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AGRICULTURE

INDIAN EXPRESS, AUG 2, 2015

Land acquisition: Karnataka eases norms for people not engaged in agriculture

The Karnataka Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill, 2015, passed by the state legislature raised the annual income limit for acquiring land by persons not engaged in agriculture from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 25 lakh.

The [Congress](#) government in Karnataka has brought a new legislation that eases land acquisition rules for people not engaged in agriculture.

The Karnataka Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill, 2015, which was passed by the state legislature on Friday, raises the annual income limit for acquiring land by persons not engaged in agriculture from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 25 lakh.

The amendment to the 1961 Karnataka Land Reforms Act is believed to be key to regularisation of land ownership in the state and to open up the market for sale of all types of land. The new law is expected to reduce a lot of benami land ownership that currently exists due to income limit restrictions on purchase of land by people from non-agricultural backgrounds.

The amendment also empowers deputy commissioners in districts to double the area of land that can be acquired by non-agriculturists for industrial, educational, religious, housing and horticulture purposes from the existing 20, 4, 1, 10 and 20 units, respectively.

Revenue minister V Srinivas Prasad who piloted the bill stated that the income limit for non agriculturists was being enhanced keeping in mind the fact that there has been a

nearly 300 per cent inflation since 1995 when the limit was raised from Rs 50,000 to Rs 2 lakh.

The [Congress](#) government had first tabled the bill in March 30 this year, but had withdrawn it as the bill seemed to contradict the party's public opposition to the [land bill](#) brought by the NDA government at the Centre.

When the bill came up in the legislature Friday, [BJP](#) members like former speaker K G Bopaiah opposed it, saying it is contrary to the purpose of the 1961 Act. [BJP](#) and JDS members also said the new law would only help real estate businessmen.

CIVIL SERVICE

TIMES OF INDIA, AUG 6, 2015

Babus who don't stand up when netas walk in to face action

[Chittaranjan Tembhekar](#)

MUMBAI: Bureaucrats who do not get up from their chair every time an elected representative - an MLA, MLC or an MP - walks into their chamber and then do not stand up again when the netas leave will face disciplinary action.

TOI had reported on July 28 that the state government had issued a circular asking babus and ministers to treat elected representatives with "honour" and "courtesy." Standing up when netas enter is part of this new code.

According to the circular, those who flout the code will face action. Officials who do not arrange for or attend training sessions on the code will also face disciplinary action, the circular states.

In the circular, state officials as well as ministers have been asked to respond in writing to politicians' requests and recommendations for jobs and promotions.

A previous state circular, dated January 17, 2014, had allowed babus and ministers not to respond "if government departments had to divert their work force and shift their focus to collect and supply the information required, leading to loss of time and energy." Now, they simply can't say no.

Also, written replies must be signed by the babu or the minister himself; they cannot send letters signed by their personal assistants.

The requests and recommendations to which replies have to be given include those for government quarters and, more seriously, those related to withdrawal of 'adverse remarks' from government files.

Similar courtesy must be maintained during telephone conversations with netas, states the circular.

Some of the other directives include priority to parliamentarians and legislators in the list of appointments to be fixed for day-to-day meetings, prior intimation to them while

planning official functions such as bhoomi pujans and proper display of their names on the invites after they have confirmed their attendance.

Experts called the circular, whose ostensible aim is to help an elected representative connect a government employee or any other person seeking his/her help with the right state official, an indirect attempt to put pressure on the bureaucracy and especially on senior government officials and ministers who are fair in their conduct and are not known to buckle.

"What honour is shown to citizens in government offices, the same citizens who elect these representatives? Is there any diktat for that?" asked social activists, who said even RTI inquiries were not being handled well by officials.

Former chief information commissioner and RTI activist Shailesh Gandhi termed the circular illegal and feudal. "Article 14 of the Constitution says everybody should be treated as equal. It looks like elected representatives think they are the new royalty. We the people own the country and the government and these people are meant to serve it," he said.

Former top cop Julio Ribeiro said giving respect to leaders by greeting them and taking cognizance of their demands made on behalf of people from their constituency were both fine. "But replying to recommendations made by them is a serious issue. We will challenge this and will not allow it to happen. This is not acceptable," he said.

TIMES VIEW

Courtesy and honour are fine and every citizen can vouch for how much they are needed in government offices. It's also fine that the state government, in all its wisdom, wants to institutionalise these virtues. But there's one objection. Why should honour and courtesy be there for the privileged few? Why shouldn't they be accorded to every citizen who visits a government office? People working in government offices get their salary from the tax that citizens pay; courtesy and prompt service should be a given for citizens. Can we expect an amended order that will ensure officials treat every citizen with "honour" and "courtesy" and give them the service that is a citizen's right?

This order, in the worst-case scenario, can encourage corruption and, even in the best-case scenario, create a lot of confusion and necessitate avoidable paperwork. Why

should any elected representative have the authority to meddle in government business?
The first casualties could be fair play and transparency.

TELEGRAPH, AUG 1, 2015

From dukes to dustmen

What is extraordinary for some can be commonplace for others

Sunanda K. Datta-Ray

My current research interest causes me some trepidation. The life of one of the earliest Indian members of the Indian Civil Service sounds innocuous enough, especially when it can be shown that India's governance and even political evolution owe something to his quiet initiative. But this very distinction might raise hackles among readers who are averse to fame. It's said that when King Edward VII's tailor complained that the Riviera had gone down socially, the king admonished him, "Don't be silly, we can't all be tailors!"

As a commentator on the contemporary scene, I write about everyone from dukes to dustmen. Dukes couldn't care less when dustmen bask in the limelight. But some dustmen bristle with resentment if they feel attention is lavished on dukes. The reviewer in *Desh*, for instance, of *First Proof: The Penguin Book of New Writing from India* accused me of "name-dropping" in my essay, "Didima: The Last Ingabanga". The criticism was amusing for two reasons. To take the second and less important one first, a sudden English phrase in the foremost Bengali literary journal suggested there was no Bengali equivalent of "name-dropping". Does that mean Bengalis steeped in the native culture don't drop names? Or is name-dropping so much the norm that it excites no comment and doesn't even merit a distinctive description?

Social anthropologists would find the first reason - the umbrage the reviewer took because my essay mentioned celebrities - revealing. Some comments expose more the speaker than the subject of comment. In this case, the name-dropping charge meant the reviewer found it impossible to imagine that people he or she (I forget whether the reviewer was male or female) regarded with awe as *grandees* could be part of someone else's everyday life. What is extraordinary for some can be commonplace for others.

I once witnessed a practical demonstration of this inability to step out of the limitations of one's own skin. My grandmother's unconscious mention of "Rabi *babu*" provoked an ambitious (then young) Bengali *littérateur* who happened to be visiting our house that evening to pompous rebuke. "We are trying so hard to teach everyone to say Buddhadev, Saratchandra and Rabindranath..." he began in his mincing Bengali when my grandmother, unable to understand the fuss, cut him short. "But Baba would yell 'Rabi!' whenever he stayed with us in Cuttack or Simultala!" By her reckoning, "Rabibabu" was adequately deferential for a familiar figure from her younger days.

One writes partly for one's own satisfaction and partly for the pleasure of communication. The two are linked, so that personal satisfaction is dimmed when communication fails.

That happens usually when writer and reader are not on the same page. Responses often reflect the stratification - perhaps ghettoization would be more accurate - of society. Most of us are content if there is any response at all. It means one isn't writing in a vacuum. But I have long suspected that an English-language newspaper's editorial page has a very limited role in exposing abuses, effecting change and even, perhaps, in establishing communication. Ian Stephens's thunder, in *The Statesman*, about the Bengal famine had an impact because authority was both English-speaking and suffered from a sense of guilt. Today's tirades about urban public transport or the publicity-seeking farce of Swachh Bharat don't even evoke rebuttal. Authority has become totally insensitive.

It was pleasantly surprising, therefore, when an article in this paper describing the dilatory and negligent postal service in my part of Calcutta brought the Ballygunge postmaster to my flat. The improvement wasn't permanent, but the gesture showed there are still people who care. It was pleasant, too, to note that when I raised the question of municipal taxes with a former commissioner of Calcutta Corporation, he pressed a button and out popped all the relevant documents. It's rarely that an officer of his rank is ready and able to perform such service without summoning clerks and peons. Like the postmaster, he was a short-lived exception. The next commissioner was firmly embedded in pride and prestige.

It would have been the peak of professional satisfaction if irate auto drivers had mobbed me when I wrote about my auto rides to Metro stations. That would have meant that this particular genre of journalism is not yet totally irrelevant. It would have indicated an egalitarian society in which knowledge of English is a unifying and not divisive factor, and where reading English-language newspapers isn't the indulgence of an infinitesimally small percentage of the public. I had to be content, instead, with a friend's telephone call from Delhi expressing surprise that I should ride autos.

More ambitious topics can have critics sharpening their machetes. Bihari Lal Gupta's plea for justice resulted in the Ilbert Bill to establish parity between Indian and British magistrates. The bill was a watered-down version of the original measure and a victory for its British opponents. But, as the Oxford historian, Margaret MacMillan, says, the diehards who won a battle lost the war. Their victory had an unforeseen result. "Indian nationalists who, up till then, had confined themselves to the politest of requests for the mildest of reforms watched and learned from the storm. They learned how to organize an effective protest; they discovered that the Government of India did not like a fuss; they saw the futility of appealing to opinion in Britain. Shortly after the Ilbert Bill agitation, the Indian National Congress held its first meeting. Indian nationalists went on being polite but they also began to make larger and firmer demands."

The Indian Association and the National Conference to which Gupta's childhood friend and former ICS colleague, Surendra Nath Banerjea, had already invited delegates from all over north India, provided the link between the Ilbert Bill agitation and the INC. Banerjea has told his story in several volumes of speeches and autobiography. The third member of the ICS trio, Romesh Chunder Dutt, was even more prolific. Gupta alone left no record of his doings. It's almost as if he deliberately followed the motto his cousin, Pramathalal

Sen, Keshub Chandra Sen's nephew, inscribed in the students' hostel he set up in Harrison Road, "Seek to be Unknown".

Not only is he unknown but some of what little is known is incorrect. Although S. Gopal places the Ilbert Bill in "the highest reaches of political morality and statesmanship" in his admirable work, *The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon 1880-1884*, he mistakenly suggests "the government could not shrink from a remedy" after Gupta "proved he was a victim of unjust discrimination." Actually, Gupta wasn't a magistrate when he demanded equality as a matter of principle. The beneficiaries were Dutt and the first Indian in the heaven-born service, Rabibabu's "Bhai Meja Dada", Satyendranath Tagore.

Writing about them can be called name-dropping. Since Gupta was my great-grandfather, it will undoubtedly provoke fresh charges of nepotism. But it is ignorantly shortsighted to ignore people in the public domain because they are family. There were many reasons for punishing Sanjay Gandhi but, as his mother rightly observed, being her son wasn't one of them. My son's book launch fracas I described ("Instructive scuffle", July 18) was widely reported on the internet and media because certain issues were at stake. Intelligent readers understood that as well as the meaning of the "full disclosure" admission at the start of my article. Anyone who is at all familiar with India's socio-economic history (or social scene) also knows that the first Indian head of the Inchcape empire was much more than either a boxwallah or royalty.

This is not an apology. It's an explanation. Also an appeal to more knowledgeable readers for any details they might have, no matter how trivial, about Bihari Lal Gupta's life, career, family and friends. I would be most grateful for information sent to blgupta1849@gmail.com.

STATESMAN, AUG 7, 2015

Govt to assist civil service aspirants

SNS

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday announced that the state government will soon come out with a package to encourage civil service aspirants from Odisha.

The government will provide all assistance to the candidates who clear the civil services main examination to avail coaching from best institutions in the country, he said.

Patnaik made the announcement at a function held here to felicitate successful civil service candidates from Odisha in 2015. He asked the successful civil service candidates to make transparency the hallmark of their personality and career.

“You should take care that your actions should benefit the poorest of the poor, and you should be sympathetic towards women, children and physically challenged people”, said Patnaik.

The CM said taking quick decisions, effective implementation are the hallmarks of the bureaucracy.

Indian Civil Service is one of the most coveted jobs in our country. The civil servants enjoy enormous freedom and authority in decision making, he observed. Understanding development models, assessing socio-economic changes and successful application are also essential.

“Your effectiveness has a huge impact on the lives of people in the areas of your working,” he observed.

We are striving hard to reduce poverty, provide quality education and health, improve infrastructure, bring gender equality and trying to solve many other socio-economic issues, he told the young bureaucrats.

As responsible officers of the government, you must execute government’s plans and policies with finesse to achieve our goals faster, stated the CM.

Higher Education Minister Pradeep Panigrahi, Chief Secretary Gokul Chandra Pati, Principal Special Secretary of GA Department, GV Sharma, also addressed the gathering.

INDIAN EXPRESS, AUG 4, 2015

Idiots are lined up at every step: Woman IAS officer on the harassment she faced

A trainee IAS officer in Madhya Pradesh, Bafna had filed a sexual harassment complaint against a MP Human Rights Commission official for sending her lewd messages. The IAS officer’s post has gone viral on Facebook.

An IAS officer who allegedly faced sexual harassment by a Madhya Pradesh Human Rights Commission official shared the trauma she had to go through not just by the perpetrator but by the country’s judicial system as well, saying “so called ‘officers of the court’ are more keen to teach me my place as a woman than to help me assert my rights and get justice.”

“Idiots are lined up at every step,” Riju Bafna said in a post on Facebook that has since gone viral.

A trainee IAS officer in Madhya Pradesh, Bafna had filed a sexual harassment complaint against a MP Human Rights Commission official for sending her lewd messages.

While her police complaint led to the immediate removal of the officer, her traumatic experience didn't end there. Bafna claims that when she approached the Judicial Magistrate to record her statement, she asked that lawyers present in the court room leave, as she was not comfortable speaking in their presence.

“I requested the Hon'ble Judicial Magistrate to kindly allow me in camera recording of statement. Even before the Court had decided on my request, an advocate, who happened to be standing there, started screaming at me as to how dare I make such a request. He started using very rude language and said that I might be an IAS officer in my office but this was his Court and he was not leaving.”

Bafna adds that she told the lawyer she wanted privacy not as an IAS officer, but as a woman reliving the horrible experience of sexual harassment. “But probably this advocate was more interested in demeaning me than facilitating justice against perpetrator of sexual harassment,” she says.

Further, when she expressed her concerns to the Judicial Magistrate, who she claims was a mute spectator to the abuse she faced inside his courtroom, he dismissed them saying she was young.

“When I said to Judicial Magistrate that he should be careful of presence of other people when a woman is giving statement under sexual harassment case, he said that you are young and that’s why demanding such things.”

In her letter to the authorities, she questions what ordinary women would be going through if a woman with a supposedly privileged post of an IAS officer has to face such apathy and insensitivity inside a court.

In an earlier version of her post, she had said, “I can only hope no woman is born in this country,” but she corrected it saying, “I wrote that line in the spur of moment and I regret blaming the country for the fault of individuals.”

CRIME

HINDU, AUG 7, 2015

The rope and a chance to reform

SRINIVASAN RAMANI

Political circumstances have perhaps intervened even in cases that have involved justice being delivered in thoroughness and rigour.

That life imprisonment not only punishes and institutionalises criminals, but also offers them an opportunity to feel genuine remorse and make use of their time in prison is an option that is ruled out when one is handed capital punishment for the sake of retribution

The events leading up to the execution of Yakub Memon, one of the conspirators in the Mumbai bomb blasts of March 1993, on his birthday on July 30, have resulted in yet another debate on capital punishment, as has been the case with every execution in the near past. There was of course the added layer of intense discussions on social media and TV; albeit whether these debates brought more light than sound and fury is doubtful. There are certain core questions that require finality and the death of capital punishment in jurisprudence is one among them. There are legal and philosophical ways of addressing this question. Sometimes, popular culture is a powerful medium that helps distil these viewpoints and enables one to take informed views on the subject.

Finding ‘closure’

At the outset, I would like to apologise to readers who do not like film plot “spoilers”. When one thinks of “capital punishment”, a film that readily comes to mind is the Oscar winning Argentinian film, *El secreto de sus ojos* (The Secret in Their Eyes). Essayed brilliantly by the veteran thespian, Ricardo Darin, the lead character is an investigator who is obsessed with bringing to book a rapist and murderer who brutalises and kills a young woman.

The woman’s husband is equally keen on securing justice for his loss, but insists that the culprit should not face the death penalty, as he believes that it is too quick a punishment that will not allow the culprit to understand and rue the consequences of his actions. The culprit is caught but escapes punishment because of a change in political circumstances in Argentina and disappears from view.

For more than two decades, the investigator cannot find personal “closure” — moving on from the tragedy. But when he finds out that the culprit has been kidnapped and held hostage just like any other life-term prisoner (in near solitary confinement by the victim’s husband for all those years in a furnished cell in his backyard), he is shocked. He also notices the aged culprit begging him to ask the husband to speak to him and is

overwhelmed by the change in the culprit's demeanour. He finally gets his "closure", finds peace and sets out to reclaim his undeclared love from the past.

The lack of closure

The film could as well be a metaphor for all of us. Yakub, was, by all accounts, involved in the conspiracy — although not as much as his brother 'Tiger' Memon who is still at large — in the Mumbai blasts which killed hundreds. He escaped justice by fleeing with his family to Pakistan, but an element of rue over his actions brought him — and later his family — back to the country to face the judicial system. After years in prison, it does seem that he felt enough regret for his actions and wanted to avoid the death penalty, but unlike the culprit in the Argentinian film, he was put to death by our institutions as punishment. Also, unlike Darin's character in the film, I would argue that some of us who are obsessed with justice for the victims, can't find "closure" as Yakub's death was merely retribution for the deaths of our fellow citizens then.

After all, the main culprits, 'Tiger' and the "underworld" kingpin, Dawood Ibrahim, are still beyond the pale of justice, hiding in Karachi — facts which are only open secrets now. Even if 'Tiger' and Dawood are brought to justice, it would still not be "complete", I would argue. For, these blasts weren't the only ones that shook the city and plunged it into riots and mayhem.

There was another element — the role of chauvinist, right-wing groups like the Shiv Sena and others who went on a wanton spree against Muslims in the form of riots in the city in late 1992 and early 1993, which acted as a precursor to the blasts in 1993. Unlike 'Tiger' and Dawood, many of those involved in these crimes are still at large in the city, some enjoying political power and brazenly avoiding any culpability. The Justice Srikrishna Commission that investigated the riots indicted many individuals including the late Sena chief Bal Thackeray. Just like the culprit in the Argentinian film, political circumstances have helped the culprits of the riots avoid the long arm of the law as the Maharashtra governments of that day and since then have refused to act upon the recommendations of the Commission.

Imbalanced justice

Political circumstances have perhaps intervened even in cases that have involved justice being delivered in thoroughness and rigour. Justice Jyotsna Yagnik's judgment, in 2012, in the trial court hearing of the Naroda Patiya riots case was a milestone. The judge established the culpability of the former Gujarat Minister, Maya Kodnani, Bajrang Dal activist Babu Bajrangji and others in the Naroda Patiya pogroms of 2002 in a thoroughgoing and meticulous manner. The judge sentenced them and others to long years of life imprisonment without remand. She argued against the death penalty by not basing her reasoning that it wasn't warranted in these circumstances (whether or not these

were “rarest of the rare”) but because the judge felt that the death penalty will not do justice for the crimes committed.

Exactly a year ago, on July 30, 2014, Ms. Kodnani was released on bail on health grounds by the Gujarat High Court, which also raised questions about witness statements in the case. Since then, Ms. Kodnani is not back in custody. The victims of the pogroms and bystanders like us had almost reached a sense of “closure” after the judgment, but the developments since last year have denied that.

The deterrent argument

People argue for the continuation of capital punishment either on the need for retributive justice to be part of an Indian jurisprudence or for the reason that it would act as a deterrent. The second argument has been proven empirically wrong all over the world. The UN General Assembly has repeatedly pointed — even in a non-binding moratorium on death penalty — to how capital punishment was not a deterrent to violent crimes.

But we can again seek to rely upon popular culture to answer the first argument. The Hollywood film, *The Shawshank Redemption*, based on a novella by Stephen King, is as much the story of a prisoner wrongly sentenced to life for a crime not committed as it is about the narrator, Ellis Boyd “Red” Redding enacted by Morgan Freeman. “Red” makes a name for himself in prison as someone who gets things for inmates, including the protagonist, and is a calming and mentor-like influence with a moral code, in a prison where it is a rare commodity.

It takes him four decades to realise the futility of the crime he committed in his youth and to make peace with his punishment. The message from the film is that life imprisonment not only punishes and institutionalises criminals, but also offers them an opportunity to feel genuine remorse and make use of their human selves within prison. This is an option that is ruled out when one is handed capital punishment for the sake of retribution. Besides, incarceration for life (especially without remand or remission) is also a tough punishment, something that critics do not generally realise. Of course, the examples quoted to make an argument against the death penalty are from popular culture and fiction. But this was to make an illustrative argument and to mirror reality. There are many examples from real life across the world as to how even those who committed the most heinous of crimes and had served life terms, used that punishment as a means of rectification and made themselves useful in prison and outside after remission in some cases.

Everyone — even the most hardened of criminals who have committed the most heinous of crimes — deserves a chance; even those who will never get to be free for their actions. Abolishing capital punishment can give us a chance to make our imperfect republic less so and to improve our civilisation even more in the 21st century.

ELECTRICITY

HINDU, AUG 2, 2015

Power users may have to pay for maximum demand

How much you pay for your electricity consumption may soon change if Bescom has its way. To overcome losses incurred due to consumers overshooting their sanctioned load, the power utility is seeking to introduce a scheme under which consumers' maximum demand in consumption pattern will be recorded.

Those who have been paying only under the 'sanctioned load' head, fixed several years ago, may then have to pay for the maximum demand instead, if that is higher.

Bescom officials said Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission has given its approval to the scheme in principle. A public hearing is expected soon to bring an amendment to the conditions of supply to enable electrostatic meters that Bescom is now installing (by replacing the old electromagnetic meters) to record the maximum demand.

The problem of consumers using electricity beyond the sanctioned load is said to be most predominant in the central business district and areas which have old connections. Adding consumer goods such as microwave oven and air-conditioners over the years are major factors behind pushing the maximum demand, officials said.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

TELEGRAPH, AUG 4, 2015

Regulatory architecture: - The RBI and justice Indian-style

Ashok V. Desai

A story is making the rounds that Reserve Bank is unhappy with the proposals of the Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission (FSLRC). This is no longer news; the story began four years ago. The present President announced his intention to appoint FSLRC in his budget speech in 2010 when he was finance minister. He said: "There are over 60 Acts and multiple Rules/Regulations in the sector and many of them date back decades when the financial landscape was very different from what is obtaining today. Large number of amendments made in in these Acts over time has increased the ambiguity and complexity of the system. The Commission would simplify and rewrite financial sector legislations, including subordinate legislations, to bring them in line with the requirements of the sector to achieve harmony and synergy among them. This will remove ambiguity, regulatory gaps and overlaps among the various legislations making them more coherent and dynamic and help cater to the requirements of a large and fast growing economy in tune with the changing financial landscape in an inter-connected financial world. In the long-term, it would help usher in the next generation of reforms, contribute to efficient financial intermediation enhancing the growth potential of the nation."

In the early 1990s, when I joined the finance ministry, I found that enormous powers were vested in the ministry which the bureaucrats in charge had neither time nor competence to exercise. Every other day there would be a meeting, say, of the board of Bombay Stock Exchange; the under-secretary in charge would take a flight to Bombay, attend the meeting, and fly back. He had little idea of the business of the stock exchange, and no time to learn. The Securities and Exchange Board of India was created in 1989, but given no powers, so Ramakrishna, its chairman, kept twiddling his fingers and thinking nasty thoughts about the ministry. I suggested that the powers should be transferred to SEBI. It depressed the joint secretary in charge, who loved the queue of industrialists waiting outside his little office. But it was done.

Now I think SEBI also has grown too big and become riddled with rules; it is responsible for our useless capital market. But for a while it did a good job - better than the ministry. Meanwhile, many more such regulatory institutions have been created. Though none has thrived as much as SEBI, all have given jobs and transfer opportunities to bureaucrats and created reams of regulations.

It was this jungle of regulators and regulations that led Pranab Mukherjee to appoint the FSLRC. It was an unusually competent commission; amongst others, it had P.J. Nayak, who rose from the finance ministry to senior jobs in financial institutions, Yezdi Malegam, the able chartered accountant from Bombay, Jayant Varma, the economist from Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, and Govindacharya, who had worked in and later headed Indian Institute of Public Finance, among others. From his institute

came Ajay Shah, who built up a research unit to serve the Commission. It was headed by Justice B.N. Srikrishna, who had retired from Supreme Court four years earlier. He made a name when he headed an enquiry into the Bombay riots of 1993 and completed an objective and detailed report despite the sabotage of the Shiv Sena, which formed government in Maharashtra in 1995.

He was also focused and efficient. Under him, the Commission completed its work in two years. Instead of getting lost in the thicket of existing laws, it devised a new law - which it called Indian Financial Code - to replace them all. It recommended a changeover from pernickety laws to a statement of principles to be applied to all financial regulation. That would make regulation more efficient, and reduce the need for so many swollen regulators. The regulators were upset, and went to the finance minister one by one and objected. Undecided on what to do in the face of such opposition, P. Chidambaram put out the Code on internet and called for comments. Apparently, 653 comments were received. Ajay Shah's team worked through them, revised the Code, and the Commission sent a new version to the finance minister - this time, Arun Jaitley. He matched his predecessor's indecision; now, the finance ministry has called for comments on Version 2.

The Reserve Bank was unhappy with the FSLRC's recommendations; Raghuram Rajan summarized his objections in a speech in June, last year. His point was that the FSLRC was mistaken in taking regulation as a legal process. Courts are experts in law; they listen to arguments on cases brought to them, relate the facts to the law and precedent, and give judgments. Regulators are experts in an industry; they watch it for market failure - that is, for misuse of a firm's market power - and ameliorate its ill-effects. Often, they just tell a firm not to do something or to do it differently; if the misuse is widespread, they make rules and impose them on all firms. There are thousands of firms, clients and relationships in a market; transactions among them are numerous and fast. It would be inefficient to apply a judicial process to their regulation; cases, appeals and judgments are too slow to work in a market situation.

The Srikrishna Commission proposed reduction of the number of regulators through mergers, to be based on synergy. Rajan found synergy too vague a concept; he felt that silos often developed even within an organization, and that even if synergetic activities were divided up between regulators, they could work together. He regularly met the chairman of SEBI, for example; and all chiefs of regulators would be thrown together in the Financial Sector Development Council anyway. In general, Rajan thought the present regulatory structure was working well enough, and was against disturbing it.

Ajay Shah is against this conservatism of an entrenched regulator. He thinks that judicial procedures are a part of our democracy and should apply as much to Reserve Bank as they do to SEBI. Just because different countries have different regulatory structures, it does not mean that we should not think of a better structure for ourselves. The FSLRC was appointed because we have a welter of poorly working financial laws; they need to

be fixed. If we must have a precedent, Britain and Australia revise their financial laws every 30-40 years.

I do not think that Ajay has addressed Rajan's objection, or fear as the case may be. Part of regulators' effectiveness comes from the fact that their victims fear them. I do not think the creation of a court of appeal would destroy that effectiveness. There has always been the possibility of appeal from SEBI to SAT, but that has not prevented heavy-handed SEBI from destroying the stock market as a source of equity. Once created, regulators take on their own lives; and the Indian mode of governance is so inefficient that some regulators have done a lot of damage. I admire the Indian Financial Code; I would love Ajay to take all our laws and rewrite them. But I agree with Rajan that we should seek to improve market structure and behaviour of suppliers, and not get addicted to justice Indian-style.

BUSINESS STANDARD, AUG 7, 2015

Banks can shift, merge urban, semi-urban branches without approval: RBI

However, banks must ensure banking needs continue to be met through satellite offices/mobile vans or through Business Correspondents

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday said banks can shift, merge or close urban and semi-urban branches without its approval. This is to allow greater operational freedom.

Rural branches outside the block can also be shifted without prior approval of RBI. In a notification on Thursday, [RBI](#) said shifting, merger, or closure of any rural or sole semi urban branch would require approval of the District Consultative Committee/District Level Review Committee. The regulator further said that while doing these activities, banks have to ensure that banking needs continue to be met through either satellite offices/mobile vans or through business correspondent.

However, RBI has asked the lenders to ensure that the customers of the branch are informed well in time before shifting/merger/closure of the branch, so as to avoid inconvenience.

When shifting happens, banks have to ensure that branches are shifted/ within the same

or to a lesser population category, that is, semi-urban branches to semi-urban or rural centres and rural branches to other rural centres.

In cases where banks shift some activities/part shift activities of a branch in any centre due to space/rent constraints, then they can do so without seeking prior approval of RBI.

However, deposit or loan business cannot be maintained at both places, and the new location for part shifting would have to be within one km of the existing location. They may also spin off certain activities such as government business into separate branches at their discretion.

FLOODS

STATESMAN, AUG 7, 2015

... And the floods came !

In the moment of a natural calamity, it is distressing to reflect that the fury of the floods in no fewer than 12 out of 20 districts of West Bengal has been matched with that of the Chief Minister. It didn't behove the head of government to threaten the BDO of Amta block in Howrah district with a "slap across the face" - some reports say "will be whipped" - for assisting the media in taking photographs of the deluge. Mamata Banerjee flew off the handle over this media interaction of the district administration when it is direly imperative for her to be focused on the basics - to provide relief and rehabilitation to the dispossessed, not least in the wake of at least 50 deaths across the state. Nor for that matter does this annual calamity lend scope for bruised egos as when the Chief Minister asserts that the state government will "go begging from door to door" rather than seek Central assistance.

Better sense has now prevailed and Miss Banerjee has agreed to call on the Prime Minister to seek a relief package. This isn't the juncture to engage in double-think, let alone renewed Centre-State standoffs. It is a certitude of the federal engagement that the Centre helps out a State in the event of a natural catastrophe. The primary duty is towards the flood victims, and considering the magnitude of the disaster that confronts Bengal, the Centre, the state, and the Opposition are expected to act in concert... without carping to score political brownie points. Hopefully, the all-party meeting on 8 August will lead to improved coordination. It would be thoroughly misplaced to pass the buck onto the Centre; the state's cavil only exposes geographical ignorance. The DVC has been blamed for releasing water from its dams and barrages. In point of fact, both the state government and the Damodar Valley Corporation are confronted yet again with a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" situation. Admittedly, the DVC release has flooded a vast swathe of the state; yet the nub of the matter must be that a dam-burst would have intensified the calamity. Central to the crisis is the poor management of rivers... with the embankments so fragile that they tend to collapse with the onset of monsoon. Clearly, the state government has been caught with all defences down; successive alerts by the National Disaster Management Authority were palpably ignored as was the need for upgrade of embankments. The damage could have been contained had the state taken appropriate measures long before disaster struck. Negligent nonchalance has afflicted Kolkata no less, where different parts of the city are still submerged on account of the double whammy - appalling drainage and the tide in the Ganga. Across the state, the development of under-development is complete.

GOVERNORS

STATESMAN, AUG 4, 2015

A Governor tweets

It has been a grave gubernatorial indiscretion, verging on religious insensitivity. Mr Tathagata Roy, the Tripura Governor, has gone public on Twitter with a subjective reflection on last rites that he ought to have kept to himself. Sad to reflect, as one who holds a constitutional office he has betrayed poor taste with the comment that “many among those who assembled before Yakub Memon’s corpse are potential terrorists”. He may have expressly excluded “relatives and close friends”; yet he is expected to be circumspect not least as the august resident of the Raj Bhavan in Agartala.

Mr Roy is straying far afield from his responsibilities when he avers that “Intelligence has kept a tab on those who turned up” at the burial. In the net the former leader of the West Bengal unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party has played to the gallery of the party’s ombudsmen in Nagpur. Of course, he mentioned “no community” in his reference to the perceived presence of “potential terrorists” at the last rites of Yakub. Yet the inference was obvious. He has reinforced his perception with the observation that “I stand by my comment on Twitter”. Without question, as Governor he ought not to have made a statement that has a political, even communal, connotation.

As the constitutional head of a state, he has blurred the distinction between those who were present at the funeral and “potential terrorists”. Altogether he has caused a flutter in the communal roost - notably the All-India Majlis-e-Muslimeen - and at a critical juncture... indeed when the sentence awarded to Yakub, most importantly the judicial proceeding, is now a topic of public discourse. Not to put too fine a point on it, Mr Roy has spoken as a saffronite fundamentalist... and not the Governor. In so doing, he has brought the office he occupies into controversy. Not unsurprisingly, the Centre has been studiously muted in its response to a potentially explosive statement. And it is hard not to wonder if, by thinking aloud, he has echoed the sentiments of the BJP hardliners... and as a representative of the President of India. Unwittingly or otherwise, Mr Roy has followed Prime Minister’s Narendra Modi’s penchant for tweeting when he could have conveyed his personal feelings confidentially to his counterpart in Mumbai or the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. In the event, he has gone public with a statement that is bound to offend sensitivities of not just the minority community. The Governor has binned his pledge when he took over, specifically his commitment on “tweeting on Agartala’s weather and topography to avoid controversy”. As it turns out, he has trashed gubernatorial neutrality and circumspection as well.

HEALTH SERVICES

PIONEER, AUG 7, 2015

IN JOB OR RETIRED, ALL BANK STAFF TO GET MEDICAL INSURANCE

Now all bank employees, working or retired, have reason to cheer as they will be provided a medical insurance soon by State-owned general insurers, covering a range of treatments, including major surgeries, at a very affordable yearly premium.

State-run general insurers have decided to issue a Master Medclaim policy for bank employees through Indian Banks Association (IBA) by August end.

“As per the new wage agreement between bank unions and IBA on May 25, general insurers have agreed that employees of all member-banks will be provided with a health cover by their respective banks by this month end,” a senior IBA official told The Pioneer on Thursday.

“The IBA is currently busy collecting data of bank employees from its member banks for the scheme and we have already got information from over 19 banks so far. We are still waiting for complete data from other banks too. We will prepare a database of all employees of our member banks before issuing the Master Medclaim policy for them,” added the official.

As per the IBA data, there are 43 banks - private, foreign and public sector banks - which are members of the association, comprising 25 State-owned banks, 11 old-generation private sector banks and seven foreign banks with over 10 lakh employees and three lakh retirees, who would benefit from the scheme.

Confirming the development, All-India Bank Employees Association (AIBEA) vice-president Vishwas Utagi said, “At the time of signing of the tenth bipartite agreement between United Forum of Bank Unions and IBA, both parties had agreed to implement a health insurance scheme in form of reimbursement of all expenses on hospitalisation upto Rs 5 lakh, which includes all dependents and family members of the bank employee.”

TIMES OF INDIA, AUG 4, 2015

Freebies for docs: Govt ban set to replace voluntary code

[Rupali Mukherjee](#)

MUMBAI: The government is planning to make the code of conduct which bans unethical marketing practices — doling out freebies and sponsoring jaunts of doctors — mandatory on the drug and medical devices industry, making it tighter and providing teeth to it. The code — banning cruise tickets, freebies and exotic paid-vacations for doctors, sponsored by drug companies, is voluntary at present, but with concerns being expressed that it lacks "teeth", and with rampant violations, the government seems to be veering around to make it binding by making it a regulation.

The government has started discussions with the stakeholders, as the code is voluntary till August, industry sources said, adding a final call on the matter will be taken by the year-end, and changes if any will be implemented only next year.

In a series of meetings held last week with the industry, consumer and health activists, the government conveyed that it is "keen" to make the code mandatory, sources said, adding, since cases of "misconduct" still continue with certain drug companies sponsoring exotic trips for doctors under the garb of medical education. The 'Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices', kicked in from January this year, and was to be reviewed after six months.

When contacted, department of pharmaceuticals joint secretary Sudhansh Pant declined comments.

"The government seems keen to make the implementation (of the code) mandatory, so that it is enforced effectively. We want the code to be "voluntary and self-regulatory" as we feel that it is not practical to follow", Indian Drug Manufacturers Association secretary general Daara Patel, when contacted, told TOI, adding the industry body will ask for "certain concessions," in case it is made mandatory.

The code was implemented finally in January after inordinate delay of years, as the government failed to curb unethical marketing practices and drug promotions by pharma companies. Though it had first decided to ban these through a uniform code in 2008-2009, the exercise was futile as the pharma associations did not agree to it.

Even after the code kicked in this year, complaints against drug companies continued with many saying that it existed only on paper as companies aggressively try to influence prescriptions through several ways.

When contacted, Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance secretary general DG Shah said the industry body is in favour of making the code "mandatory", as it "lacks teeth".

Interestingly, results of a survey done by top consultancy and discussed with the government at the meeting held recently in Mumbai, indicate that a majority of pharma industry is itself in favour of tighter controls by making the code mandatory. "There are 15-20% black sheep who are bringing bad name to the entire industry. We want (that) to be curbed", an industry player said.

The medical devices industry wants the code to be mandatory, but has asked for certain concessions like "low-value" gifts and up to 10 samples, to be given to hospitals, Rajiv Nath of Association of Indian Medical Device Industry (AIMED) said.

JUDICIARY

DECCAN HERALD, 2, 2015

Executing selective justice

Ashish Tripathi

Never have the doors of the Supreme Court opened in the early hours but they did on July 30 (to decide a condemned prisoner's plea to stay execution). In the three cases that involved terrorism – that of the Rajiv Gandhi assassination, parliament attack, and now the Yakub Memon hanging in the Mumbai blast case - verdicts have varied. Did not Afzal Guru (Parliament attack) and Memon deserve their sentences to be commuted to life?

The July 30 hanging of 1993 Mumbai serial blasts convict Yakub Memon has spawned the debate over continuity of death penalty in a civilised society. Every criminal act has to be met with adequate punishment. This helps in maintaining people's faith in the criminal justice system. Any deviation is fraught with the risk of citizens developing cynicism and alienation towards the system.

Every criminal case is treated on the basis of facts and circumstances. But in awarding capital punishment, the Supreme Court has tried to develop standardised mechanism to avoid unguided and untrammelled discretion. Way back in 1980, a Constitution bench, while dealing with the validity of Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code and sentencing procedure, saddled the courts with the task of ascertaining aggravating and mitigating factors.

It also introduced the “rarest of rare” doctrine in death penalty cases, the application of which continued to face criticism. The Criminal Procedure Code also mandates for the courts to list out special reasons for sentencing a convict to death penalty.

Being at the cusp of all sorts of terror attacks, India, however, faced somewhat bigger challenges, forcing governments to continue with death penalty.

Such stance gets further exacerbated when one notes that Indira Gandhi was killed by her own bodyguards, who felt angered over her actions in Punjab, when she was the prime minister. Her successor and son Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by an LTTE suicide bomber. Beant Singh also succumbed to one such attack when he was the chief minister of Punjab.

In such circumstances, it is left to the courts to adopt a balanced approach while handing out punishments. Interplay of political consideration, however, comes into picture when terror cases are looked from a prejudiced view. That's why, when it comes to awarding the capital punishment, we often see cries of injustice, though every criminal action is treated not as an offence against an individual but to the nation.

The classic example of how political compulsion played its role can be seen in the case of Rajiv Gandhi's killers. Condemned prisoners V Sriharan alias Murugan, T Suthendaraja

alias Santhan and A G Perarivalan alias Arivu were spared the gallows after the Supreme Court held that over 11 years delay in disposal of their mercy petitions made their sentence “inexecutable”.

The apex court relied upon its January 21, 2014, verdict in the Shatrughan Chauhan case where it was held that unreasonable delay in deciding mercy petitions qualified as the supervening circumstance, warranting commutation of death sentence into life imprisonment.

The three were awarded death penalty by a Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act court in 1998. A year later, this was confirmed by the apex court in 1999. But this judgment ultimately got frustrated despite the President rejecting their mercy petition on August 12, 2011. The convicts approached the court citing questionable delay. Curiously, the then Union government, told the court that their file was lying in a Home Ministry official's drawer for five years.

Treating it as a violation of basic human rights, the court said when the President and the government made exorbitant delay in disposal of the mercy petition, the process of execution of death sentence becomes arbitrary, whimsical and capricious.

Interestingly, as the apex court commuted their sentence, the Tamil Nadu government acted swiftly to grant remission of their sentence, forcing the Union government again to approach the apex court. Now, a Constitution bench is examining the legal issue if the state government had power to grant remission in cases investigated by the Central agencies like the CBI.

Contrast this with the fate of Yakub Memon or the 2001 Parliament attack case convict Afzal Guru, one tends to get the feeling that the Supreme Court failed to maintain the same standards of equity in these cases. Afzal's appeal against death sentence was dismissed by the Supreme Court in 2005. His life was hanging in balance for eight years since his mercy plea was rejected by the President only in 2013.

Delay as reason

But Afzal was not fortunate unlike the petitioner in the 2014 Shatrughan Chauhan case, where the apex court held: “One of the supervening circumstances sanctioned for commutation of death sentence into life imprisonment is the undue, inordinate and unreasonable delay in execution of death sentence as it attributes to torture”.

Afzal was sentenced to death for being a co-conspirator of the Parliament attack. His was hanged in Tihar jail and without any intimation to his family members, which caused a lot of heartburn in Kashmir. Many still believe that the act reflected poorly on the justice administration system and the apex court failed to intervene unlike in the case of Rajiv Gandhi's killers.

The Yakub Memon case, however, brought to the fore procedural lapses on the part of the Supreme Court. Though a three-judge bench disagreed with the view of Justice Kurian Joseph, the question raised by him as to why his curative petition was not put before the judges who handled his review petition would make many squirm over the treatment meted out to him.

Even if one leaves aside this aspect and the last-hour hearing granted to him, it is difficult to dispel the doubt over the March 21, 2013, judgment as to why his death penalty was not commuted while the same punishment to 10 others was commuted. An unpublished article by former R&AW officer further aggravated the situation. Yakub, himself, felt that he was punished for the fault of his brother Tiger Memon. Notably, the Supreme Court division bench said: “If we say it in a metaphoric style, A-1 (Yakub) and all the absconding accused were the archers whereas rest of the appellants were the arrows in their hands.”

Eminent citizens, civil society members, retired judges and human rights lawyers tried to stave off the imminent but it all proved too late for Yakub. The “mantra” of aggravating and mitigating circumstances as propounded in the Bachan Singh vs State of Punjab case needs to be reviewed, the Supreme Court advocated in Sangeet and another Vs State of Haryana case (2012), while saying that “unfortunately” the sentencing process in capital offences has become judge-centric rather than a principled task.

22 LEGISLATIONS CONTAINING DEATH PENALTY

including IPC, Arms Act, Karnataka Control of Organised Crime Act 2000, The Bombay Prohibition (Gujarat Amendment) Act, 2009)

11 IPC OFFENCES PUNISHABLE BY DEATH

including waging war against country, abetment of mutiny, murder, intentionally fabricating evidence resulting execution of some one

50 NON-IPC OFFENCES PUNISHABLE BY DEATH

including causing, joining and not informing superiors of a mutiny and offence in relation to the enemy

No executions here since independence

Andaman and Nicobar Islands; Arunachal Pradesh; Chandigarh; Chhattisgarh; Dadar and Nagar Haveli; Daman and Diu;

Gujarat; Himachal Pradesh; Jharkhand; Lakshadweep;

Manipur; Meghalaya; Nagaland; Mizoram; Puducherry;

Sikkim; Tripura; and Uttarakhand

THE FIRST EXECUTIONS IN INDEPENDENT INDIA#

Sep 9, 1947Raghuraj Singh (27); Jabalpur Central Jail, MP

Dec 11, 1947Rahul (20);Jabalpur Central Jail; MP

Nov 15, 1947Shivanandan (40)Raipur Central Jail*; Chhattisgarh

Dec 30, 1947Mahantappa Gangappa (30)Belgaum Central Jail; Karnataka

Dec 30, 1947Kachedilal (28)Jabalpur Central Jail; MP

ON DEATH PENALTY

“Death sentence has a certain class complexion or class bias in as much as it is largely the poor and the downtrodden who are the victims of this extreme penalty. We would hardly find a rich or affluent person going to the gallows”.

Justice

P N Bhagwati, former Chief Justice of India

AGAINST THE GRAIN AFTER YAKUB MEMON HANGING

There is no evidence that death penalty serves as a deterrent: to the contrary, in fact. All it does is exact retribution: unworthy of a Govt. We must fight against terrorism with all the means at our command. But cold-blooded execution has never prevented a terror attack anywhere. I am not commenting on the merits of a specific case: that is for the Supreme Court to decide. Problem is death penalty in principle and practice.
Congress MP

Shashi Tharoor on Twitter

The death penalty is not just a remedy available at the disposal of the law, but a human rights issue, beyond the pale of law.

For the largest democracy, the death penalty is an anomaly.

It needs correction; Many that live do deserve death. And some that die deserved life. One must not be too eager to deal out death in judgement.
BJP MP

Varun Gandhi in a magazine article

PARLIAMENT

HINDU, AUG 2, 2015

Now, monthly surveys to rate performance of MPs, Ministers

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday said that he would gauge the performance of Members of Parliament, Ministers, MLCs and MLAs on the basis of three surveys to be conducted every month.

The stock-taking would be on welfare schemes, quality of services and development projects. “The surveys are to ensure that people are cent per cent satisfied with the TDP government, which did commendable work but had a long way to go to make them happy,” he observed.

Addressing the State party meeting here, Mr. Naidu said top priority was given to irrigation projects in view of the severe drought in Rayalaseema and deficit rainfall across the State. On completion, Polavaram project would bring 19,000 cusecs of water through Pattiseema to Prakasam barrage and even if 50 per cent of the water going waste into the sea from Godavari and Krishna rivers was saved, at least 100 tmcft of water would be available for meeting the irrigation and drinking water needs of Rayalaseema to a large extent.

Pattiseema project, he said, would be ready for inauguration by August 15. Due emphasis was being laid on Handri-Neeva, Galeru-Nagari and Somasila-Kandaluru projects, the lifelines of Rayalaseema, he said.

Mr. Naidu said reconciliation of land records was going on at a brisk pace under the Mee Intiki-Mee Bhumi programme in the wake of the fake pattadar passbook scandals unearthed in various districts. The Chief Minister further said AP had become power-surplus from a deficit of 22 million units at the time of bifurcation and asserted that the Aggregate Technical & Commercial (AT&C) losses would reach the global standard of five to six per cent from about 10 per cent now.

Capital city

Mr. Naidu said the State could successfully pool 33,000 acres of land for construction of the capital city while the proposed amendments to Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 met with stiff resistance from Opposition parties in Parliament. Arrangements were being made for laying foundation stone for the capital city on October 22. Government employees in AP were drawing highest salaries in the country on a par with Central government scales, he claimed.

Three such surveys will be done every month, says Chief Minister

INDIAN EXPRESS, AUG 2, 2015

Congress hits back at Union Minister Mahesh Sharma over his ‘no work, no pay’ remark

Mahesh Sharma had on Saturday said in Varanasi that there is a suggestion for applying ‘no work, no pay’ policy on MPs like it is being done with regard to bureaucrats.

[Congress](#) on Sunday hit back at Union Minister Mahesh Sharma for his suggestion of ‘no work, no pay’ policy over logjam in Parliament, saying such views were “wrong” as [Congress](#) MPs were “working hard”.

“We are working. We have standing committee meetings, I have a select committee meeting on land tomorrow and also a standing committee meeting on health. Therefore, it is wrong to say MPs are not working. MPs are working hard,” [Congress](#) spokesperson Jairam Ramesh told reporters here, when asked about it.

Sharma had on Saturday said in Varanasi that there is a suggestion for applying ‘no work, no pay’ policy on MPs like it is being done with regard to bureaucrats, triggering a debate after which he went into a denial mode.

In its reaction, [BJP](#) on Sunday said there was no such proposal before the government but the government would not mind discussing the issue.

“Government would not mind discussion on ‘no work no pay’ issue. But as of now there is no such matter before the government,” Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told reporters.

Blaming the [BJP](#)-led government for ongoing logjam in Parliament, Ramesh said there has been no change in their stand of “no resignation, no discussion”.

The party, which is cornering the government on the [Lalit Modi](#) and Vyapam controversies, is demanding the resignation of External Affairs Minister [Sushma Swaraj](#), Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

“We are not alone in Parliament. We are being supported by the Left parties, JD-U and several others,” Ramesh said.

“Questions were raised for how many days we can run it (our demand) but from day one we are saying resignation first and discussion later,” he added.

Talking about [Congress](#) Parliamentary Party meeting tomorrow morning, he said the party’s stand would become clear in the speech of president [Sonia Gandhi](#).

He reminded of the stand taken by [BJP](#) five years ago when they said Parliamentary disruption is a “legitimate tactic”.

BUSINESS STANDARD, AUG 4, 2015

25 Cong MPs suspended for disorderly conduct

Left parties, TMC, AAP and NCP join Congress-led boycott of Lok Sabha

An open war broke out between the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government and the Opposition on Monday after [Lok Sabha](#) Speaker [Sumitra Mahajan](#) suspended 25 [Congress](#) members for five days on charges of disorderly conduct.

It isn't clear how the parliamentary logjam, which Monday's developments have deepened, will be resolved. What looks certain is the ongoing [monsoon session](#) of Parliament, to conclude on August 13, is unlikely to see any business being transacted, a blow to the government's economic reforms agenda.

However, there were indications that the Speaker might be amenable to revoking the suspensions.

At a meeting of the parliamentary joint committee on the contentious Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Amendment) Bill, 2015, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) members suggested changes that effectively junked the government's amendments to the United Progressive Alliance government's 2013 land Act. This marked a major victory for the Opposition.

But the government's overtures might not help in resolving the impasse, with the Congress announcing it will boycott the Lower House. The government's efforts to reach out to the Opposition were further hit as it didn't have a direct communication line with Congress president Sonia Gandhi and vice-president Rahul Gandhi. [Congress MPs](#) were heard saying not only the monsoon session, even the winter session would not be allowed to run. What further queers the pitch for any rapprochement is the fact that both the National Democratic Alliance and the Opposition are preparing for what are set to be keenly contested Assembly polls in Bihar.

With the Left parties, the Trinamool Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) joining the Congress-led boycott, the fate of the most economic legislation - the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Bill cleared by the Cabinet last week - hangs in the balance.

Since Monday morning, the signs were clear: Congress President Sonia Gandhi, while addressing a meeting of the parliamentary party, was critical of the government's conduct and said the House would not function till Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj, as well as the chief ministers of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, resigned. Emerging from the all-party meeting, leader of the Rajya Sabha and Congress MP Ghulam Nabi Azad said the result of negotiations with the government was a big zero. "Our stand is resignation first, then discussion," he said.

When the Upper House convened, Swaraj tried to make a statement but she wasn't allowed to speak. After she laid her statement on the table, the House was adjourned.

In the Lok Sabha, the government tried to conduct some business in the afternoon, but slogan shouting and display of large placards, thrust at Deputy Speaker Thambi Durai's face, caused Left party MPs to counsel their Congress colleagues to show some restraint. Several ministers, including Rajiv Pratap Rudy, too, crossed over to Opposition aisles to plead with the MPs. Finally, Sumitra Mahajan named 25 Congress MPs, announcing their suspension under article 374 (a) of the rules of business.

PARLIAMENTARY PARALYSIS: WHAT LIES AHEAD

- Speaker suspending 25 MPs deepens the gulf between [NDA](#) and Congress. Prospects of resolution parliamentary logjam not clear
- Government overtures such as relenting on the land Bill and indicating that suspensions could be revoked unlikely to persuade the Congress; government strategists hobbled in their efforts by not having a direct communication line with Congress President Sonia Gandhi and Vice-President Rahul Gandhi
- Suspensions bring together what until now was a divided Opposition
- Monsoon session washout a near certainty and government's economic reforms agenda under threat
- GST Bill unlikely to be passed in the session; will severely impact any possibility of a GST roll-out by April 2016
- Real Estate (Development and Regulation) Bill, 2015, also unlikely to be passed in the current session
- The govt-Opposition standoff could even impact winter session proceedings
- If differences persist, the next ray of hope for the govt could be in early 2016, when the Rajya Sabha, where the government is in a minority, will elect nearly a third of its members, which could swing Congress numbers decreasing
- Meanwhile, [BJP](#) is preparing for a bitter battle against the 'grand secular alliance' in the Bihar elections
- Assembly polls in Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry and Assam by mid-2016 might affect government ties with some regional parties as well

Congress members showed their outrage by squatting on the floor and refusing to leave the House. Soon, the Speaker adjourned the House and a visibly agitated Congress President reached out to other Opposition party members on the floor of the Lok Sabha, including [Trinamool Congress](#) chief Mamata Banerjee. "The Trinamool would boycott the House for the next five days," said Trinamool Congress leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay.

Outside the House, the party was mutinous and unrepentant. Congress leaders termed the Speaker's action "premeditated". Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha, Mallikarjun

Kharge, likened the move to suspension of Opposition members in the Gujarat Assembly. "The Speaker has acted in a partisan manner," he said.

Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Ghulam Nabi Azad, said, "It's an undeclared Emergency." Sources said the Speaker had suspended those who had consistently disrupted the House during the session, irrespective of whether or not they were present at the time of her ruling.

Recognising things had perhaps gone too far, the government tried to say it was the Congress that had used article 374 A the most and with the greatest impunity. It was hinted that the Speaker could be persuaded to revisit her ruling. However, this had no effect.

The net result of the day's proceedings was not only was the Opposition united, but legislation such as the GST, on which there is no real political difference of opinion, has been tossed out of reckoning. Also, the government had to come to terms with the fact that despite being in a majority in the Lower House, its version of the Land Acquisition Bill 2015 would not pass muster.

Now, the government has been forced to revert to the 2013 version; it will have to go through the painful process of withdrawing its own Bill.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

TIMES OF INDIA, AUG 4, 2015

Modi govt signs historic peace accord with Nagaland's NSCN(I-M)

NEW DELHI: The government has signed a historic peace accord with Nagaland's insurgent group Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) on Monday.

This was announced at an event at 7 Race Course Road in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, home minister Rajnath Singh, other government officials and NSCN(I-M) chief Thuingaleng Muivah along with other leaders of the group.

Speaking on the occasion, Muivah said, "I thank God for this momentous occasion. Naga people have great respect for Mahatma Gandhi. We appreciate the statesmanship of (former PM) Atal Bihari Vajpayee."

Praising Modi, he said, "Under PM Narendra Modi, we have come close to understand each other, and worked out a new relation between the two parties ... Nagas will forever remember you for your statesmanship."

After Muivah finished his speech, the Prime Minister described as "historic" the signing of the peace accord.

He said, "The Nagaland political issue had lingered for six decades, taking a huge toll on generations of our people."

TELEGRAPH, AUG 5, 2015

Caught in a stranglehold: - Political tactics and economic effects

Commentarao - S.L. Rao

India appears to be caught in a political time warp that will strangle its potential. Many initiatives of the United Progressive Alliance II were stalled by inept ministerial management and the Opposition (Bharatiya Janata Party) obstruction in Parliament. This is repeating itself with the Narendra Modi government. Ministerial improprieties and ineptitudes have enabled the Congress to regroup itself as leader of an Opposition group, and using the BJP's past tactics. The result will be a weakened economy.

The decimation of Opposition parties in the Lok Sabha by the BJP frightened them all. They, and particularly the Congress, were in shock. Like headless chickens they searched for leadership initiatives from the mother-son duo. BJP ministers and chief ministers have presented them with opportunities for attack.

Mulayam Singh Yadav's Samajwadi Party did not see their Lok Sabha losses as representing a trend. After all, they had a strong state legislative presence. Lalu Prasad's Rashtriya Janata Dal lost little because they had little to lose. But Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) persisted in distancing itself from the BJP. That had resulted in lost votes for the Lok Sabha. The isolation has eroded Nitish's credibility. He initiated an alliance of 'secular' parties, including the corrupt RJD of Lalu Prasad. Nitish and Lalu, after graduating from the Jayaprakash Narayan movement, had been enemies for decades.

The Trinamul Congress in West Bengal saw no threat till the BJP sought to gain turf in Bengal. But decisive victories in the subsequent municipal elections bolstered the TMC's self-confidence. The TMC recognized the need to have the Central government on its side. Overtures to the BJP were reciprocated. The earlier intemperate language of the TMC spokesman, Derek O'Brien, about the prime minister was shelved.

The South remained largely unchanged. Tamil Nadu was the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam bastion and it kept its distance from the BJP. Karnataka is ruled by an increasingly inept Congress. But assembly elections are still years away. They would then confront a united BJP. Telangana is being wooed by the BJP. The Telugu Desam Party in residual Andhra Pradesh has returned to an alliance with the BJP.

None of these regional parties has a permanent ideology, whether regarding socialism, market economy, *Hindutva*, secularism, or any other but only the determination to exercise government power. The Congress's fury at having lost power is demonstrated by the language of its vice-president and others used of the prime minister. Its mother-son leadership moves from one issue to another. Television gives it wide exposure. The Congress has paralysed Parliament (like the BJP did in the UPA II regime). The Congress does not seem worried that the BJP might expose its family skeletons.

The BJP seems to believe that its spectacular victory in the 2014 elections has turned the tide permanently. The humiliating defeat in Delhi in the hands of the Aam Aadmi Party has not taught it otherwise.

The BJP's contempt of the Congress and its leadership, as well as of other parties, persists. There is no tempering of the arrogant attitudes of the prime minister and the party president towards them. For the AAP, the confrontation in Delhi suits it, not being a party for governance as for agitation and anarchy. The AAP uses government funds on unprecedented self-propaganda, violating judicial directions. It demands all the powers of full-fledged state governments. No party in power at the Centre will accept that. The national capital is Centrally administered in most countries. The AAP's constituency in Delhi is among dwellers in slums and unauthorized colonies, a majority in the electorate. The AAP's strategy is to show itself as being denied power and suppressed by the Centre. This resonates with the AAP's voters. The AAP also gives them populist sops to sustain loyalty.

Parliament has become non-functional. The BJP lacks a majority; the Congress is severely truncated and led by a novice; other parties are confined to the states and each is

built around one leader; the AAP, a welcome anti-corruption crusader, is now a party of agitation, not good governance. All parties in Opposition now want to bring the BJP down - not allow it to win more assemblies, not allow it a majority in the Rajya Sabha, and will oppose all its legislative proposals. Improprieties and allegations of misdemeanors by ministers get street agitations and uproars in Parliament. Ministerial resignations are demanded without investigation or debate.

This makes the passing of most legislation unlikely. The BJP has no strategy to woo, suborn and split the Opposition parties. The result will be inevitable economic stagnation. This could make the BJP lose the elections in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, and, consequently, the Rajya Sabha, and, ultimately, the Lok Sabha elections in 2019. The UPA II, for similar actions by the BJP, experienced relative stagnation.

There are many economic issues for legislative sanction. There are also numerous administrative decisions waiting. Among legislation, the vital one is the Constitutional amendment to enable the goods and services tax which will make India truly a common market. It will significantly add to gross domestic product growth. States and the Centre now agree on its contours.

Various laws to improve the ease of doing business are vital to accelerate domestic and foreign investment, manufacturing growth, urbanization and urban quality of life. Legislation for easing land acquisition is important for this.

So are labour reforms, which require Central and state legislation. India, unlike even Bangladesh, does not encourage large factories employing thousands to manufacture simple products like garments, footwear and so on. Just state legislative initiatives will only make a patchwork. We need Central legislation, for which state governments must compete to make their states more attractive for investors. Various acts relating to factories (hygiene, safety, workmen's compensation, inspections and so on) need changes to reduce intrusively frequent inspections.

But the BJP can move forward also without legislation. It could improve the speed and quality of implementation. More digitization and online reporting and permissions are needed. Direct taxes must be made simpler, consistent and stable. Many basic reforms (some examples follow) do not require legislation, only government determination.

Administrative reform to increase individual accountability, speeding up of investigations, enforcement and stronger penalties for malfeasance are required. The government must place more trust and be less suspicious of private manufacturers. Our regulatory systems must be independent and strong. They must not require others to point to our weaknesses (for example, American, not Indian, Food and Drug Administration discovered quality problems and forbade the export of Ranbaxy drugs to the United States of America).

A holistic attitude must inform government approaches to all problems. Thus, for example, all electricity (based on coal, hydro, nuclear, gas, renewables), must be

governed together by one ministry, along with all fuels. Road, rail, air, shipping, inland and coastal water transport must be considered together to ensure transport coordination and optimization. Health, sanitation, water, must all be governed together.

Instead, we have many ministers and, consequently, uncoordinated approaches. For example, in education, there is little attempt to significantly increase faculty and raise quality in all disciplines at all levels. Appointments, particularly of vice-chancellors, directors and so on, in academic bodies are being influenced by ideology rather than by expertise, a sure way to debase them. To gain a demographic dividend, a major thrust for education and skills is urgent and vital. Quality is bogged down by the BJP's ideological issues. To develop more faculty we need a good basic education and arrangements for faculty development.

A year of the BJP government has not changed the grim prospect. For consistent and higher economic growth with more manufacturing and better agricultural production, we need a detailed plan of action, carefully monitored budgets, monitored implementation, intelligent and sincere ministers and officers. Grand ideas and great rhetoric are at best motivators. The orientation to action is not visible.

The author is former director-general, National Council of Applied Economic Research


POSTAL SERVICES

HINDU, AUG 7, 2015

Post offices to sell stamp papers

A USER-FRIENDLY R&S DEPARTMENT

STATE GOVERNMENT HAS ENTERED INTO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF POSTS FOR SALE OF NON-JUDICIAL STAMP PAPERS AT COMPUTERISED POST OFFICES FROM SEPTEMBER 1.



FACILITIES

- Interactive web portal
- Pilot for shift-based working hours
- Own buildings for sub-registrar offices

SOFTWARE SOLUTION

- To be developed by the month-end to facilitate electronic accounting and sharing of real-time Management Information System between post offices and the Registration and Stamps department

THE SERVICES WILL BE GRADUALLY MADE AVAILABLE IN ALL THE 6,400 POST OFFICES IN THE STATE.

MOHAMMED MAHMOOD ALI,
DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

People shelling out more money for stamp papers than their actual value have a reason to cheer now. In order to address the scarcity and black-marketing of stamp papers, the Telangana government has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Department of Posts towards facilitating the sale of non-judicial stamp papers at the State's computerised post offices from September 1.

This is only one among a slew of facilities announced on Thursday towards rejuvenating the functioning of the Registration and Stamps (R&S) department and making it user-friendly. Others include launching of interactive web portal, pilot for shift-based working hours, and own buildings for sub-registrar offices, as shared by Deputy Chief Minister, Mohammed Mahmood Ali, at a media conference.

After signing the MoU for sale of stamp papers, the Postmaster General of Hyderabad, P.V.S.Reddy, said that, as of now, the number of computerised post offices in Hyderabad and other places stood at 859, where the stamp papers of the denominations Rs.10, Rs.20, Rs.50 and Rs.100 would be made available.

A software solution would be developed by the month-end to enable electronic accounting and sharing of real-time Management Information System between post offices and the Registration and Stamps (R&S) department. Mr. Ali, while recalling that even he had to pay higher price for stamp papers during elections time, assured that the services would be gradually made available in all the 6,400 post offices in the state.

Notable among other announcements is the pilot project for shift-based working hours in two sub-registrar offices in close vicinity. It will be implemented on experimental basis in Boinpally and Marredpally offices from August 17.

TIMES OF INDIA, AUG 4, 2015

India Post won't move savings a/cs to its bank

[Mayur Shetty](#)

MUMBAI: [India Post](#) has shortlisted management consultants to advise it on floating a new bank. Instead of migrating existing [savings](#) account customers to a bank, the [Department of Posts](#) is looking at floating a completely new entity which will start from scratch but leverage India Post's infrastructure by entering into service-level agreements.

The department, which has received expressions of interest from all the top global consultancy firms, including the big four, is pursuing a plan where there will be two Postbanks. The first will be the traditional [financial services](#) of the department. This includes the postal savings accounts and eight other post office savings schemes. Although not a Reserve Bank of India-recognized bank, this division, which is a bank for most practical purposes, will continue to operate in its existing form.

The second bank would be an entirely new creation with a paid-up capital in line with the Reserve Bank of India's requirement. The new entity will operate with a payments bank licence but will be manned with banking professionals recruited from the industry. The new entity will have 500-700 branches which will be housed in post office premises across the country. Despite its lean structure, the payments bank will reach out to all customers across the country by using India Post infrastructure through service-level agreements with the department.

SHARING INFRA	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The Dept of Posts wants to have one entity that will run its general postal savings a/cs & 8 other schemes 	<p>according to RBI norms, manned by banking professionals</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A new Postbank will have paid-up capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > It will have up to 700 branches in post office premises and will share other existing infra



"When it comes to financial inclusion, the post office has the capacity to be one of the most disruptive elements," said Ashvin Parekh of Ashvin Parekh Advisory Services, who has been an adviser to the department.

The department is expected to create a disruption because of its sheer reach. The infrastructure will include the 25,000 offices which are linked through leased lines, 1.3 lakh other post offices and the postmen and other employees of the department who will function as business correspondents.

By creating a new public sector bank, the government will overcome legal issues in converting postal savings customers into bank customers.

"For banks, the cost of inclusion is very high. As an industry, they are spending close to Rs 12,000 crore to telecom companies as part of the last-mile reach and another Rs 6,000 crore is spent on business correspondents. As against this, banks earn around Rs 4,000 crore. By using its existing infrastructure and their feet on the street, India Post can be a disruptive method of reducing costs," said Parekh.

The department of posts mobilizes over Rs 6 lakh crore of long-term savings under the various postal savings schemes. It also has close to Rs 40,000 crore in its postal savings accounts. To modernize the operation of the traditional Postbank, the department is implementing Finacle - a core banking solution from Infosys - which will be completed by end March 2016. The department is also deploying its own ATM network and issuing its own ATM cards to the postal savings account holders.

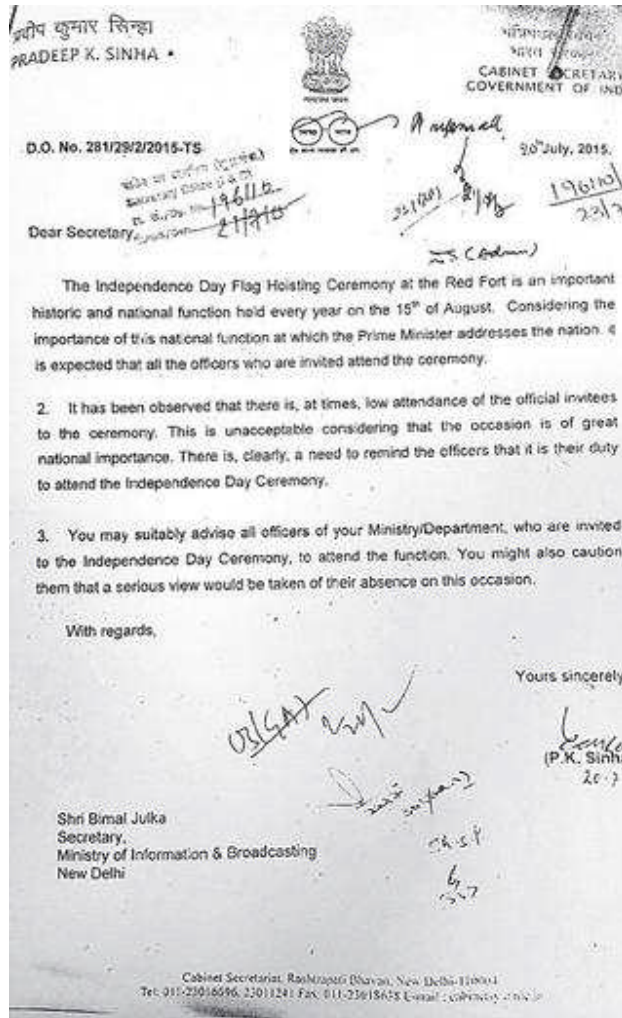
The only business which is likely to shift from the traditional [Postbank](#) to the new payments bank would be that of remittance. It is expected that the payments bank would be able to handle cash remittances much better than the post office and transfer cash within hours. This will enable the department to grow the business several fold.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

HINDU, AUG 15, 2015

Govt. orders all officers to turn up for Modi's I-Day address

ANURADHA RAMAN



The Union government has issued a circular (*see image*) making it mandatory for its officers to be present at the Red Fort when Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoists the National Flag and delivers his address on Independence Day on August 15.

The July 20 circular, issued by Cabinet Secretary P.K. Sinha, directs the Secretaries to various Ministries and departments to caution the officers not to miss the Independence Day function. “You might also caution them that a serious view would be taken of their absence on this occasion,” it says. Giving the reason for making attendance of officers mandatory, Mr. Sinha writes: “It has been observed that there is, at times, low attendance

of the official invitees to the ceremony. This is unacceptable considering that the occasion is of great national importance. This is clearly to remind the officers that it is their duty to attend the ceremony.”

While some officers described the circular as a routine one, issued every year ahead of the Independence Day function, others could not recall any past directive with such a strong tone and tenor. Some, however, said that when P.V. Narasimha Rao had been Prime Minister, the officers’ attendance was taken.

The circular reached the officers only on Tuesday as it moved from the Cabinet Secretary’s office to the Ministries and from there to the media heads in the Press Information Bureau and the administration. The covering note accompanying the circular makes it clear that the government would like to address a full house on Independence Day. The note says: “Subject: Independence Day Flag hoisting ceremony at Red Fort — Compulsory Attendance.”

This will be the second Independence Day address of Mr. Modi. Though not a comparable event, the International Day of Yoga, which included yoga sessions at designated places, on June 21 saw a similar directive for officers’ attendance. The media, especially television channels, were told to give maximum publicity to the event.

SCAVENGERS

HINDU, AUG 4, 2015

Govt. job portal lists manual scavenging as ‘career option’

MOHIT M. RAO

Cleaning of sewers, descending into manholes, removing night-soil (human excreta) using a broom find a place in the National Career Services portal.

The job profile of a “Safai Karamchhari” and a “scavenger” is listed as being “mildly hazardous or dangerous” – putting them in the same category as “astrologer”

What was conceived by the Narendra Modi-led NDA government as bringing employers and job seekers on a single platform, seems to now promote and allow the hiring of the prohibited act of manual scavenging at the click of a button.

Cleaning of sewers, descending into manholes, removing night-soil (human excreta) using a broom find a place in the National Career Services portal that was launched recently as a part of Skill India.

For instance, under the ‘unorganised sector’ panel of the website, a “Sweeper, Sewer” is “expected to” clean sewage systems by “using various cleaning instruments,” including bamboo or iron rod, and collecting debris and refuse in a bucket using a spade and handing this bucket to “helper outside manhole.”

Similarly, the “Sweeper, Wet” description lists a “key competency” of removing “night soil using spade and broom.”

On its launch by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 20, the portal was to link two crore job seekers with nearly nine lakh establishments. Mr. Modi had then said: “...it is essential for Indian society to develop a consciousness towards ‘dignity of labour’.”

However, advocates Clifton D’ Rozario and Maitreyi Krishnan — who had taken the issue of manual scavenging to the Karnataka High Court — say: “These dehumanising [definitions] are the very practice due to which the manual scavenging community has been stigmatised, ostracised and discriminated. [It] is now being proudly promoted as a ‘career option’.”

Furthermore, employing persons under these definitions have been made punishable with imprisonment under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, the advocates say.

‘Inhuman practice’

They also point to the Supreme Court order (dated March 27, 2014) in the Safai Karamchari Andolan vs. Union of India case, where the court observes that handling human excrements with bare hands, brooms or metal scrappers or in baskets is an “inhuman practice,” while in November 2008, the Chennai High Court had directed that the cleaning of sewage could only be through mobile mechanical pumps or other devices.

Acknowledging that the description did indeed become promotion of manual scavenging, M. Shivanna, Chairperson, National Safai Karamchari Commission, said, “This is definitely wrong, and amounts to promoting such activities. Though we have been insisting that Sucking and Jetting Machines should be used, the website implies that descending into manholes is also a part of the job.”

The commission will issue a notice seeking clarification on Wednesday, he told *The Hindu*.

In same league as astrologers

Incredibly, the job profile of a “Safai Karamchari” and a “scavenger” is listed as being “mildly hazardous or dangerous” — putting them in the same category as “astrologer” and “palmist” that come under unorganised sector careers.

While the risks for “Safai Karamchari” include “lung, respiratory, neurological diseases, infection, biological diseases, suffocation, fatigue,” for an astrologer or palmist or money lender, the dangers include “heart diseases, depression and anxiety, fatigue, stress.”

The website similarly contains unfortunate, now antiquated phrases for describing jobs. “Domestic Servant” is described as “performing the general house-hold duties and attending to the personal comforts of master or employer” — terms that show “underlying feudalism,” say advocates Clifton D’ Rozario and Maitreyi Krishnan.

TERRORISM

DECCAN HERALD, AUG 4, 2015

Bengalurean among seven still serving in Islamic State

Seven, including one from Bengaluru, of the 13 Indians recruited by Islamic State (IS) are still with the dreaded terror outfit while the remaining six have fallen to bullets, government officials said on Monday.

They also felt that most states do not have a “good enough assessment” of the threat posed by the IS and their efforts to radicalise youths and recruit them.

Of the seven, only one is in combat role while six others are doing odd jobs like assisting fighters, serving as cooks and drivers.

The Indian recruits include one each from Karnataka capital Bengaluru and Telangana. Two are from Mumbai’s outskirts Kalyan while others are three young men who had lived in Australia, Oman and Singapore. The officials said that among the six Indians killed in action include Indian Mujahideen terrorists Sultan Ajmer Shah and Bada Sajid who joined the IS after their stay in Pakistan, two from Maharashtra and one from Telangana.

Earlier, the security establishment had prevented at least 25 youths, including 17 from Telangana, from travelling to Syria to join the IS.

Last Saturday, Union Home Secretary L C Goyal convened a meeting of state officials to discuss IS. The meeting took up the issue of radicalised youth joining the IS. The need for streamlining the institutional mechanisms for sharing information and to adequately meet the threats from terrorism were highlighted. It was also decided to strengthen the capacity building of police officers in states through training programs, to be organised by central intelligence and security agencies.

“Some instances of radicalisation of youth in some states came up for discussion. Appropriate measures on counter radicalisation including counselling of such youth and their families were also discussed,” an official statement said on Saturday. Maharashtra and Telangana have already put in place a model for dealing with IS related cases.

WOMEN

HINDU, AUG 4, 2015

Delhi to set up commission to probe crimes against women

SWETA GOSWAMI

JATIN ANAND

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday announced that his government had initiated the process for setting up a State Human Rights Commission (SHRC), even as the Delhi Assembly passed a resolution for establishment of a Commission of Inquiry to probe crimes against women.

Mr. Kejriwal made the announcement while speaking on women's safety at a day-long special session, where he expressed surprise at the number of human rights violations in Delhi.

According to the resolution, the Commission of Inquiry will be empowered to receive unheeded complaints regarding crimes such as violence, sexual harassment, stalking and voyeurism, among others, committed against women since February 2013. The proposal for the Commission was tabled by Women and Child, and Social Welfare Minister Sandeep Kumar.

Apart from being empowered to suggest necessary amendments to relevant laws, if any, the Commission will also be empowered to recommend to the Delhi government whether any case of negligence or collusion is made out in the cases examined, measures to expedite all proceedings in such criminal cases, measures to "properly implement" the provisions of existing laws and welfare measures for improving the working conditions of the police.

"Recently, the Supreme Court observed that Delhi is at number two in human rights violations. I cannot even think about it. I thought it used to happen in naxalite-affected areas. The Delhi government was directed to set-up a State Human Rights Commission. We have started the process.... A police complaint authority will also be set up," Mr. Kejriwal said. Soon after the resolution was tabled, the three BJP MLAs trooped into the Well of the House and termed it "illegal". They threw copies of the resolution and walked out of the Assembly. The trio also met Lieutenant-Governor Najeeb Jung, where they rued that the government has misguided the High Court on the issue of appointing the Lokayukta. "The Commission is in contravention of Rule number 239AA. Setting it up is only a drama to mislead the people of Delhi. The Assembly cannot set up a Commission of Inquiry on matters beyond Assembly's jurisdiction, so it is illegal," said Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta.