PHD Chamber, was estimated at \$3.2 billion in 2009, which with a compounded annual growth rate of 20 to 25 per cent is expected to climb to \$9 billion by 2015, but India has not been able to progress to put up cold chains as desired to harness its food products, added Mr Jaipuria.

As a result, 30 per cent of fruit and vegetables grown in India gets wasted because of lack of cold storage facilities and energy infrastructure and only 8 per cent of the produce is processed, said the chamber study.

It has said India needs smart food supply chain in which 25 per cent of its total food production is processed in the next few decades for which both the Centre and state governments should collaborate to bring in investments with much more flexible policies that are aggressively industry and consumer friendly. In addition, agriculture reforms are a must and amendment to existing Acts such as agriculture marketing produce Act is called for on a priority basis, the chamber said.

ADVERTISING

HINDUSTAN TIMES, APR 24, 2014

SC panel to stop govt from giving ads for publicity

The Supreme Court on Wednesday constituted a committee to frame guidelines to prevent the government from misusing public funds by giving advertisements in newspapers and TV for political mileage.

Media personnel fix their cameras in the lawn of Supreme Court during a hearing on the coal blocks allocation case in New Delhi.

“In these circumstances, conceding that the existing DAVP policy/guidelines do not govern the issues raised in these writ petitions and do not lay down any criteria for the advertisements to qualify for “public purpose” as opposed to partisan ends and political mileage, there is a need for substantive guidelines to be issued by this Court until the legislature enacts a law in this regard,” said a bench headed by Chief Justice P Sathasivam.

The bench constituted a three-member committee comprising former director of National Judicial Academy, NR Madhava Menon, former Lok Sabha secretary TK Viswanathan and senior advocate Ranjit Kumar.

The committee has to submit a report on the same within three months to the court, which will examine the guidelines and then approve them.

CIVIL AVIATION

DECCAN HERALD, APR 25, 2014

'Underutilised' Mysore airport to be expanded for future needs

Infrastructure Development Minister Roshan Baig said on Thursday that the State government would take up expansion of the Mysore airport, keeping in mind the future development of the City of Palaces, despite the fact that the existing facility has remained under-utilised.

Speaking to reporters, he said he had recently asked the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) to go ahead with the acquisition of land required for the expansion.

Besides, the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) has been requested to work on the realignment of the Mysore-Nanjangud stretch of National Highway 212 to pave the way for the expansion, he said.

Asked about private airlines not finding Mysore a viable commercial destination to operate flights, he said: "I do agree that the existing airport is not commercially viable. But we have to plan for the future. Mysore is going to develop as a major tourist destination in the future. We have to use our common sense," he said.

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) developed the existing airport at Mandakalli on the outskirts of Mysore at a cost of Rs 82 crore in 2009.

The existing airport is designed to operate short-haul flights. But airline companies have not found Mysore a lucrative destination to operate. Currently, Spicejet is operating a 78-seater aircraft five days a week (excluding Tuesdays and Saturdays), with about 50 per cent occupancy, to Mysore.

The previous BJP government had shelved the expansion plan based on a report from civil aviation experts that it will not be viable.

Moreover, the AAI has informed the State government that it will not take up expansion works till the Mysore-Nanjangud stretch is realigned – diverting a five-km stretch between Bandipalya and Kadakola.

On the other hand, the NHAI has commenced work to upgrade the stretch into a four-lane road.

Baig said the airport expansion is aimed at operating wide-bodied aircraft like Boeing and Airbus to Mysore in the future. The expansion, which includes increasing the runway length from 1,740 metres to 2,400 metres, will require an estimated 180 acres of additional land.

Gulbarga airport

Minister Baig said that the work on the construction of the Gulbarga greenfield airport will resume soon. IL&FS, a private company that was part of the consortium (Gulbarga Airport Developers Private Limited), has agreed to resume the work. A legal dispute had arisen among the companies in the consortium about two years ago, affecting the construction work.

He said he will soon hold talks with GMR group and officials of the Civil Aviation ministry on opening the Bidar defence airport for civilian traffic.

CIVIL SERVICE

BUSINESS STANDARD, APR 25, 2014

No entry age limit for govt staff under NPS'

The [pension sector](#) regulator has said all eligible [government employees](#) (central & state) on the rolls of the government can be enrolled into the National Pension System ([NPS](#)), irrespective of age at the time of entry.

However, this is subject to the condition that the total period of contribution to NPS account shall not be more than 42 years. NPS is the contributory pension scheme launched by the Union government in January 2004. It was made compulsory for all new government employees.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, APR 28, 2014

Delhi govt employees take it easy under Prez rule

Neelam Pandey

With the last elected government bailing out after 49 days and the Capital under President's rule, state employees have, ostensibly, been taking it easy — showing up late for work.

In an effort to keep a check on latecomers and absentees, the administration has decided to activate a biometric system of attendance from Wednesday.

Sources in the government said that even as the biometric machines were installed a few weeks back, the process of recording the data of employees at the Delhi secretariat has been speeded up after complaints were received of staff turning up late for work.

The system will become fully operational by this week at the secretariat. Other departments will be linked soon. The mechanism is expected to cover approximately 100,000 employees.

“The system was expected to be in place nearly two months ago, but since there was no elected government, the process got delayed. Earlier, the AAP dispensation had decided to introduce the mechanism, but the process came to a halt after it quit office. At the same time, due to the model code of conduct, elections had become the priority. During this period, complaints were received about employees not showing up on time and leaving early,” said a senior Delhi government official.

Sources in the administration said action would be taken against frequent latecomers, but the nitty-gritty of the penalties was still being worked out.

“We are looking at linking the biometric system to the salaries of the employees, and pay will be deducted if they continue to report late for work. The setup will help in increasing the output of workers,” added the official.

Chief secretary of Delhi SK Srivastava had, earlier, held several meetings reviewing the status of the system, and had set April 20 as the deadline for activating it. The Public Works Department and the General Administration Department are carrying out the operations of installation and initiation of the setup.

DEFENCE, NATIONAL

DECCAN HERALD, APR 28, 2014

Spare the army

Brig R S Chhikara

The past week has witnessed a surfeit of tendentious opinions on the reported move of the UPA government to announce the appointment of the next Chief of Army Staff on the basis of seniority.

It is to be noted that most of these opinions have been expressed by well meaning veterans with a claim to national and institutional interest.

That the accepted principle of seniority has been set aside in the matter of appointing the Chief of Naval Staff to replace Admiral Joshi as also the fact that this appointment was unduly delayed is altogether another matter. His sudden resignation took the government by surprise – not that it is sufficient excuse for the unseemly delay.

It only shows the decision-making processes of our political establishment in poor light.

An efficient government can not afford to dither in the face of unforeseen situations.

So, what are the two basic issues circumscribing the decision to appoint the next Chief of Army Staff?

Institutional interest and national interest. If that is agreed, we can work towards a logical and appropriate course.

Primary institutional interest of the Indian Army would demand that it be headed by a capable, experienced and trustworthy general who inspires unadulterated credibility and confidence with the broad cross section of its rank and file.

Any substantive debate on the question of capability is obviously difficult because the system of evaluation and promotion in the services ensures that there is little to choose between individuals who have made it to the rank and position of army commanders.

Experience also loses relevance if two or more Lieutenant Generals have been tested while in command of field formations under nearly similar circumstances.

The third litmus test – confidence and faith of the men under command – is a matter of ongoing evaluation that gets counted in prior to each successive promotion to positions of higher responsibility.

Any failure or shortcoming would be outside the scope of stray and seemingly subjective individual opinion of an odd person.

It is more a matter of widely shared peer and subordinate opinion and perceptions.

Trustworthiness of the Chief of Indian Army has a professional as well as political dimension.

Institutional interest demands a professionally sound person who can be depended upon to take decisions and give orders, opinion and advice in the best interest of the institution and the nation without political or personal bias. Without fear or favour, as they say.

In all these areas, there is little to choose between the two, three or four generals in the order of seniority.

A former chief may have felt that his own opinion from a distant observation point is qualitatively superior to that of the then Eastern Army Commander who was the direct superior of Lt Gen Suhag when the latter was a corps commander.

The right of Gen Bikram Singh to correct that perception is equally important.

No wonder, people question the veracity and objectivity of such opinion and consequent actions resulting in the ban on his promotion.

National interest in the matter of selecting and appointing a Chief of Army Staff would demand a professional soldier who will not be swayed by the political wind or by the lure of favour while rendering strategic, operational and organisational advice to the government of the day.

And yet, be willing to carry out the task assigned to him by the designated political authority, with resources at his command – shortfalls notwithstanding.

His only residual option in the face of unreasonable or unconstitutional/ illegal political expectations being resignation as was demonstrated by some of the erstwhile chiefs and more recently by Admiral Joshi.

Surely, the political leadership keeps itself constantly updated on developing personality kinks of individuals.

It therefore stands to reason that selection of the next chief should not require fresh evaluation on the basis of background checks etc at the last moment.

As is the tradition, the next in the chain of command should be always ready to take over. Delay in the case of Admiral Dhowan was certainly not convincing.

Unsubstantiated

The appointment of General Bikram Singh left him under a cloud in the face of unsubstantiated innuendoes that adversely impacted his credibility and standing with his colleagues and the rank and file.

The ongoing lose talk with controversial implications is bound to similarly leave the next chief, be it Suhag or Ashok Singh, under a cloud. This certainly does not auger well for the Army.

Let us therefore stop mudslinging and degrading the ability of the next chief to take Indian Army to greater professional and operational heights. This great institution deserves better.

Having said that, it is a fact that selecting the Chief of Army staff is a decision that needs to be taken by a responsible and accountable cabinet.

With the present government at the fag end of its tenure, a decision by this government will always be open to questions on political and moral propriety.

Whichever way the decision goes, it will be tarnished with shades of grey. The Indian Army should be spared this burden of a grey chief.

One wonders why political parties are slugging it out on an issue that falls outside their partisan purview and must be left to the next duly constituted government.

It does not matter which party or group forms the government after May 16.

There is no case for hurrying the decision.

EDUCATION

ASIAN AGE, APR 28, 2014

President Pranab Mukherjee presents the Padma Shri to Delhi University

President Pranab Mukherjee presents the Padma Shri to Delhi University vice-chancellor Dinesh Singh at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Saturday.

STATESMAN, APR 29, 2014

Teacher acknowledges campaign for induction of Muslims in UK schools

Amid reports that UK authorities are investigating about 25 state schools in Birmingham for their alleged radical “Islamisation”, a teacher at the centre of the plot has acknowledged the existence of such a campaign to install Muslims in governing roles.

The schools are currently being probed after reports that there existed a “Trojan Horse” plot aimed at takeover of the secular state schools by religious hardliners. The reports claim male and women students were segregated, sex education banned and extremist clerics praised in assemblies. But one of the teachers said the controversial plot was aimed at raising the attainment levels of Muslim students after years of under-achievement.

Speaking anonymously to Channel 4 News last night, the teacher said: “This is about the proportion of representation and leadership on boards of schools that serve predominantly Muslim children. These teachers and leaders have a deeper understanding of the view of the population in these schools. I think the needs of Muslim children have been neglected for many, many years.”

Birmingham has a large Muslim population ~ nearly 22 per cent, according to the 2011 census. The “Trojan Horse” plot involves the alleged takeover of secular state schools and the removal of secular head teachers in Birmingham by radical Muslim staff and governors. Britain's schools inspectorate, OFSTED, is set to publish its final inspection reports on the Operation Trojan Horse by May.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, APR 28, 2014

Relief for students, no major changes in DU admission policy this year

Mallica Joshi

Lifting the fog that has been clouding the much-awaited admission process, Delhi University officials on Saturday said that there would be no major changes this year.

“We do not want to change the policy each year and confuse students. The committee set up for admission matters has submitted its report and restricting the number of colleges or

courses that a student can apply to is not on the cards this year,” said director, South Campus, Umesh Rai.

The committee had proposed a change in the admission process to college principals whereby an aspirant would be allowed to apply to only six colleges. A proposal to limit the number of courses one can apply was also floated.

The university had sought the principals’ view and suggestions on the matter. According to the existing admission policy, aspirants are free to apply to as many colleges and courses as they want.

The changes were suggested to ensure that colleges don’t admit more students than the number of seats, something that has become a regular feature. The university is bound to admit all those students who meet the cut-off, irrespective of the total number of sanctioned seats.

Last year, six colleges were charged with refusing to admit eligible students as they had already admitted more students than the total number of seats.

Over admission, in fact, is a serious problem in the university with colleges forced to admit more students than they can even seat. Last year, students in the university were forced to write their exams in a school field where a tent was installed for them. Others were forced to sit in laboratories and canteens due to the lack of space.

According to sources in the varsity, however, curtailing the number of choices for students was not pragmatic.

“The university has been trying to make its admission process smoother for students. Passing this policy would have been a step backwards and we do not want to go that way,” said an official on condition of anonymity.

According to others, colleges do not have the infrastructure to manage the kind of complexities that would have arisen had the new policy been adopted. The university is expected to announce this year’s complete policy in the coming week.

HINDU, APR 30, 2014

UGC to go the online way, to introduce open courses

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has decided to implement Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), its vice-chairman H. Devaraj has said.

MOOCs will help students pursue distance education in a big way, he said, adding, “We have lot of e-content and e-patshala available with us with which we will implement the new system.”

Delivering the convocation address recently at Sathyabama University, Semmanchery, Mr. Devaraj called upon educational institutions to concentrate more on accountability.

Over the last 60 years, the country had achieved access and equity in the education system, he said. “As we have achieved access and equity, we now have to bring in excellence to the higher education system.”

Sathyabama University founder-chancellor Jeppiaar exhorted students to pursue higher education, stating that a mere undergraduation qualification would be unlikely to fetch them the big jobs. “You should pursue higher studies and become job-providers rather than job-seekers,” he said.

The university conferred honorary doctorate degrees on K. Sivan, project director (GSLV), Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, ISRO, film script-writer Arur Doss and Nagaswaram exponent Mambalam M.K.S. Siva.

A total of 1,539 undergraduate and 933 postgraduate students received their degrees, with a large number of them being gold medallists. Besides this, 85 research scholars received their doctorate degrees.

The placement record for 2013-14 stood at 72.83 per cent.

HINDU, APR 30, 2014

DU professor is Indraprastha V-C

Anil K. Tyagi, a professor of Biochemistry at Delhi University’s South Campus, will be the new Vice-Chancellor of Guru Govind Singh Indraprastha University.

His appointment has been approved by Lieutenant-Governor Najeeb Jung. He will succeed Dilip K. Bandyopadhyay whose tenure ended on December 11. A leading scientist in the area of biotechnology, Prof. Tyagi was selected from among three shortlisted candidates. — PTI

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, APR 28, 2014

India’s big university challenge

With the established western global powers facing irreversible relative decline, India has several important attributes that should enable it to become a global leader in the 21st century. But the country also has a major Achilles’ heel: its dysfunctional system of education. Fixing this should be a top priority for India’s next government, but the task will be huge.

Four big things should work in India’s favour during this century.

One is its distinct demographic advantage over not only the western powers but also India’s BRIC peers. Russia and China are ageing fast and, by 2040, will have populations with average ages of 46 and 44, respectively. India, with an average age of 35 in 2040,

will retain a youth dividend of a decade. Thus, in the race between China and India, as Indians are fond of saying, “the Chinese may win the sprint, we will win the marathon”. Furthermore, whereas Brazil’s population will peak at 231 million in 2050 and thereafter decline, India’s population is projected to continue growing till 2070.

Second, India is a democracy. And while many lament that its rambunctious nature hinders growth and development—compared to China, where top-down decision-making appears effective—history suggests that, in the long run, democratic regimes are more sustainable. One can quite confidently predict that, in 2050, India will still be a democracy, whereas what kind of regime China will have by then is an open question.

The third advantage is, taking the title of Amartya Sen’s masterpiece, the culture of the “argumentative Indian”, complemented by a very high degree of heterogeneity. India is a hotbed of creativity and ideas—though implementing them remains a challenge.

Finally, English is likely to remain the global lingua franca for decades—if only because there are so many millions of English language teachers on the planet. The fact that English is an Indian “native” language gives the Indian elites a significant advantage. Japan’s global ascent, for example, was in part constrained by its linguistic limitations.

However, this vision of India as a global leader will be little more than hallucination without greater investment in human capital and a much more robust educational system. These were key to the admirable accomplishments of the East Asian “miracle economies”—Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and more recently China. Illiteracy in these countries was, by and large, eliminated at an early stage of development. And their educational pyramid is solid, with inclusive and high quality primary and secondary education and a tertiary sector that caters to the needs of industry and the broader economy.

The Indian educational system stands out in quite shocking contrast. Public primary and secondary education systems are poor, and illiteracy rates, although declining, are still appallingly high. With an adult literacy rate of roughly 63%, India is an under-performer even compared to other lower middle-income economies. The base of the educational pyramid is weak and, as a consequence, the intake at tertiary level is mixed in terms of quality.

At the tertiary level there is a bit of everything: the outstanding, the good, the bad and the ugly. The best of the best schools produce some of the world’s brightest brains, but given the lamentable state of the rest of the education system, the chasm between the

intellectual elites and the semi-literate or illiterate masses remains wide. In short, the first major challenge for the next government has to do with the overall quality of the Indian educational system.

In terms of sheer numbers, Indian universities churn out millions and millions of graduates, but gross enrolment ratios remain quite low (16%) and too many graduates are deemed unemployable. Moreover, no Indian university is classified among the top 200 in the world.

Since robust and competitive industries will be essential to ensure India's sustained growth and development, its universities need to provide graduates who meet these needs. As the numbers of college candidates swell in tandem with the Indian youth dividend, the challenge will become even bigger. Accordingly, the new government's other priorities for educational reform should be to dismantle regulatory barriers to entry in the sector (for example, by reforming institutional gatekeepers such as the University Grants Commission) and to liberalise tuition fees, a necessary step for Indian universities to compete in attracting good teachers.

The challenges in implementing such reforms are immense, but an Indian "miracle" would do wonders not only for alleviating poverty on a global scale, but also for unleashing new sources of ideas and innovation.

Jean-Pierre Lehmann & Carlos Braga

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ELECTIONS

ECONOMIC TIMES, APR 28, 2014

Lok Sabha polls 2014: What the RSS wants, and plans for India

By C P Bhambhri

The fact that the 16th Lok Sabha election is special was highlighted by Sonia Gandhi in a televised message on April 14, when she said the electoral battle was against "divisive" forces who would lead to the "ruination of Bharatiyata and Hindustaniyat".

That this is an ideological contest was also underlined by Priyanka Gandhi, who on April 15, attacked Varun Gandhi for his association with the BJP. This ideological challenge by the oldest and largest social and political formation of India has been effectively responded to by its real and only opponent, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

The Mohan Bhagwat-led RSS has jumped into the election process with a determination, aggression and energy not seen in any election held from 1952 onwards. The RSS always preferred to be a backseat driver of the Jan Sangh/BJP during polls, while in public it wore the "mask" of a cultural organisation, but in 2014, the RSS has brought all its ideological and organisational resources to bear on mainstream electoral politics.

The Sangh Parivar recognised, on the basis of its experience from 1998 to 2014, that its basic goal of Hindu Rashtravad could be achieved only if it controlled the levels of power at the Centre. The Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led government did succeed in pushing forward the agenda of Hinduisation of the Indian state apparatus, but the loss of power in 2004 and failure of the BJP alerted the Sangh leadership.

So, Mohan Bhagwat purged all leaders of the Vajpayee era, and nominated Narendra Modi as the prime ministerial candidate. The RSS nominated Modi because he is expected to perform the same role for the cause of Hindutva as L K Advani did when he led a yatra for the Ram Temple at the site of the Babri Mosque.

Keshav B Hegdewar, the founder, and M S Golwalkar, the real consolidator of the RSS, built the organisation not only to create an army of Hindutva preachers but also invented, following in the footsteps of British colonisers, a Hindu Brahmanical monolith in place of a diverse and pluralist Hindu identity.

This narrative of the ideology, organisation and political parties of the RSS clearly shows that the "Idea of India", which is the real issue in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, is defined in Hindu terms by the RSS.

What are the main social constituencies of the BJP, on whose support it comes to power either at the central or state level? A few important leaders of industry, business and trade are openly supporting the candidature of RSS-nominated Narendra Modi.

If profit-seeking billionaires are openly supporting the Sangh Parivar in these elections, irrespective of its ideology, the upwardly-mobile aspirational Hindu-at-heart middle and

upper-middle classe have also enthusiastically come out in support of the BJP and Modi.

An added factor that has attracted Hindu professional and entrepreneurial classes towards the Hindu ideological party is that their sentiment of nationalism and patriotism is reflected in the Hindu party's programmes and policies. So, millions admire the militaristic approach of the BJP towards national security.

But where are the minority communities in this Hindu " ideological party is that their sentiment of nationalism and patriotism is reflected in the Hindu party's programmes and policies. So, millions admire the militaristic approach of the BJP towards national security.

But where are the minority communities in this Hindu "Idea of India"? Do they really count? The BJP did not show any hesitation while applauding and nominating for the Lok Sabha polls three MLAs accused under the National Security Act for their role in anti-Muslim riots in Muzaffarnagar and Shamli. Is this action of the BJP not a clear signal to Muslims that they just do not matter in Hindu India?

The belief that Hindus of Bharat Mata are "first-class citizens" and other religious communities can at best be "second-class citizens" means the latter are often targeted. This anti-minority message is spread through its 44,982 shakhas across the country by the RSS, and with 50 RSS-affiliated organisations at work, to expect that Muslims will not be targeted would be fooling oneself.

In brief, on May 16, the hard choice between two antagonistic Ideas of India will become public. It can't be forgotten that any model of economic development represents a social philosophy of a particular kind, and the RSS-BJP is committed to the ideology of social exclusion of minorities. There is, simply, nothing like a "neutral development model".

PIONEER, APR 28, 2014

EC BANS RAMDEV FROM HOLDING RALLIES

Coming down heavily on yoga guru Baba Ramdev, the Lucknow administration has banned him from holding any public meetings in the district till May 16 following his controversial "honeymoon" jibe against Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi. However, not satisfied with Ramdev's apology and EC's action against him, the Congress has demanded his immediate arrest. "After directives from the Election Commission, the district administration has banned programmes of yoga guru Ramdev till May 16," a senior official in the Election Commission said on Sunday. He said the Election Commission has also issued a fresh guideline asking people not to make "malicious" statements about the private lives of individuals. Earlier, FIRs were also filed against Ramdev, two in Lucknow and a couple of others in different parts of the State, for his remarks against Gandhi. Despite leaders from the entire political spectrum having come down heavily on Baba Ramdev for his objectionable remarks, the BJP tried to downplay the issue. BJP spokesman Vijay Bahadur Pathak said: "The issue should be considered closed after Baba Ramdev apologised and FIRs have been lodged against him.

Now, the law will take its own course.” On Friday, Ramdev slammed Gandhi in Lucknow saying: “He goes to Dalit houses for honeymoon and picnic. Had he married a Dalit girl, his luck could have clicked and he would have become the Prime Minister.” The Congress stepped up the attack on the yoga guru demanding his arrest. “He has insulted the Dalit community. There are certain crimes which cannot be pardoned,” party leader Rashid Alvi told reporters in Delhi. Congress spokesperson Afzal said he should be arrested and cases should be slapped against him under the SC and ST Act. The Left parties and BSP too have demanded legal action against Ramdev. Meanwhile, an Ahmedabad-based NGO has lodged an FIR Ramdev for "insulting" Dalit and demanded action against him under the SC/ST Act, police said on Sunday.

TIMES OF INDIA, APR 24, 2014

Election Commission officials seal four IT companies in Chennai as they function on polling day

CHENNAI: Election Commission officials sealed the offices of four IT companies in Chennai and sent their employees out on Thursday as the they functioned despite authorities declaring a general holiday for all offices, commercial establishments, IT companies, theatres, hotels and others.

According to reports, more than 3,000 workers in these well-known IT companies reported for duty in the morning and were in the office when EC officials swooped on them and sent them out.

The four companies have been sealed and a first information report has been filed against them.

Following orders from the Election Commission, the chief electoral officer had issued statements asking all establishments to declare a general holiday.

At another IT company in the city, employees were seen leaving the premises through front entrance while many were entering the building through the back entrance, apparently to work. Company officials justified keeping the office open stating that it carries out 24x7 operations and cannot be shutdown.

On Wednesday, the labour commissioner issued a press release ordering all the establishments in the state to close for a day to enable the employees to vote.

DECCAN HERALD, APR 28, 2014

Un-model code

Some of the actions of the Election Commission of India in the name of the Model Code of Conduct for the ongoing Lok Sabha elections indeed defy logic.

While the model code came into force with the announcement of Lok Sabha elections on March 5, along with it came a near-complete halt to the working of the government and decisions on any activity intended to be taken up by the administration.

While the model code being in force up to the day of polling is understandable, there is absolutely no justification to continue it well past the polling day. It is absurd, to say the least.

Imagine the fate of the North Eastern states where elections got completed (except in Assam) by April 9 and in some others like Kerala, Delhi and Haryana the next day.

The EC, on its own, should have clarified while announcing the election schedule that the code would be relaxed the moment the polling was over.

Instead, it chose to wait until most of the states came to it with requests to relax those guidelines.

This decision to relax norms was taken only on April 21.

Needless to say, several states where elections had ended early lost precious time in conducting normal governmental business, in taking decisions, implementing developmental works and other key measures.

Although the EC has relaxed some norms, there seems to be no clarity within the poll panel even now regarding some of the important works of the government.

Karnataka chief electoral officer Anil Kumar Jha has been quoted as saying that the EC guidelines, while allowing the government to proceed with on-going projects, has remained silent on whether fresh tenders can be sanctioned for works which are part of on-going large-scale projects.

Fresh recruitment exercise will require special permission from the EC. The same applies to official transfers.

The EC should have known answers to these important issues rather than maintaining stoic silence. The model code is restrictive for candidates and parties too. To cite just two examples, the increased election expenditure of a Lok Sabha candidate of Rs 70 lakh in bigger states and Rs 54 lakh in smaller ones is but a joke.

Large-scale impounding of official vehicles too is unreasonable.

It is also time the EC took note of all these shortcomings and came out with clarifications so that there will be no scope for uncertainties in future elections.

Overall, there is need for a review of the model code.

FINANCE

BUSINESS STANDARD, APR 24, 2014

Bengal govt ignored RBI alert in Dec

Subbarao had even publicly said all states had been warned to act, that it was solely their responsibility

Manojit Saha & Somasroy Chakraborty

The West Bengal government seems to have ignored the alarm bells sounded by the central bank and other lenders in the state on the mushrooming of chit funds such as the under-scanner [Saradha group](#).

In the state level bankers' committee (SLBC) meetings as early as in December last year, bankers raised the issue of these chit funds. The message was conveyed to the representative of the government, both verbally and formally.

According to bankers, there could be at least 80 such entities in the state, which are collecting deposits from the public. Saradha is in the news due to the scale of its operations and the resulting impact when it failed to repay its depositors following a run on it. The group's chairman and managing director, Sudipta Sen, was on the run for days; he was nabbed on Tuesday from Sonmarg in Jammu, with two other company officials. It has turned out to be the biggest crisis yet for the Mamata Banerjee government.

“We had informed the Reserve Bank of India ([RBI](#)) that we were not comfortable with the operations of the chit funds ,which offered above 40 per cent returns to the public, mainly in the rural areas. We have asked the state government to protect depositors' interest,” said a banker who attended the SLBC meeting in December.

Bankers explained that apart from the greed of getting higher return on investments, the depositors in such funds were also attracted to such informal means of investment as they find this avenue more convenient compared to a bank or mutual funds, due to the know-your-customer norms and other formalities, which [banks](#) require.

RBI Governor D Subbarao, had also expressed discomfort over such entities. In a media conference in December, he had said, “Chit funds are operating under the banner of multi-level marketing companies. The responsibility for prosecuting these firms for any violation of law is with the state government. The Reserve Bank of India does not regulate these entities.”

Adding: “We have warned all the state governments about entities indulging in multi-level marketing activities. We have written to state governments, requested them to stay vigilant and take appropriate actions against these firms.”

Subbarao said RBI had held training sessions for police departments at the district level to help them check the proliferation of these companies. “We do not have the authority to direct the police department and conduct only training sessions. The primary responsibility for controlling these entities, preventing and prosecuting culprits is with the state government,” he emphasised.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had said this was a central government responsibility but later ordered a probe team and a high-level inquiry into these companies after the Saradha collapse. The latter development had revisited the memory of the collapse of Sanchayita Investment of the early ‘80s, which collected Rs 120 crore from the public before its offices were raided and then shut down. A handful of investors got back a fraction of their money.

HEALTH SERVICES

HINDUSTAN TIMES, APR 24, 2014

Indian doctors ditching Britain in droves

Prasun Sonwalkar

For the first time in recent decades, the number of Indian doctors coming to Britain has shown a major decline, mainly due to a growing private health sector in India, immigration restrictions and perceptions of unfair treatment at work in the National Health Service (NHS).

Britain has long been the first port of call for Indian doctors seeking postgraduate qualifications and experience of working in the NHS. From a trickle in the 1950s, large numbers of Indian doctors came here in the 1970s and the early 2000s.

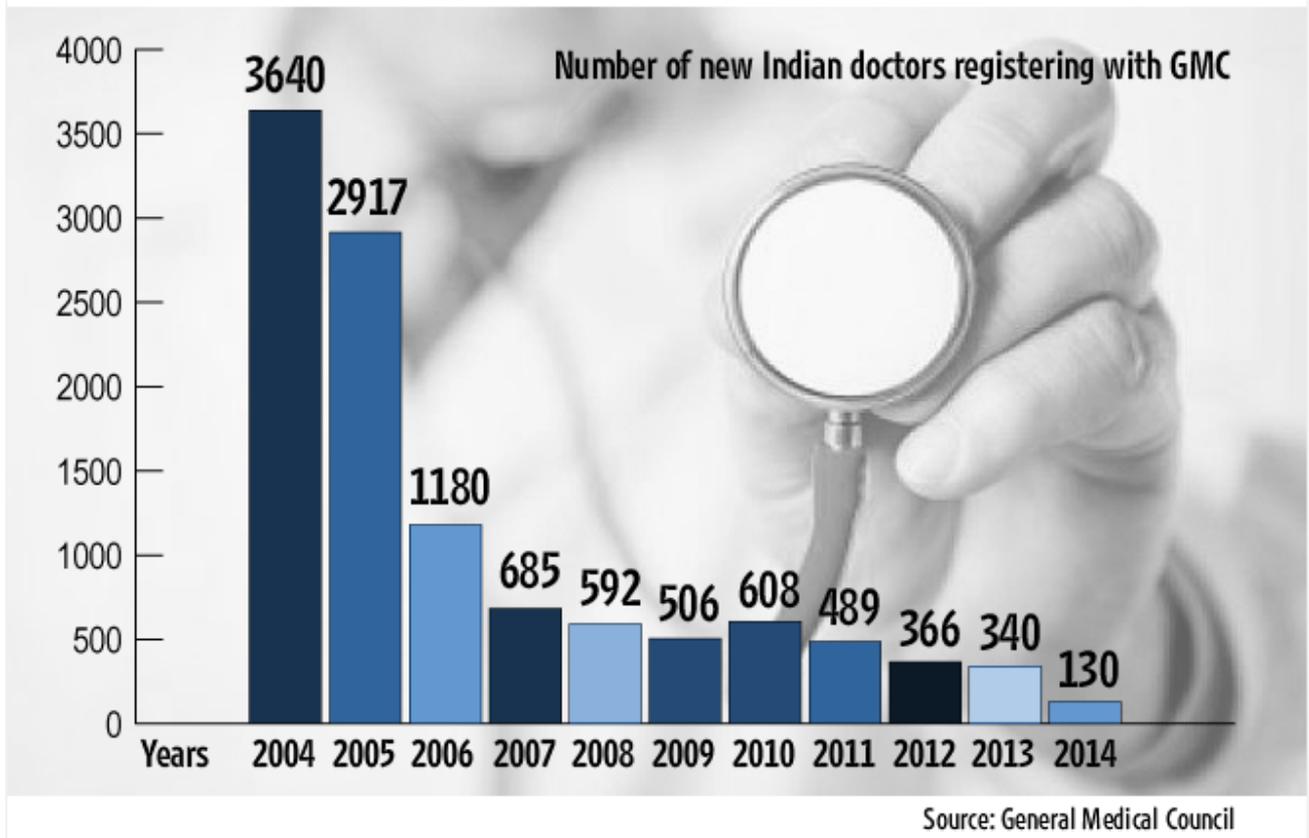
However, as figures from regulator General Medical Council (GMC) indicate, there has been a sharp drop: from 3640 in 2004 to 340 in 2013. A new British study published last week that questions the competence of foreign doctors has added to negative perceptions.

Several Indian doctors who moved to Britain years ago told HT that conditions had become increasingly difficult. The number of those who have returned to India, or moved to better conditions in the US, Canada or Australia, after working in the NHS in recent years is said to be in the hundreds, and growing.

Ramesh Mehta, president of the British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (Bapio), said: "There are lots of opportunities in the private health sector in India now. New visa rules that restrict stay of overseas doctors here to only two years has added to the drop".

He added: "Another major issue is the way Indian doctors are treated. News travels fast these days. There is institutional racism in the NHS. The system is not fair, there are many cases of Indian doctors facing discrimination. Together, these factors are putting off Indian doctors from coming here".

DROP IN NUMBER OF INDIAN DOCTORS COMING TO UK



Terming it as an “unfortunate situation” for the NHS, Mehta said hard working Indian doctors were liked by patients and were long considered its ‘backbone’. Unless British authorities improved the situation soon, the NHS will face another shortage of doctors.

Currently, 68,116 doctors in the NHS gained their primary medical qualifications in countries outside Britain and the European Union. They include 25,092 (as of 2014) doctors who qualified in India and later passed the necessary tests to register with GMC and work in the NHS.

Private hospitals from India who have recently recruited Indian doctors working in the NHS – particularly surgeons and cancer specialists – include Apollo, Reliance, Max Health, Fortis and Rainbow.

Birmingham-based Madhur Rao, who trained and practised in Pune, said several of his colleagues had returned to India or were considering doing so, mainly due to better career prospects, salaries that were equal to or better than those in the NHS, and the prospect of returning to look after their parents.

Rao said: "It is a win-win situation. The salaries in India are exceedingly good now. The quality of life is better in India, thanks to the availability of domestic help. There are also Indian doctors who don't want their children to grow up in Britain, and return after some training here".

An Indian-origin NHS consultant said: "These (private Indian) hospitals prefer recruiting Indian doctors from UK because of their experience of working in well-equipped hospitals in western countries. It seems that Indian well-to-do patients also prefer western qualified doctors".

TIMES OF INDIA, APR 24, 2014

Row over rates stalls CGHS facility at private hospitals

[*Durgesh Nandan Jha*](#)

NEW DELHI: The stand-off between health ministry and certain private hospitals over fixing of rates and the payment for various surgical procedures and treatment has left CGHS beneficiaries in a real fix. With several big hospitals stopping the cashless facility till the issue is resolved, the beneficiaries are left to fend for themselves. Health ministry data states that 24 of 407 private hospitals empanelled under the CGHS have decided 'unilaterally' to discontinue the credit facility. This list includes eight Delhi hospitals like Fortis Vasant Kunj, National Heart Institute, Delhi Heart and Lung Institute. An official from Moolchand Hospital, south Delhi said that their bills are pending too but they are continuing the cashless facility. As the profit margins are less, patients claim that many hospitals, which are officially on the CGHS panel, refuse admission to beneficiaries after citing non-availability of bed.

"The CGHS patients are back to 1970s when cashless treatment was only available in government hospitals. Then, almost everyone flocked to AIIMS and Safdarjung," said Narayan Dutt (name changed on request) who retired from the home ministry two years ago.

Under the facility, the CGHS beneficiaries could simply go to any of the empanelled private hospitals for treatment and the payment would be claimed by the hospital directly from government. The discontinuation of this facility has resulted in many patients being forced to pay from their own pockets. The beneficiaries also claim that the reimbursements from CGHS are tedious.

Girdhar Gyani, director general of the Association of Health Providers of India (AHPI) said that some hospitals have been forced to discontinue cashless facility due to long-pending bills. "The CGHS has not been clearing due bills. Delayed payments affect the cash flow. Also, we are demanding a revision in the rates fixed by CGHS for various procedures and room tariffs to sustain ourselves," he said.

To this, a senior official said, "The health ministry has already taken steps for clearing the pending bills on a priority basis, and it is almost cleared. As far as revision of rates is concerned, the tendering process for it has been completed."

JUDICIARY

ASIAN AGE, APR 28, 2014

New CJI against fixed tenure idea

Differing with immediate predecessor P. Sathasivam's view that Chief Justices needed to have a fixed tenure of two years, the new Chief Justice of India, Justice R.M. Lodha, said Sunday this would affect the judges next in line.

Talking to reporters after taking the oath as India's 41st CJI, he said: "My view will be a little different... This institution works on discipline. Fixed tenure is bound to affect the next member. If there is a fixed tenure of CJI, the legitimate expectations of other judges would be taken away. The average tenure of Supreme Court judges is less than four years, then how do you expect fixed tenure of two years for the CJI?"

The Chief Justice also favoured wider consultations with those outside the collegium. But he hastened to add that he didn't want changes in the collegium system of selection and appointment of judges. "This (consultation) is only for additional inputs. There is no tinkering with the memorandum of procedure prescribed by the law ministry", he said.

ECONOMIC TIMES, APR 28, 2014

Judiciary aware of its limits, doesn't get into policy-making: Chief Justice of India RM Lodha

NEW DELHI: The new Chief Justice of India, RM Lodha, said the judiciary does not take upon itself the task of policy making and was conscious of its own limits, shortly after he was sworn in on Sunday at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

"Decisions in sub judice matters may have some impact on policy making, but the judiciary is not taking upon itself the task of policy making," the 41st Chief Justice of India (CJI) said at a press conference in the judges' conference hall in the Supreme Court.

"In fact, there are very few such matters pending with the judiciary. If you go by the statistics you will see that we interfere with very few. We give due regard to the fact that a decision lies in the domain of the executive, unless it is violative of Article 14 or against the Constitution. We are within our constitutional limits," he said.

Justice Lodha denied the accusation that the court had made it difficult for business to be conducted in the country. "We welcome criticism, but (that) does not mean we will reconsider (or) review any decision unless it comes to us by way of a review or curative (petition)," he said, refusing to be drawn into specifics.

Lodha is hearing a case over alleged irregularities and illegalities in the allocation of coal blocks. The case has been a cause of concern for both industry and the government worried about the fallout of any en masse cancellation of mining licences. Though Lodha

hasn't ordered any such thing, he has caused major embarrassment to the UPA 2 government with his scathing observations regarding lack of transparency in the government's actions.

So much so that the government has volunteered to have some blocks de-allocated to take the sting off the court criticism. The CJI said that though there was nothing wrong with some "friction" between the organs, he said.

Outlining his priority areas, Lodha said he would focus on judicial appointments to clear pendency of cases within 7-8 years. However, he refused to address the issue of under representation of some communities in the judiciary, saying, "There is not class, caste, majority, minority in the judiciary." Bowing to concerns that the current inhouse procedure of a ppointment of judges may not be transparent, Lodha said he would attempt to involve lawyers of impeccable integrity in getting feedback about potential candidates.

Currently, the CJI with four senior-most judges appoint Supreme Court judges and, in the case of high courts, the chief justice and three senior-most judges make the call. To make the system more transparent, the government has been contemplating a bill to replace the collegium system of appointment with a National Judicial Commission, which would comprise nonlegal members too. Lodha's move to consult more high court judges and lawyers may be part of the top court's attempts to stave off some of the criticism against the appointment to process which, critics have said, leaves out many meritorious candidates who do not possess any legal lineage or patronage.

LABOUR

STATESMAN, APR 29, 2014

Blue-collar workers to benefit

Pension scheme to help 6 Lakh workers in UAE

An estimated six lakh blue-collar Indian workers in the Emigration Clearance Required category in the UAE are expected to benefit from the Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Suraksha Yojana (MGPSY) pension and insurance scheme as subsidy has been hiked for overseas pension plan.

The Indian government has increased its subsidy to the co-contributory pension scheme launched for the overseas Indian workers.

The male subscribers to the scheme now stand to benefit from double the amount of government contribution, Indian officials associated with the project have confirmed. As per the scheme, the government will contribute Rs 1,000 per annum for male subscribers who save between Rs 1,000 and Rs 12,000 per year.

This contribution, which comes from the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, has now been complemented with another Rs 1,000 from the Pension Fund Regulation and Development Authority (PFRDA) by including MGPSY under PFRDA's Swavalamban Yojana pension scheme.

Women subscribers, who were already given an additional contribution of Rs 1,000 from the ministry, would also be eligible for receiving the PDRFA subsidy.

In addition to this, the ministry had announced a contribution of Rs 900 towards return and resettlement of the workers who save Rs 4,000 or more per year.

Hence, the government contribution now stands at Rs 2,900 for male subscribers and Rs 3,900 for female subscribers. The early subscribers in the UAE will be the first to benefit from the scheme as its overseas launch was held here in October last year.

Commenting on the same Mr Ankit Aggarwal (Director Alankit Assignment) said "We are actively enrolling enthusiastic subscribers in the scheme and are also looking for prospective business partners in all ECR countries including KSA, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Malaysia and UAE for widespread accessibility of the service." The objective of the scheme is to encourage and enable overseas Indian workers by giving co-contribution to save for their return and resettlement in India, save for their pension and obtain complimentary life insurance cover during the period of overseas employment. Workers who have an Emigration Clearance Required (ECR) stamp on their passports are eligible to join the scheme.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

HINDUSTAN TIMES, APR 30, 2014

Cong loses S. Delhi mayoral polls to BJP's Chunar by one vote

Khushi Ram Chunar of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was elected the mayor of South Delhi after defeating Dharmveer Singh of the Congress by a single vote.

Chunar, a councillor from Ambedkar Nagar, secured 52 out of the 103 valid votes polled.

Praveen Rana of the Congress was elected as deputy mayor. He defeated Bir Singh of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) by a margin of 13 votes. Rana secured 59 out of the 105 voted polled.

An ABVP president from Bhagat Singh College, Chunar, is the son of a former cleaner at the MCD.

In the East civic body, Meenakshi of the BJP was elected mayor after defeating the Congress candidate, Tulsii, by a margin of 9 votes. Out of the 60 votes polled, one was declared invalid and Meenakshi secured 34 votes ensuring her victory.

A similar result was seen in the polling for the post of deputy mayor, with the BJP's Jai Gopal Verma defeating Congress councillor, Aas Mohammad.

Two Congress MP's — East Delhi's Sandeep Dikshit and Rajya Sabha MP Parvez Hashmi — failed to vote in the South Delhi mayoral polling and the party lost by a single vote.

Sources in the party said that the duo were likely to face action for their no-show.

"I have asked the state Congress Chief Arvinder Singh to prepare a report on this incident. If these two MPs had voted our party could have won. We will take appropriate action," said Shakeel Ahmed, AICC general secretary and Delhi in-charge.

Meanwhile, Delhi Congress chief Arvinder Singh expressed happiness over the party's performance in the election in South Delhi.

The Congress candidate for deputy mayor won by a margin of 16 votes. Singh said that this implied that certain BJP councillors must have voted for the Congress, as the candidate received six votes more than the party's strength in the house.

"This proves that BJP's own councillors are not happy with their party's performance in providing certain amenities to the area. And we have been hearing of a Modi wave across the country. But how can someone with no control over his own councillors control the entire country?" asked Singh.

Farhad Suri of the Congress, Kuldeep Solanki and Radhey Shyam Sharma of the BJP were elected unanimously for the post of members of the standing committee from the

House in the South Delhi civic body while Ashish Sood of the BJP was elected unanimously as a member of the education committee.

In the East corporation, BB Tyagi and Ram Narayan Dubey of the BJP and Savita Sharma of the Congress were elected as the members of the standing committee from the House.

The tenure of existing mayors and deputy mayors of all three municipal corporations of the city came to an end this month.

This year, the post of mayor in all the three corporations is reserved for Scheduled Caste candidates.

According to provisions of the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957, it is mandatory for the House to elect new office-bearers — mayors and deputy mayors — in the first meeting of the financial year.

HINDU, APR 30, 2014

BJP wins East Delhi mayoral polls too

The East Delhi Municipal Corporation elected Meenakshi of the Bharatiya Janata Party as its new Mayor on Tuesday. Ms. Meenakshi beat Congress candidate Tulsi by nine votes.

A total of 60 votes were cast, of which 34 were in favour of the winner and one was found invalid.

BJP candidate for Deputy Mayor Jai Gopal Verma defeated Congress nominee Aas Mohammad with the same margin.

Also elected members of the Standing Committee of the House were B.B. Tyagi, Ram Narayan Dubey and Savita Sharma .

MANAGEMENT

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, APR 28, 2014

The new wave of sustainability in management education

The objectives of managing firms are changing. Traditionally, it has been the maximisation of the wealth of firms' stakeholders. However, many a change in the surroundings have started challenging this. The gradual expansion of the definition of stakeholders, shutdown of big global firms in recent times despite apparent financial soundness, sub-prime crisis of the last decade, all have impacted the usual notion of maximisation of wealth doctrine. Enron was a \$90 billion company in 2007 and its scrips were selling at a premium even a couple of hours before it finally collapsed. Arthur Andersen collapsed with its 1,200-strong world's best corporate clientele. The cases of WorldCom, Swiss Air, Polaroid from the West and Kingfisher Airlines and GMR Infra from India tell us the same stories. These firms were highly profit-making and their stocks saw the peaks not much before they closed down. They were all economically successful, yet failed to sustain their success. What the management perhaps lacked was an adequate focus on the objective of 'business sustainability'.

The goal of wealth maximisation is fast being replaced by managing the triple bottom line (TBL) of business—profit, people and planet. The stakeholder community now includes people and planet. Business now has to be managed for people (social capital) and planet (natural capital) too.

According to the World Council for Economic Development, sustainable development is the one that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." For business development to be sustainable, it must address important issues at the macro level—economic efficiency (innovation, prosperity, productivity), social equity (poverty, community, health & wellness, human rights) and environmental accountability (climate change, land use, biodiversity). Today's business, in addition to concentrating on firm's financial success, should focus on stakeholders' optimal engagement, business ethics, natural capital management, proper corporate governance, effective disclosure system, life-cycle analysis, lowering carbon footprint, inclusiveness of economic development and the like.

A lot of initiatives have taken place between Rio 1992 and Rio+20 held in 2012. General awareness has developed in many parts of the globe over time, the developed part in particular, in favour of achieving sustainable development. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development has been formed. The United Nations has come out with initiatives including formulating Principles for Responsible Investment. Puma, one of

largest shoemakers of the world, is in the process of assessing environmental profits and losses made by the company. CSR is fast gaining ground. In India, it has been made a legal duty of the big firms. Reducing carbon footprint has become competitive. BSE Greenex and Carbonex are at work. The wave is here. The ground is ready.

But can these objectives be achieved through management programmes? Perhaps not. A paradigm shift is needed. We need managers who can respond responsibly and holistically to the emerging issues of sustainable business. A management programme in business sustainability or sustainable business needs a different focus altogether. In addition to normal business teaching, such a programme should have inbuilt theoretical and practical exposure that is interdisciplinary in character since sustainability is not a monolithic phenomenon. Since implementing the idea of sustainability is not an easy task, the programme should be designed to encourage inventive and innovative minds.

The MBA in Sustainable Enterprise, popularly known as the GreenMBA, started by the Dominican University in California in the US in 2000, was first of its kind. However, the efforts are mainly confined to the US. As many as 75-odd business schools have been offering sustainability-focused MBAs as of now. In India, Teri University has pioneered the initiative by starting the MBA in Business Sustainability since 2009. IIM Lucknow is also likely to introduce a similar programme soon. But for greater success, sustainability as a concept should find place in curricula from the elementary level. We must first develop the right kind of attitude first.

Manipadma Datta

The author is professor & head, Department of Business Sustainability, Teri University.
Views are personal

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

HINDUSTAN TIMES, APR 28, 2014

Greater public scrutiny of draft policy

ARVIND SIVARAMAKRISHNAN

The impact of the two new books by Sanjaya Baru and P.C. Parakh on the governmental climate could be far-reaching

The controversy over the recent books by former insiders at high levels of government was no surprise, and at one point was almost a form of entertainment as accusations and rebuttals flew in all directions. To start with, the timing of Sanjaya Baru's *The Accidental Prime Minister: the Making and Unmaking of Manmohan Singh* (Penguin 2014) and the former Coal Secretary P.C. Parakh's *Crusader or Conspirator? Coalgate and Other Truths* (Manas 2014) would be difficult to explain as an accident. The purportedly injured parties, particularly those in the party of government, were understandably furious about what they must have seen as betrayal, not to mention defection to the Opposition cause during a general election campaign.

The Opposition, needless to say, was delighted, claiming that the books show the Prime Minister as having little or no control, that key decisions are instead made by the president of the main party of government, and that gross irregularities — to say the least — over major policies have been commonplace at both the Central and State level. The offended figures retaliated by calling at least one of the books “mischievous,” and other allegations were made that the books were motivated (though by what seems not to have been specified; the books can hardly have been accidental creations, but this may not be the place to go into philosophic arguments about authorial intention).

The Biden example

In the row, Indian politicians were criticised for having very thin skins, and their responses were contrasted with those of, say, the Obama administration following severe criticisms of the U.S. Vice-President, Joe Biden. But politicians spend a lot of time in a world in which any utterance and any gesture is a potential hostage to fortune, and even the toughest-looking of them can be touchy. I once telephoned a former academic colleague, who was also a senior figure in a British political party, to offer congratulations on a fine article in a national newspaper, and got the gloomy response that the article had upset X, who at the time was shadow minister for a high cabinet post. After the next election he held the relevant post for several years, and repeatedly implemented cynical — and worse — policies. He had been upset by one line expressing a minor reservation about a particular draft policy, even though his party was in opposition and there were still some years to go before the election. X may have been one of the few who even noticed the line. I got my former colleague a consoling drink the next time we met.

So what of the recent row? The publishers must be congratulating themselves on their timing, and the authors may be wondering which of their former colleagues and associates are still talking to them. Nevertheless, the controversy raises serious questions;

it is not clear if the books involved count as whistle-blowing, itself a deadly serious issue which has cost many courageous whistle-blowers their lives, but the impact on the governmental climate could be far-reaching. At least one former senior civil servant has said in public that on his first day as a State Chief Secretary he refused to authorise an illegal policy and was told to be ready for a transfer that evening. He simply said he was ready for that. He was not only not transferred, but soon found that the Chief Minister had told the whole State cabinet not to bully the civil servants into illegalities, because the Chief Secretary had already resisted.

Similar things have happened in other countries; many U.S. and British public servants, including several in the military and security services, were so horrified by the way their respective political executives treated their — often accurate — analyses of Iraq between 2001 and 2003 that in 2012, when the politicians looked likely to repeat the performance by attacking Iran, some of them went literally public, and gave the media their considered comments. The British Parliament, perhaps mindful of its own performance over Iraq, also rejected the government's proposal for military intervention in Syria in 2013.

What could happen in India then, is that major policy, irrespective of which party forms a government, could well be subjected henceforth to closer scrutiny at the preparatory stages than it seems to have been so far — scrutiny not only by public servants but by the public. What, closer public scrutiny of draft policy? Yes, it's something to do with democracy apparently.

We may never know if the two books' respective authors meant to achieve that result, but it may be one of the consequences of their actions; it may also be the kind of thing Hegel meant by the cunning of reason, *die List der Vernunft*. *Time to contact my former colleague again.*

The controversy raises serious questions; it is not clear if the books involved count as whistle-blowing

The publishers must be congratulating themselves on their timing, and the authors may be wondering which of their former colleagues and associates are still talking to them

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

STATESMAN, APR 25, 2014

Obama nominates 3 Indian-Americans to advisory commission

Washington, 25 April: US President Barack Obama has announced his intent to appoint three Indian-Americans to his 14-member advisory commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs).

The Indian-Americans include, US Air Force officer Lt Col Ravi Chaudhary, prominent community leader Shekar Narasimhan and popular film and television actor Maulik Pancholy.

Nina Ahmad of Bangladeshi-origin has also been nominated to the AAPIs. "I am pleased to announce that these experienced and committed individuals have agreed to join this administration, and I look forward to working with them in the coming months and years," said Mr Obama in a statement issued by the White House. Mr Obama is currently on a four-nation tour to Asia.

Mr Chaudhary is an Air Force officer, currently serving as Executive Officer to the Commander, Air Force District of Washington, Joint Base Andrews, Maryland. He has logged over 3,000 flight hours as a pilot and flight test engineer, including over 700 combat hours, it said.

Currently managing partner at Beekman Advisors since 2003 and chairman of Papillon Capital since 2012, Mr Narasimhan previously was the managing director at Prudential Mortgage Capital company from 2000 to 2003 and the chairman and CEO of the WMF group Ltd from 1988 to 2000.

Mr Narasimhan is also a co-founder of the Emergent Institute (formerly known as the Indian Institute for Sustainable Enterprise) in Bangalore, a nonprofit institution training entrepreneurs to build social ventures.

He received a B S from IIT Delhi and an MBA from the Katz Graduate School of Business at the university of Pittsburgh.

While, a film, television, and stage actor Mr Pancholy is widely known for playing the role of Jonathan for six seasons on NBC's award-winning series 30 Rock. He also appeared in six seasons of the showtime series Weeds and played Neal on the first season of the NBC series Whitney.

Mr Pancholy is active with a number of non-profit and social policy organisations such as

Asian-Americans Advancing Justice, the New York City Anti-Violence Project, and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

Bangladeshi-origin Ms Ahmad is co-owner and executive vice president of government Affairs for JNA Capital, a real estate finance and development company based in Philadelphia.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, APR 25, 2014

US proposes rules to ban sales of e-cigarettes to minors

SUMMARYThe US Food and Drug Administration proposed rules on Thursday that would ban the sale of e-cigarettes to anyone under 18

The US Food and Drug Administration proposed rules on Thursday that would ban the sale of e-cigarettes to anyone under 18, but would not restrict flavored products, online sales or advertising, which public health advocates say attract children.

The long-awaited proposal would subject the \$2 billion e-cigarette industry to federal regulation for the first time.

FDA commissioner Margaret Hamburg said at a briefing that the proposal represented the first “foundational” step towards broader restrictions if scientific evidence shows they are needed to protect public health.

Critics of e-cigarette advertising say it risks introducing a new generation of young people to conventional cigarettes when little is known about the long-term health impact of the products. And they lamented the fact that limits were not included in the proposed rule.

“It's very disappointing because they don't do anything to rein in the wild-west marketing that is targeting kids,” said Stanton Glantz, a professor at the Center of Tobacco Control Research and Education at the University of California, San Francisco. “They should not have been so timid.”

Hamburg said the current proposal “lays the foundation for many more actions and activities.”

Vince Willmore, a spokesman for the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, said the proposal “by no means does everything we think needs to be done, but it starts the process. What is critical now is that they finalize this rule and then move quickly to fill the gaps.”

A law passed in 2009 gave the FDA authority to regulate cigarettes, smokeless tobacco and roll-your-own tobacco and stipulated the agency could extend its jurisdiction to other nicotine products after issuing a rule to that effect. E-cigarettes use battery-powered cartridges to produce a nicotine-laced inhalable vapor.

In the short term, the rule would prohibit companies from distributing free e-cigarette samples, forbid vending machine sales except in adult-only venues and prohibit sales to minors.

TAXATION

ECONOMIC TIMES, APR 25, 2014

I-T dept to set up new data centre to check tax evasion

NEW DELHI: To fasten the process of identifying tax evaders, the Income Tax department has decided to set up a major data centre of such classified information on the lines of the existing two such centres on e-filing and TDS information.

The new office which has been named Centralised Processing Cell-Compliance Management (CPC-CM) will have its base in the national capital and a dedicated workforce, drawn from the department, will man it.

The CPC-CM is an ambitious project of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) aimed at enabling the I-T department to use technical data to check cases of non-compliance and non-filers of taxes.

The project has been planned under the business intelligence project initiated by the CBDT to enable the taxman move from physical verification of a taxpayer to a smart approach of data-based monitoring and checking.

"The aim is to basically ensure voluntary compliance by taxpayers .. through the use of intelligent data at the disposal of the I-T department," a senior official involved in the project told PTL.

To bolster the investigative and enforcement skills of the I-T officials, the CPC-CM will have the entire database of the Permanent Account Number (PAN), reports generated by financial snoop agencies and the full assortment of letters and notices issued to non-compliant taxpayers, their replies and the final action in the new centre.

"The I-T department has already created two CPCs which have been running successfully. The first is for capture of e-filing data of taxpayers based in Bengaluru and the second is for hosting Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) data in Ghaziabad," the official said.

Tax officials have already started issuing polite letters to erring taxpayers as and when they obtain information in this regard and hence to streamline this process the CPC will act as an important tool, the official said.

Through the 'non-filers detecting exercise', which was done in close coordination with the CBDT, the I-T department collected over Rs 1,900 crore in taxes with more than five lakh returns having been filed under the category in the last financial year.

An estimated 1,50,000 self-assessment tax defaulters were thus detected during the 2013-14 fiscal, the official said.

The department had initiated the business intelligence project in February 2013 to identify PAN holders who have not filed their returns and about whom specific information was available in its databases like the Annual Information Return (AIR), Central Information Branch (CIB) data or TDS/TCS returns.

It has already made it known that over four million high-spenders are under its scanner with plans afoot to check all potential evasion instances.

According to data published by it, the department has information on 4,072,829 persons who made cash deposits amounting to Rs 10 lakh or more in their saving bank accounts in the current fiscal.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

STATESMAN, APR 30, 2014

TDSAT relief for telecom operators

Leading telecom operators were today given a major relief by the Telecom Disputes and Settlement Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) which upheld their plea to provide 3G intra-circle roaming services and quashed the cumulative penalty of Rs 1,200 crore imposed by the Department of Telecom (DoT).

The companies which got the relief were Bharti Airtel, Vodafone and Idea Cellular. “We are allowing all the petitions,” said a TDSAT bench headed by Justice Aftab Alam. The Bench said 3G ICR agreement signed by Airtel, Vodafone and Idea Cellular is not violative of licence agreement. The three companies had approached TDSAT against the DoT order to stop 3G intra-circle roaming agreement under which they had also agreed to acquire customers in areas where they did not win spectrum. Airtel, Vodafone and Idea Cellular won 3G spectrum in the 2010 auction. Airtel won 3G spectrum in 13 out of 22 telecom service areas for Rs 12,295.46 crore, Vodafone in 9 for Rs 11,617.86 crore and Idea Cellular in 11 circles for Rs 5,768.59 crore.

DoT issued notice to Airtel, Vodafone and Idea on 23 December 2011, asking them to stop 3G ICR within 24 hours and report compliance but the order was challenged by the telecom operators. Tata Teleservices and Aircel too had signed 3G ICR but immediately called off their agreement after DoT issued notice to them. In July 2012, TDSAT gave a split verdict where one of the Bench members ruled in favour and the other member against it.

DoT again issued notice to the telecom operators asking them to stop 3G ICR service and pay penalty cumulatively amounting to about Rs 1,200 crore.

WOMEN

TRIBUNE, APR 25, 2014

Haryana women lift the veil Defy long history of patriarchal oppression

WOMEN have been kept behind the veil for centuries, figuratively and literally, under different justifications produced through medieval history to modern times. The veil was supposed to protect them from the evil eye of soldiers of invading armies. In present times it is justified to protect their 'honour'. The veil is to a woman what the blinkers are to a horse. Both are imposed to limit the vision and perspective. To keep women behind the veil in the 21st century democratic India is not just ridiculous, it is not pragmatic for women doing odd jobs -- from tilling the fields to driving carts.

By keeping the veil, women underestimate their worth and perpetuate patriarchal myths such as a woman's status is lower than that of a man. Now, some thinking women in rural Haryana are taking up the cudgels to show their mettle, that is, show their face. They are doing so in a planned and organised manner. The sarpanch of Chappar village organises special lectures and interaction with rural women to help them come out of the "ghunghat". She was elected sarpanch with the support of women who wanted to defy the age-old practice but lacked courage to do so.

Making laws against social evils like "purdah" does not help much. The experience of prohibiting dowry through the legal way has hardly shown any positive results. On the contrary, the social evil has grown manifold. In the wake of stirrings of change even in the matters of marriage initiated by khaps, this campaign acquires significance. For any society to grow it is imperative that women acquire equal status. If they work towards a better society, to free it from the blemishes of dowry, female foeticide and honour killing, instead of succumbing to pressures of patriarchy, a true beginning would have been made by just lifting their veil. The rest would follow.