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AWARDS

HINDUSTAN TIMES, DEC 11, 2014

Satyarthy, Malala receive Nobel Peace Prize

Indian child rights campaigner Kailash Satyarthi received the Nobel Peace Prize on Wednesday, sharing his award with Pakistani schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai, who became the youngest laureate ever.

"A young girl and a somewhat older man, one from Pakistan and one from India, one Muslim, the other Hindu; both symbols of what the world needs: more unity. Fraternity between the nations!" Thorbjørn Jagland, chairman of the Norwegian Nobel committee, said at the ceremony in Oslo.

Satyarthi's organisation Bachpan Bachao Andolan (Movement to Save Childhood) prides itself on liberating more than 80,000 children from bonded labour in factories and workshops across India and has networks of activists in more than 100 countries.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) there are about 168 million child labourers around the world.

Nobel winners receive eight million Swedish kronor (\$1.1 million, 862,000 euros), which is shared in the case of joint wins.

Satyarthi, a soft-spoken, trim 60-year-old, has for decades been at the forefront of the drive against child labour in India, home to the largest number of working children in the world, according to the charity ChildLine.

"This prize is important for the millions and millions who are denied a childhood," Satyarthi said in Oslo on the eve of the prize-giving.

The award has sparked new awareness about child labour, he said, adding, "Consciousness is the beginning of change."

"There are children who are sold and bought like animals," said Satyarthi, an admirer of the pacifist teachings of Indian independence icon Mahatma Gandhi.

"There are children who are born and live in situations of conflict and terror."

"I refuse to accept that the world is so poor, when just one week of global military expenditure is enough to bring all of our children into classrooms," he said after receiving the prize.

"I refuse to accept that the shackles of slavery can ever be... stronger than the quest for freedom."

Malala, 17, became a global icon after she was shot and nearly killed by the Taliban in October 2012 for insisting that girls had a right to an education.

Malala has already been honoured with a host of awards, standing ovations and plaudits everywhere from the United Nations to Buckingham Palace.

On the eve of the ceremony, she said she would not rest on her laurels, saying she would like one day to become prime minister in her native Pakistan.

"If I can serve my country best through politics and through becoming a prime minister then I would definitely choose that," she told the BBC.

"I want to serve my country and my dream is that my country becomes a developed country and I see every child get an education."

7,000 Norwegian children

Minutes after Malala received the prize, a man carrying a Mexican flag walked towards her, but was caught by security. His motives were unknown.

Before the ceremony, Malala and Yousafzai met with 7,000 Norwegian children aged between six and 14 in the heart of Oslo.

"You have given me so much energy. It's more than a red bull!" Malala said.

At a press conference in Oslo on Tuesday Malala said that in many parts of the world, children's requirements are infinitely more modest than an "iPad or computer."

"What they are asking for is just a book, just a pen, so why can't we do that?"

Malala was 15 when a Taliban gunman shot her in the head as she travelled on a school bus in response to her campaign for girls' education.

Although she almost died, she recovered after being flown for extensive surgery in Birmingham, central England.

She has been based in the city with her family ever since, continuing both her education and activism.

Indian-Pakistani symbolism

The pairing of Malala and Satyarthi had the extra symbolism of linking neighbouring countries that have been in conflict for decades.

After she was named as the winner, Malala said she wanted both states' prime ministers to attend the prize-giving ceremony in Oslo.

"If the prime ministers had come here I would have been very happy," she said.

"I would have thought of it as a big opportunity to ask them... to make education their top priority and work on it together because we see the number of children who are out of school and suffering from child labour are mostly in India and Pakistan."

The other prizes -- also featuring the literature prize winner, Frenchman Patrick Modiano, and his compatriot Jean Tirole with the economics award -- will be awarded in Stockholm later Wednesday.

CIVIL SERVICE

TIMES OF INDIA, DEC 12, 2014

7th Pay panel members to visit Jaisalmer

[Vimal Bhatia](#)

JAISALMER: The newly formed 7th Pay Commission delegation led by Justice A K Mathur will be in Jodhpur today and visit Jaisalmer on December 13. The delegation's purpose is to observe the BSF and other Central government employees and officers who are on duty at remote areas and are guarding the international border in tough conditions. Sources said that many Central departments including Army and paramilitary forces have sent many recommendations for change in salary to the Commission. The panel's recommendations will be given to the Centre next year.

BUSINESS LINE, DEC 12, 2014

Unshackle the bureaucracy

Why amending the anti-graft law is crucial for efficient governance

The Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Bill has a notable feature, aimed at allowing government functionaries to work without fear while deciding on coal projects. It says that as long as government officials act “in good faith under this Act” they will be immune from prosecution. When placed in the right context, this provision is not as sweeping as it seems. Coming as it does after at least one senior Coal Ministry functionary in the UPA regime was implicated on decidedly flimsy grounds for favouring an industrial house, this legal assurance will help bureaucrats break out of their ‘play-safe-do-nothing’ mindset — one of the principal factors behind the ‘policy paralysis’ in the UPA. Power Minister Piyush Goyal’s statement in Parliament on this issue seems like a follow-up of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s assurance given in May that he would back bold, decisive decision-makers in government.

But what is just as important is that the proposed move, in a way, challenges a draconian provision in the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 — namely, Section 13 1 (d), which implicates a public servant for criminal misconduct if he or she “obtains for himself or for any other person any valuable thing or pecuniary advantage without any public interest”. Many an honest bureaucrat has been harassed by this astonishingly vague law, prompting even former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to speak out against it and getting his government to work on an amendment. Singh had rightly argued that the law does not call for establishing guilty intent or *mens rea* on the part of the bribe-taker. This government should take Singh’s initiative to this rightful conclusion. Besides this law, the socio-political environment in recent times has also played a role in creating a climate of diffidence. The Right to Information Act, with the potential to point a flashlight at each stage of decision-making, posed a welcome challenge to the opacity to which the bureaucracy had grown accustomed; but with laws such as Section 13 1 (d) in place the chances of innocent individuals being trapped only increased. The Anna Hazare movement demanding the creation of a Lokpal added to the overall fear. The anti-

establishment anger of 2011 was hardly conducive to a discussion on introduction of reasonable checks and balances.

One of the possible safeguards, as former Chief Economic Advisor Kaushik Basu rightly noted in his much-discussed paper on bribery, is to punish those who make wrong accusations. But, as Basu argues, “we cannot have an efficient market economy unless human beings are endowed with a minimal amount of integrity”. For that, we also need laws that reward, not disincentivise, both integrity and efficiency in the bureaucracy. With the coal and 2G scams still fresh in public memory, pushing reforms on this front would be a test of Prime Minister Modi’s political dexterity. In trying to get on with policymaking, he cannot be seen to be riding roughshod over civil society concerns. He should initiate a wider debate on what the ‘new normal’ in governance ought to be.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated December 12, 2014)

HINDU, DEC 9, 2014

4,000 govt. services at your fingertips

You no longer need to go to government offices or to police stations to check the status of an application or register a complaint. You need not even stand in queues to book a bus ticket or pay for utility service. The cellphone in your hand can do all these tasks and more. President Pranab Mukherjee on Monday inaugurated the State government’s ambitious Karnataka MobileOne — e-governance project, which enable citizens to access government services at their fingertips round the clock throughout the year.

If you have a smart phone, all you need to do is download the Mobile One app and gain access to over 4,000 services. Users of ordinary cellphones can access services through SMSs or call the toll-free number 161. Within three hours of the launch of the service it received 33,000 IVR calls, 16,000 USSD, 15,000 app download and 10,000 SMSs, added IT Secretary Srivatsa Krishna.

TRIBUNE, DEC 9, 2014

State short of 37 IAS officers: Total authorised strength is 120

Neena Sharma

There is a shortage of 37 IAS officers in Uttarakhand against the total authorised strength of 120, badly affecting governance in the state.

Only nine officers are working against the 21 posts of super time scale and four officers above super time scale.

Most of these officers have been given the responsibilities of more than two departments and are even burdened with the additional post of director in some cases.

The Chief Minister Harish Rawat has already written to the Central Government to relieve the officers on Central deputation from the state cadre who have completed three years of deputation. 'We are awaiting response from the Central Government,' said Principal Secretary to the CM Om Prakash .

In Uttarakhand, out of the sanctioned strength of 120 IAS officers, 83 posts have been filled, but out of 83 posts, 16 IAS officers are on Central deputation. As such the state is being served by only 67 IAS officers.

Out of the sanctioned strength of 60 senior duty posts, 41 posts are filled, while out of 26 sanctioned strength for Central deputation posts, a total of 16 posts have been filled. While out of the sanctioned strength of 10 junior duty posts, 10 posts are currently filled in the state and 16 posts of IAS officers have been filled through deputation from other states.

The government has recently relieved Secretary to the Chief Minister Nidhi Mani Tripathi, who was on deputation from Manipur.

Significantly, around three officers have not joined the Uttarakhand cadre and continue to serve in Uttar Pradesh.

STATESMAN, DEC 15, 2014

North Dinajpur govt staff to protest on 23 Dec

With a demand of development of the district, the members of the North Dinajpur unit of Confederation of State government Employees decided to organise a movement. On 23 December, they are planning an agitation in front of the office of the District Magistrate at Karnajora where their state leaders also will be present. They will demand for the immediate start of Raiganj-Barsoi Road, the construction of AIIMS pattern Institute in Raiganj and they will demand to make the casual workers as permanent.

They will also demand for payment of dues to the state government employees. The Secretary of North Dinajpur unit of Confederation Mr Sujash Mukharjee said: "The TMC leader of North Dinajpur, Mr Ashim Ghosh, in 2011 informed that state allotted Rs 4 crore for the construction of Raiganj-Barsoi road. But this work was not started yet."

We also demanded the state government to start the process of land acquisition for AIIMS in Raiganj. We demanded to construct AIIMS in Raiganj. We also demand to bring transparency in the work of administration so that both the residents and the employees are not harassed. On that issues we will stage agitation in front of the office of the District Magistrate on 23 December. Our some important state leaders will be present on that day.

One of the members of the state TMC Committee Mr Ashim Ghosh said: “There was a problem on the issue of land so the construction of Raiganj-Barsoi road could not be started for construction. Then very soon the construction work of this road will start. There was no crisis in the work of administration too.”

TRIBUNE, DEC 9, 2014

Retirement age was hiked for political gain, govt to HC

What the affidavit says

The decision was “not honest” and taken even though no such demand or representation was received from any association or union of Haryana Government employees.

The Council of Ministers on its own decided that the age was to be increased. The issue was not even placed before the Finance Department for consideration.

Lashing out at the previous Hooda-led Congress Government for increasing the retirement age from 58 to 60, the Khattar Government today claimed that the decision was taken to gain political mileage just before the imposition of the model code of conduct.

In an affidavit submitted before the Punjab and Haryana High Court, the government claimed that the decision was “not honest” and was taken even though no such demand or representation was received from any association or union of Haryana Government employees.

The affidavit by Secretary to the Haryana Government D Suresh said the Council of Ministers on its own decided that the age was to be increased. The issue was not even placed before the Finance Department for consideration, it was added.

The matter was brought to the High Court’s notice after a bunch of petitions were filed against the Haryana Government’s decision to lower the retirement age of its staff to 58 years within months of the previous Hooda government enhancing it to 60 years.

In one of the petitions, Kurukshetra-based executive engineer JK Arora and 14 others contended that the action of the respondents was constitutionally impermissible. Their counsel, Rajiv Atmaram, further contended it was a well-settled principle of law that a change in the government could not result in alteration in the policy.

He added the government was required to rise above vested interests and nepotism, while shunning “window-dressing”. Succeeding governments must be held duty-bound to continue and carry on the policies of its predecessors.

The Khattar government’s decision has immediately impacted around 5,000 of the 3,00,000 employees, besides putting an additional burden of Rs 200 crore on the government. The Hooda government had increased the retirement age by two years to 60, shortly before the October 15 Assembly elections.

CRIME

STATESMAN, DEC 11, 2014

Sec 309 IPC to be scrapped

attempt to commit suicide no more to be a crime

The government has decided to decriminalise attempt to commit suicide which is now a crime under Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code.

This was announced in the Rajya Sabha by the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Mr Haribhai Parathibhai Chaudhary, in a written reply to a question raised by Trinamul Congress MP Vivek Gupta.

Attempt to commit suicide currently attracts imprisonment of one year and a fine. The government's move will help, among others, Manipuri social activist Irom Sharmila, who has been on a hunger strike for the past 14 years. She has been under detention throughout her fast and is force-fed every day.

The minister said in its 210th report (on Humanisation and Decriminalisation of Attempt to Suicide), the Law Commission of India had recommended that Section 309 of IPC needs to be deleted from the statute book. The Commission had also argued that attempting suicide was “manifestation of a diseased condition of mind” that called for treatment and care rather than punishment. “As law and order is a State subject, views of States/UTs were requested on the recommendations of the Law Commission. Eighteen States and four Union Territory Administrations have supported that Section 309 of the IPC may be deleted,” the minister stated. India is among the countries with a high suicide rate. In 2013, 1,34,799 people had committed suicide. Data on attempted suicide, however, is not available with the National Crime Records Bureau.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

STATESMAN, DEC 11, 2014

Reforms must for 8% growth

The government needs to pursue structural reforms vigorously if India were to achieve and sustain growth levels between 7 and 8 per cent, minister of state for finance Jayant Sinha said today.

Addressing the 5th Delhi Economics Conclave here, Mr Sinha said the government will pursue policies that will entail stability, promote infrastructure development and ensure social security."We need to get the economy up to a long-term growth rate of seven-to-eight per cent," he said.

Mr Sinha, son of former Union finance minister Yashwant Sinha, estimated that a seven-to-eight per cent gross domestic product (GDP) growth per annum will propel the \$2 trillion Indian economy to assume a size of nearly \$4 trillion within the next 10 to 12 years. "If the rupee strengthens we may end up getting closer to \$5 trillion economy," he said.

He also stressed the need to contain inflation at four to six per cent over this time period to allow the growth to take effect.

Mr Sinha said India needs deep structural reforms to create at least five million jobs every year as well as to ensure 7-8 per cent economic growth as job creation and growth go hand-in-hand. He said India also needs to develop an alternative model of growth based on a mix of policies including market driven entrepreneurship innovations, scope for larger private investment and free market economy in democratic polity among others.

Mr Sinha said the world economy is passing through a critical phase and needs higher growth. He said growth must be sustainable, all inclusive, anti-inflationary and job-oriented. Environmental and ecological carrying capacity should also be increased along with higher growth, he added.

Giving details about the kind of structural reforms required, Mr Sinha said the government believes in supply-side revolution with high productive capacity. He said structural reforms must result in macro-economic stability, world class infrastructure, unlocking of entrepreneurship and innovations, and world class social security system. The minister also focused on growth in agriculture, especially in providing irrigation facilities and power to every field in the country so that agriculture productivity grows much faster.

Jaitley to meet state FMs:

Mr Sinha said his senior colleague Mr Arun Jaitley will meet state finance ministers tomorrow to discuss challenges in rolling out the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

“On GST we are working on a variety of discussions with the states. The legislative aspects of the GST are complicated, they have to be approved by the states. CST (Central Sales Tax) compensation is one of the items which is under discussion,” Mr Sinha said. The government is trying to roll out the GST by 1 April 2016.

HINDU, DEC 8, 2014

No consensus among CMs on panel revamp

PUJA MEHRA

There was no consensus among Chief Ministers at a meeting specially convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the nature of the body that should replace the Planning Commission.

At Sunday’s meeting, Congress Chief Ministers questioned the Government’s approval to scrap the Planning Commission, which was announced by the Prime Minister on August 15. Instead, they demanded that the Centre reinvent the plan panel rather than scrapping it and replacing it with a new body.

At the consultation meeting, the Centre and States also couldn’t reach any agreement on whether India should retain or scrap five-year plans and the annual State plans. Briefing reporters after the meeting Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the Centre would hold further consultations to decide on the alternative mechanism to transfer funds from the Centre to the States for Central Plan Assistance.

He said that at the meeting, there was broad consensus on three points: federalism must be strengthened, States must get more powers and they must have greater flexibility to implement schemes and programmes. “All States agreed that the principle of one-size-fits-all as far as the design and format of schemes and programmes go does not work,” Mr. Jaitley said. He also said that all States were in favour of cooperative federalism.

Sunday’s consultations follow a decision of the Cabinet on August 13, to repeal the March 15, 1950 Resolution by which the Planning Commission was set up. Mr. Modi said “Team India” was a combination of three teams — the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers; the Union Council of Ministers; and the bureaucracy in the Centre and States.

Consensus on greater federalism and more powers for States

TIMES OF INDIA, DEC 8, 2014

States take Centre-stage in revamp of planning commission

By Mahendra Singh

The government is also open for a relook on the mechanism for fund flows from the Centre to states as chief ministers were asked to give suggestions on the issue.

NEW DELHI: The BJP government's blueprint for a revamp of the planning exercise envisages giving states flexibility to tailor their plans to suit their needs and requirements instead of the Centre imposing a "one size fits all" programme.

In a 40-page presentation during a meeting of chief ministers, the government said the institution to replace the [Planning Commission](#) would be empowered to formulate national development strategy in a market economy integrated with the globalized world in consultation with states.

Highlighting key weaknesses in the erstwhile planning panel, the presentation suggested six key functions for the new institution that included evolving consensus on national development strategy, defining reforms agenda, acting as a platform for resolution of cross-sectoral issues at the Centre and states and as a knowledge and innovation hub and capacity building and technology watch group.

The plan visualizes partnership with states in promoting cooperative federalism as it proposes permanent members from states in the new body.

The new institution will act as a platform for structured and regular interaction with states as there are indications that the government is working on a structure which will have the prime minister, some [Cabinet](#) ministers and some chief ministers along with technocrats and experts from various fields.

The government is also open for a relook on the mechanism for fund flows from the Centre to states as chief ministers were asked to give suggestions on the issue.

Pressing for an effective structure which strengthens "cooperative federalism" and the concept of "Team India", Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) said, "It is impossible for the nation to develop unless states develop."

Finance minister [Arun Jaitley](#) said, "There cannot be a universal scheme that suits all states. It is a fallacy that one size fits all in case of implementation of central schemes. The strategy should be to empower the states to enable them to meet their own specific needs."

The blueprint visualizes the new organization to play an active role in forging partnership with national and international policy hubs and think tanks while facilitating exchanges with national and international universities, academia and research institutes.

"The think tank role of the new institution was a very important agenda item and I think most people were in favour of that because it is more encompassing as it not only covers states methodology of expenditure but also gives direction or indicates at least a direction in which the private sector can also have a role," Jaitley said.

ECONOMIC TIMES, DEC 8, 2014

New body replacing Planning Commission likely by January-end; Congress opposing move

Modi had said in his maiden Independence Day speech that the Planning Commission should be replaced by an organisation which can think creatively.

NEW DELHI: The Narendra Modi-led NDA government will move ahead with setting up of a new institution in [place](#) of the [Planning Commission](#) despite resistance from Congress-ruled states as a majority of states are on board. The new institution could be in place before the end of January 2015 and would have adequate representation from states and will include domain experts.

In a meeting convened by Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) with chief ministers of all states on Sunday, Congress-ruled states were of the view that the present Planning Commission should be evolved into a new structure, Finance Minister [Arun Jaitley](#) told the media after the meeting.

"Most states are in favour of a system that strengthens their ability to deliver and hence they want more flexibility. There was a larger consensus to the effect that the context has changed and there is a need to decentralise power and planning and states needs to be empowered," Jaitley added. Earlier, Modi referred to remarks by his predecessor to bolster his push for replacing the Planning Commission.

NDA states seek immediate disbanding of panel

" [Manmohan Singh](#), who had been associated for a long time with the Planning Commission, had noted that the body has no futuristic vision in the post-reform period. He had also noted that the Planning Commission would have to reinvent itself to remain more effective and relevant in the present situation," Modi told state CMs in his concluding remarks.

"The current global scenario offered a chance for India to take a big leap forward," Modi said, seeking to abandon the 'incremental' approach of the past and creating a new approach — in which the Centre and the states act as a team — in the spirit of co-operative federalism. [Congress](#) party spokesperson [Anand Sharma](#) said the move to dismantle the Planning Commission will be "unwarranted, shortsighted and dangerous" as it will have a long-term adverse effect on Centre-state relations, asserting that the panel needed "reorientation" and not "political burial".

His party colleague and Kerala Chief Minister [Oommen Chandy](#) towed a similar line. "I am not convinced that the wholesale change of a time-tested institution is required, particularly so, when we have not progressed even now beyond the conceptual stage of designing an alternative mechanism."

While chief ministers of [Jammu and Kashmir](#) and Jharkhand skipped the meet on account

of elections in their states, states of [West Bengal](#) and Mizoram were represented by their finance ministers. However, some NDA states and those ruled by parties like the AIADMK and Telangana Rashtra Samithi wanted immediate disbanding of the Planning Commission.

Change in the Air
The **govt** is yet to decide on the structure of the new institution

It may include the PM, some CMs & Cabinet ministers along with domain experts

States could be given the liberty to spend funds according to their needs

Planning Secretary Sindhushree Khullar has proposed six key functions of the new institution

The infographic features a pyramid structure composed of stylized human faces in suits, representing the hierarchy of the new institution. To the left of the pyramid, there are icons for a gear, a wheel, a ladder, and a bar chart, symbolizing various aspects of policy and planning.

West Bengal and northeastern states, barring Assam, have pitched for strengthening states and giving more powers to the inter-state council under the new institution. According to Jaitley, Prime Minister Modi had extensive consultation with states and the central government will take a considered view on the new institution as it is of the view that policy planning needs to change from "top to bottom" to "bottom to top".

Modi had said in his maiden Independence Day speech that the Planning Commission should be replaced by an organisation which can think creatively, strengthen the federal structure and energise states.

A new structure

While the government has yet to take a view on the new institution, the first meeting of the PM with chief ministers on the alternative institution hints that the government is considering an institution which will have the Prime Minister, some Cabinet ministers and some chief ministers along with technocrats and experts in various fields. States could be given the liberty to spend funds according to their needs, a demand made by various states which feel that "one size fits all" strategy isn't workable.

A presentation made by Planning Secretary [Sindhushree Khullar](#) on Sunday has proposed six key functions of the new institution: evolving a consensus on national development strategy, fostering cooperative federalism, defining reforms agenda, serving as a platform for cross-sectoral issues, acting as a knowledge and innovation hub besides capacity building and technology watch group.

Under the present allocation of business rules, the Planning Commission is responsible for formulating plans, assessing and allocating plan resources, identifying constraints, appraisal of plans, determining implementation machinery and formulating programmes for area development.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, DEC 9, 2014

Editorial: Decentralising planning

More Finance Commission funds is a better idea

Given how, over a period of time, state governments had begun to see the Planning Commission (PC) as an instrument of Central government oppression—state budgets couldn't be finalised without the PC's inputs and states allied with the Centre got more transfers than others—it is not surprising the new-look PC is to have the states on board. The core team of the PC will be the prime minister and the state chief ministers, and they will meet regularly to decide on what development priorities should be, even design different scheme for different groups of states. The PC's secretariat's role will be to help states and central ministries to achieve identified outcomes as well as to strategise over 10–20 year time horizons. And since the new-look PC will have ties with local and global think tanks, presumably this will end the view held by some that the government is not interested in strategic thinking. Appropriately, the PC will have an independent Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), though it is not clear how this will be different from the UPA's Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). The new-look PC, at least so far, is not going to have a US-style Congressional Budget Office whose job is to evaluate the impact of every major government tax/non-tax policy—perhaps this needs to be built in.

While the idea is, admirably, to give the states more flexibility in their spending—so that their plans will suit their needs and not just Delhi’s—it has to be acknowledged the PC has been much maligned. While states get around half of the total central transfers by way of tax devolutions and are free to spend it as they choose, the bulk of the rest flows through central ministries—so, the rigidity in such funding and the designs of the schemes is more ministry-driven than PC-driven. Making PC-driven funding more flexible is undoubtedly a good thing, but states will never be fully-freed up unless the central ministries loosen their controls or unless the Finance Commission transfers more funds through the automatic tax devolution manner.

EDUCATION

TIMES OF INDIA, DEC 12, 2014

CBSE introduces pre-examination activities

CHANDIGARH: In order to ensure smooth conduct of annual examinations scheduled in March 2015, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) issued pre-examination activities for schools.

Every year in March, Class X students sit for summative assessment II (school based-cum-board), while Class XII students sit for Board examinations. However, this year, the Board has made certain pre-examination activities downloadable.

Downloading of school-wise list of candidates, who will sit for examinations in March 2015 has been scheduled for January 5, while downloading of internal grades performance and uploading of internal grades awards on net has been scheduled from January 5 to February 28. The receipt of list of internal grades will take place on March 15, 2015.

Similarly, from March 5 to 21 schools will be able to make online corrections in the list of candidates except subject for class XII, and subject and date of birth for Class X.

The admission cards for students will be available for downloading from CBSE's website with effect from February 5, 2015. The detailed procedures are available on CBSE's website. The Board has asked schools to download all the said material as per the schedule.

BUSINESS STANDARD, DEC 11, 2014

Bangalore University to be bifurcated

Karnataka govt to set up a separate university for colleges in Kolar, Chikkaballapura and Bengaluru rural districts

The state government is considering bifurcation of the [Bangalore University](#) to reduce its jurisdiction and it has also decided to set up a new university.

Minister for higher education R V Deshpande informed this to the Assembly at [Suvarna Vidhana Soudha](#) here on Wednesday.

Replying to a question from [Congress](#) MLA Ramesh Kumar, Deshpande said the government has realised the need for a separate university to cater to the colleges in Kolar, Chikkaballapura and Bengaluru rural district.

The Bengaluru north and east taluks which are in Bengaluru city district, Bengaluru rural,

Chikkaballapura and Kolar districts will come under the purview of new university which will have headquarters at Jnana Vahini campus in Hosakote. Bengaluru South, Anekal taluk and Ramanagara district will continue to be under Bangalore University.

The state government has already sent a proposal for amendment to the Karnataka State Universities Act 2000 to the governor to facilitate the change. The governor had returned the proposal seeking more details. A committee headed by former vice-chancellor of the university N R Shetty was constituted to provide a detailed report, Deshpande explained.

CCTVs in govt schools

Minister for primary and secondary education Kimmane Ratnakar told the house that the government schools in Bengaluru will be equipped with [CCTV](#) cameras on an experimental basis.

Each school will have four CCTVs and the government has called for tenders for the same, he said in a reply to MLA Ravi Subrahmanya.

Kasturirangan Report

Minister for higher education R V Deshpande said, the state government was ready for a detailed discussion on the report submitted by Kasturirangan on the preservation and promotion of the Western Ghats in the state.

BJP MLA Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri had raised the issue by saying that farmers in Malnad region were confused and worried over recommendations of the commission. He said, the recommendations, if implemented, would hit hard the lifestyle and agriculture in the region, Kageri pointed out that Kerala, Maharashtra, Goa and Gujarat adjoining the Western Ghats had already obtained certain concessions. But, Karnataka was still in a slumber when the date for pleading its case before the Green Bench of the Supreme Court was fast approaching.

Kageri wanted a detailed discussion on Madhav Gadgil Commission report too.

The environmental research commission was appointed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The commission was mandated with compiling readily available information about Western Ghats; development of geo-spatial database based on environmental sensitivity; and consultation with government bodies and civil society groups.

BUSINESS STANDARD, DEC 11, 2014

Schools of Planning and Architecture Bill gets Parliament nod

A Bill for converting three [Schools of Planning and Architecture](#) (SPAs) into centres of excellence was passed by [Parliament](#) on Wednesday, with the government expressing confidence that such schools will help in setting up of smart cities.

The government also assured members that the reservation policy will be put in place and there will be international tie-ups and global experts to impart world class education.

The School of Planning and Architecture Bill 2014 was passed in the Rajya Sabha today. The bill was passed in the Lok Sabha on December 3.

Winding up discussion on the bill, HRD Minister [Smriti Irani](#) assured the House that the reservation policy with regard to admission of students and faculty recruitment will "completely be followed" in SPAs similar to what is being done in IITs, [NITs](#) and IIMs.

Currently, the SPAs are located in Delhi, Bhopal and Vijayawada. The bill aims to empower these institutes to grant degrees to students. That apart, it also has provision to set up a council, which can recommend creation of new SPAs.

Responding to an amendment moved by a TMC member Kanwarr Deep Singh who sought changes in the bill for setting up of a [SPA](#) in Kolkata, the minister said, "There is a provision for setting up of a council. The council can recommend opening of new SPAs to the government."

Satisfied by the minister's reply, the TMC leader withdrew the amendment and the bill was passed.

Noting that the SPAs can contribute in setting up "Smart Cities" in India, Irani said, "Smart cities are not misnomer or fallacy but they are going to be a reality as the government is pursuing to set up such cities seriously. SPAs can contribute to the development of Smart Cities." On a member's suggestion to have a visitor other than 'President of India' to SPAs and other central universities, the Minister said it cannot be done.

"President Pranab Mukherjee has taken a lot of measures to impart and improve education in the country. If we replace, it gives an impression that we don't appreciate his leadership," she said.

The Minister also assured members that their suggestion to incorporate subjects related to disabled-friendly buildings, restoration and conservation of historical structures, green buildings among others are already part of the syllabus of SPAs.

Shantaram Naik (Cong) said that in spite of her educational qualifications being "challenged", Irani had done well but raised questions on her visit to an astrologer.

"I am pained to see you going to an astrologer," he said, adding that it challenges entire scientific temperament as enshrined in the Constitution.

"(As a Minister) you don't have a private life. I am pained, you have visited an astrologer, what are you going to tell the students. To go to a fortune teller? The message you have given does not commensurate with the role you have been given," Naik said.

Satyanarayan Jatiya, who was in the Chair, intervened saying, "Don't talk like this."

To this, Naik replied that the Chair can give a ruling if he was making a wrong statement.

Deputy leader of Congress in the House, Anand Sharma stood up and said the Chair cannot say this as it is not the tradition of the House. Jatiya said it would be better if the member came to the technical issue.

He asked Naik not to discuss what had happened outside the House after which he spoke about his views on the bill.

Among other things, he suggested that authorities of schools under the Act should try to see heritage concept grows in India. Supporting the legislation, C P Thakur (BJP) said these institutes will be assets to the whole country as they are based in Delhi in north India,

Bhopal in central and Vijaywada in south India. Such institutions, he said, would contribute towards the Smart Cities project.

He also said that in the past the country was quite advanced in the aspect of learning with 'Lakshagriha' mentioned during the times of Kauravas and Pandavas which nobody could differentiate whether it was a normal house or made of lac. Similarly, during the Mughal period, the country was quite advanced in this realm, he said.

HINDU, DEC 8, 2014

Theses of Delhi University scholars to go digital

Delhi University will develop a digital repository of research conducted by its students. The digital repository will be part of the University Grants Commission's digital database, called Shodhganga repository, and will include doctoral theses and dissertations.

Shodhganga, which is database of all research conducted in all Indian universities, is a project of the UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium. It aims to promote the use of electronic databases and full text access to journals by the research and academic community in the country. It also facilitates keeping a check on plagiarism in research.

According to DU's dean of research Ajay Kumar, the varsity has signed an MoU with the UGC in this regard and all the theses and dissertations submitted to DU after December 2 will be added to the repository. "We are setting up an electronic thesis and dissertation lab in the Central library where all the theses and dissertations will be digitised and their bibliographic records will be created for inclusion in UGC's Information and Library Network catalogue," added Mr Kumar.

According to the MoU, the students will submit their thesis to their respective departments with a "certificate of originality" and "student approval form."

TIMES OF INDIA, DEC 8, 2014

DU to set up Intellectual Property Facilitation Centre

Aaditi Isaac

The University of Delhi (DU) is coming up with a new intellectual property rights (IPR) policy under which it will create an Intellectual Property Facilitation Centre (IPFC) for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) at the Cluster Innovation Centre (CIC).

"The IPR cell was lying dormant after 2008 as there was no dedicated IPR trained person who could handle the university's IP. At that time, even the patent funds were inadequate," informs Rekha Chaturvedi, MHRD IPR chair professor (technical). The university is taking this step to ensure that awareness is created among academics and students about IPR protection and to enable them to assess the business potential of their work. "This will also make them aware of the pitfalls of technological manipulation through the internet," she adds.

On the need to create IPFC for MSMEs, Chaturvedi says that these organisations generally do not have in-house IPR cells. "Without being aware, they might be using the designs of already existing products or using protected software unknowingly. This is a positive step to avoid infringement and to bring greater awareness about copyright-related issues among the MSMEs," she adds.

According to her, establishing an IPFC for MSMEs at university level is useful because this can encourage interaction between industry and academia which might lead to collaborative R&D and technology transfer at a later stage.

The centre would train MSMEs as well as give advice on means for IPR protection apart from helping them create IPR-driven business strategies and perform patentability assessment to find out the commercial potential of the project and its usefulness for creating business for the enterprises.

The ministry of human resource development (MHRD) had mandated that all Central universities set up an IPR chair.

Three basic issues of importance for researchers include IPR awareness, use of technology and business potential of research. "The academics and students are not adequately aware of intellectual property rights. With the change in technology, it has become important for students as well as faculty to know whether the material they use is legally available," explains MM Chaturvedi, director, CIC.

In order to further expand the scope of this project, DU is considering launching certificate and diploma courses in the field.

ECONOMIC TIMES, DEC 10, 2014

Functioning of UGC, AICTE under review: Smriti Irani

NEW DELHI: Private sector in education is facing many challenges and these are being addressed by reviewing the functioning of regulatory bodies like University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), government told the [Rajya Sabha](#) today.

HRD Minister [Smriti Irani](#), while replying to a debate on a bill for setting up of one more central university in Bihar, said higher education per se is facing challenges and "there is a long way we need to go."

She promised to fast-track filling of vacancies of faculties of central universities, including Vice Chancellors, and make the process transparent by letting common people to express their views through a government website MyGov.in.

When a mention was made about private colleges, she said, "I am seized of the matter that there are challenges in the private sector. There has been several representations from the private sector and possibly their engagement with the regulators (UGC and AICTE) to be looked into."

She informed the House that "we are reviewing the (functioning of) UGC, [AICTE](#) and also NCTE, the demand which has come from across the states."

About two months back, the government has set two separate committees to review the functioning of [UGC](#) and AICTE.

The Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2014, which seeks to set up one more central university at Motihari in [Bihar](#) after Mahatma Gandhi, was then passed by voice vote. It was passed in the [Lok Sabha](#) on November 26.

CPI member D Raja earlier demanded the government to establish an expert committee to look into various issues undermining the quality of education including infrastructure, adequate faculty and enrolment of students.

Favouring the suggestion, Irani stated that the government would try to constitute a committee in this regard.

About vacancies, Irani said she has asked all the Vice Chancellors to send a report with regard to this aspect in their respective institutions. The ministry would extend all possible assistance on this issue," she added.

To enhance the quality of education in central universities, the minister said all the central universities would have to get accredited with [NAAC](#) by February 2015.

Listing out the initiatives taken by her ministry, she said highlighted the launch of [Unnat Bharat Abhiyan](#) to discourage brain drain.

She also said that till the infrastructure problems in North East are addressed, students from that region are encouraged to complete a part of their programme with central universities to get knowledge.

The bill received widespread support from members from various parties in the House.

Jairam Ramesh (Cong) supported the move and lauded the role played by former Bihar Chief Minister [Nitish Kumar](#) in carrying out a campaign for the creation of this university.

He, however, emphasised the need to ensure control over quality especially that of the faculty. He also spoke on the need for regulating education in private sector as fly by night operators could do damage.

Anil Dave ([BJP](#)) expressed happiness that a university named after Mahatma Gandhi was being created and emphasised that it should be ensured that the Vice Chancellor and faculty should be people who believe in Gandhi's philosophy.

He said the choice of Vice Chancellors should not be done from among the political theatre.

DMK member Tiruchi Siva also supported the bill to set up the central university in

Bihar but emphasised that important issues need to be addressed. He said that thousands of teaching posts are vacant.

Siva urged the minister to see that the Central assistance to states on education is enhanced.

Javed Ali Khan (SP), in his maiden speech, suggested that while one university was coming up in Bihar, named after Mahatma Gandhi, and another could be named after leaders like Lok Nayak Jai Prakash or Karpoori Thakur.

He said there are reports that astrology would be taught in universities.

Khan said there was no objection to a move to introduce astrology provided such a demand came from academic councils of universities rather than outside.

He also said that in several universities, elections to student bodies had not been held.

ENVIRONMENT

STATESMAN, DEC 15, 2014

Deal struck at climate meet draft to cut carbon emissions cleared

Negotiators today adopted a compromise draft for national pledges to cut global carbon emissions at marathon UN climate talks here that addressed all of India's concerns and paved the way for a new ambitious and binding deal to be signed in Paris next year to combat climate change.

“The document is approved,” announced the president of the United Nations climate talks meeting Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, who is also the Environment Minister of Peru, after hectic negotiations by officials from 194 countries for about two weeks in the Peruvian capital here.

“I think this is good, and I think this moves us forward,” Pulgar-Vidal said. Commenting on the draft, Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said, “all of India's concerns have been addressed.” “We have achieved targets and we got what we wanted,” he said after the delegates approved a broad blueprint for talks leading up to a deal in 2015, to take effect in 2020.

He also remained positive about meetings over the next year and in Paris, saying “we can build on this [Lima text] and build consensus.” The adoption of the draft at the meeting which went into two extra days was seen as a significant first step towards reaching a global climate change deal in Paris although delegates feel much of the hard work remained ahead. The deal -- dubbed the Lima Call for Climate Action -- paves the way for what is envisioned as the historic agreement in environmental history. The agreement was adopted hours after a previous draft was rejected by developing countries, which accused rich nations of shirking their responsibilities to fight global warming and pay for its impacts.

The final draft is said to have alleviated those concerns by saying countries have “common but differentiated responsibilities”. There was a great sense of relief among delegates when the announcement came in the early hours of Sunday morning, as the 12-day meeting had already overrun by two days.

Indian delegation led by Javadekar worked overnight, engaging with developed as well as developing nations to reach the deal taking into account India's concerns. “We are happy that the final negotiated statement at COP20 in Lima has addressed the concerns of developing countries and mainly the efforts of some countries to re-write the convention have not fructified,” Javadekar said. “It (deal) gives enough space for the developing world to grow and take appropriate nationally determined steps,” he said. The

developed world will have to take responsibility for action in technology and capacity building and to that end they will have to provide resources, he said. But environmental groups criticised the deal as a weak and ineffectual compromise, saying it weakens international climate rules.

The talks proved difficult because of divisions between rich and poor countries over how to spread the burden of pledges to cut carbon emissions. The draft mentioned only that all pledges would be reviewed a month ahead of the December 2015 Paris summit to assess their combined effect on climate change. UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres told reporters that the approved text is a sign of progression on closing the gaps between three key elements: science, policy response and action.

FEDERAL STATE RELATIONS

HINDU, DEC 8, 2014

Plan assistance should continue as general transfer: Khattar

The Haryana Government on Sunday sought devolution of funds on the basis of a formula other than the Gadgil-Mukherjee formula and asked for it to be in a manner that leaves space for local initiatives and puts premium on efficient and fast-growing States.

Further, a demand was made for an annual central plan assistance (CPA) for an automatic for identified national goals, greater liberty to States in opting for the strategy to achieve them within the given time-frame and burial to the ritual of annual plan approval.

These and other demands were voiced by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar while speaking at the meeting of Chief Ministers convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi to discuss devolution of resources to States, and put the stamp of approval on the new institution which is set to supplant the now defunct Planning Commission.

The Chief Minister said the classification of public expenditure into plan and non-plan should be modified; the CPA should continue as automatic general transfer; and funds for the Centrally-sponsored schemes (CSS) should be released as sector-specific grants. Mr. Khattar proposed that CPA should be made automatic and on an annual basis for identified national goals.

Individual States should be given the freedom to choose the path for achieving the national objectives within the time-frame defined by the national forum. The freedom to formulate need-based strategies will not only encourage innovation in governance but will also allow space for path-breaking initiatives, especially in the social sectors, and in long-gestation project implementation, he contended.

As the CPA is proposed to be released automatically each year to all States for the national goals identified by the forum, the ritual of annual plan approval may be discontinued.

“I further suggest that future devolution of CPA should be on a formula different from the Gadgil-Mukherjee formula. The present classification of public expenditure into plan and non plan expenditure also needs to be modified. Thus, the CPA should continue as an automatic general transfer and the CSS funds should be released as sector-specific grants,” he added.

Micro-planning and strategising for individual schemes should be left to States and the broad parameters for spending should be provided at the time of sectoral allocation of funds. The expected annual and long-term outcomes must also be defined. Thereafter, the national forum should hold State-wise sectoral reviews of the progress as indicated in the schematic design of States.

“In this fast changing world, change has become the only constant. Our institutions must evolve to cater to the changing demands of the country, and its people. I fully support the Prime Minister’s vision of a cooperative federal structure for growth that will empower the States to achieve their developmental aspirations with rejuvenated vigour and enthusiasm,” he said.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

BUSINESS STANDARD, DEC 8, 2014

Now, use your debit card for inter-bank fund transfers at ATM centres

To begin with, the amount allowed to be transferred will be capped at Rs 5,000 a day and Rs 25,000 a month

Neelasri Barman & Nupur Anand

If you need to transfer money from, say, your [YES Bank](#) account to a customer of [Union Bank](#) of India, you can now do so through your debit card, by visiting an automated teller machine (ATM). Union Bank of India, Canara Bank, Andhra Bank, [Saraswat](#) Co-operative Bank and YES Bank have come together to allow [inter-bank](#) fund transfers through debit cards.

“For this card-to-card transfer, a customer has to go to the [ATM](#) and just punch in the [debit card](#) number of the person to whom he or she wishes to transfer money. You have to type the 16-digit debit card number of that person in the ATM and the amount you want to transfer. Immediately, once you confirm ok, your account gets debited and the other person’s account linked to the card gets credited. This is an instant fund transfer,” said a senior Union Bank of India official, explaining the transfer process.

MOVING AHEAD

Initially, the amount allowed to be transferred is a maximum Rs 5,000 a day and Rs 25,000 a month

Earlier, some like SBI were offering such card-to-card transfers, but the facility was available only if both the receiver and the sender were SBI debit card holders

EYEING COST CUT

[Banks](#) have been looking to reduce the number of consumer visits to branches, so they have increased the number of services available through ATMs

The cost incurred per transaction if a customer visits a bank branch is Rs 40; this can drop to Rs 10-12 if the transaction is carried out at an ATM

Initially, the amount allowed to be transferred is a maximum of Rs 5,000 a day and Rs 25,000 a month.

Aspy Engineer, president & country head (ATM management & currency chest) at YES

Bank, confirmed the bank had been running this facility for its customers for a while, and the response so far had been encouraging.

“This project has been launched on a pan-Indian basis. We are getting good response and footfalls. Currently, we are not charging the customer for this service,” said a bank official involved in the process.

Earlier, some like State Bank of India (SBI) were offering such card-to-card transfers, but the facility was available only if both the receiver and the sender were SBI debit card holders.

Bankers believe more people are likely to adopt this medium for fund transfers, though they have still not started advertising this aggressively.

"We are waiting for a bank with a significant ATM network, such as SBI, to join hands for card-to-card transfers before we start advertising it aggressively," said an official from one of the banks currently allowing these transfers. Banks have been looking to reduce the number of consumers' visits to branches, so they have increased the number of services available through ATMs. For instance, as a banker explains, the cost incurred per transaction if a customer visits a bank branch is Rs 40; this can drop to Rs 10-12 if the transaction is carried out at an ATM.

However, fund transfers are allowed even through internet channels, where the cost for the bank comes further down. But the sender needs to add the receiver as a beneficiary and this process takes up to 24 hours, unlike an instant card-to-card transfer.

HEALTH SERVICES

STATESMAN, DEC 13, 2014

52 new drugs come under price control

New Delhi, 12 December: To keep a check on prices of essential medicines, the government has brought 52 new drugs under its price control mechanism including some commonly used painkillers and antibiotics, as also those useful in treatment of cancer and skin diseases.

Following the latest move, more than 450 drug formulation packs are now under the price control mechanism of the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), which entails the regulator fixing ceiling and retail prices for such medicines. “The NPPA has fixed/ revised the prices in respect of 52 formulation packs both ceiling and retail price packs under DPCO, 2013,” the drug pricing regulator said. The major drugmakers likely to be impacted by the latest price control decision include Lupin, Cadila and Merck. The new drugs that have come under price control include commonly-used antibiotics and painkillers as well as medicines used for treating cancer and skin disorders. The bulk drug formulations that have been added to the controlled list include those containing Paracetamol, Glucose, Amoxicilline, Diazepam, Codeine Phosphate, Ciprofloxacin, Losartan and Diclofenac.

Earlier in September, NPPA had capped the prices of 43 formulation packs including drugs such as antibiotic Ciprofloxacin, BCG vaccine and anti-diabetic Metformin.

JUDICIARY

STATESMAN, DEC 10, 2014

Transfer of judges

The Supreme Court's power to transfer judges from one High Court to another has been stipulated in the Constitution. But when in 1963 some amendments were to be made, the then Law Minister in order to dispel fears of misuse of power, had assured Parliament that transfer of a High Court judge will only be effected with the judge's prior consent.

But in 1975, High Court judges were transferred in a series of "non-consensual transfers" because they were believed to be too independent. It was expected that the Supreme Court, recognising the danger to independence of the judiciary, would strike down this provision. On the contrary, it inflicted a self-wound by continuing to uphold this power.

I fail to see any logic in the present policy of transfers. Normally transfers may be explained by the Supreme Court by relying on what is ironically called the Uncle/Nephew phenomenon, specifically to transfer those judges whose sons or brothers are practising in the same High Court. In my opinion, this unnecessarily accepts an adverse assumption without any solid proof. But to transfer a judge at the initial stage is most unfair. There is double jeopardy, when one is appointed in one court and then transferred to another, thereby denying him the right to practise in the parent court. The more damaging aspect of the transfer of judges is the practice of appointing Chief Justices and Judges of other High Courts. At the conference of Chief Justices in 2002, it was resolved that the policy of appointing "outside chief justices" of High Courts be discontinued. But the government was apparently not happy with the recommendation because it would have no hand in the appointment. In practice, the most senior judge of a High Court would automatically have to be appointed the Chief Justice. Subsequently, however the Supreme Court collegium yielded to the government's suggestion of "outside Chief Justices" and the damage was done.

This is without precedent in India. In the USA, in many states the State Supreme Court Justices, whether elected or appointed, are not posted outside the State. No one has found fault with this practice in either America or the UK. Why this gratuitous insult to the Indian judiciary?

I have never understood the logic of transferring the most senior judge who is due for promotion to head the court in which he has functioned for almost 10 to 15 years. To transfer him out of the state to a new court to which he is a total stranger is a strange concept of advancing the administration of justice. He may willy-nilly have to rely only on the opinion of a few select colleagues and officials which unfortunately may spell further disharmony in the High Court. Is there any special reason why the judiciary wants to devalue experience and, thus, score a self-goal and reduce its own effectiveness?

Let us not indulge in the hypocrisy of judges being “tigers” and fiercely independent. Yes, they should be, but practical life is different. We know to our shame how Supreme Court judges caved in during the Emergency and how the threat of transfer kept many in control. Do not forget that judges come from the same background as the rest of other mortals.

The transfer policy continues to defy logic. The issue has been brought to public notice very recently and rudely at that when I read in the newspaper of the appointment of nine judges in Punjab & Haryana High Court. All of them, we are told, were asked to give their consent to be transferred any time at the discretion of the Supreme Court, though they were given a useless lollypop of mentioning three state preferences to which their transfers could be made. I understand none of them has any relation practising in Punjab & Haryana High Court. Three have already been ordered to be transferred. How a choice has been made and by what norms is unknown. The system of transfer is, therefore, arbitrary and unsympathetic. Among these three, there is a lady judge, whose parents are no more. Moreover, she is unmarried and has no immediate family that she can take with her to the new station. I am quite sure that if the Executive had transferred any officer in such circumstances the Supreme Court would have pontifically reprimanded the government to justify its arbitrary and discretionary anti-women attitude. One is tempted to retort loudly ~ “Physician heal thyself first”.

Let me make it clear that I have never seen or met any of these nine appointees; nor for that matter do I know the parents or relations of any of them. I am particularly distressed because of my profound attachment towards Punjab & Haryana High Court, where I spent my best years at the Bar and where friends were gracious enough to elect me as President of the Punjab & Haryana High Court Bar Association. It was an uncontested election in 1967-68. So any decision with a bearing on the High Court by an insulated Collegium naturally disturbs me.

My personal experience of transfers during the Emergency is traumatic. But then we were political animals and could bear the trauma ~ the dislocation of family life and the isolation, tolerably well. But there is no justification for subjecting a single lady judge to the trauma of transfers and tragically that too at the hands of the “family head” ~ the collegium of the Supreme Court.

I am aware that I sound harsh. It would be useful to recall the words of Justice Holmes of the US Supreme Court ~ “I trust that no one will understand me to be speaking with disrespect of the law because I criticise it so freely.....but one may criticise even what one reveres.....and I should show less than devotion, if I did not do what in me lies to improve it.”

The writer is former Chief Justice, Delhi High Court

LIBRARIES

DECCAN HERALD, DEC 8, 2014

25L books on offer, grab any for free

Hundreds of book lovers from across the City filed into the National College Grounds in Basavanagudi on Sunday as the three-day 'Pustaka Parishe' (book fair) began on a grand note.

Nearly 25 lakh books on literature, culture, education, health and religion are on display. Visitors can pick any book of their choice free of cost. The organiser of the event, Srishti Ventures, a socio-cultural organisation, expects more than two lakh visitors during the seventh edition of the Parishe.

Among the books are the works of Kannada literary giants Kuvempu and Shivaram Karanth next to acclaimed American writers Ernest Hemingway and Arthur Miller. The organisers told Deccan Herald they were getting around 60 calls from people every day, wishing to donate rare books

With the rare and old titles, the organisers have developed a library of 30,000 books. □ There are 1,516 dictionaries of various languages and subjects, besides 60,000 titles useful to school and college students. Publishers and writers can sell their books on the second and third day. They expect about 150 writers and publishers. A symposium on 'Survival of Kannada: Practical Measures' will be conducted.

Jnanpith awardee and veteran Kannada writer Prof Chandrashekhara Kambara, who inaugurated the Parishe, urged the public to actively take part in the signature campaign launched by the Kendra Sahitya Akademi seeking mother tongue as medium of instruction in schools.

"The Akademi recently launched the campaign for which there has been a very good response in Gujarat, West Bengal, Maharashtra and other states. □ The campaign seeks to ensure mother tongue as the medium of instruction in schools. □ Everybody in Karnataka should take part in it to save Kannada and ensure it as the medium of instruction in schools," he said.

Kambara demanded that primary and secondary education be nationalised to solve the issue of medium of instruction in schools. According to him, most regional languages, including Kannada, are struggling to survive.

The Supreme Court has held that parents have the right to choose the medium of instruction, which cannot be questioned. Hence, the only option left is to nationalise primary and secondary education, he opined.

ECONOMIC TIMES, NOV 9, 2014

AMU library opens its doors to Women's College students

By Eram Agha

The controversy erupted when AMU VC Zameeruddin Shah said allowing girls to access central library was not possible owing to space constraint.

ALIGARH: It was in the 1960s that the undergraduate girls of [Abdullah Women's College](#) were told they would no more have access to AMU's hallowed Maulana Azad Library. After decades of demand, denial and heartburn, in what many said was one of the university's most landmark events, girl students stepped into the library once again on Sunday.

The first bus left the Women's College campus with eight girls at 8.30 am, but more joined later. Inside the library, many just looked around in awe at the structure and soaked in the feeling, still coming to terms with the new reality. Others exchanged high-fives and withdrew the books they had always wanted to. "It's a historic day for the women students of AMU and for the university itself," one of them said.

The controversy that erupted on November 10, when the AMU [VC Zameeruddin Shah](#) said allowing girls to access the central library of the 94-year-old institution was not possible owing to space constraint and that such a move would lead to "four times more boys" crowding the "packed" facility, was put to rest on a nippy December morning.

"Any idea which is new takes time to fructify, this time only eight girls came and others will pick up," Shah told TOI. "From next Sunday, the numbers will increase. The girls should know that this opportunity has come to them with great difficulty and they should make full use of it. Soon there will be book stores and stationary shops around the Maulana Azad Library too."

On November 12, the VC had submitted before the Allahabad high court that all students, including girls, have been allowed access to the library from the current session itself. He had also clarified that undergraduate girl students of the university's Abdullah Women's College can also become members of the library.

MASS MEDIA

HINDU, DEC 8, 2014

A new template for media regulation – 4

In the last three columns, we looked at the available literature on media regulation, the limitations of some of the recommendations, the desire to have a soft touch approach that will not undermine the agency of journalism and its investigative quest, some of the shortcomings within the profession and the fault lines within the existing regulatory framework. In this context, the ongoing consultation by the Law Commission of India assumes significance.

There are many salient points in the consultation paper. First, it recognises the limitations of the existing self-regulation mechanisms within the three self-regulation bodies — the Press Council of India (PCI) for print, the Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC) for channels other than news and current affairs, and the News Broadcasters Association (NBA) for news and current affairs channels. It also recognises that the legal challenge of Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, which many view as violating free speech. There are many instances in the recent past where this Section has been arbitrarily invoked to block access to content allegedly objectionable.

The Law Commission has raised some pertinent questions: “Do the existing self-regulation mechanisms require strengthening? If so, how can they be strengthened? In the alternative, should a statutory regulator be contemplated? If so, how can the independence of such a regulator be guaranteed? How should members of such a regulator be appointed? What should the eligibility conditions of such members be? What should their terms of service be? How should they be removed? What should their powers be? What consequences will ensue if their decisions are not complied with? Should any such change be uniform across all types of media or should regulators be medium-specific?”

Potential pitfalls

There have been many suggestions to the Commission. It is important to spell out some of the potential pitfalls before suggesting some solutions. First, the Commission must refrain from recommending a meta-regulator for the four forms of media — print, radio, television and the Internet. There should be different regulators for different forms of media. Each media platform has its own sets of problems that are neither transferable nor replicable. Second, it should come out with clear implementable and binding codes, for each of the media, which draw from Articles 19 (1)(a) and 21, and that provide an effective complaint redress mechanism and its enforcement. The first tier of regulations should focus on course correction rather than being punitive in its approach. Third, there should be space for arbitration to resolve some of the issues. The idea of arbitration is to make the redress system accessible to the general public both in terms of costs and time. The legal recourse, in the event of unsatisfactory outcome during the arbitration, should be at the level of the High Court. The PCI’s demand for an empowered Media Council,

whose decisions can be reviewed only by the Supreme Court, will pose more problems to citizens than media houses. Fourth, the Commission must attempt a triangulation method, as in the social sciences, to incorporate suggestions from different quarters and disciplines in order to come up with a set of rules that do not prioritise one element of freedom at the cost of others.

Tiered and platform-specific

I am convinced that the need of the hour is to create a robust self-regulation mechanism that is two-tiered and platform-specific. The first tier should be within the news organisations — an ombudsman, a readers' editor or a public editor. This will give a chance for a reader or a viewer to get relief and recompense without going through the time and resource consuming legal path. Tier two should be at the national level and it should be closer to what Lord Justice Leveson suggested for the U.K. press: It should be independent self-regulation that takes an active role in promoting high standards, including having the power to investigate serious breaches and slap sanctions on newspapers. It should have a legal underpinning to make it binding. The regulatory body should be backed by systems designed to assess whether it is doing its job properly.

Lord Leveson also suggested a legislation to enshrine the legal duty on the government to protect the freedom of the press. He recommended that media outlets that refuse to join the self-regulation mechanism, with statutory underpinning, could face direct regulation by the media watchdog, Ofcom. In India, that power can be given to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) for organisations that refuse to join the mechanism. The most defining element of his recommendation is that the regulating body should be independent of serving journalists, the government and commercial concerns, and not include any serving editors, government members or Members of Parliament. The body should consider encouraging the press to be as transparent as possible in relation to the sources of its stories, if the information is in the public domain. He also suggested a whistle-blowing hotline for journalists who are under pressure to do unethical things.

I am also convinced that it will be easier to arrive at a perfectly acceptable regulation for the legacy media — both print and broadcast — than for the digital platforms and social media. The substantial narrative in social media falls between the personal and the public. Any regulatory framework for this young, vibrant, and sometimes problematic, media needs a balancing act between these two distinct domains.

MINORITY GROUPS

ASIAN AGE, DEC 11, 2014

Government draws up 15-point plan to help minorities

[Rajnish Sharma](#)

On a day when the “forcible conversions” issue created a storm in Parliament, the Narendra Modi government is learnt to have decided on a major push for the socio-economic upliftment of minorities across the country.

Top government sources said both the Prime Minister’s Office and the minority affairs ministry were working on a 15-point programme that will help bring the minorities into the nation’s mainstream. Once the draft proposal is finalised the issue will be taken up by the Union Cabinet, the sources added.

It may be recalled that before the Lok Sabha polls, the BJP had planned to come out with major proposals for the benefit of Muslims and other minority communities. The new policy is in tune with Prime Minister Modi’s slogan of “Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas” (development for all), which he had strongly advocated in the runup to the Lok Sabha polls, even drawing admiration from overseas.

Among key features of this ambitious plan, said to have been mooted by Mr Modi himself, is a major thrust on the modernisation of madrasas. This includes giving madrasas access to the latest computer hardware and software, more English and Urdu teachers and even financial assistance to improve the premises in which these institutions operate.

While the Centre is keen on providing direct assistance to the madrasas, the Modi government also wants to rope in state governments in this ambitious plan, mainly on issues like hiring specialised teachers, the sources said.

One of the focus areas of the new policy will be financial inclusion of Muslims, to help them get “soft loans” from banks and financial institutions. Sources claimed that the government had come across a large number of cases where members of the minority communities, particularly small traders and businessmen, were facing difficulty in getting access to easy loans, that in turn was affecting their livelihood.

Another issue linked to this will be special focus on skill training and development. Mr Modi’s own constituency of Varanasi has a sizeable population of weavers, most of whom are from the minority community, but are facing a number of difficulties.

“We plan to set up vocational training centres or polytechnics where youth from the minority communities can get admission to improve their traditional skills or even learn new crafts. Over the past few months we have noticed that the younger generation is gradually shifting away from traditional work or craft of their ancestors due to the lack of support from the government machinery,” a senior official said.

Importantly, the new policy will also deal with the vexed issue of sensitising the law enforcements agencies, both at the Centre and state level, on involvement of members of the minority communities, particularly in cases related to communal violence. While the Modi government is firm that the law should take its course in criminal cases, it will insist on a more humane approach to ensure that no innocent person is wrongly implicated.

PARA-MILITARY FORCE

HINDU, DEC 13, 2014

The Central Reserve Police Mess

RAHUL PANDITA

The CRPF is so ill-prepared to fight Maoists, it is a miracle its troops are not deserting en masse

DEEP ROOTS: “In their strongholds, the Maoists have no dearth of human intelligence through their sympathisers.” Picture shows a team of CRPF's CoBRA commandos in Dantewada district, Chhattisgarh.—

For 15 days, since November 15, more than 2,000 troops from six battalions of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) had been venturing out to conduct SADO — Search and Destroy Operation(s) — in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district. The troops, roughly divided into ten groups, would traverse villages that are considered Maoist strongholds: Polampalli, Kankerlanka, Puswada, Jaggawaram, Korapad, Kanrajgubbal, Rangaiguda, Degalmetta, Ramaram, Pidmel, and Chintagufa. Since they had no intelligence inputs, the troops were asked to engage Maoists if they ever came in contact.

There is a very little possibility of such chance encounters unless the Maoists themselves want to engage the CRPF. In their strongholds, the Maoists have no dearth of human intelligence through their sympathisers. In fact, several arrested Maoists have revealed to the security agencies how their squads had passed less than 100 metres away from CRPF troops without being detected. The CRPF has, in the last few months, tried desperately to win over the local population in these areas through civic action programmes. Their men distribute items like transistors, cycles, and saris among the people. But in Maoist strongholds such as in Sukma, many adivasis do not accept them. On Independence Day this year, some of these items were handed over forcibly to adivasis in several villages. But, according to a CRPF officer, many of them threw away these items at the periphery of the village and ran away. “The people here are angry because they see their near and dear ones dying of malaria, or diarrhoea, or complications during pregnancy,” explained the officer. “The government has not diagnosed the problem and is behaving rather like a quack,” he said.

Gorillas, not Guerrillas

The operation that ultimately led to the death of 14 CRPF personnel on December 1 was to end a day before, but was at the last hour extended by one day. On the night of November 30, about 800 troops were asked by their commanders to “take harbour” on a hillock named Hill 406, south of Kasalpada village. The villagers knew about the presence of such large number of troops. By the evening, says a soldier who was present there, the gathering had turned into a *mela* (fair). The troops lit a fire and chatted loudly in groups. “Had the Maoists attacked during the night, there would have been mayhem,” the soldier said.

At 6.30 the next morning, about 200 troops among this group were asked to move towards Kasalpada village and stay put on the outskirts of the village. It is the heart of Maoist territory, and the troops halted in an open field. “We are told that we need to fight the guerrillas (Maoists) like guerrillas,” said a CRPF officer, “but by the time they halted outside Kasalpada, our troops had turned into gorillas.” The basic requirements of guerrilla warfare, said the officer, are: surprise, mobility, small-team formations, quick action, closely-knit group, specific task, training and motivation, and effective command. But none of these was met, he said. The Maoists were closely watching the troop movement, so there was no surprise. There was restricted mobility — the troops only went as far as a few miles every day. The troops were from six different battalions and were not acting on any specific input. Several of them had already contracted malaria and longed to go on leave.

Just before 9 a.m., the commandant of the CRPF’s 223 Battalion, Sanad Kamal, who was also the acting commander of the group, received a radio message from the CRPF’s Inspector-General (Operations) in Chhattisgarh, H.S. Sidhu. He asked Kamal to join him for a meeting at a spot, 400 metres away. Before he left with nine men, reveal eyewitnesses, his juniors asked him if they could secure Kasalpada. But Kamal just asked them to wait.

After he was gone for an hour, the deputy commandant of the 223 Battalion, B.S. Verma, sent a message to Kamal on the radio, asking him if they could leave the area. “No, just hold ground,” he was told. In the meantime, the troops had broken into small groups. Some took out utensils and began to prepare Maggi noodles under a tree. Some smoked in another corner. A few veered closer towards the village.

Shock and awe

The Maoists, numbering 50-60, attacked the group at 10.30 a.m. Oblivious to the CRPF troops, the Maoists had positioned their snipers on top of large tamarind trees. They led the attack with such accuracy that two officers and several others among the 223 BN died very early on. The rest of the troops, without any command or control, began firing indiscriminately in all directions, leading to complete chaos. As a result, the CoBRA commandos, who took position on one side, could not even pinpoint locations from where Maoists were firing. The CRPF troops fired about 7,000 rounds of bullets in response to a few hundred fired by the Maoists.

“They (Maoists) were so agile,” recounts an injured soldier, “I saw one of them taking off his chappals, climbing on a tree, fire a few shots, get down stealthily and then immediately change location.” They shot with precision while the CRPF troops exhausted all their ammunition. Later, some of them just stood in daze, almost ready to surrender to the Maoists if they had come closer, said a CoBRA commando.

The attack lasted for an hour after which the Maoists looted whatever weapons they could lay their hands on. The CoBRA troops recovered 6 bodies of soldiers beneath a tree. The Maoists had lured them one by one, showing them a glimpse of themselves, and as they

took aim, the Maoist snipers hit them with precision. “Also, I won’t be surprised if some CRPF men died of bullets fired by their own colleagues,” said the CoBRA commando.

The IG finally arrived at 2.30 p.m., four hours after the attack had begun. The commando recalls that he just came, shouted “*Bharat Mata ki jai*,” and then told his men: “*Jo hua so hua*.”

Then began the long walk back to the camp. The troops took away string cots from villagers to carry the injured and the dead. It took them seven hours to walk a distance of seven kilometres through the dense jungle. “We were so scared that the Maoists might attack again,” said a CRPF soldier.

They reached the camp at 9.30 p.m. Two injured soldiers could not make it. They died on the way.

The other injured personnel are now being treated at the civil hospital in Jagdalpur. More than 70 other CRPF personnel, suffering from malaria, are also admitted there. But the hospital is in a very bad shape. Succumbing to media pressure, the hospital authorities removed civilian patients from their beds, offering them to the soldiers. “It is like living in a latrine, if you ask me,” said a CRPF soldier undergoing treatment there.

“One thing I tell you,” he said, “it is better to be a Maoist in Chhattisgarh than be a CRPF *jawan*.”

“I saw one of them (Maoists) taking off his chappals, climbing on a tree, fire a few shots, get down stealthily and then immediately change location”

POLICE

ASIAN AGE, DEC 10, 2014

New Scotland Yard headquarters in London sold to UAE group

New Scotland Yard, the headquarters of London's Metropolitan Police, has been sold to investors from the United Arab Emirates, London mayor Boris Johnson announced on Tuesday.

The central London building was sold to the Abu Dhabi Financial Group investment company for £370 million (\$580 million). ADFG beat off 10 other bidders, paying £120 million more than the guide price. The total sum is three times what was originally paid for the freehold in 2008.

The money from the sale will be used to provide police officers with tablets, smartphones and body cameras. A small amount will also be used to put the Met Police collection of rare crime artefacts on public display in a new museum.

Taking the name of its 10 Broadway address, the old site will become residential and probably also feature offices and a hotel, Mr Johnson said.

The Met police has been in the now out-dated concrete office block since 1967 and will move half a mile to the smaller Curtis Green building it owns next to the Thames. It is undergoing a £58 million refit.

The famous New Scotland Yard revolving triangle sign, seen in news reports and photographs, will move to the new address, which will take on the Scotland Yard moniker.

PRIME MINISTERS

TELEGRAPH, DEC 9, 2014

The distant connection

- Narendra Modi should make use of the best

- Ashok V. Desai

His admirers may call him a star; his critics may call him an exhibitionist. Either way, it is undeniable that the prime minister is a good tightrope walker. His shows become more interesting because he has almost no training for his role. Till recently he performed largely on the local stage where his witty, idiomatic Gujarati served him well. When his party promoted him to the national stage, the rough-and-ready Hindi he had picked up during his escape from Gujarat in the 1980s worked wonders.

Prime ministership may be national, but the performance has to be international. His predecessor may have been hardly noticed on the national stage, but world leaders appreciated and listened to his sage counsel. So he spent much time on the international stage, and presumably enjoyed it. Just how would his milkman - sorry, *chaiwallah* - successor do it? It was a riveting, and to the latter's critics, alarming question.

Subsidiary to that larger question was the uncertainty regarding his second-in-command. Leaders of G20 sit around a table for two days and make wise and boring speeches. But they do sometimes have to take a break to go to the convenience; some may also feel awkward about dozing off while their esteemed colleagues are making important speeches, and may prefer to step out for a snooze. So there has to be someone to take their seat while they run around or whatever.

There may also be urgent messages from ministers at home; or the prime minister may need some homework to be done. So he needs an all-purpose assistant. Whom would he take? Manmohan Singh had Montek Singh Ahluwalia, who had been his - the word escapes me - not Hyde, not double, not alter ego, nor Man Friday - no, Sherpa is the right word. The Bharatiya Janata Party is rather short of intellectuals, and being a Sherpa in G20 requires a somewhat differently abled person from a typical officer of the Indian Administrative Service. Arun Shourie would have fitted the bill perfectly; but then, he has influential enemies amongst the prime minister's close colleagues, and he would have been a little too senior in any case. In the circumstances, Suresh Prabhu was a good choice.

In one of his speeches in Brisbane, Narendra Modi mentioned that Walter Burley Griffin, architect of Brisbane, is buried in Lucknow. That was an interesting choice; I do not know which of the prime minister's men-at-hand discovered him. But Griffin was not an Australian; he was American. He started as a designer of gardens and landscapes. He was a junior in Frank Lloyd Wright's studio in Oak Park, Illinois. I am unlikely to live in anything resembling it, but Wright's Fallingwater is one of my favourite houses; his Taliesin must be the most beautiful home an architect ever built for his sweetheart.

Griffin did not last long with Wright. When Wright went to Japan in 1905, he had borrowed money from Griffin. When he came back, he tried to settle the debt by giving Griffin prints of *geishas*, *yujos* and *joros*. His Japanese clients may have appreciated the pictures, but Griffin was not captivated by the pale ghostly females. He left Wright and started his own practice in 1906. Most of the buildings he designed in the next few years were what are called Prairie-style houses - sprawling single- or double-story villas looking out on the treeless prairies of the American Mid-east. He was one of the couple of dozen architects who prospered with this style.

Then in 1911, Griffin and his wife, Marion Mahony, won the competition that the Australian government announced for the design of its new capital, Canberra. He moved to Australia in 1914. Although he was given the grand title of Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction, he was comprehensively sabotaged by local bureaucrats; the Canberra that was finally built had little to do with his beautiful design. But he found enough other work in Australia to make a career. He bought 640 acres of cheap land in north Sydney and designed an entire suburb there.

Griffin and his wife were followers of Rudolf Steiner who believed in anthroposophy. It comes from the philosophy of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe that the mind is just another one of the senses and that thoughts like seeing, hearing or tasting. In other words, it denies the distinction between thought and sensation. This belief is close to Advaita.

Membership of this spiritual family led Griffin to a commission to design the library of Lucknow University. Once he got to Lucknow, he was commissioned to make many buildings, including a *zenana* for the Raja of Jahangirabad in 1935, and a museum and library for the Raja of Mahmudabad. He had so much work, and was so fascinated by his new ambience, that his wife Marion joined him in 1936. Unfortunately, he got peritonitis and died in Lucknow in 1937. Hence Narendra Modi's interest in him. He used Griffin to draw a connection between Australia and India: a rather contrived connection, but I guess that was the best that Modi's gopher could find in the short time he was given.

Modi could have chosen better. For example, he could have mentioned Robert Sievier, the handsome actor who gambled on the racecourses in Bombay as well as Melbourne. He invented bookmaking: in November 1882, he climbed a box at Flemington racecourse in Melbourne and started shouting odds on the horses in the next race. Soon, people crowded around him wanting to lay bets. He was the first bookie to issue tickets - chits that promised to pay bettors the multiple of the money they had paid as given by the odds, which they could cash once the race was over - provided, of course, that their horse won.

He was so successful he was soon employing a number of bookies. At the end of his first year he had made £70,000 - £5 million or Rs 50 crore at today's prices. He was a serial Romeo: he married Amy Everett in 1882, who divorced him in 1886 for desertion, and then Lady Mabel Emily Louisa Brudenell-Bruce, sister of the Marquis of Ailesbury, in 1887, who divorced him in 1898. He was a serial bankrupt; he declared bankruptcy at least five times. He was a serial cheat at cards and billiards. And he was a good actor; he

even wrote a play, appropriately called *Stone Broke*. It is a pity that he did not leave any films or television clips, for he had much to teach today's star politicians.

But then, there are other models. The best one close by is Amitabh Bachchan; you just have to imagine him giving one of Narendra Modi's speeches. He would pause often to create suspense about what he was going to say. He would meet the eye of his listeners to hold their attention. He would organize the lighting so as to illuminate as well as to give contrast. These are just amateur ideas; the Khans could have even better suggestions. Our prime minister is good, but he can get even better if he would open his mind to the best, without fidelity to old ideologies.

HINDU, DEC 15, 2014

Abe re-elected Japan Premier

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe won a comfortable re-election on Sunday in a snap poll that he had billed as a referendum on his economic policies.

But a low turnout from unenthusiastic voters beset by a heavy snowfall across much of the country could cast doubt on the endorsement he will claim for “Abenomics” — his signature plan to fix the country's flaccid economy. Media exit polls shortly after voting showed his ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its junior partner Komeito had swept the ballot, with an unassailable two-thirds majority in the lower house of parliament that will give them the power to override the upper house.

“Voter turnout is likely to be a record low, but we still can call it a landslide victory for Prime Minister Abe,” said Masaru Kohno, a Politics Professor at Waseda University in Tokyo. —AFP

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

STATESMAN, DEC 15, 2014

Be better governed

G RAMACHANDRA REDDY

The BJP's vision document for the Jammu & Kashmir assembly elections had projected good governance as the poll plank. Like socialism and secularism, good governance is a relatively new feature in political power-play. There is as yet no clarity or vision about the concept. There is no definite idea about the starting-point, let alone the ultimate reach.

To my mind, the starting-point of good governance is a dramatic revamp of our state institutions ~ political, electoral, judicial, administrative, police, army etc. It is impossible to expect such governance with a crime-tainted polity in Parliament, State assemblies, Council of Ministers etc. We need to question the leadership of these institutions as to whether they have addressed promptly and honestly the needs of aam aadmi. There is at least a modicum of accountability of the political institutions contesting elections, while the unelected institutions are going scot-free.

Good governance is not wishful thinking in terms of administrative/political philosophy. The tenets need to be garnered from the writings of Western philosophers or from our ancient texts, notably Arthashastra. Our intelligentsia falls back on the writings of Gunnar Myrdal, social scientist and Nobel laureate, to derive lessons on good governance. The experience of the common man is the benchmark of such governance, which can be achieved if we blend merit and integrity with authority. It is a wholesome approach and not piecemeal. The government cannot counter inefficiency without combating corruption and wrongdoing. One cannot have quality education in the midst of overwhelming corruption and fraud. In Telangana, private engineering colleges ~ with neither a faculty nor students ~ claimed reimbursement of tuition fees from the government. One cannot be efficient by ignoring care and caution, as manifest in the botched sterilisation in Chhattisgarh in November when 14 persons were killed. When we talk of "reform", we need to be cautious and not identify the parameters that dominate our public discourse. In the name of reform, our unelected institutions clamour for an increase in the number of personnel, courts, funds, infrastructure, modern gadgetry and arms for the police and the army, better working and living conditions, streamlined transport, complete autonomy from the political executive or a greater degree of it and finally more powers forgetting the fact that history provides enough proof that power has often been "misused" rather than put it to right use. Police, security forces, and the army possess more arms, manpower, equipment than the Maoists and terrorists. The modernisation mantra did not work. Police became sitting ducks in any gun-battle with the Maoists. The vital equipment or reform needed for good governance is preparedness, honesty, efficiency and a missionary zeal in terms performance. The last is totally absent in about 80 per cent of the administrative, police and other institutions. Therefore, this vital equipment is a condition precedent to good governance. The "rogue reform", that

dominates our public discourse, reminds me of the French proverb “the more you reform, the more unchanged our system remains”. The reform programme should not exert an additional burden on the tax-payer. The process must not be hijacked by industry, that includes the giant multinationals.

There are certain vital parameters to evaluate the quality of governance. It needs to be reasonably free from judicial intervention at every turn. The State is the biggest litigant in civil, criminal and other matters. Adverse court orders, ending finally in acquittal, reflects poorly on governance. Public interest litigation on the “inaction or wrongful actions” of the government and the subsequent intervention of High Courts and the Supreme Court U/A. 226, 32 of the Constitution has an adverse effect on the perception of governance. Annually, there are any number of court orders and indictments. Similarly adverse judicial enquiries, indictment by Lokayukta, Human Rights Commissions, Information Commissions and so on need to be taken into account while evaluating the standard of governance. In fact, the RTI Act 2005 becomes redundant if good governance is an assured commodity. More than this Act, which was packaged as a piece of landmark legislation, we need a law on accountability. Accountability for wrongdoing and crime, that include corruption of the establishment, is the oxygen of good governance. A law is expected to impart and “formalise” the process of accountability. Barring rare cases, there is no accountability for inaction, wrongful action, high-handed action of the bureaucracy, police, and the army.

In the current debate on black money stashed away abroad. the public debate is centred around trivia ~ naming the culprits while ignoring or downgrading the core issue of “legal accountability” or prison sentences for the offence. The Mahatma Gandhi NREGS was passed with considerable fanfare. It was indeed a vote-catcher. But the scheme got mired in corruption. There is an attempt to review this reform measure by the BJP government as it has not led to asset creation. So reform, review and reform is cyclical. Yet it may not add up to good governance unless the reform is genuine. The right to life is a fundamental right. In that sense, safety and security of the citizen is sacred. But the sheer volume of crime makes a mockery of our faith in “safety and security”. As regards corruption, the detection rate is five per cent. The loot of the public treasury is a silent crime. No Prime Minister or Chief Minister can claim with authority that he or she has reduced corruption by 5 per cent yearly, bringing it down by 25 per cent over a five-year time-span. No Chief Minister can boast that he/she has brought down “traditional violent crimes” annually by five per cent. And surprisingly, the metropolitan cities, the seat of state governance, are the worst affected by the crime wave, in comparison to rural areas.

A government that takes effective action to prevent communal riots can be credited with good governance. The crime-graph rises due to (a) failure of preventive and punitive police action; (b) poor detection of crimes (c) poor investigations and prosecutions leading to acquittals; (d) sabotage of investigations that bails out accused from criminal

liability; (e) poor rate of conviction by the judiciary. Escape from “criminal liability” due to sabotage of investigations and enquiries is a poor reflection on governance. To ensure good governance, we need to prevent the people’s republic from turning into a republic of political, business, administrative, police, army and judicial elites ~ at the cost of welfare of the common man. The major campaign plank for the 2014 Lok Sabha election was development. This should lead to the development of the marginalised sections of society... and not the development of the “establishment” and the business classes. Prudent and efficient management of energy resources is no less an important component of good governance. Efficient management of water for domestic, industrial and agricultural use as well as the FCI’s foodstocks are no less important. The writer is a former Inspector-General of Police and author

DECCAN HERALD, DEC 14, 2014

Govt set to prune more central schemes

In order to provide close monitoring and implementation and give greater flexibility to states, the government may further prune Centrally sponsored schemes (CSS). Currently, there are 67 such schemes.

“The whole idea is to give more autonomy and power to states to run their administration and determine finances. There is no clarity as to how many schemes will remain Centrally sponsored, but next year’s Budget will see a significant pruning,” a government official told Deccan Herald.

The CSS numbers declined from 155 in 2005-06 to 99 in 2007-08 at the beginning of the Eleventh Plan Period, but subsequently increased to 147 in 2011-12. Last year’s budget saw a major pruning to 67.

Various committees set up by the government have from time to time suggested that these schemes be redesigned physically and financially so that they meet states’ concerns.

Schemes with small outlays do not achieve the objective of making an impact across states. Such schemes are, therefore, not suitable for Central sponsorship, and need to be implemented by states, say experts.

A number of schemes with an average annual outlay of less than Rs 100 crore may be weeded out or merged with larger sectoral schemes, or even transferred to states, which can then continue with them based on their requirements, said officials.

The fresh proposal for weeding out CSS comes in the wake of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s renewed emphasis on states being given a key role in the overall development process.

RAILWAYS

BUSINESS STANDARD, DEC 11, 2014

Railway staff pad up to go on strike

They are yet to decide when the strike will begin. A strike lasting a single day will cost the railways Rs 2,400 cr

Sudheer Pal Singh

Aggrieved with the government's decision to allow foreign direct investment (FDI) in railway projects, a million [rail employees](#) on Wednesday decided to go on strike.

They are yet to decide when the [strike](#) will begin. A strike lasting a single day will cost the railways Rs 2,400 crore.

[Indian Railways](#) has 1.31 million employees. Of them, a million are affiliated to the [National Federation of Indian Railwaymen](#) (NFIR). On Wednesday, a meeting of the working committee of the union was held here and the decision was taken to mobilise the entire workforce.

“We have decided to go on strike against the Prime Minister (Narendra Modi)’s decision to sell the railways to foreigners,” said M Raghavaiah, general secretary of the federation.

He added no date has been decided upon but the workers would stage a protest in front of Parliament in April next year. “Successive past governments are responsible for the financial malaise of Indian Railways, not the workers. The past governments have announced new lines that are not remunerative. Concessions have been provided, even though the fares have remained stagnant for 10 years. Despite that, workers have managed to make Indian Railways the fourth largest freight carrier in the world, with a load of 1,100 million tonnes every year,” he said.

He also said the workers were willing to provide their provident fund as loan for the railway works. “But the PM thinks beating drums in Japan will bring money.”

HINDUSTAN TIMES, DEC 11, 2014

Delhi govt changes names of 10 Metro stations

Delhi Government has changed the names of 10 Metro stations, including seven proposed stations under its Phase III of construction.

The move comes after the recommendations of a committee constituted by the government for renaming of metro stations.

According to the transport department, the names of three existing Metro Stations - Tughlakabad, Badarpur and Okhla -have been changed and they will now be known as Tughlakabad Station, Badarpur Border, Harkesh Nagar Okhla, respectively.

"The names of seven other proposed Metro stations, which is being built under Phase III, have been changed," said a senior government official.

The official also said that the proposed Metro station Shalimar Place will be known as Badli More, while the Municipal Corporation station will be known as Najafgarh.

Besides, Najafgarh Depot Station will be known as Nangli and the name of Ghevra has been changed to Ghevra Metro Station.

"Proposed Metro station Moti Bagh, which is also being built under Phase 3, will be known as Sir Vishweshwaraiah Moti Bagh. The name of Okhla (Phase III) station has been changed to Okhla NIC. Apart from that the proposed South Campus station will be known as Durgabai Deshmukh South Campus," he added.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

STATESMAN, DEC 13, 2014

Cabinet approves names of six new townships

The Cabinet today approved the naming of six townships that will come up at Bolpur, Kalyani Siliguri, Durgapur, Bantala and at Andal in Burdwan

The township that will come up in Bolpur will be named as Nobel city while those that will be developed at Kalyani and Siliguri will be named as Knowledge city and Sunrise city respectively. The township at Andal in Burdwan has already been developed and it will be named as Golden city, while the township that has been developed at Bantala will be named as Sector VI. The township that will be set up at Durgapur will be named as Silver Township.

Although the land for setting up township is yet to be identified at Kalyani and Siliguri, the land at Bolpur, Andal and Kolkata has already been identified. Around 180 acres of land has been identified at Bolpur for setting up the township.

The township will be developed on a Public Private Partnership (PPP) basis. Mr Firhad Hakim, minister in charge of urban development department said that 25 per cent area will be developed for economically weaker section (EWS) and we have instructed the private party to develop the space for EWS and handed over to the state government, so that the government could select the beneficiary. According to him, 40 percent open space will be kept at the newly developed township. The Cabinet today also approved the name of the deep sea port as Bhor Sagar Bandar. The deep sea port, a project that was conceived by the state government in 2008, is yet to take any concrete shape.

The fund for setting up the port will be borne by both the Centre and the state. They also decided that from now onwards sweepers will be named as Karmabandhu.

It was also decided that another private medical college would be set up at Kurseong in North Bengal. With the setting up of a private medical college in Kurseong, altogether nine medical colleges will be set up during TMC's regime.

The Cabinet today also gave a final nod to name Andal airport as Kazi Nazrul Islam and the technical University at Andal as Abul Kalam Azad University.

WOMEN

HINDUSTAN TIMES, DEC 11, 2014

The Khaps in our homes

ANUMEHA YADAV

The enforcers of women's honour are not only Khap Panchayats, but also men in middle and upper middle class households

On November 15, 21-year-old Bhawana Yadav, who had married Abhishek Seth the same week, was strangled in her house in Dwarka, Delhi, by her mother and father, Savitri and Jagmohan Yadav. Her parents had called her to their house on the pretext of discussing a reorganisation of the wedding — this time with their consent.

On November 27 in Raikot's Johlan village in Ludhiana, Manjit Kaur, a 24-year-old M.Com. student, was strangled by her parents Gurdeep Singh and Amarjit Kaur after they found out about her relationship with a 35-year-old Hindu man living in the same village.

Two days later on November 29, in a village in Hapur district in Uttar Pradesh, 20-year-old Sonu Kumar, a Jatav Dalit, was hacked to death. His wife, 18-year-old Dhanishta, a Rangadh Muslim, was also found with her throat slit, a crime committed allegedly by her brothers in front of the panchayat, for marrying Sonu.

Honour, a valued ideal

Honour or *izzat* is portrayed as one of the most valued ideals among Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities. Daughters, wives and mothers are the repositories of this honour for their communities, families, and castes. Ideals of family and community honour are invoked, sometimes with women's complicity, to condition women to behave in certain ways and to shame and punish them for "inappropriate" behaviour.

The enforcers of this honour are not only groups of old men huddled together and smoking hookahs in Haryana's villages, but can also be found in middle and upper middle class households. From childhood, children in these households are repeatedly told who they should not marry. In our families and films, daughters are treated as *paraaya dhan*, to be handed over unsullied to a man of the right caste at the right time.

Neither education nor knowledge of law may guarantee against this tendency. In December 2013, the Supreme Court asked for 30-year-old Supriya Rathore, the daughter of a sitting Rajasthan High Court judge, Justice R.S. Rathore, to be produced in court after a habeas corpus petition was filed by Siddharth Mukherjee. Mr. Mukherjee alleged that Ms Rathore was being kept under house arrest by her father, as he was opposed to her marrying outside their caste.

Academic Uma Chakravarti has noted that the term "honour killing" itself needs to be questioned for its association with the uniqueness of cultures. She says there is a need to examine what structures of power make such violence possible. In Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities, caste has historically determined control over land and resources, and

caste and its reproduction is contingent upon endogamy. While access to money and power is one way of moving up this hierarchy, actions judged as inappropriate and as per normative codes are also critical. “Action to uphold *izzat* is always a male prerogative; women can only ‘incite’ action... the concept of ‘honour’ in punishing ‘defilers’ is essentially a means of maintaining the material structures of social power and social dominance,” she argues in her 2005 essay “From fathers to husbands: of love, death and marriage in North India.”

In case a couple elopes, it is common for the woman’s family to allege abduction, and sometimes even rape, to regain control over their daughter. The families press criminal charges on the boy and target the boy’s family’s *izzat* in retaliation for their own loss of *izzat*. Couples are often forced to stay underground and are sometimes forced to resurface in fear. Legal support groups in U.P. and Haryana have documented instances where boys have been arrested and girls have been sent to *nari niketan* (state-run shelter homes), where the police and administration, echoing the same beliefs of “honour,” facilitate the father’s or the family’s access to the girl and pressure her further. The girl, even if she is 18 years old, is shown as having been coerced, or to be of unsound mind, or even too irrational to make a decision.

Role of organisations

Along with families, political and ideological organisations are active in safeguarding community boundaries, especially in cases of Hindu-Muslim relationships. The role each adopts in the violence cannot be understood or dealt with in isolation.

Hundreds of kilometres from the North Indian towns that were the sites of the recent killings, in Mohrabadi, an upscale residential colony in Ranchi, Vijay Ghosh, a *pracharak* with Dharam Jagran Samanvay Samiti in Jharkhand, narrated how the organisation, a wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh which works to prevent religious conversions among Hindus, had prevented eight Hindu girls from continuing with their relationships with Muslim boys in the last four months.

“Through my network, I found out that a girl from Sau caste in Seraikella-Kharsawan district, 130 kilometres from here, was having an affair with a Muslim boy there. I contacted her family and approached the administration and have got her placed in a government *nari niketan*. The boy was sent to jail for abduction. There was a similar case in Dhanbad too, which we managed in the same way,” he said.

Dressed in a brown Nehru jacket and silk kurta and dhoti, 50-year-old Mr. Ghosh explained that if the case involved a Hindu boy and a Muslim girl who were in love or eloping, the organisation took an entirely different approach. They offered the couple all their support, including temporary shelter in the apartment we were sitting in. “Hindu boys are very simple. We take *poora daayitva*, full responsibility, for the couple. We help in organising shelter and in protecting the couple from any harm [by providing them] with finances,” he said.

While murders make headlines, such instances are not scrutinised in local district courts. It is crucial that the law is made to work to uphold women's right to choice, and that the courts recognise couples' right to privacy, protection of life and personal liberty.

Among State measures, based on the All India Democratic Women's Association's recommendations, the High Courts of Punjab and Haryana passed an order to set up "couples' protection homes" in every district in both the States. However, according to activists, this has produced mixed results.

"Every month, 10-12 couples who are facing threats from their families approach the Haryana government and they are made to stay in either police lines or in one room together. They have no privacy, and the police decides and approves whom the boy and girl can meet among visitors," said Jagmati Sangwan, Haryana State President, AIDWA. Ms Sangwan said that there was increased pressure to shut down these homes from the caste panchayat, which has repeatedly been approaching the Bharatiya Janata Party government in the State. However, despite the flaws in the functioning of these homes, the way forward was to set similar protective spaces in all States while making them more responsive to the couples' needs, she said.

On November 16, the National Commission for Women Chairperson Lalitha Kumaramangalam set off a controversy when she remarked in an interview to SheThePeople.TV, a website: "Most women don't even understand what autonomy means. Autonomy sometimes becomes more of a risk for a very aggressive woman."

"Women's autonomy is something that is still not okay to defend publicly. We need shelters, helplines, special protection officers, but also gender sensitive campaign material which talks of women's autonomy — both to say yes and no," said feminist activist Kavita Krishnan.

On the one hand, if reducing sexual violence and rapes against women requires defending a woman's right to say no, on the other hand preventing violence against intercommunity relationships, which requires scrutinising the notion of "honour," also requires recognising and supporting a woman's right to say yes.

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