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CONTENTS

AVIATION	3-5
BLACK MONEY	6-16
CIVIL SERVICE	17-19
CORRUPTION	20-22
DEFENCE, NATIONAL	23-24
EDUCATION	25-31
JUDICIARY	32
LABOUR	33-35
LIBRARIES	36-37
MONEY	38
PARLIAMENT	39-43
RAILWAYS	44-47
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	48-50
TRANSPORT	51-53
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION	54

AVIATION

HINDUSTAN TIMES, DEC 21, 2016

Airlines to pay fine if planes drop human waste during flight

The CPCB, after analysing the samples taken from the petitioner's house had stated that, 'it was indeed excreta, but its source is not known'. (Reuters)

Airlines will be penalised if they empty toilet tanks during flight, the green panel ordered on Tuesday.

National Green Tribunal (NGT) directed the country's aviation regulator - Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) - to issue instructions to all airlines, whose planes are involved, to pay Rs 50,000 as environmental compensation.

The NGT bench chaired by Swatanter Kumar passed a slew of directions to be followed by airlines while hearing a plea of a retired army officer, who claimed the terrace of his house in south Delhi's Vasant Enclave is being repeatedly splattered with excreta falling from aeroplanes.

"DGCA shall also issue directions that aircraft on landing shall be subjected to surprise inspection to see that human waste tanks are not empty. If any aircraft is found to be violating such circular or (their) tanks are found empty on landing, they shall be subjected to environment compensation of Rs 50,000 per default," the bench said.

The direction came on the plea of Lt Gen (Retd) Satwant Singh Dahiya who had sought action against airlines and levy of hefty fines on them for endangering the health of residents, terming their act as violation of the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan'.

"For over a week now, we found that walls and floors of our terrace are splattered with large patches of excreta dumped by aircraft flying in front of Palam airport at night. The last time it

happened early in October, we had to spend Rs 50,000 to get the exterior painted,” Dahiya had stated in his plea.

Earlier, the green panel had asked the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), to send a senior environmental engineer to inspect the petitioner’s house and if human excreta was found on its walls, sample should be collected for analysis and the report placed before the tribunal.

The CPCB, after analysing the samples taken from the petitioner’s house had stated that, ‘it was indeed excreta, but its source is not known’.

While issuing directions, the green panel expressed surprise over the CPCB report, saying, “We are surprised to note the stand of CPCB to the extent of coliform and the kind of splashes created on the houses of the petitioner as well as others clearly demonstrate that it was human excreta.”

Earlier the NGT had slapped a fine of Rs 5,000 on the environment ministry and the ministry of civil aviation for failing to file inspection report on the plea.

During the hearing, the DGCA told the bench it will investigate the matter.

In his petition, Vasant Enclave resident Dahiya had sought creation of a 24-hour helpline for immediate reporting of such incidents and a monitoring mechanism to check that no aircraft drops “human soil or excreta” while landing.

The Ministry had opposed the argument and said plane toilets stored the waste in special tanks which are normally disposed of by ground crews once the plane lands. However, aviation officials acknowledge that lavatory leaks can occur in the air at times.

The green panel added that the amount collected as fine from airlines shall be used for environment protection and a quarterly report shall also be submitted by DGCA before it.

BLACK MONEY

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, DEC 22, 2016

RBI does embarrassing U-turn, revokes Rs 5000 notification

In an embarrassing volte-face, the Reserve Bank of India on Wednesday revoked a circular issued earlier in the week, which said scrapped-notes deposit above R5,000 in banks could only be made once per account till the December 30 deadline and subject to being “questioned” by the bank staff on the delay.

Practically, this removes the restriction on deposits in old R500 and R1,000 notes in most bank accounts, barring the financial inclusion-driven ones including a section of the 26 crore Jan Dhan accounts. (Source: Reuters)

In an embarrassing volte-face, the Reserve Bank of India on Wednesday revoked a circular issued earlier in the week, which said scrapped-notes deposit above R5,000 in banks could only be made once per account till the December 30 deadline and subject to being “questioned” by the bank staff on the delay. Widespread criticism of the decision as a breach of trust by the government, which had assured the public of free deposits in these notes until the deadline, and doubts about its legality — experts have said the [RBI](#) lacks the powers to impose such anticipatory conditions on a citizen unless it has intelligence to presume a financial wrong may have been committed by him — led to the revocation.

“On a review... we advise that the provisions of the (Monday) circular (in) sub para (i) and (ii) will not apply to fully KYC compliant accounts,” the RBI said.

Practically, this removes the restriction on deposits in old R500 and R1,000 notes in most bank accounts, barring the financial inclusion-driven ones including a section of the 26 crore Jan Dhan accounts.

The earlier circular had said tenders of the scrapped notes above R5,000 limit, or many tenders cumulatively exceeding the limit, will be received for credit only once till December 30 this year, and only after questioning the tenderer, “on record, in the presence of at least two officials of the bank, as to why this could not be deposited earlier and receiving a satisfactory explanation”.

Meanwhile, the RBI said banks have issued currency worth over R5.92 lakh crore to the public since the demonetisation of old high-value notes last month. It also said that it has issued 2.2 billion (220 crore) pieces of notes of new R500 and R2,000 during the period — November 10 to December 19.

The currency infused into the system, however, is much less than what has been deposited in the form of defunct notes. The old R500 and R1,000 notes returned to RBI and currency chests amounted to R12.44 lakh crore as on December 10 (the attorney-general last week said in the Supreme Court the amount the value of the returned notes exceeded R13 lakh crore and unconfirmed reports put the figure to be above R14 lakh crore by now). When the note recall decision was announced, such notes worth R15.5 lakh crore were in circulation.

TELEGRAPH, DEC 21, 2016

Bring on the white- Black money in a cash-driven economy

Commentarao- S.L. Rao

Demonetization represents loss of value for money. It is a loss of legal tender. It is only one among other steps awaiting action. Substantial quantities of fake rupee currency notes pouring

in from Pakistan and financing terrorist activities must halt; illegal and non-tax-paid wealth held in cash must be almost eliminated. They demand strong policing and change in the economic system. Making currency notes worthless will not stop bribery and corruption.

Paper currency notes have value because there are strong agencies, usually governments that back them. When the governments are weakened by war or economic crises the currency loses part of its value. No bank or government is going to give another valuable commodity in its place except at a lower paper value. People must trust the currency. Diminution of trust devalues the currency.

Currency values fall when there are catastrophes, wars, revolution or civil war, natural disasters, economic crises, or when notes are printed in excess of the country's perceived strength. More paper currency is then needed to buy goods and services than before. There have been many instances when (as in immediate post-Second World War Germany) large quantities of paper currency were required to buy even a loaf of bread. In such situations, exchange takes place by barter. In due course, a more stable currency is introduced. For example, American dollar notes are introduced formally or informally as legal tender. The country then introduces many reforms to improve the perception of its economy and establish the strength of its own legal tender.

Corruption has been a major source of black money in India. This was through kickbacks on major construction, large government purchases (for example, in defence), award of government permissions to set up new establishments, licences to manufacture and to import materials, changing specifications to suit one supplier, and so on. Eliminating or reducing these calls for a radical transformation of the way in which government has functioned for 70 years. It demands change in the rules that regulate civil service recruitment, control, promotion, transfer and termination. It requires strong, speedy and independent investigation of malfeasance, and severely deterrent punishment for the guilty and their abettors.

Land and real estate transactions generate black money as they evade stamp duties and other taxes on the transactions. While the absence of the black portion might reduce prices briefly, the white price must rise over time to cover costs.

Black money is also accumulated abroad. This is through commissions paid overseas for favours in India, under- and over-invoicing of exports and imports. A *hawala* agent arranges for the illegal transfer of the money to an overseas haven where it might be invested or may stay in a bank account. Informers give the names of Indian holders and overseas banks, and can be pursued.

A good part of this money comes back to India. Conveniently, bureaucrats have arranged double taxation avoidance agreements with countries like Mauritius from where the money can be remitted for investment in India. It is then sent back legally to Mauritius or another country with which India has a double taxation avoidance agreement that makes such investments liable to that country's tax laws and not of those in India (20 per cent in India *versus* zero in Mauritius). The illegal rupees that paid for the foreign holdings add to the stock of black money

in India.

It has not been announced as to who were privy to the 'demonetization' secret. They were obviously not street-smart bankers who could anticipate most of the consequences and prepare for them. The action was taken within a few months of the accession of a new governor of the Reserve Bank of India. The governor may have had prior knowledge but failed to make adequate plans to minimize inconveniences to the public.

India is a cash-driven economy (the West is mostly plastic). Currency notes are widely used for most small and even large transactions. Cash is also hoarded as wealth (apart from gold, jewellery and undervalued real estate). A good part of production, some say over 20 per cent, uses black money (for material purchases, wages and so on). Most of India is self-employed, and many are in small and cottage enterprises, and get low wages. They cannot withstand the loss of income even for a day. Almost all are paid daily, a few every week or month, and in cash. Agricultural income has no income tax. Transactions for agricultural produce are in cash. In such a cash-dominated economy, it is not difficult to evade direct and indirect taxes. The large unaccounted for economy (income and wealth) in India is used in transactions, accumulated as wealth, used for consumption, used in the production process, and it constantly shifts between use in the 'white' or accounted for economy and the 'black' unaccounted for economy. Cash and currency notes are the lubricant for both. Their shortage must diminish all the transactions in which they are used. The gross domestic product will fall till white replaces black money. For India to use less cash will take years of effort. Inadequate bank branches, unsophisticated and relatively uneducated customers will all slow the spread of the plastic habit.

The disruption to the supply of currency notes will hinder economic transactions, as it has done so far. Agricultural transactions are mostly in cash. Those self-employed, or employed in small and cottage industries, or in casual employment, with daily or weekly wages, will suffer loss of employment or delayed wages. Currency shortage has done that in the last few weeks. Common, everyday transactions in cash-retail and some wholesale packaged goods, vegetables, fruits, domestic services, taxi and bus services and so on, are hindered because of inadequate currency. As more legal currency is printed, these transactions will resume at old volumes but possibly at higher transaction costs and prices, since taxes will be paid. The goods and services tax will reduce black transactions.

Everyone who had currency notes of Rs 1,000 or 500 tried to get them exchanged for Rs 100 notes. They were more likely to be offered new Rs 2,000 notes. There was no immediate rationale for introducing Rs 2,000 notes. Banks soon ran out of stocks of lower value notes. Shops, markets, malls and daily wage labourers were squeezed because there was no currency. Economic activity declined.

What is the likely future? Currency availability will improve. In the absence of black money, all transactions might see higher prices. Production units that ran on black money must find ways to raise equity and debt. Their costs and prices will rise.

If the government is serious about cutting corruption it cannot stop with currency withdrawal. Revamping the bureaucracy must be top priority, along with its methods and procedures. The

much touted "ease of doing business" must become a reality. That calls for a change in mindsets, transparency in decisions, reduction of multiple-window clearances and elimination of numerous application forms. Coordination between government departments on common issues must be statutorily imposed. A beginning has been made to close the 'money laundries', especially with Mauritius. *Hawala* operators must be hounded and stopped, including multinational banks helping in the business. Information about illegal overseas holdings by Indians must be sought; all undeclared Indian overseas holdings must be seized. Overseas private investments must be compulsorily disclosed; large overseas purchases including defence must be transparently scrutinized. State governments must be persuaded to harmonize stamp duties and property taxes.

These and more actions could reduce corruption and unaccounted for money. Things will improve as more cash enters the system. The diminution of black production and transactions will slow the economy. More of the economy must become white to find a new equilibrium.

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

TELEGRAPH, DEC 20, 2016

Cash goalpost is changed, again

Jayanta Roy Chowdhury

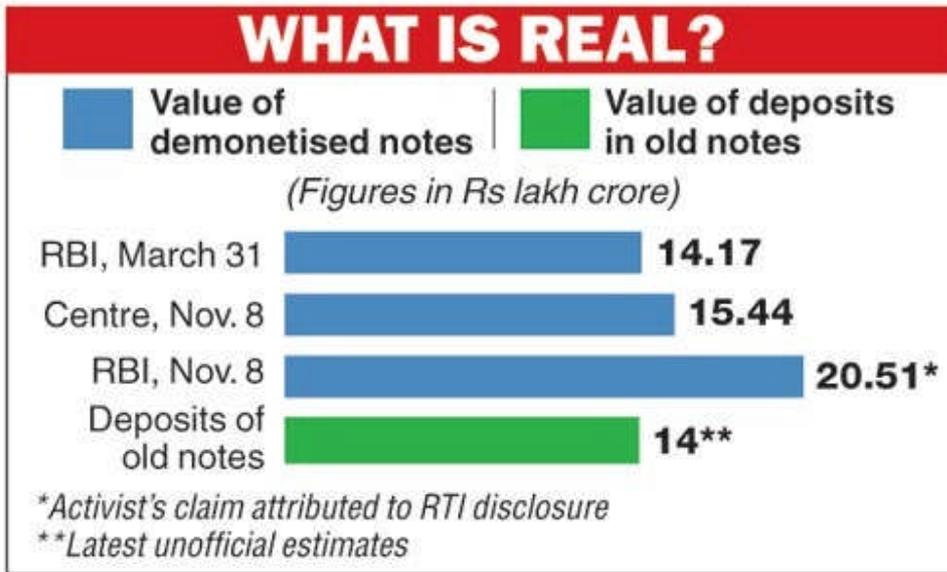
New Delhi, Dec. 19: The RBI has said deposits of demonetised notes with a value of over Rs 5,000 would be allowed just once in a bank account between now and December 30.

The announcement not only lengthened the list of abrupt changes enforced since the note recall was announced on November 8 but also fuelled suspicion that the government is trying to dissuade people from depositing demonetised notes.

The value of such deposits is said to have touched Rs 14 lakh crore, a tad shy of the original estimate of Rs 15.44 lakh crore worth of the demonetised Rs 1,000 and Rs 500 notes.

A high percentage of such deposits would suggest only an insignificant amount of black money was being kept as high-value notes and/or dodgers found some way to beat the system. Another possibility is that a sizeable chunk of counterfeit notes may have entered the banking system, taking advantage of the chaos that followed demonetisation.

However, there seemed to be an attempt to shift the goalposts once again with the RBI apparently suggesting in a reply to a Right to Information (RTI) query that the total number of demonetised notes was actually more than Rs 20 lakh crore -- a surprising 30 per cent increase, compared with what the government had said earlier.



Today, while announcing the Rs 5,000 rule, the RBI said two bank officials would grill customers to determine whether they had valid reasons for "not depositing the notes earlier".

But finance minister Arun Jaitley said tonight: "If they (bank customers) go and deposit with the bank any amount of currency, no questions are going to be asked and, therefore, the 5,000-rupee limit does not apply to them if they go and deposit it once.

"But if they are going to go everyday and deposit some currency, same person, that gives rise to suspicion that where is he acquiring this currency from. In that event a person may have something to worry about. Therefore, everyone is advised whatever old currency you have, please go and deposit it now."

The RBI notice today flies in the face of earlier assertions by Jaitley that people ought not to rush to banks to deposit their cash hoards as they had adequate time till December 30 to do so.

Earlier, the government had made it clear that no questions would be asked if customers made deposits of old notes up to Rs 2.5 lakh. At that time, Jaitley had said: "My appeal is that you have time till December 30. So, there is no need to come in the first few days (to deposit your old notes). Take your time, this will ease pressure (on banks)."

The government had moved a gazette notification on Saturday that effected the rule change, stating that "the deposit of an amount exceeding Rs 5,000 shall be made only once per account until 30th December, 2016." But the finance ministry didn't put up the notification in the public domain until Monday.

The notification added "that the deposit up to the amount of Rs 5,000 shall be made directly into such account and the rest of the amount, if any, shall be subject to such conditions as the Reserve Bank of India may specify."

The banks have been asked to stop customers from trying to sidestep the new rules by making smaller deposits in their accounts. If the cumulative deposits top Rs 5,000, the customers will be subject to the same strictures that apply to those who make a single deposit of more than Rs 5,000.

The RBI said deposits of over Rs 5,000 worth of demonetised notes would be credited only into KYC-compliant accounts. "If the accounts are not KYC-compliant, credits may be restricted up to Rs 50,000 subject to the conditions governing the conduct of such accounts," the RBI notification said.

These restrictions will not, however, apply to those who make income disclosures under the second amnesty scheme with deposits made into the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana.

PTI reported that in response to a question posed by Mumbai-based activist Anil Galgali, the RBI said that on November 8, it had Rs 9.13 lakh crore in Rs 1,000 notes while Rs 11.38 lakh crore in Rs 500 notes -- adding up to Rs 20.51 lakh crore.

If true, this will raise the headroom for the government that has become increasingly uncomfortable with the avalanche of deposits that banks have received since the demonetisation announcement.

Economist Pronab Sen said: "There has already been a significant erosion of people's confidence in our currency, given the regulatory flip-flops and rumours about the quality of new notes which have been printed ... and this rule merely adds to that uncertainty."

Analysts speculated the latest restriction was prompted by the possible failure of its second Income Declaration Scheme which provides for a tax and penalty of up to 50 per cent of declarations.

Finance Ministry officials, however, contended that the move was meant to stall any further money laundering. They believe that many people have been using all kinds of devices to dodge taxes.

TIMES OF INDIA, DEC 19, 2016

Pakistan senate adopts resolution to withdraw Rs 5000 banknotes

Omer Farooq Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Senate on Monday passed a resolution seeking withdrawal of high denomination Rs 5,000 currency notes from circulation to halt illicit money flows and money laundering.

Senator Usman Saifullah of opposition Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) tabled the resolution, arguing that the Rs 5000 note was being used in illegal transactions and should be withdrawn.

The move was strongly opposed by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government but since the PPP has a majority in the upper house of parliament, the resolution was endorsed without any hindrance.

It called on the government to demonetise the highest denomination currency note "in order to reduce illicit money flow, encourage the use of bank accounts and reduce the size of undocumented economy".

Opposing the resolution, Law Minister, Zahid Hamid, said that the move would have repercussions on the economy and the masses in general, as is happening in neighbouring India. He said that around 3.43 trillion Rs 5,000 banknotes were currently in circulation in Pakistan. He said that about 30 percent of the total currency in circulation comprises of these high denomination notes.

"Such a huge number of currency notes cannot be pulled from circulation without causing a monetary crises. If such steps are taken, people will lose confidence in the Pakistani Rupee and will instead prefer foreign currency due to the steep drop in supply of local currency notes," the minister said.

Top Comment

At this, Senator Saifullah said the Rs 5000 currency note shouldn't be withdrawn at once from circulation as was done in India, but its printing should be halted and withdrawal should take place in a time span of three to five years. The PPP senator said that most illegal transactions are carried out using the Rs 5,000 note.

Ever since the Indian government ended high denomination currency notes by pulling out 500 and 1,000 Indian rupees notes from circulation, it was frequently discussed in Pakistan that such steps could help in revealing hidden assets and prevent tax evasion.

DECCAN HERALD, DEC 19, 2016

India unprepared for cashless age

The government has opportunistically changed the theme of demonetisation from elimination of black money to creation of a cashless society. It was probably forced to shift the objective because the exercise may not lead to unearthing of all the black money, as it was originally claimed, but to the laundering of most of it. That will leave the government with little justification for the hugely disruptive exercise. So, both the prime minister and the finance minister are now talking of a push to digital currency, which is another impractical idea being forced on an unprepared society. The consequences of going in for a cashless dispensation by Caesarian section will not be good for the society and the economy. The government has announced some incentives for moving to the age of electronic transactions. The non-availability of cash has also introduced elements of inevitability and even coercion into the programme.

Between 90–95% of the financial transactions in the country are in the form of cash. Moving to a digital economy is almost impossible for most people in the foreseeable future. The challenges and difficulties are many. The banking sector is still underdeveloped. The digital infrastructure is very poor. Internet connectivity is bad, payment interface is inadequate and digital literacy is very low. With internet penetration at 30% and smartphone penetration at 17%, the cashless option will be available to only a small minority. Most small establishments and many bigger ones do not have Point of Sale terminals. Incentives will not make much difference to the charges on merchants. Internet and power failures are common. Cyber security is a major concern and there are many legal and practical problems and regulatory issues connected to it. All these problems will be magnified many times in small towns and villages. When illiteracy is so high, the talk of teaching people the basics of digital deals on mobile phones is foolish and unrealistic. The situation gets more complicated with a large number of people on the move, with no identity indicators and numbers.

The digital push was, in any case, possible without demonetisation. It will take a long time for the infrastructure to be built, skills to be imparted and mindsets to be changed. The rising pitch about the cashless economy may be a sign that the actual cash will come much later than promised. The trauma and inconveniences of the cash drought are going to continue, and most people will not be able to use the digital tools. It is a cruel idea being sold to the people: If you don't have the bread of currency, eat the cashless cake.

DECCAN HERALD, DEC 19, 2016

EC seeks ban on anonymous contributions to parties above Rs 2000

Seeking to stem the flow of blackmoney in polls, the Election Commission has urged the government to amend laws to ban anonymous contributions of Rs 2000 and above made to political parties.

There is no constitutional or statutory prohibition on receipt of anonymous donations by political parties. But there is an "indirect partial ban" on anonymous donations through the requirement of declaration of donations under section 29C of The Representation of the People Act, 1951.

But, such declarations are mandated only for contributions above Rs 20,000.

As per the proposed amendment, sent by the Commission to the government, and made part of its compendium on proposed electoral reforms, "anonymous contributions above or equal to the amount of Rs two thousand should be prohibited."

Only yesterday, the government had said that political parties depositing old 500 and 1,000 rupee notes in their accounts will be exempt from income tax provided the donations taken are below Rs 20,000 per individual and properly documented.

Revenue Secretary Hasmukh Adhia said the government is not tinkering with the tax exemption available to political parties and they are free to deposit old 500 and 1000 rupee notes in their bank accounts. But these deposits will, however, be subject to the condition that individual donations taken in cash do not exceed Rs 20,000 and are properly documented with full identity of the donor.

The Commission has also proposed that exemption of Income Tax should only be extended to political parties that contest elections and win seats in Lok Sabha or assembly polls.

Section 13A of the Income-tax Act, 1961 confers tax exemption to political parties for income from house property, income by way of voluntary contributions, income from capital gains and income from other sources.

Only income under the head 'salaries and income from business or profession' are chargeable to tax in the hands of political parties in India.

The Commission said, "There could be cases where political parties could be formed merely for availing of provisions of income tax exemption if the facility, that are at the expense of the public exchequer, is provided to all political parties."

In yet another recommendation to check blackmoney, the EC has asked the Law Ministry to ensure that political parties are made to register details of donors for coupons of all amounts on the basis of a Supreme Court order of 1996.

Coupons are one of the ways devised by the political parties for collecting donations and hence

are printed by the party itself. There is no cap or limit as to how many coupons can be printed or its total quantum.

Currently, the details of donors is not required for coupons with small amounts such as for Rs 10 or 20. "These smaller sums aggregate into a bigger amount and hence, they need to be accounted for, to ensure transparency," the Commission said.

CIVIL SERVICE

TIMES OF INDIA, DEC 20, 2016

IAS and DANICS officers go to MHA with `injustice' plea

Rajnath Singh

NEW DELHI: The associations of AGMUT cadre IAS and DANICS officers, which passed a resolution last week to "collectively raise voice against injustices meted out by the political executive of Delhi government" has now submitted a copy of the proposal to Union home minister Rajnath Singh.

It is learnt that they have also shared their concerns with the ministry of home affairs (MHA), which is the cadre-controlling authority of AGMUT cadre IAS and DANICS officers.

The stalemate between the elected government and the bureaucracy has only increased ever since the associations passed the resolution. First deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia and then chief minister Arvind Kejriwal held press conferences to declare the resolution "politically motivated".

The associations had submitted the resolution to Lieutenant Governor Najeeb Jungand Sisodia last week."We met Singh on Sunday and handed over our resolution passed last week against `misbehaviour' by political executives of the Delhi government and other issues," an association member said.

Latest Comment

This is an act engineering, accusation against elected Delhi government by saffronized party ruling central government lead by NAMO, who are putting hurdles in each and every way of the functioning ... Read More**Sheik Mohamed**

Both the associations had appealed to the Kejriwal government not to resort to "misdemeanour, unfounded allegations, mis-information" campaign against officers, un der any circumstances. In January , all DANICS officers' association had gone on a oneday mass leave after the city administration had suspended two of their colleagues.

Alleging that PM Narendra Modi was "using LG and IAS and DANICS officers as pawns to target AAP-led state government", Kejriwal had hit back at the associations on December 15. Warning the officials to fall in line, the CM had alleged that IAS officials in the city were being "threatened (with action) by the Central Bureau of Investigation and Anti Corruption Bureau" and "provoked" by the PMO and LG to revolt against him.

ECONOMIC TIMES, DEC 19, 2016

Uttarakhand government employees to get 7th Pay Commission hike from January 1

As a result of the cabinet's decision, the treasury will have to bear a burden of Rs 3000 crore
DEHRADUN: Ahead of the Uttarakhand assembly elections next year, the state government has decided to implement recommendations of the [7th Pay Commission](#) from January 1, official sources said.

The decision, which will benefit around 2.5 lakh government employees and pensioners, was taken in the state cabinet meeting headed by Chief Minister [Harish Rawat](#) yesterday. The government employees will get the benefit of the 7th Pay Commission from January 1 next year, they said.

The arrears for this year will be paid after the finalisation of the procedure for the same.

As a result of the cabinet's decision, the treasury will have to bear a burden of Rs 3000 crore, they said.

The decision to implement the 7th Pay Commission recommendations for government employees of corporation and public venture will be taken by their board and [Finance Secretary](#) Amit Negi has been assigned responsibility in this regard.

Dehradun-Haridwar-Rishikesh have been declared metropolitan [cities](#) and a consent to make a detailed project report for metro has been given to the [Delhi Metro Rail Corporation](#) (DMRC).

The state government also posed a penalty of Rs 2 crore and Rs 2.5 crore for PG doctors for violating bond of 5 years with the state for essential service.

ECONOMIC TIMES, DEC 19, 2016

Siddaramaiah govt transfers IAS officer, sparks outrage

In August this year, the government appointed former BDA commissioner T Sham Bhatt ignoring protests and objections to its proposals.

BENGALURU: The state government has transferred 1999-batch IAS officer Subodh Yadav from the [Karnataka Public Service Commission](#) (KPSC) --the constitutional body tasked for

making recruitments to government jobs, but often made news for large-scale corruption and scams in recruitment.

The transfer has turned the spotlight back on Yadav, a recipient of PM's award for excellence in administration during the UPA regime, and has begun to show the Congress regime headed by [Siddaramaiah](#) in poor light. In June this year, he was unceremoniously shifted from BBMP where he was handling solid waste management initiatives apparently under the garbage contractor lobby.

The persons nominated as members and chairman of KPSC have quite often given tough time to the IAS men posted as secretary. There are also occasions when both colluded, which resulted in scams in the past.

With the kind of track record that Yadav has maintained, people suspect the hand of the nominated members to KPSC in his transfer. "Already created enough of animosity due to changes bng brought Everyone can't be satisfied. All kind of people with all kind of vested interests," Yadav tweeted on learning about his transfer. "Thought of doing a lot, but couldn't do anyway ," he said in another tweet. "Very disappointing to see good officers moved," tweeted [Biocon](#) founder and B.PAC chairman [Kiran MazumdarShaw](#). "Please understand that the officers who were moved are very competent and with high integrity. That's why we are disappointed," she mentioned.

"@subodhyadav111 (is) Part of service.It's the systems that need to take care but in India it's still the personality & ind touch that matters," tweeted K Ratna Prabha, additional chief secretary.

In August this year, the government ap pointed former BDA commissioner T Sham Bhatt ignoring protests and objections to its proposals. The Opposition BJP as well as the Aam Admi Party had protested Bhatt being selected for the coveted post, given the plethora of complaints that were pending against him.

CORRUPTION

TELEGRAPH, DEC 22, 2016

Top IAS named in grants swindle- PATNA TO CHENNAI, HEAT ON OFFICERS

Ramashankar

SM Raju

Patna, Dec. 21: Senior IAS officer S.M. Raju is among 16 persons accused by the vigilance bureau of committing financial irregularities to the tune of Rs 9.75 crore in a scheme meant for granting scholarships to students from the scheduled castes and tribes.

The vigilance investigation bureau lodged the complaint against Raju and 15 other public servants and middlemen at the vigilance police station in Patna yesterday. Raju, a 1991 batch IAS officer who is also known as an inventor of Ayurvedic medicines, is at present posted as additional member in the board of revenue.

This is the second time that Raju has been booked on a corruption charge. In 2003, he was arrested in Karnataka on the directive of the southern state's Lokayukta for allegedly accepting Rs 21 lakh as bribe from the principal of a college to help students clear the entrance test for the Industrial Training Institute (ITI).

Raju, who was then posted in Karnataka on inter-state deputation, was immediately repatriated from his home state to his parent cadre - Bihar - on the recommendation of the government in Bangalore. The bribery case against him is still pending in Karnataka because the Centre is yet to sanction his prosecution on the corruption charge.

Sources in the vigilance bureau here said that the scholarship money was paid to institutes by furnishing fictitious names of students with the connivance of officials of the SC/ST welfare department. Even the scholarship amount was disbursed among fake and non-existent students and institutions in Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Telangana, causing massive loss to the state exchequer.

The funds were meant for post-matriculation SC/ST students pursuing professional and technical courses in colleges and educational institutions outside Bihar during the financial year 2013-14. While a sum of Rs 9.55 crore was disbursed by the SC/ST welfare department for students belonging to the Scheduled Castes, the remaining amount (Rs 20 lakh) was withdrawn for those from the Scheduled Tribes.

Raju was posted as secretary in the SC/ST welfare department when the alleged irregularities occurred. Till the time of the filing of this report, he couldn't be reached for his comments. A senior official of the board of revenue said: "He (Raju) is currently on leave." Efforts to contact

chief secretary Anjani Kumar Singh also proved futile as he was busy in an official meeting.

The irregularities came to the fore earlier this year when a batch of 60 students hailing from East Champaran district threatened to commit mass suicide for non-payment of scholarship to them. These students, enrolled in the Rajdhani Engineering College in Odisha's Bhubaneswar, were left in the lurch as the money wasn't paid to them.

"Preliminary investigation has revealed financial irregularities in disbursement of the scholarship funds," director-general (vigilance) Ravinder Kumar said today. He said the bureau has already launched its investigation after lodging the FIR.

Named in the vigilance FIR is then special secretary in the SC/ST welfare department Suresh Paswan.

Among the other officials whose names figure in the FIR are additional director (computer) Indrajeet Mukherjee, sub-divisional police officer Vidhan Chandra Rai and block development officer Sanjay Kumar - all posted in the SC/ST welfare department. Also named are the then secretary of Gonna Institute of Information Technology and Science, Vishakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh), G.B. Naidu, and former principal of Guntur Engineering College, also in Andhra Pradesh, B. Brahmaiah.

Two middlemen - Abdul Quadir and Rajeev Saxena, both residents of Patna - are also on the wanted list of the bureau. Arun Kumar Singh has been made investigating officer of the case.

Chief minister Nitish Kumar, while replying to a question in the Legislative Council in March this year, had promised strict action against those found guilty. He had prima facie admitted financial as well as administrative lapses and ordered for a probe by the vigilance bureau.

Raju recently hogged the limelight for coming up with a series of Ayurvedic medicines, including those for patients suffering from cancer.

TELEGRAPH, DEC 22, 2016

Swoop on chief secy

G.C. Shekhar

Chennai, Dec. 21: Tamil Nadu chief secretary P. Rama Mohana Rao today became the first such officer in the country to face income-tax searches, which soon assumed a political colour.

In another first, the tax officials searched his chamber in the state secretariat, apart from his home. The operation unfolded on 10 other premises linked to Rao, including the home and offices of his son Vivek.

Tax officials claimed to have seized currency notes during the searches but no official statement was issued till this evening.

Agitated AIADMK cadres gathered outside Rao's three-storey bungalow in Anna Nagar and thrashed an Aam Aadmi Party volunteer who chanted slogans against alleged corruption in the state administration. This prompted the tax officials to call the CRPF.

An AIADMK leader said the tax swoop appeared to be a signal from the Centre to the new government in Tamil Nadu "to behave and cooperate" following Jayalalithaa's death.

Sources suggested the leads that led the tax investigators to the chief secretary's premises emerged from the CBI's questioning of J. Shekhar Reddy, a building contractor and AIADMK member whom the agency arrested today.

When chief minister O. Panneerselvam was public works minister, Reddy had bagged the largest volume of state government contracts.

Tax officials had earlier claimed - after raiding Reddy's home and office two weeks ago and without making public any documentary evidence - that they had seized papers showing huge business transactions between Rao's son and Reddy's companies.

Rao, who had also served in Gujarat for two years, was credited with tapping the huge revenue potential of sand mining when he was collector of Kancheepuram district near Chennai in 1991-92. It's through this that he is believed to have befriended Reddy.

Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee termed the searches "vindictive, unethical, technically improper action" and wondered whether it was aimed at "disturbing the federal structure".

The BJP retaliated by calling her the "*maharani* of corruption".

DEFENCE, NATIONAL

HINDUSTAN TIMES, DEC 18, 2016

Lt Gen Bipin Rawat appointed army chief, Air Marshal BS Dhanoa is new air force chief
Rahul Singh

Lt Gen Bipin Rawat was named India's next army chief on Saturday, as the government abandoned a three-decades-old tradition of elevating senior-most officers as military chiefs.

It, however, stuck to the practice in elevating vice chief air marshal BS Dhanoa – a Kargil war veteran – as the next head of the Indian Air Force.

The two new chiefs – both 1978 batch officers – will take charge on December 31.

Political parties usually avoid comment on military appointments but the choice of Rawat was immediately criticised by the opposition Congress. Its spokesman Manish Tewari questioned why the government had ignored others for Rawat, who is the now the force's vice chief. A vice-chief is not necessarily the second senior-most officer.

In early 1980s, Lt Gen SK Sinha was overlooked in the appointment of Gen AS Vaidya as the army chief.

In promoting Rawat, the claims of Eastern Army commander Lt Gen Praveen Bakshi, the senior-most general on the day present army chief Dalbir Singh retires, and Southern Army commander Lt Gen PM Hariz, were ignored.

Ads by ZINC

There were early indications that the government might not follow established norms. The names of news chiefs are conventionally announced 2-3 months before an incumbent retires.

But this time the next appointments have come barely a fortnight before the incumbents retire.

Dhanoa, who was awarded the Yudh Seva Medal after Kargil, will be the third Sikh to head the IAF after distinguished military leaders Arjan Singh and Dilbag Singh.

Rawat will be the second consecutive chief from the Gorkha Rifles. He will succeed Gen Dalbir Singh who was commissioned into 4/5 Gorkha Rifles.

Rawat, a Kashmir and Northeast veteran, miraculously survived a chopper accident when he was commander the Dimapur-based Headquarters 3 Corps. He headed the Indian brigade during the UN peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2008.

EDUCATION

PIONEER, DEC 22, 2016

AD-HOC TEACHERS' HARDSHIP TO END!

Rahiba R Parveeni1

While the Delhi University has decided to go with the final draft formula to start the regularisation of its ad-hoc teachers, the officials of the university are brainstorming to find ways of “giving breather” to the longest serving teachers.

At the same time, the Delhi University Teacher’s Association has expressed “happiness” over the initiative of starting the regularisation process even when their demand of “complete absorption” of ad-hoc teachers was not accepted.

“There are teachers who have served for 15 years as adhoc and due to some or the other problem, interviews were not held by their colleges. But putting them through a process which could result in losing their jobs is completely unfair but we are hopeful that the new 50, 30 and 20 formula will help. At least, starting the regularisation is a welcome step,” DUTA President, Nandita Narrain.

In the “50, 30, 20” formula, the first 50 points are divided into academic and research, 30 include domain knowledge, teaching skills and teaching experience and 20 include interview. This 100 point formula can get an ad hoc teacher either in as a permanent employee of the Delhi University or make them jobless. The recommendation were made by the University Grants Commission (UGC), the university had formed an expanded committee review it, after receiving opposition from teachers. In the Academic Council meeting on Monday, the recommendations were approved.

Narrain says that the fact there is consideration of teaching experience in this formula gives hope that teachers would be able to generate points based on their long stay in teaching at the university.

TRIBUNE, DEC 22, 2016

NEET in Hindi, English, 6 other languages now

Quota eligibility

Candidates qualifying NEET will be eligible for all-India quota and other quotas under state governments and institutes irrespective of the medium taken by candidates, subject to other eligibility criteria.

The Ministry of Health today decided to hold the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG) from academic year 2017-18 in eight languages — Hindi, English, Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali, Assamese, Telugu and Tamil. The test won't be held in Punjabi.

The ministry added the candidate qualifying NEET will be eligible for all-India quota and other quotas under the state governments/institutes irrespective of the medium in which exam is taken by the candidate, subject to other eligibility criteria. Joint Secretary Medical Education AK Singhal stated the collaborative efforts of the Union Health Ministry with the state health ministries had led to this decision to bring parity for students who had taken the state board exams.

In May, Union Health Minister JP Nadda met with Health Ministers and Health Secretaries of 18 states/Union Territories towards implementation of NEET across states.

NEET has replaced AIPMT and is mandatory for admissions in all-India medical/dental colleges, which means no other state can conduct its separate medical entrance.

TIMES OF INDIA, DEC 21, 2016

Class 10 board exams likely to return from 2018

Akshaya Muku

HIGHLIGHTS

- Class X Board examination was scrapped in 2010
- A new 'no-detention' policy will come in effect where students will be automatically promoted till Class V
- This will be the first major decision of Prakash Javadekar after he took over as HRD minister

MHRD minister Prakash Javadekar

NEW DELHI: The government is set to announce the reintroduction of the Class 10 board exam for students affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education(CBSE), India's largest national school test-conducting body.

The announcement is likely to be made by HRD minister Prakash Javadekar on October 25 and will be his first major decision after taking over as HRD minister in early July. The Class X boards are likely to be back from 2018.

Javadekar will also announce a new 'no-detention' policy wherein students will be automatically promoted till Class V. States will then devise their options till Class VIII but will need to provide an opportunity for a "re-test" for students who fail.

The CBSE Class 10 board examination was scrapped in 2010 and replaced with the current **continuous and comprehensive evaluation** that provides for tests and grading through the year as a means to reduce pressure on students.

Reasons for reintroduction of the Class X Board examinations include feedback from states and representative organisations of parents and teachers that doing away with the exam along with the no-detention policy was affecting academic standards, even though studies indicated that the number of drop-outs has reduced.

The board exam was seen — by those arguing for its retention — as a means of preparing students for the more important school-leaving Class XII tests.

The no-detention policy was felt to be reducing the authority of teachers and prompting schools to merely shuffle an under-performing student from one class to the next.

There were large number of government school students failing in class XI as evaluations became more demanding at the senior school level. These factors seem to have prompted the government to consider amending the decisions.

Touted as a Diwali gift in the HRD ministry, the decision will be made public after the meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE). State education ministers who are to attend the CABE meeting have been intimated about restoration of Class 10 board examination. Several of them have been saying that scrapping of class X board has not delivered the anticipated benefits.

As the formula for "no-detention" seems complex, "it is for states to decide if they want to detain a child in class 5, 6 or 7 or in all of these classes," a source said. But a re-test will be made mandatory for students who fail from class VI to VIII. A CABE committee headed by Rajasthan

education minister Vasudev Devnani has also ruled in favour of removing the provision of "no-detention" and recommended re-tests. However, NCERT is opposed to removal of the "no-detention" policy.

Top Comment

Drop 2nd and 3rd languages as a evaluation for any exam. Instead teach language speaking which will have more value and students and adults will enjoy. The exam oriented language teaching has never h... Read More

Ramakrishnan S

While restoration of the class 10 board examination does not need a legislative intervention, a change in the no-detention policy does require an amendment in section 16 of the Right to Education Act.

The issue of "no-detention" was also considered by the Supreme Court, which had ruled in its favour. In the Society for Un-aided Private Schools of Rajasthan vs Union of India case, the SC had said holding back in a class or expulsion may lead to large number of dropouts, defeating the purpose of the act, which was to "strengthen the social fabric of democracy and to create a just and humane society". The decisions were taken in a meeting on Wednesday.

HINDU, DEC 20, 2016

DU exempts pre-2009 PhD holders from NET

The Delhi University's academic council in its meeting on Monday exempted PhD degree holders before 2009 from National Eligibility Test (NET), while approving a sub-committee's recommendations for recruitment of teachers with minor change.

The university's sub-committee had recommended 50:30:20 formula for recruitment. As per the formula, 25 marks each of a total of 50 marks, were fixed for academic record and research criteria, 20 for teaching and 10 for domain knowledge, while 20 marks were fixed for the interview.

Merging marks

The council merged academic record and research marks to a total of 50 marks, said Council member Prof Hansraj Suman.

“The members also approved exempting candidates with PhD degree prior to 2009, from having NET eligibility,” he said. Such candidates will, however, have to submit two published research papers, he added.

The meeting continued in the night with discussions on criteria for promotion of teachers.

“No final decision was taken on promotion criteria and there was the likelihood of formation of a committee for further deliberation,” Prof Suman said. The decisions taken by the Academic Council will have to be approved by DU's Executive Council.

Law students

Meanwhile, The law students of DU with less than 70 per cent attendance have been allowed to appear in the exams and admit cards are being issued to them following a communication from Bar Council of India.

The students had been protesting against the decision of DU to debar them from exams this year due to short attendance for the past few days. PTI

HINDUSTAN TIMES, DEC 18, 2016

Ministers want education system to make students more patriotic

Neelam Pandey

From introducing military lessons in schools to compulsory hoisting of the national flag, education must help make students more patriotic than they are, a group of ministers has suggested to the country's top education policy-making body.

Among their other suggestions are building more military-focused schools, teaching biographies of national heroes and making the singing of the national anthem mandatory for children to create an “ecosystem of morals, ethics and patriotism”.

The ideas were pushed by several central ministers as well as those from BJP-ruled states at a meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) on October 25. The minutes of the meeting were accessed by HT this week. CABE is the highest advisory body on education for central and state governments.

The suggestions echo an increasingly strident brand of nationalism whose rise has coincided with the election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government two years ago. Many oppose this resurgent nativist wave as just a means to curb personal freedom and dissent.

In the October 25 meeting, Deepak Joshi, Madhya Pradesh's minister of state for school education, suggested that more Sainik schools be built than state-run Kendriya and Navodaya Vidyalayas because "nationalism and patriotism is need of the hour".

HIGHLIGHTS

- A group of ministers has suggested to the country's top education policy-making body that education must help make students more patriotic.
- Among their other suggestions are building more military-focused schools, teaching biographies of national heroes and making the singing of the national anthem mandatory.
- The ideas were pushed by several central ministers as well as those from BJP-ruled states at a meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education.

"He further suggested that chapters on the role of freedom fighters and stories of national heroes could be included in the upcoming policy," according to the meeting's minutes. The government is in the process of overhauling the country's education policy.

Joshi's idea of military education was echoed by Mahendra Nath Pandey, Union minister of state for human resource development, who said, "Military education should be provided to students to promote the idea of patriotism and nationalism. He felt that due importance be given to girls' education and value education".

Discussions also included shortages of teachers, skill development, the state of midday meals in schools, how to push yoga, rising dropout rates and the possibility of imparting lessons in mother tongue.

Vijay Goel, minister of state (independent charge) for youth affairs and sports, stressed on instilling patriotism and nationalism in the curricula. Terming moral-and value-based education as the need of the hour, Kunwar Vijay Shah, minister of school education of Madhya Pradesh, suggested schools and government offices compulsorily fly the Tricolour.

For Himanta Biswa Sarma, minister for higher, secondary and elementary education in Assam, the focus must be on developing an eco-system where students could learn and develop patriotism.

But this isn't the first time government ministers have spoken of the need for education to be more patriotic.

In February, the central government decided to [fly the Tricolour atop a 207-foot mast](#) in all central universities across the country to evoke nationalistic sentiments on campuses, many of which were at that time rocked by anti-establishment protests.

JUDICIARY

ECONOMIC TIMES, DEC 20, 2016

Justice Khehar named next Chief Justice of India

By [Samanwaya Rautray](#)

Some parties had criticised the delay in clearing the appointment. Top court functionaries had also expressed disquiet over the delay. The file regarding the appointment, which is a fait accompli once the outgoing CJI recommends the appointment of his successor in terms of the top court's pecking order, first goes to the Law Ministry and then to the President's office.

NEW DELHI: The President on Monday appointed Justice JS [Khehar](#), the second senior-most judge in the [Supreme Court](#), as the next Chief Justice of [India](#).

Justice Khehar will take over after Chief Justice TS Thakur demits office on January 3, ending the suspense on who will head one of the most-powerful supreme courts in the [world](#).

Justice Khehar will be the first Sikh CJI and will take over on January 4, after a formal swearing in ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan. He will hold office for little over seven months as the head of the judiciary. President [Pranab Mukherjee](#), who will administer Khehar the oath of office, cleared the file only on Monday evening, a source said.

Though Justice Khehar's name had been forwarded by CJI Thakur to the government over a fortnight ago, the delay in clearing it had led to [speculation](#) as such high-level appointments are made in a week, the source said.

Some [parties](#) had criticised the delay in clearing the appointment. Top court functionaries had also expressed disquiet over the delay. The file regarding the appointment, which is a fait accompli once the outgoing CJI recommends the appointment of his successor in terms of the top court's pecking order, first goes to the Law Ministry and then to the President's office.

LABOUR

BUSINESS STANDARD, DEC 20, 2016

40 million subscribers will now get a 4-year low interest rate of 8.65% on PF deposits

Central Board of Trustees took this decision in light of low surplus; fulfil aim of lowering interest rates on other saving schemes

Arindam Majumder

127

EPFO will remain best savings route for the risk averse Higher equity share can boost EPF's returns EPFO settling death claims in 7 days will reduce relatives' ordeal PF deposits to fetch lower returns as EPFO cuts rates to 8.65% for 2016-17

Forty million subscribers will get a four-year low interest rate of 8.65 per cent on their money in Employees Provident Fund for the current financial year, against 8.8 per cent they received in 2015-16. The highest decision-making body, Central Board of Trustees (CBT), of the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) took the decision at a meeting in Bengaluru despite objections raised by the trade unions.

The decision by the body to cut interest rate was taken in light of low surplus and the finance ministry's aim of lowering interest rates on other saving schemes.

EPFO's financial audit and investment committee (FIAC) had recommended a similar cut in interest rate as the body's surplus was not enough to pay an interest rate of 8.8 per cent as demanded by the trade unions.

According to sources in the labour ministry, FIAC said that continuing with an 8.8 per cent rate this financial year will leave EPFO with a deficit of around Rs 394 crore, while with an interest rate of 8.65 per cent, the body will be left with a surplus of around Rs 250 crore.

FIAC preliminary estimates show that EPFO's total corpus will stand at around Rs 39,000 crore for 2016-17. However, trade union members argued that FIAC has not taken into consideration the interest it will earn from the investment in equities. In September, EPFO hiked its exposure to equities to 10 per cent of total corpus from the previous five per cent.

"We tried to impress on the minister that if the income from exchange-traded fund is added, then an 8.8 per cent rate will not result in deficit," said D L Sachdev, general secretary, AITUC.

While there was a demand by most trade unions to continue with the 8.8 per cent rate for this financial year, the government seems to have taken largest trade union Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) on board. Virjesh Upadhyay, secretary of BMS said that a cut in interest rate was in line with falling interest rate worldwide. “Despite a cut, EPFO is still the most attractive savings scheme with a higher interest rate than any other savings scheme in the country,” Upadhyay told Business Standard.

A senior labour ministry official said the decision was also in line with other small savings scheme — interest rates which have been cut by the finance ministry as these are now market-linked and yield of government securities with equivalent maturities depleted — and other saving instruments in the market. “Finance ministry has cut interest rate on public provident fund (PPF). EPFO cannot have interest rate in isolation,” the official said.

Other saving schemes give quite a less interest rates. For instance, PPF yields eight per cent interest rate as of now and also has tax exemption on contribution, accretion and withdrawal like EPF. SBI fixed deposits from five years to 10 years fetch 6.5 per cent rate of interest, but do not have tax exemptions beyond Rs 10,000.

Ashish Shanker, head investment advisory Motilal Oswal Pvt Wealth Management, raises questions about one's retirement funds keeping pace with high inflation.

“With interest rates being where they are and inflation continuously threatening to erode the value of money, one needs to ask a broader question for a portfolio that confines itself predominantly to debt instruments. How safe is one’s retirement money?,” he said. According to the practice, the finance ministry gives concurrence to the rate of interest fixed by the CBT, considering the income projections of a year. After its ratification, the interest rate is notified and credited into the accounts of subscribers. However, CBT and the finance ministry differed over the interest rates for 2015-16 when the North Block cut interest rate to 8.7 per cent against the former’s recommendation of 8.8 per cent. Later, the ministry relented to CBT's recommendations, after protests by unions.

Feel the pinch

- Interest rate cut to a four-year low of 8.65 per cent

- The decision by the body to cut interest rate was taken in light of low surplus and the finance ministry's aim of lowering interest rates on other saving schemes
- Unions cry foul, say return on equity investment not factored in
- According to sources, the financial audit and investment committee said continuing with an 8.8 per cent rate this financial year will leave EPFO with a deficit of around Rs 394 crore
- FIAC preliminary estimates show that EPFO's total corpus will stand at around Rs 39,000 crore for 2016-17

LIBRARIES

HINDU, DEC 19, 2016

British Library to digitise 4,000 Bengali books

‘This exciting project will make South Asia’s rich and vibrant printed heritage accessible to everyone’

A new British Library project will digitise 4,000 early printed Bengali books, amounting to more than 800,000 pages, as part of the U.K. India Year of Culture plans for 2017.

The digitisation project is part of a wider “Two Centuries of Indian Print” project, an international partnership led by the British Library with funding from the Newton Fund to digitise unique material from its South Asian printed books collection. The books are in high demand and span at least 22 South Asian languages.

Project’s scope

The project will explore how digital research methods and tools can be applied to this unique digitised collection, and will deliver digital skills workshops and training sessions at Indian institutions to support innovative research within South Asian studies.

Baroness Blackstone, chairman of the British Library, said: “This exciting project will make South Asia’s rich and vibrant printed heritage accessible to everyone; millions of pages will be digitised for researchers around the world. “I am very much looking forward to meeting our partner institutions in India this week to discuss the collaboration.

“I thank them and our funding supporters for making Two Centuries of Indian Print possible.”

Two Centuries of Indian Print recently benefited from an additional donation of nearly 500,000 pounds from the Newton Fund, which will allow for the digitisation of the South Asian Vernacular Tracts series, of which the Library holds approximately 6,000 volumes.

Fragile publications

These are rare, fragile publications, many of which do not survive in other library collections, meaning they are hugely in demand by researchers.

U.K.'s Minister for Universities and Science Jo Johnson said: "The British Library hosts the world's largest single collection of early printed South Asian books and the Two Centuries of Indian Print project is an inspiring initiative that will give both researchers and the public access to this rich heritage."

To share skills

Also as part of the 'Two Centuries of Indian Print' project, the British Library is collaborating with partner institutions in India to share knowledge and skills, helping to stimulate digital scholarship and build research capacity. — PTI

MONEY

ECONOMIC TIMES, DEC 20, 2016

RBI to issue new Rs 500 note in new series with inset letter R

The new notes will bear the signature of Urjit R Patel, the incumbent RBI Governor, and the year of printing '2016' printed on the reverse of the banknote.

MUMBAI: The [Reserve Bank of India](#) today said it is issuing a new batch of [Rs 500](#) notes in Mahatma Gandhi (New) series with the inset [letter R](#) in both the number panels.

"In continuation of issuing of Rs 500 denomination banknotes in Mahatma Gandhi (new) series which are currently [legal](#) tender, a new batch of banknotes with inset letter 'R' in both the number panels, bearing the signature of Dr [Urjit R Patel](#) Governor, Reserve [Bank](#) of India, with the year of printing '2016' are being issued," RBI said in a notification.

The [central bank](#) in two separate notifications further said it will shortly issue Rs 50 denomination banknotes in the Mahatma Gandhi Series-2005, with inset letter 'R' and 'L' in both the number panels.

The new [notes](#) will bear the signature of Urjit R Patel, the incumbent RBI Governor, and the year of printing '2016' printed on the reverse of the banknote.

"These banknotes (Rs 50 notes with insert letter L and R) have the ascending size of numerals in the number panels; the banknotes are similar to the banknotes of Rs 50 issued earlier in Mahatma Gandhi Series-2005," RBI said.

Meanwhile, the Central Bank today imposed stiff restrictions on depositing more than Rs 5,000 in the scrapped Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes, mandating that it can be deposited only once per account till December 30, that too after explaining to bank officials the reasons for not having done that so far

PARLIAMENT

HINDU, DEC 19, 2016

The unmaking of Parliament

Neera Chandhoke

Parliament proceedings

Representative democracy is the only form of democracy that enables a relationship between the citizen and the state, provided our representatives do what they are supposed to be doing in Parliament.

The Indian Parliament meets, the Indian Parliament ceases to meet, and there is nary an impact of these meetings/non-meetings on the democratic discourse in the country. Newspaper columns rue the waste of time and money, commentators complain about the clatter and ear-splitting clamour in Parliament, analysts regret that widening of the social base of the body has not resulted in meaningful legislation or responsible legislators, legal minds register the shift to law-making by ordinance, and most Indians find Parliament irrelevant to the needs of the day.

The chaos and the paradox

Why should they not find it so? The Opposition focusses on denigrating the government rather than engaging with policies, the government hardly bothers to reply, political theatrics replace calm, reflective and reasoned debate, and the Prime Minister prefers to speak directly to existing and potential voters. What Jawaharlal Nehru termed the 'majesty' of Parliament is insistently, systematically and repeatedly desecrated. Is not democracy also subverted in the process?

The paradox is that generalised loss of confidence in representative institutions has not led to disenchantment with democracy. Surveys show that Indians value democracy. They value democracy because this form of government has enabled them to realise the primordial desire of each human being to be treated as an equal, at least during election time. Over the years, we see the making of a body politic shaped by democratic imaginings, and struggles to attain equality and dignity. Elections are marked by high voter turnouts,

voters exercise freedom of choice and elect and dismiss governments in often unpredictable ways.

The biography of India's democracy validates confidence in the maturity of the political public. The Motilal Nehru Constitutional Draft recommended adult suffrage for both men and women as far back as 1928, the very year women finally got the vote in England. "We," held the report, "attach no weight to the objections based on the prevailing illiteracy of the masses and their lack of political experience... Political experience can only be acquired by an active participation in political institutions and does not entirely depend on literacy. There should be equal opportunities available to all to acquire this experience." The belief, which was reiterated in the Constituent Assembly, underscored the competence of ordinary women and men to participate in political deliberations. Simply put, politics is too important an activity to be left to professional politicians.

In eighteenth century France, the great defender of direct democracy, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, wrote that sovereignty "lies essentially in the general will, and will does not admit of representation: it is either the same or the other; there is no intermediate possibility". But direct democracy can hardly be practised in large and complex societies. In market-oriented societies, dominated as they are by the imperative of 'need satisfaction', citizens cannot afford to put aside the time and energy-consuming task of earning their daily bread, and participate whole-time in an activity called politics. Besides modern citizens, unlike ancient Athenians, value and guard their personal spaces, their vocation, their interests, their social life, and their privacy. For these reasons and more, democracy requires a third set of political agents to mediate between the first two sets: the citizen and the state. This is the representative.

To stand in

Whereas the status of the citizen as the *primary* unit of political society is incontrovertible, the status of the representative is derivative. Voters authorise representatives to speak and act on their behalf. Notably, the representative does not speak for individuals, her duty is to

ensure that the opinions, interests and needs of constituents are adequately, competently and effectively represented in forums of decision-making. Representatives are obliged to perform the functions that they have been charged with, notably to assist in the production of appropriate policies. Finally, the representative is accountable to her constituency for all acts of omission and commission. In theory, citizens have command over *who* they want to be represented by, and what issues representatives, normally members of political parties, should represent.

Civil society in India is inhabited by a large number of organisations, the media, social associations, neighbourhood groups, all kinds of professional lobbies, non-governmental and non-profit organisations, philanthropic bodies, social and political movements, and trade unions. Each of them claims to represent the interests of their members. Political representatives, however, possess three advantages over other modes of representation. One, they represent *all* the members of a territorially delimited constituency, as opposed to say trade unions. Two, political representatives are accountable to their constituents via the route of election. And three, the party representative acquires legitimacy by the fact that she has been elected by the people whose interests she is charged with representing and furthering. Representative democracy is not perfect, it is flawed, but it is the only form of democracy that enables a relationship between the citizen and the state, provided our representatives do what they are supposed to be doing in Parliament.

Parliament makes laws, ensures accountability of the government, and considers and scrutinises legislation through the committee system. But above all, Parliament provides a forum and establishes procedures for reflection on, and critical engagement with, what has been done, and what needs to be done in the light of popular expectations. Representatives are expected to 'stand in' for their constituents, even as they keep in mind that they are in Parliament to promote the public good, and not for advancing petty, grasping projects.

This is the job of representatives, the reason for which they have been elected, the source of their power and privilege, the rationale for their very existence. This is no small matter we are discussing, says Socrates in Plato's *Republic*, we are discussing how we should live.

The deliberative aspect of Parliament is no small matter, nor is it just another function of the body. Deliberation, by way of representation of different points of view, is an indispensable component of how we, as a collective, should live. For policies generated by the parliamentary process establish a framework for the transaction of all manners of projects in different settings.

A sharp decline

It is precisely this aspect of our Parliament that has visibly gone missing. The failure of the body to deliberate on the public good is condemnable. Telecasts showed empty benches in the Rajya Sabha on the opening day of the winter session of Parliament. It made for a sorry spectacle. Some members delivered excellent speeches on the benefits, or the lack thereof, of demonetisation. But parliamentarians simply could not be bothered to listen to or participate in a debate on what misery an ill-thought-out action had caused their own constituents.

The sharp decline in the effectiveness of Parliament, its failure to monitor the executive, delegation of power to non-representative regulatory institutions, the substitution of deal-making for informed arguments, the rushing through of legislation without discussion, and the increasing concentration of power in the hands of the executive, has been commented on extensively. Of overriding concern is the wilting of the representative and deliberative functions of the body.

If India wishes to hold on to her democratic credentials, parliamentarians must recognise that the task of representing the opinions, interests and needs of citizens is their paramount responsibility. Nehru, in a famous speech he made in the Lok Sabha on March 28, 1957, had said that historians will not pay much attention to the time expended on speeches, or the number of questions asked and answered in Parliament. They will be interested in the deeper things that go into the making of a nation. There is no higher responsibility than to be a member of this sovereign body responsible for the fate of vast numbers of human beings. “Whether we are worthy of it or not is another matter.” Our Parliamentarians have

proved unworthy of the great responsibility bestowed on them. This is the political tragedy of our democracy.

Neera Chandhoke is a former Professor of Political Science, Delhi University.

RAILWAYS

BUSINES STANDARD, DEC 20, 2016

Indian Railways ends flexi fare experiment on two stretches

The rollback would result in reduction of fares of the trains on the said sections by an average of nine to 24%

Ramakrishnan T S: Will flexi-fare for 'elite' trains work?Railway surge pricing to be reviewed in JanRail surge pricing Modi's model to loot common people: RahulCongress, Left demand roll back of rail surge pricing**Bibek Debroy:** Station visibility at night

The railways have, after starting an experiment of flexible fares from September 9 on some prime trains, decided to end it on the Jaipur-Ajmer and Mysuru-Bengaluru sections.

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The railways were expecting additional revenue of Rs 500 crore by March from this but have got only Rs 92 crore more in the first two months. The rollback would result in reduction of fares of the trains on the said sections by an average of nine to 24%.

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The system was the same one followed by cab aggregators and the airline sector, with pricing driven by the rise or fall in demand. The new system was introduced on 142 premium trains — 42 Rajdhani, 46 Shatabdi and 54 of the Duronto. It had reduced the gap between airfares and the rates of these premium trains. Except for the two sections mentioned, the flexifare system would continue for now. In addition, the railways have decided on discounts for some train journeys.

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“We had introduced the system on an experimental basis and will have a full review in a couple of months. Till then, the pricing system for premium trains will continue to be the same in the other sections,” said an official source.

According to sources, the expectation was for additional revenue of Rs 83 crore a month but occupancy fell with higher fares; many shifted to road or air travel. In the system, prices are to rise by 10% for every 10% of tickets sold. Supplementary levies such as reservation charge, superfast charge, catering charge and service tax remain the same.

The railways ministry said the new discounts it has decided to give (for six months on a trial basis) for the two sections mentioned, where flexi fare has been rolled back, would mean the ticket for the New Delhi-Ajmer Shatabdi would drop to Rs 300 from Rs 351, and of the Jaipur-Kishangarh Shatabdi from Rs 328 to Rs 300; Ajmer-Jaipur will drop to Rs 200, from Rs 396.

Also, the Bengaluru City-Mysuru and Mysuru-Bengaluru City Shatabdi would see a drop of 31% and 18.4%, respectively.

DECCAN HERALD, DEC 20, 2016

10% discount on vacant berths in premium trains

Indian Railways has decided to sell vacant berths in premium trains at a discount. A 10% rebate shall be applicable on the base fare of the last ticket sold for a particular class and train just before preparation of the first chart.

This discount shall also be applicable to the allotment of vacant berths (due to passengers not turning up) in the train by Train Ticket Examiners.

The discount will be applicable from December 20 on all Rajdhani, Duranto and Shatabdi trains with flexi fare. According to sources, flexi fare is adversely affecting occupancy and several seats are left vacant.

In the flexi fare system, the price of the last tickets sold turns out to be 50% costlier than the actual price. So, for booking of a vacant berth, the passenger will have to pay only 40% more on the basic fare. Other charges will remain the same.

The Railways has taken some more measures to address the problem of vacant berths. It has reduced fares of two Shatabdi trains — Chennai Central-Mysore and New Delhi-Ajmer. The fare from Chennai to Mysore will come down from Rs 440 to Rs 300 and from Mysore to Chennai will come down from Rs 340 to Rs 300.

The fare for Ajmer to Jaipur on New Delhi-Ajmer Shatabdi will be Rs 300. The railways has also reduced Tatkal Quota in flexi fare trains to 10% in every class.

The Vikalp scheme has also been broadened. Wait-listed passengers will be accommodated in any train or class without being charged any extra money. The passengers are only required to give the option at the time of booking.

PIONEER, DEC 20, 2016

RAC passengers won't get confirm berths!

Deepak Kumar Jha

Come New Year, travelling by train on RAC (reservation against cancellation) tickets will get more taxing. Starting January 16, those with RAC tickets will have to travel being seated throughout the journey, short or long, in most of the trains in India.

Their tickets will not be confirmed with a full-berth allocation in case of a cancellation, as is the practice now. It means, if you get an RAC status at the time of reservation, your ticket status will remain unchanged till the end of the journey.

Besides, the Railways has also tactfully changed the berth allocation practice for children within the age group of 5-12 years. The full fare has to be paid now in case the child requires a seat. Else, you need to pay half the price but without any seat. Earlier, half fare for children in the age group was charged with a full-berth allocation.

The new measure will be applicable only in trains with non-LHB (Linke Hofmann Busch) coaches and will not affect those like Rajdhani/

Shatabadis/Durontos with LHB coaches, where the existing system will continue.

With a majority of trains in India having non-LHB coaches, sources said the move will surely inconvenience passengers. The Railways, however, argued that this step will actually accommodate more travellers by virtue of increase in number of RAC berths and help it earn an additional Rs 1,500 crore annually.

“The revised allocation of seats would increase the chances of waitlisted passengers to get RAC seats. More than 50 per cent of trains run with 24 coaches (maximum permitted number). Each train has 13 to 15 sleeper coaches. The revised allocation would add a minimum of 35 to 40 passengers in all the classes,” said a senior railway official.

Officials said berths, which remain vacant in the intermediate stations on several long distance routes, even after catering to all the RAC passengers, will get filled under the new arrangement. This decision, however, has now reduced the chances of senior citizens and pregnant women getting side lower berths.

“At least, some of the waitlisted passengers would get seating arrangements if they at all need to travel. If an RAC gets cancelled, then the next waitlisted ticket would get an opportunity to jump into the RAC and hence he or she can travel,” explained a senior railway official.

Currently, there are five RAC berths in Sleeper coaches, which have been increased to seven and as a result 14 passengers can be accommodated instead of 10 only.

In the 3AC coaches, there were only two RAC berths which have been increased to four to accommodate total eight passengers instead of four earlier. For the 2AC coaches, RAC berths have been increased to three from the existing two. Now six passengers can be accommodated in 2AC instead of four only.

The latest move will come on the heels of those like the recently-introduced flexi-fare system in Rajdhani and Shatabdi for its half-vacant seats, which were offered on the pattern of dynamic fare system in airlines. It also did not yield the desired results.

In fact, worried over poor occupancy in some Shatabdi trains, the Railways on Monday withdrew the flexi-fare system in certain sections of Ajmer and Mysore Shatabdi service. “Instead, it has been decided to give discounted fare in AC Chair Car in selected sectors of New Delhi-Ajmer Shatabdi Express and Chennai Central - Mysore Shatabdi Express,” said a senior Railway

Ministry official. Other surcharge, if applicable shall be levied separately. The decision will be implemented from December 20.

Railways also did away with revoking of concessions of NRI senior citizens earning lot of criticism for its decisions which resulted in very miniscule financial gains in passenger earnings for the railways.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

TELEGRAPH, DEC 20, 2016

Footloose scientists- The next frontier of liberalization

Writing on the wall: Ashok V. Desai

India's rulers have always had high expectations from Indian science. Nehru said to Indian Science Congress in 1937, "It is science alone that can solve the problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening custom and tradition, of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people." Speaking to the same Congress 79 years later, Narendra Modi asked scientists to concentrate on his five Es: Economy, Environment, Energy, Empathy and Equity. His predecessor, Manmohan Singh, also religiously addressed scientists year in and year out and exhorted them to solve the country's problems.

If prime ministers' wishes were horses, Indian scientists would have won the global race long ago. It would be wrong to say that science has nothing to do with the considerable improvement of Indian standards of living: cell phones, for instance, have enabled a majority of Indians to keep in touch with their friends and relatives many miles away; and synthetic materials have made them much better clothed and shod. Once in a while, even an Indian innovation has made a difference - for instance, the autorickshaw, though it was followed very soon by better variants from eastern countries.

Politicians give high ratings to utility, especially social; scientists give importance to novelty. Nobel prizes are given to scientists who "advance" science - that is, make novel discoveries. But novelty is a matter of degree. From their first years, scientists learn science by studying what past scientists have done. When they begin to publish, their publications are supposed to add something new; but their papers are full of citations. Their contribution is often only marginal.

The cheapest and quickest way of learning from other scientists is to read their publications. But the quality of learning depends on whom one learns from; and the most effective way of learning is to meet, listen, and talk with bright scientists. Geniuses tend to congregate in great universities and research institutes; those who want to do great science must go and spend time with them.

These intellectual interactions have recently been subjected to statistical analysis, yielding interesting results. One of the leading analysts in this field is Chiara Franzoni of Milan Polytechnic. She and her colleagues asked a sample of scientists why they chose to go abroad. The answers they got were a combination: that the scientists thereby met prestigious scientists in famous institutions, and that they improved their career prospects.

Which were the countries whose scientists were most likely to leave and go abroad? The world champion was India; 39.8 per cent of its scientists in the sample were studying or working abroad in 2011. The second country, surprisingly, was Switzerland; a third of its scientists were abroad. British and Dutch scientists came next. I guess the presence of a better country to migrate to, particularly Germany and the US, made a difference. Japan had the lowest proportion

abroad, followed by the United States of America (China was not in the sample).

The opposite question is, which countries have most foreign scientists? The top three countries are Switzerland (57 per cent), Canada (46 per cent) and Australia (44 per cent). The three least hospitable countries are India (1 per cent), Italy (3 per cent) and Japan (5 per cent). Italy, Japan and the US were the countries with the highest proportion of scientists who had never gone abroad; those with the lowest proportion were Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The countries with the highest proportion of scientists who had returned after a foreign stint were India, Spain and Brazil; those with the lowest proportion were the US, Italy and the Netherlands. So many Indians returned because so many went abroad; so few Americans returned because so few went abroad.

The scientists were asked how likely they were to return home. British, Italian, Danish and Belgian scientists were least likely to go back, followed closely by Indians; Swedes, Canadians, Swiss and Germans were the most likely to go back.

Did a stint abroad make a difference to scientists' performance? Migrant scientists outperformed immobile scientists. Franzoni and colleagues' explanation is that movement leads to new combinations of knowledge, and that scientists meet others who match their speciality. They found that migrant scientists had larger research networks. Those who moved after finishing study benefited more from collaboration.

Working abroad did not necessarily mean working with foreigners; migrant scientists often worked with fellow nationals abroad. Their networks stretched across country borders, but linguistic and cultural bonds survived international migration.

Where do migrant scientists go? The US dominates the destinations. The quality of its research institutions makes a crucial difference, but respondents also mentioned the American lifestyle; I guess the greater openness of American society also attracts bright people. But other countries have been nibbling away recently. Australia, Germany and Switzerland have attracted both doctoral students and trained scientists. France and Britain have also attracted scientists, but have failed to attract PhD students.

What does this imply for India? The last prime minister, Manmohan Singh, was highly educated, and paid frequent homage to science and technology. His government issued a science and technology policy in 2013 that was full of fine sentiments; but no practical action followed. Earlier this year, the president announced that the present government was working on yet another science and technology policy, but was in no hurry to formulate one; it was aiming at issuing one in 2020.

Can we do better? I think we can. The government has long spent liberally on research laboratories and educational institutions, but has no fruit to show. It had once thought of allowing entry of good foreign universities, but then balked. We have good minds, and our universities teach students well enough to qualify them for foreign universities. If we allow foreign universities in, many more of our students would be trained in good science. But foreign universities will not come unless they are allowed to charge whatever fees they want, and unless

they can send teachers freely in and out of India. Hence we need price decontrol of our universities; if the government wants cheap education, let it subsidize students. And we need decontrol of movement of qualified foreigners into and out of India. They are needed not only in educational institutions, but in enterprises as well. If India is to excel in science and technology, it has to become far more open to foreign institutions and nationals.

India was held back for decades by Nehruvian policies of import substitution. We threw them out of the window in the 1991 reforms in the areas of goods and technology, but we did not liberalize international movement of intellectuals and the institutions that shelter them. This should be the next frontier of liberalization. If we think radically in this area, we can aspire in a few decades to become another United States or Germany - an international powerhouse of science and technology. If we continue in our parochial ways, we will continue to be the country that bright people want to leave. Does the government have the foresight and the courage for the radical change in policy? It can demonstrate that it has: it can begin by abolishing the ministry of commerce and industry, the last refuge of the licence permit *raj*.

TRANSPORT

HINDUSTAN TIMES, DEC 21, 2016

To boost public transport, Delhi govt offers 75% discount on bus travel

Faizan Haidar

For the whole of January, there will be a flat fare of Rs 5 in non-AC DTC and cluster buses and Rs 10 for air-conditioned buses.

Travel by bus is all set to get cheaper as the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Delhi is offering discount of up to 75% in order to encourage more people use public transport and leave their personal vehicles at home.

For the whole of January, there will be a flat fare of Rs 5 in non-AC DTC and cluster buses and Rs 10 for air-conditioned buses.

Right now, a ride in a non-AC bus can cost anywhere between Rs 5 and Rs 15. The AC buses charge fares between Rs 10 and Rs 25.

The government has decided to give free travel passes to students (below the age of 21), widows and senior citizens.

It is also offering a permanent discount of 75% on travel passes to women and those belonging to the economically weaker section.

They can get a monthly pass for Rs 250, which currently costs Rs 800 for non-AC buses and Rs 1,000 for AC buses.

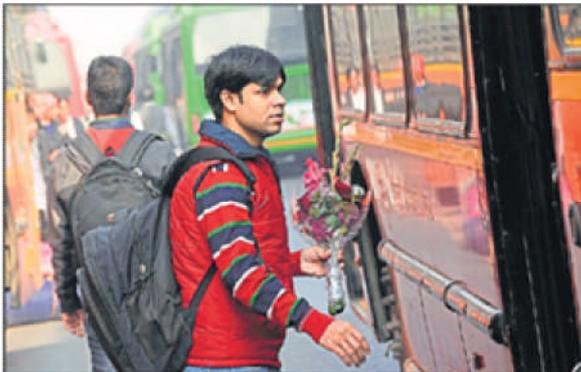
“Our aim is to reduce the number of vehicles on road, which will reduce pollution. Buses are anyway running empty and by lowering the fare, we are expecting more people to use the bus

service. We are targeting youngsters and if they leave their bikes home and take the bus, then pollution will be reduced to a certain extent,” said a senior transport department official.

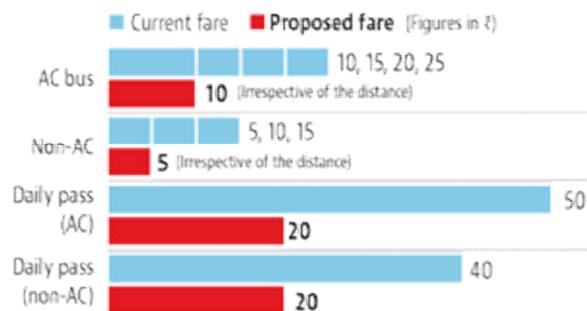
As per the data, 21.80% Delhi commuters travel by bus but share of buses among all registered vehicles in Delhi has gone down from 1.52% in 1980-81 to 0.36% in 2014-15. However, during the same period, the share of private vehicles (two and four wheelers) increased from 86.61 % in 1980-81 to 95.95% in 2014-15.

DTC SLASHES BUS FARE BY 75%

DTC carried 43.47 lakh passengers per day in 2013-14, 38.87 lakh per day in 2014-15 and 35 lakh in 2015-16



■ The idea is to encourage people to use public transport. BURHAN KINJ / HT



Other changes: Monthly pass (for general) that costs ₹1,000 for AC and ₹800 for Non-AC buses will now cost ₹250

THE FREE CATEGORY

- ▶ Monthly pass for senior citizens for AC (₹350)
- ▶ Monthly pass for senior citizens for non-AC (₹250)
- ▶ Monthly pass for students (₹100)

DTC fares for the different segments. (HT Graphics)

Cars and two-wheelers eat up more than 75% of the road space but meet only 20% of the commuting demand and buses use less than 5% of the road space but meet more than 60% of the travel demand.

Sources said Deputy CM Manish Sisodia and transport minister Satyendar Jain held a meeting on Tuesday and asked the department to implement the scheme at the earliest.

“The notification for flat fare scheme will be out in 2-3 days and initially, the scheme period would be from January 1 to 31. The scheme to give discount on the pass will be announced soon. Free passes will be issued for a year and can be renewed after that,” the official said.

Sources said that Jain was facing resistance from the department on the issue, but Sisodia has now directed the department to implement it without any delay. Of the 4352 buses, DTC has 569 standard, 2,506 green low-floor and 1,275 AC low floor buses. Besides this, there are 1100 cluster buses in the city. The standard buses are overaged and will be taken off road by the end of 2016.

DTC carried 43.47 lakh passengers per day in 2013-14, which reduced to 38.87 lakh per day in 2014-15 and it reduced to 35 lakh in 2015-16.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

DECCAN HERALD, DEC 19, 2016

Rajasthan to impose fine on those who abandon cows

In an unprecedented move, Rajasthan has announced that it would penalise owners who abandon their cows or let them starve to death.

The “State government, for the first time, formulated a stringent law for cow protection,” Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje said at a public hearing in Jodhpur.

“A person failing to properly maintain a cow must pay Rs 10,000. Those who abandon cows after milking them will also be penalised.” Her announcement comes four months after 5,000 cows died at the Hingonia cow rehabilitation centre maintained by the Jaipur Municipal Corporation. The incident earned nationwide condemnation and embarrassed the state that prided itself on creating the country’s first ever cow welfare ministry.

Caught off-guard by the announcement, officials of the Animal Husbandry and Cow Welfare departments said the government has been mulling imposition of tough penalties for some time.

“At present, the fine imposed on owners of stray cows ranges from Rs 500 to Rs 2,500 depending on the city. It is under the jurisdiction of the municipal administration,” secretary for Animal Husbandry Kunji Lal Meena said, adding that the new rules would apply to the whole of Rajasthan.

The CM’s effort to protect cows was made obvious when the JMC mayor was asked to resign for the cow deaths, a day after the BJP government completed three years in power.