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CIVIL SERVICE

DECCAN HERALD, AUG 7, 2014

Firm stand needed

It is now weeks since a section of Civil Services aspirants went on agitation, demanding some changes in the preliminary test pattern adopted three years ago.

The agitators initially focussed on what they contended to be a poor quality Hindi translation of the English version of Civil Services Aptitude Test (CSAT) question paper that carries 50 per cent of the 400 marks allotted for the two papers to be taken in the preliminary qualifying test.

This, according to them, put those taking the tests in Hindi language at a disadvantage. They then escalated their case against the CSAT claiming that the entire paper, not just its English comprehension segment that carries 20 marks, is loaded against aspirants from rural India, asserting that the kind of objective questions put to the aspirants weighed heavily in favour of those who crack IIT and IIM entrance tests. So, scrapping the CSAT paper from the preliminary test became their next demand.

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), the constitutional body in-charge of conducting the recruitment process for the country's elite service, has rejected these claims outright. As such, the Narendra Modi government, which came under pressure from the agitators, does not have many options to address the perceived grievances of the agitators.

Yet, the government gave the agitators a false hope that their complaints would be addressed in a week's time. In between, however, a government-appointed panel of three experts went into the grievances and came out with its conclusion that there was nothing wrong in the preliminary exam pattern.

Notwithstanding the panel's conclusions, the government chose to make a concession to the agitators by offering that the 20-mark English comprehension segment of the CSAT would not be considered for preparing the qualification cut-off marks for the next round of test – the main exams. Emboldened, the agitators are not willing to settle for the concession. Having tasted some success and secured support of our populist politicians from all sides, they want more.

With the preliminary tests less than three weeks away, the continuation of the agitation will only create an atmosphere of confusion among lakhs of other aspirants who are preparing for the tests. While the merits or otherwise of the agitators' grievances may be considered, now is not the time for settling the issue as the preliminary tests are fast approaching. The Modi government must put its foot down and convey this message to the agitators.

DECCAN HERALD, AUG 6, 2014

**Govt solution on CSAT best and quick, says Venkaiah
Centre in no mood to give further concession to aspirants**

The government on Tuesday described its formula to solve the controversy surrounding the civil services aptitude test (CSAT) as “best and quick”, but unimpressed aspirants vowed to continue their protest accusing the NDA dispensation of betrayal.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister M Venkaiah Naidu told BJP MPs that the decision on CSAT was the “best and quick” solution taken by the government so as not to disrupt the examination process.

The government appears in no mood to give further concession to students on the issue with the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) putting its foot down on the continuance of CSAT.

The UPSC fears that scrapping the CSAT at the last minute would attract litigation. The examination will be held as scheduled on August 24 with the changes announced by the government, sources said.

“The government has made its stand clear yesterday (Monday),” Home Minister Rajnath Singh, who was tasked by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to oversee efforts to defuse the crisis, was quoted by NDTV as saying. Trying to assuage the concerns of protesters, the government on Monday recommended exclusion of English marks for clearing the prelims, besides giving an extra chance next year for those who appeared in 2011 exam, when the CSAT was introduced.

A number of UPSC aspirants shifted their month-long protest demanding scrapping of the CSAT to Jantar Mantar, the “dharna hotspot” in the capital, from north Delhi’s Mukherjee Nagar. Most of the aspirants live in Mukherjee Nagar where there are a number of coaching institutes.

The protesters, who were joined by Aam Aadmi Party leader Yogendra Yadav, said they would continue their fight until the government scraps the controversial CSAT. They said they were not happy with the piecemeal approach of the government.

“We are not satisfied. The government has not fulfilled its promise by proposing such changes. We want Modi-led government to scrap this test completely,” Pawan, one of the protest leaders, said.

The protesters alleged that the police are not allowing students to move out of Mukherjee Nagar and are not allowing them to participate in demonstrations. The Delhi Police refuted the allegation.

TELEGRAPH, AUG 7, 2014

Govt: Civil Services prelims to be held as scheduled, on Aug 24

New Delhi, Aug 7 (PTI): The civil services examination will be held as scheduled on August 24, the government declared on Thursday in Parliament, while saying that consultations will be held with various parties and stakeholders on the matter after the current session.

”As for this year, there is no scope for postponement of (UPSC preliminary) examination,” Parliamentary Affairs Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu said, as the Opposition created an uproar in the Rajya Sabha demanding an all-party meeting immediately.

Civil services aspirants are agitating against more weightage given to English in the exam.

Naidu said the UPSC issue requires “deep” study and discussion with political parties and other stakeholders as there are both sides of the argument about the CSAT in UPSC.

“...after the session, government is ready to discuss it with all” to reach a consensus, he said, adding the government has taken a correct decision in this regard and minds of students should not be disturbed.

As members insisted for all-party meeting before August 24, Prakash Javadekar, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, said there is already a view among many members that it will not be possible to find a solution to the issue immediately.

”An all-party meeting has to take place to discuss wider reforms. We will inform about the date later on,” he said.

Earlier, government had announced marks of English will not be included for gradation or merit in UPSC exam.

As soon as the House met for the day, opposition parties including Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party raised the issue and demanded that government should immediately call an all-party meeting to resolve the matter as it affects lakhs of students.

In the Lok Sabha, All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leader M Thambidurai made a strong plea that the UPSC exam should be conducted in all regional languages to provide level-playing field to students from all over the country.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, AUG 4, 2014

CSAT row: English marks won't be counted while preparing merit list

The government on Monday said that the marks in English language comprehension skills in the civil service exam aptitude test would not be included in preparing the merit list but the opposition continued to raise objections, particularly on discrimination against regional languages.

Minister of state in Prime Minister's Office Jitendra Singh told the Rajya Sabha that the exams have been thus made "language neutral".

"Government is of the opinion that in the civil services preliminary examination, Paper II, the marks of the question section on 'English language comprehension skills' should not be included in gradation or merit," the minister said in his statement made in both the houses.

WATCH: English marks won't be included for UPSC exam gradation: Jitendra Singh

He also announced that candidates who appeared in civil services examination 2011 may be allowed one more attempt in 2015.

"The government has studied the matter very deeply and tried to handle it sensitively," Jitendra Singh said.

In the Rajya Sabha, many members wanted to seek clarifications from the minister.

However, deputy chairman PJ Kurien said that the statement was made on a demand and clarifications could not be taken up.

Undeterred, opposition members from non-Hindi speaking states said it was still partial towards regional languages, even as Jitendra Singh clarified: "We have made it language neutral."

"Students from south India may be understanding English better than Hindi. What about them," said Vayalar Ravi of the Congress, and was joined by other members from non-Hindi speaking states.

"The non-Hindi speaking students have been facing bias for very long," said Kanimozhi of the DMK.

"The question paper for UPSC must be in all national languages, why only Hindi and English," said P Rajeev of the Communist Party of India-Marxist.

In response, Jitendra Singh said all languages in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution are treated equally and that status remains unchanged.

This did not satisfy opposition members who wanted clarifications, despite the deputy chairman insisting that a notice can be given to discuss the topic later.

As the din continued, the upper house saw two brief adjournments, before being adjourned for the day.

The CSAT-II paper in the preliminary exam, conducted by the Union Service Public Commission, carries questions on comprehension, interpersonal skills including communication skills, logical reasoning and analytical ability, decision-making and problem-solving, general mental ability, basic numeracy and English language comprehension skills (of Class 10 level).

The aspirants for the examination have been demanding it be scrapped as they term it discriminatory to those from Hindi-speaking states as well as humanities students.

ECONOMIC TIMES, AUG 2, 2014

CSAT examination: Government, UPSC head towards a collision

NEW DELHI: Confrontation is brewing between the Centre and the [Union Public Service Commission](#), with a committee suggesting a status quo regarding the pattern of the 2014 civil services examination while the [government](#) wants to drastically reduce weightage allotted to a compulsory English paper worth 22 marks.

The commission, which is authorised to conduct the examination, "will have to listen and follow the directions" of the government even as it is an autonomous body, a senior minister told ET. "Autonomy and independence are fine. But the [UPSC](#) is also part of the government. Public interest of a large number of students is involved here," said the minister, who was not willing to be identified.

The UPSC has so far said no to changing or dropping the English paper in the preliminary examination. A government-appointed committee that submitted its report to the Centre on Thursday has backed the UPSC on this count, officials said.

However, the minister said the government wanted the weightage to this section to be reduced to sixeight marks or the paper to be dropped altogether

The BJP-led government is under intense pressure as protests are being led by the party's youth wing [ABVP](#) and the government has already promised this week that the solution will be as per the "liking of the students".

The committee has meanwhile suggested that better and sound translations from English to Hindi be provided to students regarding the other questions in the preliminary examination - which is another major grouse of students.

PIONEER, AUG 5, 2014

LESS BUREAUCRATIC BURDEN

Self-attestation offers relief to aam aadmi

The push for self-certification of official documents is a huge step towards cutting red tape and reducing the common man's bureaucratic burden. This past week, the Prime Minister once again called upon all Union Government departments and ministries as well as all State Governments to do away with affidavits that have to be endorsed by gazetted officers. This system, which reeks of an unnecessarily suspicious state, has been the source of much public harassment. Just about every Indian, who is not related to a gazetted officer or is not fortuitous enough to live or work in the vicinity of one such high-ranking Government officer, has a story to tell about how much trouble he or she has had to undertake to get documents of a routine nature attested. The process is a colossal waste of time, energy and money. Moreover, it serves no significant purpose. Officers who sign the documents hardly care about authenticity — and to be fair, it's

unrealistic to expect as much from them. Also, unscrupulous persons who use fake documents bypass the entire system with ease; it's the vast majority of honest folks who have to find their way through *sarkari* offices and notary publics. Indeed, the only persons who 'benefit' from this process are those officers who charge money — mostly, to blindly put their stamp and signature on documents. Given this situation, it's rather astonishing that the system has continued for all these years. Nonetheless, it's better late than never.

The new system of self-attestation will also go a long way in encouraging the common man to take responsibility for his paperwork. Precisely because there is no other authority figure verifying his documents, the individual is culpable for any and all discrepancies. This also makes it easier for law enforcement agencies to penalise wrongdoers, as compared to the older system wherein prosecuting the notary public or the gazetted officer who had signed off on forged documents, apart from the individual, was too cumbersome a task. Critics (mostly within Government) who are still concerned that the move will lead to a proliferation of fake documents and certificates should take comfort from the fact that it has already been tried and tested in Punjab for the past five years. Prior to 2009, 65 per cent of the 2.2 million services offered at the Punjab Government's district centres related to affidavits. Two years later, affidavits constituted only 9.8 per cent of the service requests. Also, self-attestation is already allowed in some key areas — such as passport applications and income tax filings. There is no reason why it cannot be extended to cover almost all official documents.

TIMES OF INDIA, AUG 4, 2014

UPSC row: Delhi high court had red-flagged CSAT in 2013

[*Abhinav Garg*](#),

NEW DELHI: As early as May 2013, the Delhi high court had red-flagged errors in the current CSAT examination conducted by UPSC but had left it to the central government to rectify them.

A bench of Chief Justice D Murugesan and Justice Rajiv Sahai Endlaw had ordered the government to form a panel to conduct a study in nine months on the introduction of a compulsory English language paper.

However, the Centre did not set up the panel on time and the outcome of its study is still awaited, even as protests threaten to derail this year's preliminary exam.

Citing the HC order, RSS ideologue K N Govindacharya has now urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to resolve the grievances of those protesting against UPSC's move. The letter highlights how HC delved deep into the problem and came out with its directions that ought to have been implemented.

The court had acted on a petition by Dina Nath Batra of Shiksha Bachao Samiti. Batra, a retired professor, had alleged that according to the new pattern adopted in 2011, "the test of English language comprehension skills worth 22.5 marks adversely affects Hindi and other regional language speaking candidates taking the said exam".

His petition termed UPSC's revised norm as "discriminatory". However, the commission

defended it, claiming the new format "evolved through a process of intense review of the examination system by an expert committee and it has been approved by the government".

Justice Endlaw had observed that the move reflects "lack of any application of mind by the appropriate authorities in the UPSC or the government to the aspect of the change challenged in this petition"

HC pointed that though UPSC and the government claimed English language skills are required for a bureaucrat to thrive and work, no study was carried out on "the candidates selected between 1979 and 2010 of their performance as civil servants on the anvil of knowledge of English language".

"In the present day of specialized surveys and studies by experts...the impugned change, which indeed is a vital shift from the policy adopted in 1979, seems to have slipped in without proper attention being bestowed thereon from the persons concerned ," the court said while questioning the manner in which UPSC/government brought about changes in the exam pattern.

ECONOMIC TIMES, AUG 7, 2014

Clamour for civil service jobs is raucous only in UP and Bihar

By [Himangshu Watts](#),

If Sachin Tendulkar was born in a family settled in Bihar or Uttar Pradesh, his parents would have forced him to become a graduate and sit for the civil services entrance examination.

He would probably have failed, and somebody would have goaded him to join unruly mobs demanding changes in the examination to suit his academic interests.

Welcome to archaic and outrageously feudal India, where people will feel sorry for a prosperous, young executive who drives home in a fancy car at 7:00 pm, but will admire and envy a flabby, unkempt neighbour who works for some obscure public sector company, earns one-tenth the salary drawn by the smart executive and reaches home by 5:30 pm in a battered Maruti and has a driver to pick up his briefcase and lunch box.

In Bihar and UP, decades of misrule has killed enterprise, repelled jobcreating businesses and forced the youth to agitate and clash with the police in a campaign that effectively wants to make sure that India 's best talent does not join the civil services. Students from the Hindi heartland are angry that a Hindi-speaking student has a disadvantage compared to the English-comprehending elite.

They should note that students from south India, Kashmir and other states, where English is usually not the medium of instruction, are not burning police cars in search of respectable jobs.

Actually, students outside the Hindi belt have better things to do: aspire for private jobs, lead a respectable life as an artist, architect, comedian or a cricketer.

Unfortunately, when students in this feudal zone do not get a government job, their options are miserable, at times criminal. But if two states are in a horrendous mess, then it would be wise to change UP and Bihar, not the civil services entrance examination system.

The competitive exam is conducted to spot and select the best talent for the entire country, not to provide employment to angry young men only from the north.

Working Minority

Already, about half of the government jobs are manned by folks who became bureaucrats because they belong to a particular caste or community, not because they performed the entrance exam with flying colours.

A similar number includes people who succumb to temptation or pressure, leaving a minuscule minority in the system to do the good job. The protesting students have a genuine grouse.

Their career options are dismal in a place like UP where the government is going out of its way to hound its biggest industry, sugar, and unfairly booking industrialists and managers under Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code. Mills are shutting down after losses in four years during which state-set cane prices jumped 70 per cent while sugar prices rose only 7 per cent.

Nobody will invest in such a state, and the clamour and protests for government jobs will grow. To an extent, people should blame themselves for their predicament.

Despite the mess they face, many of these students and their families are not ready to vote out politicians that do not set their education system right. These things don't matter as long as the politician belongs to their caste or community. And the politicians will create turmoil on the streets and in Parliament to reinforce their voters' illusion that they have voted for the right candidates.

For, tweaking the [civil services](#) entrance exam is far easier than curing [UP](#) and [Bihar](#). Students do deserve sympathy. They are victims of decades of poor governance. They are also reportedly angry that civil servants are chosen by a system that gives an edge to bright, talented students from the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT).

They may argue that being able to understand the laws of thermodynamics doth not a better bureaucrat make. But is it their case that memorising Akbar's date of birth equips them better to govern a district, make Indian Railways more efficient or prepare a note for the Cabinet?

The Science of Civil Service

The fact of the matter is that in India, the majority of bright students opt for science subjects. Those who make it to IITs are also better when it comes to history, geography, English and even Hindi before choosing science in senior school.

Not surprising then that many ex-IIT bureaucrats opted for one humanities paper to crack the civil services exam.

Analyse, Don't Memorise

If Patna University introduces a Banking Honours graduation degree, Citibank will still prefer a mechanical engineer from IIT than the topper from such a course. It is not that knowledge of robotics or the ability to build a nuclear plant makes you a better bureaucrat.

The point is that if you can understand, analyse and deal with such complexities, and if you have beaten lakhs of competitors in doing this, you are more likely to be better in dealing with complex challenges in a high-stake game, whether it is administration, banking or selling toothpaste, than those who are laggards.

The government should reinstate the English comprehension portion in the civil services entrance exam. Unless it wants to erect a permanent wall between those who make for good civil servants and those who are in the IAS just because they elbowed their way in it.

TIMES OF INDIA, AUG 2, 2014

Sports merit main criterion for govt jobs via quota: Central Administrative Tribunal

CHENNAI: The crucial factor for appointment in government services under sports quota is achievement in sports, and a written test is redundant if a candidate is meritorious, the Central Administrative Tribunal said, rejecting the plea of a candidate who was not selected for the post of lab technician at Jawaharlal Institute of Post Graduate Medical Education and Research (Jipmer), Puducherry.

S Oumapady said he had applied for the post under sports quota and secured highest marks in the written test under the quota. Instead of selecting him, officials chose another candidate S Sendhilvel and appointed him to the post. As such there was discrepancy in selection and Jipmer should have selected him on the basis of written marks, he said.

Jipmer counsel M T Arunan said the merit list for appointment under sports quota was prepared on the basis of performance in sports without conducting written test and interview. Jipmer made

an "inadvertent mistake" by conducting a written test and the error could not "confer any right for appointment". The applications of candidates along with documents of sports merit had been sent to department of personnel and training (DOPT) , Puducherry. As Sendhilvel topped the sports performance he was selected, he said, adding that Oumpady was not selected as he had not submitted national level participation certificate.

Sendhilvel said while he had participated in national-level championship, Oumpady had "somehow stage-managed to get meritorious sports person certificate." Also for appointment under sports quota, the order of merit in terms of achievement in sports was the sole deciding factor, he said.

The bench of judicial member K Elango and administrative member P Prabhakaran said the guidelines of department of personnel and training governed appointments under sports quota. Both candidates had not won any medals but had participated in national-level sports. While Sendhilvel had participated in several sports at the national level, Oumpady did not submit any proof that he had.

As both candidates were not "similarly placed," there was "no infirmity in the selection" said the bench rejecting the application for being "devoid of merit".

ECONOMIC TIMES, AUG 5, 2014

CSAT row: Ex-UPSC member Vijay Singh says ABVP pressure on government too strong to ignore

By Aman Sharma

NEW DELHI: Calling it an "absolutely retrograde step" in the history of the civil service examinations, former UPSC member and ex-defence secretary Vijay Singh said the government succumbed to the "goons lobby" while saying that marks of the English comprehension paper in the preliminary exam should be excluded for merit or gradation.

Singh, a veteran bureaucrat, was a member of the Union Public Service Commission when the Common Service Aptitude Test (CSAT) was introduced in 2011. Speaking to ET on Monday, Singh said the UPSC had gone into the concerns over the English comprehension exam in great detail before introducing CSAT.

"UPSC was very mindful of the concerns so that no injustice is done...then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh looked at this personally and TKA Nair had called several meetings on the same in the PMO. Former Chairperson of Centre of Indian Languages at JNU, Purushottam Agrawal, who was then a UPSC member, was extensively consulted.

Even then, we did anticipate a problem but a considered decision was taken. But the government now has succumbed to the goons lobby. It is an absolutely retrograde step," said Singh, who

joined the UPSC in 2009 and resigned last year just before his superannuation. Singh said that 10th level English was thought to be a bare minimum necessity.

"UPSC has no Anglo-English hangover. 50% of the aspirants clearing the exam are engineers and doctors. Medicine and engineering are taught across the country only in English," he said. He also regretted that the lobby of the Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad, the BJP's youth wing which has been protesting against CSAT, was "too strong" for the present government to stand up to.

Perhaps the root cause of the protests, Singh said, was that the format of CSAT had been changed. "The idea was that too many people qualifying the exam were coaching institute products and the material coming was not up to the mark. So the pattern of the exam was changed to make it easier for intelligent aspirants to clear it rather than products of coaching institutes.

We must remember that the coaching institutes are a big and strong lobby in UP and Bihar," Singh said. The former UPSC member was also critical of the fact that the government already seemed to have made up its mind about the matter when Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh said a solution would be to the liking of the students and justice would be done.

TIMES OF INDIA, AUG 2, 2014

Civil Service Aptitude Test to stay in preliminary examination of UP Provincial Civil Services

LUCKNOW: After advising the Centre to consider scrapping the Civil Service Aptitude Test (CSAT), the Public Service Commission of UP on Friday decided to conduct the preliminary examination of the UP Provincial Civil Services on schedule, on August 3.

In effect, those appearing for the provincial civil services examination in UP will also have to appear for the CSAT.

On July 28, chief minister Akhilesh Yadav had written to prime minister Narendra Modi asking him to reconsider making CSAT a compulsory component in the UPSC exam.

The matter pertained to an earlier decision in which Google translator was being used to translate English questions to Hindi.

Akhilesh had said literal translation of English to Hindi was leading to changed meanings or contexts, which was, in many cases, leading to difficulties in comprehension for students appearing for the exam in Hindi.

On Friday, the Arvind Verma committee appointed by the Centre to examine the merits of CSAT

recommended that status quo be maintained in the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Preliminary Examination. According to the committee, the CSAT is a scientifically-formed exam and should not, therefore, be tinkered with. The findings of the committee, though, are not binding upon the UPSC, an autonomous body.

With a large number of states protesting CSAT, however, the issue remains a politically sensitive one. The UP government, despite raising concerns, appears to have failed in prevailing over the UPPSC to change the examination system.

HINDU, AUG 1, 2014

16% of sanctioned vacancies remain unfilled:

Around 16 per cent of the posts sanctioned by the government in various positions remained unfilled as on March 1, 2012 because of imposition of ban on creation of new posts, Parliament was informed on Friday.

Of the total 36,84,543 positions sanctioned in various grades in the central government, there were 30,84,530 positions that were filled, Minister of State for Finance Nirmala Sitharaman said in written reply in Lok Sabha.

“In view of the prevailing economic scenario and in order to promote fiscal discipline, government has issued economy instructions which, inter-alia, impose a ban on creation of new posts,” Ms. Sitharaman said.

However, proposals for creation of posts are examined/ concurred to in the Ministry on case to case basis if supported by adequate functional justification, she added.

She added that all ministries and departments need to review their vacancies vis-a-vis the work load regularly and take necessary steps for filling up vacancies as per their requirements subject to extant guidelines and rules on the matter.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

BUSINESS LINE, AUG 2, 2014

Pranab: Infrastructure, an area of deep concern for economy

ABHISHEK LAW

There are areas of deep concern in the economy and one particular area is that of infrastructure, both physical and social, President Pranab Mukherjee said here on Saturday.

According to the President, the Planning Commission had estimated an investment of \$1 trillion in the infrastructure sector between 2012 and 2017.

Nearly 50 per cent of this investment is to be made by the private sector through Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). The other 50 per cent would come from other sources.

“There are some areas of deep concerns... a particular one being infrastructure, particularly physical and social infrastructure,” he said at the 86th Annual General Meeting of the ICC.

According to Mukherjee, to attain GDP growth of 8-9 per cent, the problem of poverty has to be addressed.

A 36 per cent investment rate can ensure a GDP of 8-9 per cent, considering minor slippages.

Investments, he said, will come from “investment surplus countries” and some of it will be “diverted” to infrastructure.

(This article was published on August 2, 2014)

EDUCATION

TIMES OF INDIA, AUG 3, 2014

Need to integrate values in education system'

NAGPUR: The need to integrate values in the education system was stressed during a special principal's workshop organized by Nagpur Sahodaya Schools Complex (NSSC) in collaboration with Ratna Sagar Publications on spirituality in education.

"Values are not getting enough importance in education. Now education is all about marks. Competition has become only about winning and this is filling students with negativity," said Aditi Singhal, key note speaker on the occasion.

A mind and memory trainer, Singhal said, "Today, character molding of students is not happening. There is a lot of intake of aggressiveness in the minds of children. While we cannot control the negativity which they take from the media, we can try and increase the positivity around them."

Annapoorni Shastri, chairperson, NSSC said the aim of the workshop was to integrate spirituality and values in the education system. "Only one period of value education is not enough. It should be a part of the entire curriculum, not something which is artificially taught," she said.

Agreeing with Shastri, Singhal said, "Values can only be caught, they cannot be taught. So it is very important that values be imparted to students in the course of regular lessons." And that is why Saturday's session was organized for school principals. "They can then guide their teachers in the integration of values and spirituality in their daily classes," Singhal added.

She also said the problem was in the fact that today, success was being equated with money. Thus, all professions had become businesses. "Education should be such that students realize that the purpose of life is happiness and that lies in our own selves," Singhal said. Former vice-chancellor of Kavikulguru Kalidas Sanskrit University Pankaj Chande was chief guest of the workshop.

TIMES OF INDIA, AUG 3, 2014

Haryana governor thaws ice between Rajasthan University VC and syndicate

JAIPUR: Former BJP state in-charge and newly appointed governor of Haryana, Kaptan Singh Solanki, has acted as an ice breaker between the vice-chancellor of Rajasthan University and BJP appointed syndicate members, including two MLAs on Saturday. The two BJP MLAs ? Rajpal Singh Shekawat and Surendra Pareek, along with academician J P Singhal, have traditionally opposed the VC in all syndicate meetings held since they have joined.

The deadlock between the two factions have cost dearly the syndicate since meetings were suspended twice, leading to several pending subjects being delayed indefinitely, including the

annual budget, which came up thrice for discussion but never got passed.

Solanki, who was the chief guest at a lecture series titled 'Role of political parties in democracy', named after professor Madhukar Shayam Chaturvedi at RU, praised the tenure of the VC. He said, "Under your leadership the university has regained its lost glory in various fields. No doubt, it is among the best institutes in the country and the way you are improving, you will soon be the best."

Source said that by appreciating the work of vice-chancellor, who is opposed by the BJP MLAs, has put the MLAs in a catch-22 situation, as it will be difficult for them to criticise the work of VC anymore.

TIMES OF INDIA, AUG 4, 2014

Delhi University polls on August 22

NEW DELHI: The DU administration has issued the schedule for elections to the Delhi University court. The court is the highest statutory body of the university.

The elections will be conducted at 2pm on August 22 at the New Convention Hall, Vice Regal Lodge in North Campus.

Polls will be held to elect the treasurer, a member of the finance committee, four members of the Executive Council and seven other positions meant to be filled from among professors of law, medicine, engineering and technology, and auditing and accountancy.

The last date for filing of nominations is August 11 and scrutiny will be done at 4pm on the same day. The list of validly nominated candidates will be notified on August 18, 2014, at least three clear days before the date of elections.

TELEGRAPH, AUG 7, 2014

Meddle virus spreads to IISc

G.S. MUDUR AND BASANT MOHANTY

New Delhi, Aug. 6: The Centre today told Parliament that the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, has been asked to discontinue its four-year undergraduate BS programme but the institute said it had not received any such orders.

HRD minister Smriti Irani, in a written response to a question in the Lok Sabha, said the University Grants Commission has reported that several universities, including the IISc, that are conducting four-year programmes have been asked to discontinue them and follow UGC notification on degrees.

Although IISc faculty said they had not received such a directive from the UGC, the reply in the House has triggered expressions of outrage in the science community.

“We have not received any notification from the UGC asking us to discontinue this course,” said Chandan Dasgupta, professor of physics and dean of undergraduate studies at the IISc.

Dasgupta said the IISc had received two letters from the UGC, one seeking details of the four-year BS programme, and the second asking the institute to explain why it is a four-year course.

The IISc accepts about 120 students each year into its four-year programme that accepted its first batch in 2011. The course, Dasgupta told The Telegraph, is uniquely structured and exposes students to sciences, engineering, humanities and a research project during the fourth year.

“If the UGC has done this — it is most unfortunate,” said Subhash Lakhotia, a professor of zoology at the Banaras Hindu University, who was among a panel from India’s three science academies that had nearly five years ago recommended that universities should shift to a four-year BS programme.

A senior faculty member at the IISc said a decision to discontinue what has emerged as a prestigious course would be a “great tragedy”. “Academic institutions should be allowed to design their own course structures — politicians should not decide this. We need to show some spine on academic autonomy.”

The IISc was among the first educational institutions in the country to implement what science academies had prescribed — a four-year BS programme with flexibility in the subject options available to students.

“The UGC has been sleeping on the academies’ proposal,” Deepak Pental, a plant biologist and former vice-chancellor at the Delhi University, said. “The UGC should have tried to push this four-year course in many more universities.”

The four-year course, senior faculty have contended, would have helped introduce equivalence between BS programmes in the sciences such as physics, biology, or mathematics with the four-year programmes in engineering.

“If professional courses in engineering take four years, why not science courses? This will bring science students somewhat on a par with engineering graduates in terms of the numbers of years of studies,” Pental said.

Students can apply for the BS programme at the IISc if they score certain minimum sets of marks in the Indian Institute of Technology joint entrance exam, a national science fellowship programme called Kishore Vaigyanik Protsahan Yojana and the All India pre-medical entrance test.

Lakhotia said: "I certainly hope that the academic community raises a clear voice against such political decisions taken without any consultation with academic institutions."

In June this year, the UGC, instructed by the HRD ministry, had directed Delhi University discontinue its four-year undergraduate programme and go back to the earlier three-year system.

The ministry said that the four-year programme in general streams of arts, science and commerce had violated the National Policy on Education, 1986. The ministry says the NPE provides for 10+2+3 system for students pursuing general stream of education.

INSURANCE

DECCAN HERALD, AUG 5, 2014

Govt plans to stop multi-level marketing in insurance

The Narendra Modi government intends to add an extra layer of firewall in the contentious Insurance Bill to check widely prevalent unethical practices. It also aims at infusing professionalism in the sector by prohibiting multi-level marketing, hiring of unregistered intermediaries and simple graduates as surveyors.

The Centre is now busy persuading the opposition to support the Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2008, that seeks to hike the FDI cap from 26 per cent to 49 per cent to aid the cash-starved segment. The Congress had conceived the legislation back in 2004 during the UPA-I regime.

The opposition parties insisted that the Bill be referred to a select committee of Parliament for a discussion on the subject. The Left and TMC MPs have already given notices to the Rajya Sabha secretariat for bringing in counter-amendments in the Bill if it comes up for debate in the House.

As per the list of 97 amendments that Finance Minister Arun Jaitley plans to bring in, the government wants “foreign investors, including portfolio investors” to replace “foreign company, either by itself or through its subsidiary companies or its nominees” in the existing bill to enlarge the scope of funds, including through Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs), coming into the country in the insurance sector.

Clause 53 of the proposed amendments says that “no person shall allow or offer to allow, either directly or indirectly, as an inducement to any person to take out or renew or continue an insurance policy through multi-level marketing”.

Some broking firms hired by leading companies are layering marketing insurance practices banned the world over.

A senior officer of a company said agencies are forcing aspirants to, for instance, buy personal accident policy to become agents, who in turn sublet it and pass on the earned commission. Some broking agencies are recruiting agents who are then allowed to sell general and life insurance policies through their own hired staff, he said.

The government said that legal action could be taken against the company, directors and other complicit employees if soliciting and procuring of insurance business is done by persons not authorised for the job.

The finance ministry has also suggested that no person should act as a surveyor or loss assessor in general insurance business category if he/she does not possess academic qualifications

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

TIMES OF INDIA, AUG 4, 2014

India ready to revise 1950 friendship treaty with Nepal

[Indrani Bagchi](#)

NEW DELHI: India has told Nepal it is ready to revise the 1950 India-Nepal friendship treaty. PM Narendra Modi, in what is the first bilateral visit by an Indian PM to Nepal in 17 years, told his counterpart Sushil Koirala that he wanted to see it completed in his tenure. Nepal has been asked to send a team to negotiate this with India as soon as possible.

By putting this out on the table at the start of his engagement with Nepal, Modi has made it clear he will not accept popular Nepali gripe about this treaty. Nepal has used the "unequalness" of the treaty as a stick against India over the years. But despite repeated Indian requests for revision, Nepal has shied away from the actual negotiations.

"The India-Nepal treaty is unequal in its treatment of Indian citizens in Nepal, which India has never complained about," said Jayant Prasad, former ambassador to Nepal. While Nepali citizens get national treatment here, the same is not applicable to Indians in Nepal.

Equally, the clause that Nepal should consult with India on defence policies has been inoperable for decades, said sources who have dealt with Nepal for years. It was after the 1962 India-China war that Nepal decided to open relations, even defence relations, with China. Therefore, India has little to lose by removing this aspect of the treaty.

After India and Bhutan rewrote their bilateral treaty in 2007, Nepal was offered the chance, but they did not take it.

During the first NDA government, former Nepali PM Sher Bahadur Deuba told then foreign minister Jaswant Singh that the 1950 treaty was a "thorn in our flesh". Singh replied, "Then the thorn must be removed." The foreign secretaries of both countries were asked to meet to take it forward. Only one meeting was held because Nepal was unwilling to open up the entire treaty.

In subsequent years, Nepal preferred to say it had "raised the issue" with India without actually sitting down for negotiations. After a while, India refused to include such a line in joint statements because the Nepali side, officials said, did not want to go so far as to actually renegotiate the treaty.

But in the political discourse in Nepal, the treaty looms large as a kind of monster which affects Nepal's relations with India. As recently as 2009, Maoist leader Prachanda promised to "redefine in a new manner" ties with New Delhi by reworking the 1950 treaty, as quoted by Prashant Jha in his book, *Battles of the New Republic*.

Modi's gift for Nepal PM

PM Narendra Modi had an interesting gift for his Nepali counterpart Sushil Koirala — a DVD set of a TV series on the making of the Indian Constitution.

Nepal is in the middle of writing a constitution which has been delayed for years now, resulting in a kind of political and constitutional deadlock. It was a subtle way of reminding Nepal that while the writing of a constitution is not easy and it involves tough political manouvers, it is essential to go through this process if a modern nation is to be built.

TELEGRAPH, AUG 6, 2014

THE USES OF OUTRAGE America has found a cause that suits its purpose and method

Krishnan Srinivasan

There have been two appalling human tragedies during July: the three week-long fighting between Israel and the Palestinians, and the shooting down of a Malaysian civilian airliner on a regular flight over eastern Ukraine.

Palestinians from Gaza have fired rockets ineffectually into Israel, and Israel has inflicted barrages from land and sea, intensive shelling of densely populated areas and a ground invasion of Gaza that have so far killed over 1,400 Palestinians, injured over 7,000 and driven 200,000 to seek shelter in under-resourced United Nations camps. Apartment blocks, sports fields, schools, hospitals, UN premises and power stations have been hit. Fifty per cent of Gaza is declared a 'no-go' area by Israel, which, in turn, has lost 58 people including two civilians.

The proximate cause of this latest conflict between Israel and the Palestinians was the kidnapping and killing of three Israeli teenagers on the West Bank in the middle of June, for which the Israelis blamed Hamas, arrested hundreds of Hamas supporters in the West Bank and closed down organizations affiliated with Hamas. Available evidence indicates that the murders were not authorized by Hamas, but were perpetrated by a group in opposition to the Hamas leadership. To Hamas, the Israeli clampdown seemed designed to eradicate Hamas's presence on the West Bank, and required a stern response if the organization was to retain any credibility. Apart from this, motivating the Hamas reaction were two unrelated developments. The first was the establishment by Fatah and Hamas of a national unity government in early June and its imminent breakdown, despite Palestinian high hopes for this new political entity. The second was the increased hardship Gaza has experienced since the closure of the underground tunnels by Egypt that had been used for the import of not only consumer goods but also weapons and transport equipment. Since 2007, Egypt and Israel have cooperated in imposing an economic blockade on Gaza, to the satisfaction of the United States of America.

With unemployment running at nearly 50 per cent, reconstruction all but halted, and exports down to only three per cent of pre-blockade levels, the closure of the tunnels led to a severe worsening of the situation, with fuel shortages leading to power cuts affecting hospitals, schools and failing water and sewerage systems. In response to this tragedy, the so-called 'international community', much lauded in the West, has expressed sorrow but failed to do anything substantive. Hamas has refused to entertain calls for a permanent ceasefire unless the economic blockade was lifted, and it could hardly have asked for anything less. The three-day humanitarian truce agreed by both sides from August 1 proved to be fragile.

Israel claims its military operations have three goals: to crush Hamas, eliminate the tunnels that have also been used to infiltrate militant Palestinians into Israel, and to remove, for all time, the threat of rockets fired from Gaza into Israel, though it is protected by a hugely expensive US-financed “Iran Dome” anti-rocket system. Whatever the duration of the Israeli offensive, it is clear that toppling the Hamas authority in Gaza will not be the outcome, and even on the West Bank, Palestinian anger against Israel is riding high. It will come as no surprise if a third *intifada* or uprising is looming.

The US secretary of state, John Kerry, said that the US was “concerned” about Palestinian casualties, but lent his support to Israel’s “appropriate and legitimate” military operation. This mealy-mouthed reaction, which pays no regard to the totally disproportionate force used by Israel, needs to be contrasted with the massive West-inspired campaign against Russia’s alleged involvement in the missile attack on the Malaysian airliner that was brought down in eastern Ukraine, killing 298 persons, 193 of whom were Dutch. There is no evidence that the Russian state authorized the attack which was quite obviously a mistake, nor that Russian citizens fired the missile, which makes the US and European claim wholly propagandist, especially considering that Stinger missiles were liberally supplied by the US to *ihadists* in Afghanistan on the grounds that the insurgents had no air cover unlike their Soviet opponents — the same argument that could be used for the missiles apparently used by the Ukrainian separatists. Mistakes can and do happen, but when the Israelis shot down a Libyan civil aircraft in 1973, the Soviet Union a Korean airliner in 1983, and the US brought down an Iranian passenger aircraft in 1988, these were no mistakes but criminal actions done quite deliberately.

Even if the missile in question, probably a SA-11, had been delivered to the separatists by elements of the Russian army, it is impossible to hold Russia responsible unless their citizens actually fired the weapon following official orders. International law is not consistent on this point. The International Court of Justice held the US not responsible for the atrocities committed by Nicaraguan insurgents who were supplied with arms and money by Washington, whereas Serbia was held guilty by the International Criminal Court for crimes by Serb-supported units operating in Bosnia. An American intelligence official has said that the US believed pro-Russian separatists shot down the flight by mistake and evidence suggested the Russian government was not directly involved in causing the crash, but “created the conditions” for the plane to be brought down by the rebels. It is highly doubtful that the civil aviation investigators will come to any other conclusion. An impartial investigation, presumably by the International Civil Aviation Organization, asked for by Germany and Russia is nowhere to be seen, and the experts on the ground are from the countries that sustained casualties and will not be considered objective.

The West’s condemnation of Russian assistance to the anti-Kiev forces in eastern Ukraine is counter to its past invocations of the “responsibility to protect”, by which principle it has openly supported and armed anti-government rebel movements in many parts of the world, most recently in Kosovo, Libya and Syria. Collateral damage, considered legitimate and acceptable in certain circumstances, is obviously an entirely subjective proposition, and different yardsticks apply for Israel and the Ukrainian separatists. As for Barack Obama’s rhetoric condemning governments that use force against their own citizens, he might reflect that this is exactly what the Kiev government of doubtful legitimacy is doing against its citizens in the eastern part of the country, despite calls for a ceasefire and a negotiated settlement from Moscow that have been

ignored by Petro Poroshenko, the Ukrainian president, egged on privately and publicly by bellicose Washington politicians.

The Russian response has been inconsistent and has not helped its cause. Vladimir Putin has never said that the rebels had nothing to do with the disaster; but he blames Kiev for attacking them. Pushing back against the US version of the crash, first came the claims that one or more unidentified aircraft were in the same airspace at the time, then that the Ukrainian government had fired the missile, and then that President Putin's plane may have been the target since it flew the same route when returning from Brazil.

All this seems to suggest a degree of improvisation or lack of knowledge of what is taking place on the ground, both scenarios being deeply disturbing. The realistic answer has to be that the Kremlin has only limited authority over what is taking place in eastern Ukraine and with the rebel formations there. And yet, even if the sanctions damage the Russian economy, Putin could not forego eastern Ukraine to Poroshenko's forces, and cannot ignore the likelihood of Nato-creep into Ukraine, against which the West has given the Kremlin no assurances, and which creates acute neuralgia in Russia. Nor can Moscow abandon the separatists in eastern Ukraine, who are permanently alienated from Kiev and swarming into Russia as tens of thousands of refugees. Western capitals know all this, but choose not to know.

What is the rationale behind the stronger US-inspired Western anti-Russian sanctions that will not be endorsed by the UN security council nor followed by most of the non-Western world? The US and its oversized military and intelligence agencies need an enemy, and certain countries in Europe, led by Britain, Poland and Holland, slavishly follow Washington's lead and urge other Europeans to concur in the spirit of unity. America has found a cause that admirably suits its purpose and method; moral outrage, followed by spirited appeals to European allies to show solidarity to revive a flagging Nato, and the demonization of Russia and Putin personally. The isolation and encirclement of Russia and China are America's strategic priority. The Cold War, unhappily, is back with us. So too is the prospect of the re-incarnation of non-alignment.

The author is former foreign secretary of India

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

ECONOMIC TIMES AUG 1, 2014

WTO deal: India blames use of a comma for creating ambiguity

NEW DELHI Under attack for its tough stand at the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Geneva that led to the collapse of the talks about a global trade deal on Thursday, some officials sought to justify its position by blaming the use of a comma as giving rise to ambiguity.

This comma apparently was cause for confusion over the availability of the 'peace clause' on the issue of stockpiling for food security needs.

India wanted the agreement to unequivocally mean that the 'peace clause' was available till a permanent solution to the issue of food subsidy was found rather than a four-year relaxation.

"In December 2013, after hard negotiation we clearly got a peace clause until a permanent solution, but there were members who were mentioning that it was only for four years. We want this ambiguity to be removed," said a government official.

The 'peace clause' is an interim arrangement that says no country can take action against another for providing food subsidies beyond the WTO agreed limit till the food security issue is agreed.

"If friends don't let us find permanent solution, then the permanent peace clause will be to our safety. It will force both sides to find a solution by December 31, 2014. To us, as we have given the deadline, and to them as permanent peace clause would give us the freedom to run away," the official said.

The agreement on the peace clause reads: "Members agree to put in place an interim mechanism as set out below, and to negotiate on an agreement for a permanent solution, for the issue of public stockholding for food security purposes for adoption by the 11th ministerial conference. In the interim, until a permanent solution is found, and provided that the conditions set out below are met, members shall refrain from challenging through the WTO Dispute Settlement Mechanism..."

India interpreted this — "In the interim, until a permanent solution is found... members shall refrain from challenging"— to mean that it was an open-ended assurance.

Officials said instead of the comma after 'interim', it should have been 'or' so that there was no ambiguity.

But would that have made a difference?

If India had an open-ended assurance on the 'peace clause', it would not have shied away from the trade facilitation agreement as its interests would have been protected.

India's fear was that it would have been open to action on subsidies if a permanent solution wasn't found by the 11th ministerial due in 2017.

"Ideal language should have been, 11th ministerial, 'or' a permanent solution is found. In negotiations, we could not get through our 'or'. We left at 'until permanent solution', which is called 'creative ambiguity' in legal terms," the official added.

DECCAN HERALD, AUG 4, 2014

Inflexible stand

India was wrong to block the long-awaited trade facilitation agreement (TFA) at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting in Geneva last week. It was caught between two genuine needs and unfortunately it plumped for the populist one.

The TFA, which had a deadline of July 31, aimed at simplification of customs rules and procedures and improvement of infrastructure to give a big boost to international trade. India has in fact fully supported the TFA, as it will be greatly beneficial to the country. The issue on which India vetoed the TFA is also of great importance to the country.

It involves price support for farmers and supply of food grains to poor people at affordable prices. Both call for subsidy from the government and it has become particularly important in the context of the implementation of the food security act.

The WTO's 1988 Agreement on Agriculture, to which India is a party, does not approve of subsidies which can distort trade, and by some interpretations, the Indian subsidy regime would be adversely affected by the agreement. India raised the issue in the WTO's Bali ministerial meeting last December and it was agreed that a permanent solution would be found in the next four years.

Therefore it was unnecessary for India to link the two issues at Geneva and it was unwise to scuttle the TFA on that ground. Brinkmanship is a part of negotiation strategy but it should not be taken beyond reasonable lengths. India need not have insisted on resolving the subsidy issue now itself before the TFA is signed. It had succeeded in highlighting its commitment to protecting the interests of poor farmers and poor consumers but should have stepped back from the brink.

The TFA is the result of 19 years of difficult negotiations among all countries and it would have benefitted all. The failure to bring it into force would call into question the relevance and perhaps even the future of the WTO.

The alternative to multilateral trade agreements is narrow pacts among groups of countries. India is not a member of any such major pact and even if it is the country would not get any more favourable terms from them than from the WTO.

There is time and there are alternatives to ensure that farmers and poor consumers are protected.

Therefore India should drop its inflexible stand and pave way to an agreement at the next WTO meet, possibly next month.

DECCAN HERALD, AUG 2, 2014

India's stand at WTO upsets US

Giving vent to America's disappointment over India's stance at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), US Secretary of State John Kerry on Friday told Prime Minister Narendra Modi that New Delhi's refusal to support a global deal for overhaul of custom rules sent out a "confusing signal".

Kerry also said that it undermined the new BJP-led government's business-friendly image. Modi told Kerry that the US must understand that India has to protect its right to ensure food security of millions of poor.

Kerry met Modi before wrapping up his two-day visit to New Delhi, which was aimed at starting preparations for the prime minister's meeting with US President Barack Obama at the White House on September 30.

The first major diplomatic engagement between the two countries after the change of regime in New Delhi was, however, overshadowed by the stand-off between India and the US as well as the rest of the developed world at the WTO.

According to a senior official of the US State Department, Kerry told Modi that India's decision to block the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) at the WTO "undermined" the message that the new prime minister was trying to send out about liberal economic policies of his government.

"The secretary (Kerry) noted that as the prime minister is very focused on this signal of being open for business and on creating opportunity, that the failure of implementing the Trade Facilitation Agreement sends a confusing signal and undermines the very message that India is seeking to send," said the official, who accompanied the US Secretary of State in the meeting with the prime minister.

Kerry is also understood to have sent out a note of warning and told Modi that it would not be in India's interest if a move was made to find a solution to the impasse at WTO keeping New Delhi out of the loop.

New Delhi refused to support a TFA at the WTO, saying it would not do so unless negotiations were hastened on a parallel deal to give India and other developing nations more leeway to continue with programmes providing farm subsidies and stockpiling food for distribution among poor.

India's stance effectively blocked the TFA for now, as the deadline for the WTO to get it approved by all its 160 members and to bring it to effect passed on Thursday.

A press release from his office said Modi “emphasised” (during his meeting with Kerry) “the need for developed countries to understand the challenges of poverty in developing countries and their governments’ responsibilities in addressing them, when discussions take place in international forums”.

Modi is understood to have told Kerry that India would have to protect its right to continue its agriculture-support programmes and stockpiling of food for the benefit of its farmers and millions of poor. He also told the US Secretary of State that monsoon failures often made the task of ensuring food security in the nation difficult.

New Delhi has been insisting that a permanent agreement giving developing nations more freedom to continue subsidy and food stockpiling must be in place along with the TFA, thus seeking to advance the 2017 deadline for such a deal set by the WTO last December.

The US official quoted Kerry telling Modi that the TFA would bring “tremendous benefit to emerging economies and particularly to the world’s poor”, and India’s actions, therefore, were not in keeping with his (prime minister’s) vision.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

PIONEER , AUG 7, 2014

NEW BATTLEGROUND, DELHI

People need a Government, sooner than later

Nobody wants the administration in Delhi to remain at a standstill, nor is it in the interests of any serious political party to maintain the suspense over Government formation in the State. Unfortunately, the situation that developed after the Aam Aadmi Party Government resigned after its brief and unforgettable 49 days in power, has led to an impasse, with no political party able to break the deadlock of the hung Assembly since February when the Delhi Assembly was placed under suspended animation. Neither the Bharatiya Janata Party nor the Congress nor the Aam Aadmi Party has the numbers to form the Government, nor does one seem to have the backing of the other to shore up the figure in the House. But many observers and politicians have felt that the parties must attempt to strike some sort of understanding in a bid to give the people of the State a stable regime and put governance back on track. After all, Delhi had gone to poll for the Assembly barely eight months ago, and it would entail a huge expenditure to conduct another election on the heels of the last one. On the other hand, there are others who believe that given the circumstances, the only way out is a fresh election. That would also be keeping with the spirit of democracy where Governments should be formed through popular will, and not with the help of opportunistic post-poll alliances or by breaking a rival party's legislative wing. The continuing stalemate led to an ironical situation where the Aam Aadmi Party, which is primarily responsible for the deadlock, approached the Supreme Court, challenging the presidential order of keeping the House under suspended animation. Now that the court on Tuesday has given five weeks' time to the Centre to make up its mind, the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Government has to take a call either way. The good thing about the ultimatum is that the people of Delhi will know soon whether they will have a Government now or an election.

The Aam Aadmi Party has gone to town claiming that the BJP was shying away from an election because it was scared of losing to the former. It also claimed that the BJP was trying to break other parties to increase its strength in the Assembly. AAP leaders, as is usual with them, did not provide any evidence to back the allegation. On the other hand, the BJP has been maintaining that it is ready for any eventuality, including facing the voters for a decisive mandate.

If the BJP expresses itself in favour of a fresh poll, it is accused of "failing" to win over support from others; if it claims it can form a Government in the State, it is slammed for "horse-trading". As for the Congress, the party has become an irrelevant factor, having been reduced to less than double-digits in the Assembly and scoring zero in the parliamentary election. Incidentally, it must assume blame for the sorry state of affairs in the State, because it colluded with the Aam Aadmi Party when the latter formed the ill-fated Government.

ECONOMIC TIMES, AUG 1, 2014

State executive committees to be set up in every state : Narendra Singh Tomar

NEW DELHI: With an aim of decentralizing the system, [Union Labour minister Narendra Singh Tomar](#) today said that executive committee having delegated powers will be constituted in every state to improve the medical infrastructure at primary level.

Tomar also termed the ESI Corporation's decision to start medical colleges as a "big mistake" and said his ministry will hold discussions with states and Union Health ministry for running already constructed colleges in a proper manner.

Chairing the ESIC's 162nd meeting today, Tomar also instructed [ESIC](#) to conduct largescale inspection by its officers to get a first-hand status report of ESIC Hospitals as well as those run by the states.

He instructed the officials to give a report to the Corporation so that a decision for improvement in the secondary medical care of ESI scheme can be taken based on it.

"ESIC will keep the Insured Persons (IPs) and their family members in centre while deciding any issue. Otherwise, no discussions will take place," Tomar told reporters.

The ESI Corporation approved a pilot project to be taken up in three states initially to give wider access to the labour force in the country.

"This will facilitate the beneficiaries to have health- care facilities in general health system of the states. A wider access of healthcare facilities will be ensured through initiative for a larger number of people in the country," he said.

"In today's talks, it was felt that decision to start medical colleges by the ESI Board was a big mistake. In this matter, we are going to review and will take decisions as well.

Those medical colleges which have already been constructed...how to properly conduct them. Our ministry will discuss it with respective state governments as well as union Health Ministry so that they can run in a proper manner," Tomar said after the meeting.

Giving details of the Corporation's approval today to the recommendations of the sub-committee on medical services and medical education, Tomar said the proposed state-level executive committee will have powers upto Rs 50 lakhs for executing special repair works in dispensaries.

The committee will have powers of upto Rs 3 crore for special repair of 200-bedded ESI hospitals and upto Rs 5 crores for special repair of ESI hospitals with more than 200 beds, he said.

The committee will also monitor the functioning of Insurance Medical Practitioners (IMP) and will have a periodic review of the reports of the local committees. It may also carry out independent inspections of ESI medical facilities.

The Corporation also approved the increase in the ceiling on medical expenditure being reimbursed to state governments from Rs 1500 per insured person in a family per annum to Rs 2000.

The Insurance Medical Practitioners (IMP) system of providing medical facility to beneficiaries will be strengthened by enhancing package remuneration to IMPs, empowering them to provide for basic pathological investigations and permitting them to issue specified medicine to beneficiaries.

The IMP system will be further strengthened with the utilization of data related to mobile phones of beneficiaries, call centre, SMS alert and IT technologies, the ministry said.

To ensure good quality and regular supply of drugs and dressings to beneficiaries of ESI Scheme, ESIC has modified the conditions of quality control by approving for a provision of more strict and larger sample testing of medicine and drugs supplied.

This will further strengthen the quality control over the supply of medicine and drugs in the ESI medical institutions. Based on the experience of the pilot project, it will be replicated throughout the country, the ministry said.

The Corporation also approved a pilot project for taking up periodic health check-up of insured persons who are above 50 years of age with certain conditions at three ESIC Hospitals initially.

The Corporation has also revised the memorandum of understanding with state governments for ensuring joint responsibility of ESIC and states with a view to improving the quality of healthcare under the ESI scheme, the ministry said.

The minister said there are many areas where neither there are medicine outlets, hospitals nor any state-run hospitals.

"However there may be many factories in these areas. Doctors will be hired in these places. Rs 150 was given earlier. We have decided to give Rs 300 per IPs from now. We are providing some equipments to them," Tomar said.

DECCAN HERALD, AUG 6, 2014

Take quick decision on Delhi Assembly: SC

The Supreme Court on Tuesday wondered how long Delhi would be deprived of a representative government and MLAs would continue to sit at home without work. It also asked the Centre to take a concrete decision on the dissolution of the Delhi Assembly.

A five-judge Constitution bench, headed by Justice H L Dattu, also asked the Centre why it was keeping the Assembly in suspended animation, even though no party was coming forward to form government.

“Every citizen wants to be ruled by a representative government. In the present scenario, one party says it does not want to form government, the other says it cannot. The third party has no strength. In a situation like this, why should people suffer?” the bench asked Additional Solicitor General P S Narsimha, who was appearing for the Centre.

The bench, also consisting of Justices J Chelameswar, A K Sikri, R K Agrawal and Arun Mishra, asked the law officer to clarify what endeavour the government was making on the issue.

The court hoped that the appropriate authority would take a decision on dissolution of the Assembly, and adjourned the matter relating to the petition filed by the Aam Aadmi Party for consideration in five weeks.

As Narsimha tried to reason that for a period of one year the Assembly could remain in the suspended animation, as envisaged in the Constitution, the court countered, “Why should taxpayers' money be paid to legislators who are not doing anything?”

The court then wanted to know what steps the Centre has taken to explore the possibility of government formation during the last five months.

To this, the law officer said the stand taken by the political parties was not absolute. “If somebody says that it (the party) is ready to form government, our thinking would be changed,” retorted the court.

During the hearing, the court refused a plea made by senior advocate Shanti Bhushan to issue direction for holding elections in Delhi along with four other states later this year.

Delhi has been put under President's Rule since February 17, with no party coming forward to stake claim for government formation following the resignation of the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government after 49 days.

The AAP, with 28 MLAs had formed the government with the support of eight Congress MLAs. The AAP's strength has come down to 27 after expulsion of party MLA Vinod Kumar Binny.

BJP's number has also reduced to 28 from 32, including one from Akali Dal, after three of its

legislators—Harsh Vardhan, Ramesh Bidhuri and Pervesh Verma—were elected to the Lok Sabha in May.

The apex court had on July 4 referred to its Constitution bench the contentious issue of deciding the AAP demand for dissolution of the Delhi Assembly, but had clarified that the Lieutenant Governor was free to take a call on government formation.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Assembly secretariat is planning a training programme later this month for all MLAs to help them make the best use of their constituency fund. The session would also touch upon matters of conduct and legislative issues.

POSTAL SERVICES

BUSINESS LINE, AUG 3, 2014

Bankable Post offices can be vehicles of financial inclusion PV SIVAKUMAR

A new approach to financial inclusion using post offices

The Government is making intensive efforts to extend access to financial resources such as savings accounts, credit and insurance services to unbanked sections of our society, and the knowledge and freedom to leverage them to one's benefit. The Budget has already mentioned that the Government considers financial inclusion as an important thrust area and the Prime Minister is expected to announce a slew of measures on August 15.

India is still lagging behind in providing financial services to the masses with nearly half the households remaining unbanked, and nearly 90 per cent villages not having bank branches. More importantly, the people in these areas do not fully appreciate why they need a bank account at all. The advantages of a financially inclusive model are many fold.

Illustratively, the unbanked and underprivileged could receive appropriate and timely payments for social benefit and employment schemes through the Direct Cash Transfer programme.

The Government and the Reserve Bank have been making concerted efforts since mid-1950s and with renewed vigour since 2005, but the success has been rather slow, due to lack of a strong network and financial instruments not suited to rural residents.

Stamp of inclusion

The network of more than 1,55,000 post offices — with nearly 90 per cent of them in rural areas — can help to extend financial inclusion. Commercial banks and post offices can build a symbiotic relationship through various ways.

First, banks can tie-up with the India Post to utilise their extensive network by setting up small banking counters at each post office, especially rural branches. The post offices have sufficient space to set up such a counter with a computer and printer, to be operated by a commercial bank employee.

With existing arrangements at the post offices, these can be converted into extended banking counters. The post offices already have existing safe deposit boxes and these can be upgraded, if necessary, to cash vaults based on expected traffic.

Second, once banking extension counters are offered at the post offices, and then fresh opening of accounts in existing postal banking schemes can be discontinued, with a forward-looking approach for banks to spearhead the financial inclusion process, through deposit mobilisation.

As a large part of post office revenues comes from existing postal banking services, banks would need to pay a 'rent fee' to India Post for use of their facilities/premises — hence solving the high fixed cost issue for banks in establishing a new brick-and-mortar branch.

Third, to encourage banking habits amongst the unbanked masses, installation of audio-video-enabled ATMs to announce simple instructions in the local language to assist the customer in the unbanked areas could be considered.

In case such ATMs are installed in the premises of post offices, trained guards could facilitate withdrawals, deposits and also account opening forms. The issue of security can be addressed by installing inbuilt CCTV cameras in the ATM machine as well as the post office.

Leveraging ties

Fourth, to capitalise on the existing relationship with post offices, banks could seek introduction to potential customers on payment of a stipulated fee. The business correspondent could accompany the post man to register deposits, withdrawals and request for opening accounts and loan requisitions with the exact amount and a thumbprint on the hand-held device to register a signature. This could serve as a KYC in many cases.

Fifth, to explore methods to attract potential customers to visit the post office with banking facilities, critical information could be provided by local language handouts or on big screens installed on the premises. This could constitute expected weather, crop and commodity prices, news of new farming techniques, business ideas and other rural innovation initiatives.

Finally, a key part of financial inclusion is financial literacy. There could be regular interactive training workshops organised in post offices on financial products suited to the rural sector. This will make take the process of financial inclusion much further with a focus on financial literacy and a reason to visit post offices on a regular basis.

The Government and policymakers are aware that the current system clearly needs improvement. There exists a redundant dichotomy in the financial system with banks and post offices both maintaining savings accounts. Through a symbiotic model as suggested here, post offices can provide another way forward in extending financial inclusion.

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(This article was published on August 3, 2014)

RECERATION

TELEGRAPH, AUG 6, 2014

Ban the dhoti? Ban the club! TN passes traditional attire Bill

Chennai, Aug 6 (PTI): The Tamil Nadu Assembly on Wednesday passed a Bill seeking to remove the ban on wearing the dhoti and other Indian traditional attire imposed by recreational clubs and others.

Introduced by Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa, in the backdrop of the recent controversy triggered by denial of entry to a dhoti-clad Madras High Court Judge into the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association Club here, the Bill provides for cancellation of licence and punishment of one year's imprisonment for any violation of the legislation.

The Tamil Nadu Entry into Public Places (Removal of restriction of dress) Act, 2014, was declared passed by voice vote by Speaker P. Dhanapal and comes into force immediately.

The Bill states that no recreation club, association, trust, company or society shall make any rule, regulation or bye-law, imposing restriction on entry to any person wearing a 'veshti' (dhoti) reflecting Indian culture or any other Indian traditional dress into any public place under its control or management.

Any violation of the Act would lead to cancellation of the licence given and punishment of one-year imprisonment and an additional penalty of Rs 25,000.

According to the statement of reasons and objects of the Bill, it was brought to the notice of the government that some clubs were denying entry to persons wearing dhoti reflecting Tamil culture into public places under their control on the ground that they are not wearing dress in keeping with Western culture and it was imperative in that context to introduce and pass the bill in the current session.

Jayalalithaa had earlier assured the House that an act to remove the dhoti ban would be brought in the current session itself after Opposition parties raised the issue of the dhoti-clad judge being denied entry into the club for attending a book release function on July 11.

SOCIAL WELFARE

BUSINESS LINE, AUG 1, 2014

TS Govt to hold household survey on Aug 19

K V KURMANATH

The Telangana Government has begun a massive exercise to survey socio-economic conditions of four crore people in the State. The Intensive Household Survey 2014 to be done on August 19 is aimed at weeding out fake beneficiaries of government welfare schemes.

The five-page enumeration pro forma takes the signatures of heads of families, authenticating the information. The survey will be completed in just one day. About 4 lakh employees will cover 86 lakh households. The government is yet to decide the date for the survey. There is nothing in the pro forma that tries to explore 'the nativity' question of people.

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao has said that the process should be completed in just one day to remove scope for malpractices.

“Statistics hold the key for successful implementation of Government welfare schemes and policies. If the numbers are wrong, schemes are bound to fail,” he said.

Addressing district collectors and top Revenue officials here on Friday to prepare them for the survey, he said the number of White ration cards and pink cards far outnumbered the number of households in the State.

“You make a mistake once (giving them the white card to wrong people), it adds on burden to the exchequer at different points. We need to correct this,” he said.

Fee reimbursement issue

The Chief Minister has reiterated that his Government would not reimburse fee for engineering students hailing from Andhra Pradesh. “We have a right to decide on the local status of an individual. A Supreme Court Bench gave a clear judgment upholding the States' right on the issue,” he said.

The government pays about Rs. 4,000 crore annually to engineering colleges on behalf of students from economically and socially backward sections. After the bifurcation, the Telangana government has said that it is not going to reimburse the fee for those hailing from Andhra Pradesh to reduce financial burden.

It reportedly is planning to set November 1, 1956 (the day the State was formed) as the cut off date to ascertain local status of an individual.

The Andhra Pradesh government is demanding the Telangana government to pay the fee for all students. On Thursday, its Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu changed its stance and agreed to bear 58 per cent. of the burden. Chandrasekhara Rao's reiteration came a day after his counterpart's offer.

Land to Dalits

The Telangana Government will buy land to distribute it to Dalits. The ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi had promised to give three acres each to Dalits during the recent polls. It would spend Rs. 1,500-Rs 2,500 crore a year for this purpose.

“We will do that in phases. Initially, we will cover 1.50 lakh families. Besides giving land, we will always dig a bore well in each plot and inputs,” he said.

(This article was published on August 1, 2014)

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TRANSPORT

HINDU, AUG 1, 2014

L-G for e-rickshaws, Euro-V norms to check Delhi pollution

Mr. Jung accepted the recommendations of a high-powered committee

E-rickshaws, stricter emission norms and zero tolerance zones for car parking are part of Lieutenant-Governor Najeeb Jung's plans to control pollution in Delhi.

On Friday, Mr. Jung accepted the recommendations of a high-powered committee, which was set up after a WHO report in May named Delhi as the city with the worst air quality in the world.

The committee came up with long and short term measures to address the alarming levels of air and water pollution in the city. "This needs to be taken up on a mission mode by all agencies of the government," said Mr. Jung.

Short-term measures to control air pollution include promotion of battery-operated vehicles, introduction of Euro-V norms for vehicles registered in Delhi, tightening of Pollution Under Control (PUC) norms and clearly demarcated zero tolerance parking zones.

The committee also said public transport use should be encouraged and air quality monitoring stations should be set up in the National Capital Region. Among the long-term measures, the committee recommended a public transport plan.

To stop pollutants from flowing into the Yamuna, the committee said all sewage and industrial effluents should be treated. Optimum utilisation of the Delhi Jal Board's treatment plants, which are running below capacity, was also a part of the plan.

The long-term solutions to water pollution include a three-year target to ensure 100 per cent treatment of sewage and industrial effluents, and removal of all encroachments on the Yamuna floodplains.

The Lieutenant-Governor ordered officials to submit a department-wise plan within three weeks to implement these suggestions. A project implementation unit was also set up at Mr. Jung's office. It will be responsible for monitoring the implementation on a quarterly basis

WATER RESOURCES

DECCAN HERALD, AUG 1, 2014

Tamil Nadu brings stringent rules to protect groundwater

To protect groundwater and prevent its over exploitation, the Tamil Nadu government has brought stringent rules which make it mandatory for builders constructing more than six floors to obtain no-objection certificate (NOC).

The government's latest move comes in the backdrop of severe dip in the groundwater levels in 20 of the 32 districts.

Taking serious view of the situation, the new norms have been brought under the Tamil Nadu Groundwater (Development and Management) Act, 2003.

“According to the rules and regulations, all the ongoing housing projects with more than six floors should mandatorily obtain clearance certificate from Public Works Department,” a senior official from Tamil Nadu Water Resources Department told Deccan Herald.

He said the new rule will not be applicable for houses already constructed and occupied. Since Chennai and some parts of Thiruvallur and Kancheepuram districts are coming under the City's Metropolitan Area Groundwater (Regulation) Act, these areas do not come under the new rule. The rule says every user of groundwater, who is building houses with more than sixth floors in the notified area, should apply for the NOC immediately.

The builder who violates the rule “shall be punishable with fine which may extend to Rs 500 per day during which such contravention continues”. The June 2014 state Ground and Surface Water Resources Data Centre statistics show that barring Chennai and a few other districts, ground water level in as many as 19 districts has decreased substantially compared to previous year's data.

The worst-affected area is Pudukottai district where the groundwater level dipped to 1.74 metres (existing 7.29 meter) against the previous year's 9.03 metres.

“The groundwater level depletion can also be attributed to poor rainfall in the region,” the official said.

Accordingly, the groundwater levels in southern districts of Theni, Sivaganga, Dindigul, Coimbatore and Trichy have also reduced to more than one meter. Even in Chennai, it dipped to 0.40 metre.

WOMEN

TIMES OF INDIA, AUG 1, 2014

LG orders shelters for women in Delhi

NEW DELHI: Recognizing the paucity of night shelters for homeless women, the lieutenant governor of Delhi has directed departments and district authorities to create new shelters exclusively for women alongside the 185 plus existing shelters in the city before the onset of winter. The LG has also taken note of the findings of an audit carried out by deputy commissioners across 11 districts to assess safe and unsafe areas for women wherein inadequate street lighting has been cited as a key concern.

Najeeb Jung has also issued orders to the revenue department to use gram sabha land freed from encroachments for creating community facilities like schools and dispensaries. These decisions were taken by the LG at a fortnightly meeting with deputy commissioners of all districts of Delhi at Raj Niwas on Thursday. The meeting was attended by Delhi's divisional commissioner Dharampal, the deputy commissioners of all 11 districts and senior officials of the LG's secretariat.

A statement from the LG's office on Thursday emphasized that a review of night shelters revealed low or no occupancy of night shelters by women. The LG has instructed that separate night shelters, with adequate attention to safety and security, be established by Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board to house homeless women, especially before the onset of winter. He directed the DCs to carry out a need-based survey in their districts to identify locations for establishment of such night shelters. These night shelters for women shall be located independent of the existing night shelters primarily occupied by men.

In another decision, the LG has made it clear to the DCs that all gram sabha and other categories of land, made free from encroachments, is to be put to use for establishing dispensaries and schools, which requires close coordination with departments of health and education.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, AUG 3, 2014

Provide 33% reservation to women in police: Govt

Inspired by Gujarat government, the Centre has urged all the states to provide 33% reservation for women in their police forces to effectively deal with cases of sexual violence and crime against women.

Women and child development minister Maneka Gandhi has written to chief ministers of all states to take inspiration from Gujarat's recent decision to enforce 33% reservation for women in the police force.

"I wrote letter to every single chief minister, saying that please replicate it," Gandhi said while expressing resolve to put in place effective mechanism to deal with cases of violence against women.

Last month, Gujarat chief minister Anandiben Patel had announced that her government would enforce 33% reservation for women in the police force as part of efforts to empower them.

Officials in the ministry of women and child development said they think increase in number of women police force would encourage the victims to lodge complaints and will also help proper investigation.

Expressing strong resolve to ensure welfare of women and children, Gandhi told PTI in an interview that her Ministry was contemplating a series of measures including plugging the loopholes in implementation of the Integrated Child Development Scheme across the country.

The Minister said the government was also mulling steps to ensure protection to the older people like in disputes relating to properties through amendment in the Domestic Violence Act or by other measures.

"I feel quite strongly that older people have no protection from their families," said Gandhi while giving examples of harassment of the older people by their sons and daughter-in-laws in cases relating to property disputes.

The Minister said government does not want to amend the Domestic Violence Act in such a way that it loses the effectiveness to protect the daughter-in-laws from any sort of violence. But, she added that at the same time, government was looking at protecting the older people as well.

The current law was enacted primarily to provide protection to the wife or female live-in partner from domestic violence at the hands of the husband or male live-in partner or his relatives. The law also extends its protection to women living in a household such as sisters, widows or mothers.