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BUSINESS STANDARD

DECCAN HERALD

HINDU

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## AGRICULTURE

**TIMES OF INDIA, FEB 27, 2014**

### **Agriculture dependent population in India grew by 50%**

WASHINGTON: The agriculture dependent population of India grew by a whopping 50 per cent between 1980 and 2011, the highest for any country during this period, followed by China with 33 per cent, while that of the United States dropped by 37 per cent as a result of large scale mechanization, a latest report has said.

"Between 1980 and 2011, the economically active agricultural populations of China and India grew by 33 and 50 per cent, respectively, due to overall population growth," the Worldwatch Institute said in its report on Wednesday.

"The economically active agricultural population of the United States, on the other hand, declined by 37 per cent as a result of large-scale mechanization, [improved crop varieties](#), fertilizers, pesticides, and federal subsidies — all of which contributed to economies of scale and consolidation in US agriculture," it said.

The [global agricultural population](#) — defined as individuals dependent on agriculture, hunting, fishing, and forestry for their livelihood — accounted for over 37 per cent of the world's population in 2011, the most recent year for which data are available.

This is a decrease of 12 per cent from 1980, when the world's agricultural and non-agricultural populations were roughly the same size.

Although the agricultural population shrunk as a share of total population between 1980 and 2011, it grew numerically from 2.2 billion to 2.6 billion people during this period, writes Worldwatch Senior Fellow Sophie Wenzlau in the Institute's latest Vital Signs Online trend.

According to the report, between 1980 and 2011, Africa's agricultural population grew by 63 per cent, and its non-agricultural population grew by 221 per cent.

Oceania's agricultural population grew by 49 per cent, and its non-agricultural population grew by 65 per cent.

Asia's agricultural population grew by 20 per cent, and its non-agricultural population grew by 134 per cent, it said.

The combination of movement to cities and agricultural consolidation caused agricultural populations to decline in Europe and the Americas between 1980 and 2011: by 66 per

cent in Europe, 45 per cent in North America, 35 per cent in South America, 13 per cent in Central America, and 7 per cent in the Caribbean, the report added.

### **STATESMAN, FEB 25, 2013**

#### **IARI develops weather resilient crop seeds**

The Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), the nation's top farm research centre popularly known as Pusa Institute, has developed farmer-friendly weather resilient crop seeds and farming methods to help withstand or escape the uncertainties of climate change and rainfall fluctuations.

The seeds and farming technology will be on display at the farmers' fair (Krishi Vigyan Mela) to be held from 26 to 28 February at the Pusa campus in West Delhi, said Mr HS Gupta, IARI director.

Scientists and extension professionals present at the fair will advise farmers on the methods to be adopted even if the coming year turns out to be an 'El Nino' year as predicted by weather forecasters warning of uncertain monsoon rains. Therefore, the theme of this year's Pusa Krish Mela is: "Climate Resilient Technologies for Sustainable Agriculture," Mr Gupta said.

He said the focus of research at IARI earlier was on increasing food production by widening the scope of the "Green Revolution". However, the emphasis now is on breeding crops that will ensure nutritional security and adjustments to the reality of climate change.

For instance, he pointed out that the water availability to agriculture in North India was gradually declining, and the institute has developed new wheat and rice seeds that demand less irrigation.

### **HINDU, FEB 25, 2014**

#### **Giving agriculture its due**

There are obviously several dimensions to India's recent agricultural performance which Finance Minister P. Chidambaram in his budget speech termed as "stellar". A week before the budget, Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar had announced that foodgrain production is on course to touch a new record of 263 million tonnes, up from 255.36 million tonnes last year. The good performance is seen with regard to other crops too. Estimates of production of sugarcane, pulses, cotton and oilseeds are also encouraging. A good agricultural season has contained farm prices, and moderating food prices are behind the steep fall in both retail and WPI inflation in January. Just as important, news of a bumper agricultural harvest has, to some extent, dampened inflation expectations. Arguably, the most noticeable feature has been the contribution of agriculture to overall

GDP growth this year. The Central Statistical Organisation in its advance estimates has projected growth in agriculture and allied activities at 4.6 per cent during the current year, with overall GDP growing at only 4.9 per cent. Since industry and the usually dependable services sector have disappointed, the farm sector is seen to have almost single-handedly underpinned recent economic growth. Even over a longer period the track record has been good. Over the past ten years, agriculture has grown by around 4 per cent a year on an average, but it must be pointed out that during most of that period the monsoons were satisfactory.

It is obvious from recent experience that supportive government policies by themselves cannot keep agricultural production growing at a high rate during periods when the monsoons fail or are below par. The question has therefore been asked whether during 2014-15, the monsoons will continue to be beneficial. With dependence on the monsoons still being high, for next year the contribution of agriculture to economic growth cannot be taken for granted. Ironically, the very success of agriculture has exposed the weakness of some government policies, which are tilted towards cereals, to the detriment of other essential food products. Specifically, the periodic hikes in minimum support prices and open-ended procurement have resulted in an imbalance, leading to a glut in the production of rice. Minimum support prices have in practice become procurement prices, and with State governments adding to it a bonus, the cost of procurement has become high. Besides, storage has been a serious problem. Government godowns are overflowing at a time when cereal inflation is still high. All this suggests that the government's major intervention in the farm sector through minimum support prices needs a closer look.

## **BACKWARD CLASSES**

INDIAN EXPRESS, FEB 27, 2014

### **Rane committee submits report on Maratha reservation**

Due to strong demand for reservation for the community, the state government had formed the committee, headed by Narayan Rane, who himself is from the community.

#### **SUMMARY**

The report has recommended reservation for the Maratha community without infringing the reservation of OBCs.

A special committee headed by Industry Minister Narayan Rane to study the question of Maratha reservation in educational and jobs sectors, submitted its report to the chief minister Prithviraj Chavan late on Wednesday night.

The report has recommended reservation for the Maratha community, without infringing on the reservation in the above sectors for the Other Backward Classes (OBC) and other communities.

Due to strong demand for reservation for the community, the state government had formed the committee, headed by Rane, who himself is from the community. The committee had traveled across the state, and had met activists and sociologists to understand the need of reservation.

A sample survey of four lakh families was done, while 18 lakh people were contacted through various medium.

Although, the question of Maratha reservation has been studied by other committees, this was the first time a quantitative analysis of the question was taken up.

## CIVIL AVIATION

BUSINESS STANDARD, FEB 26, 2014

### **AERA scraps user development fee at Hyderabad airport**

#### **UDF is charged to passengers to address revenue shortfall of an airport operator due to lower than projected passenger numbers**

The [Airports](#) Economic Regulatory Authority ([AERA](#)) has scrapped the [user development fee](#) (UDF) collected at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad. The move is effective April 1.

In an order issued on Monday, AERA said, “The authority has decided the facilitation component of the passenger service fee will now be merged with UDF. However, in case of HIAL (Hyderabad International Airport Ltd), the authority has determined UDF as zero, effective April 1 2014 to April 1 2016, for both domestic and international embarking passengers.”

The order was issued after consultations with all stakeholders for determination of aeronautical rates for the first control period (April 1 2011 to April 1 2016). A HIAL spokesperson said, “We are in the process of going through the AERA order and do not wish to make any specific comments at this stage.” ([UDF AT AIRPORTS](#))

Currently, the UDF at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad, is Rs 430 for every departing domestic passenger and Rs 1,700 for every international passenger (ad hoc determination by the authority in October 2010), along with taxes.

The [Hyderabad airport](#), commissioned in March 2008, handled 6.3 million domestic passengers and 2.1 million international passengers in 2012-13.

Hyderabad International Airport is a joint venture promoted by the GMR Group (63 per cent), the central government (13 per cent), the government of Andhra Pradesh (13 per cent) and Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad (11 per cent).

## CIVIL SERVICE

**DECCAN HERALD, FEB 26, 2014**

### **J&K withdraws red beacons for top officials**

The Jammu and Kashmir government Wednesday forbade the use of red beacons on the official vehicles of the chief secretary, the director general of police and the state advocate general.

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mir Saifullah told the state assembly here Wednesday that the permission to use red beacons on official vehicles for the three has been withdrawn.

The state cabinet had Monday had allowed the use of red beacons on the official vehicles of the three dignitaries but did not extend this to the legislators.

Cutting across party lines, legislators, including those from the ruling National Conference the opposition Peoples Democratic Party had Tuesday protested the cabinet decision.

The legislators asserted that they should be allowed red beacons as they constitutionally enjoyed a higher status than the three dignitaries.

**TELEGRAPH, FEB 25, 2014**

### **Naveen gift for govt staff**

**Bhubaneswar, Feb. 24:** Keeping an eye on the election, the state cabinet today tried to appease government employees by simplifying procedures relating to the medical reimbursement. Henceforth, the chief district medical officer can refer a case for treatment.

Briefing the cabinet's decision, chief secretary Jugal Kishore Mohapatra said: "We have decentralised the entire reimbursement scheme. Chief district medical officer (CDMO) can refer cases to various hospitals in and outside the state. In case of a medical college, the superintendent of the concerned medical college also can refer the case."

Earlier, the director of medical training and education (DMET) was empowered to refer the cases to the hospitals. The patients can also be referred to the 21 private hospitals inside the state.

The medical reimbursement will be given as per the central government health scheme. Nearly 1298 diseases will come under the scheme. The state cabinet also restructured the Employees State Insurance (ESI) Medical cadre.

In yet another major decision, the state government decided to accord the status and perks equivalent of a member of the Human Rights Commission to the State Election Commissioner. The member of the Human Rights Commission at present enjoys the status of a judge of a high court.

The cabinet also restructured the Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) cadre by allocating more posts for the senior class one rank. However, the OAS strength will remain pegged at 1,416. It also gave its nod to the Odisha Education Amendment Act, 2014. Henceforth, grant- in- aid benefits will be accorded to schools with student strength of 20 instead of 25 per class earlier in tribal areas and 30 instead of 40 in the non-tribal areas.

The cabinet also decided to recruit more constables in the excise intelligence and enforcement bureau. “Henceforth licenses of IMFL and other liquor shops will be renewed for a period of four months with a 20 per cent hike in charges,” Mohapatra said.

## EDUCATION

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, FEB 27, 014

**Column: Quality divide in higher education**

[Amitendu Palit](#)

China's growth as a regional education hub over the last ten-fifteen years has been accompanied by an increase in the number of Chinese studying abroad. While postgraduate education in North America and Europe was always a preferred option for children in affluent Chinese families, the last few years have seen sharp increase in students enrolling in undergraduate courses, even from middle-income families. While this has been a familiar trend in India too, China has been more successful in getting back its students educated abroad. The number of students returning to the mainland after finishing studies abroad has been increasing at an annual rate of more than 30% in recent years.

While Chinese students have been returning to the mainland for several years, the recent upsurge is driven by two factors. The first is the paucity of good professional opportunities in the West following the completion of education. The financial crisis has severely depleted opportunities in the US and UK, particularly for those that are fresh graduates without specialisations. The tendency on part of most, therefore, has been to return. They have also been encouraged by the fact that while the West has been struggling to recover, China has continued to grow at stable rates. The second important determinant driving the reverse migration has been the proactively encouraging attitude of the Chinese state. China has been providing strong incentives such as favourable taxation policies, generous housing allowance and insurance benefits, settlement allowances for spouses and children, research grants and awards for encouraging overseas Chinese experts to come back to the mainland.

The above factors point to two kinds of attitudes influencing the reverse migration. Experts, particularly those with strong academic achievements, are being pulled back largely by incentives. Others are largely being forced to return due to lack of adequately remunerative opportunities. For both categories, the post-return experiences have not been entirely bright.

Except for experts getting recruited by top-notch domestic universities like Peking, Fudan, Tsinghua and Shanghai Jiaotong, and the high-ranked state-owned enterprises in energy and financial sectors, salary expectations of the returnees have largely remained unfulfilled. Surveys reveal almost 80% of the returnees being disappointed with the

salaries they are being paid. This makes the situation rather complicated for those students that come back with middle-level qualifications. Many of them, these days, are no longer from the rich and affluent families. Several of them are from the middle-class. Financing graduate or post-graduate education in the West is a heavily expensive proposition for them. Their families invest in these qualifications on the assumption of their getting jobs in the West enabling them to recover the investment relatively quickly. But recovering the investment from jobs in the mainland is a far more difficult proposition. Many Chinese students and their families are realising this the hard way.

The key question though is why so many Chinese students are travelling overseas, even for obtaining graduate qualifications, despite knowing the risks involved in the decision, and notwithstanding the fact that China has taken large strides in higher education. Though some Chinese universities figure among the top-100 universities of the world, the faith of the resident Chinese in the rest of the seats of higher learning in the mainland appears rather limited. Indeed, the lack of faith in most local higher education institutions appear to be a driving force behind these students moving overseas. In a large number of Chinese households, the inability of children to get admitted in the top-ranking higher education institutions at the college level seems to be inflicting two clear choices: either send children abroad, preferably to the West, or withdraw children from pursuing further higher education. The former are not always particularly conscious of the credentials of the overseas institutions and are essentially keen on sending their children overseas. The latter, mostly families that are lower income or middle-lower income and hailing from Central and Western China, are forced to deprive their children from further higher education due to lack of affordable quality alternatives.

The global financial crisis and limited opportunities in the West do not appear to have dampened the enthusiasm of the Chinese students to study abroad. Latest reports show an almost fifty percent year on year increase in the number of such students. The trend is expected to continue since the brand value of Western higher education appears high among the Chinese families, though the local job market might have become more selective in this regard. The fundamental point to take note though is the lack of faith of local students in most provincial universities and higher education institutions. This is ironical given the huge emphasis China has placed on higher education and in projecting itself as a regional education hub. In a country where the inflow of foreign students is increasing, albeit in selected universities, and foreign universities are lining up for opening offshore campuses, the lack of faith of most in indigenous education reflects the sharp division in quality of higher education and its affordability.

The author is senior research fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies in the National University of Singapore. He can be reached at [isasap@nus.edu.sg](mailto:isasap@nus.edu.sg). Views are personal

[TELEGRAPH, FEB 25, 2014](#)

### **IN SEARCH OF EXCELLENCE**

A university in a phase of transition

**Dipankar Dasgupta**

Now that the chancellor's views are public, it is no longer a matter of conjecture that Malabika Sarkar's days as the vice-chancellor of Presidency University stand numbered. The chancellor's decision cannot be questioned, needless to say, since he is sticking to the rule book on the one hand and ensuring on the other that parity across universities remains undisturbed as far as special facilities granted to them are concerned.

Nor should the chief minister's announcement on the second campus foundation stone-laying day that Sarkar's tenure has been extended till October be over-criticized. The government had indeed made that recommendation. Protocol was violated perhaps, since the chancellor's observations were not yet available, but there was no political motive whatsoever underlying the proclamation. Quite clearly, the chief minister was expressing the hopes shared by a large majority of individuals currently associated with the development of the university who have nothing other than academic excellence in mind.

Contrary opinions notwithstanding, Sarkar has not only shown remarkable vision in her effort to resurrect an ailing institution. Further, backed as she has been by the mentor group and with no politically motivated barriers posed by the government, she was able to demonstrate her noteworthy administrative skill in the academic running of the university. The Herculean task she has been entrusted with, though not comparable in size to the cleaning of the Augean stables, bears a resemblance to it. In her search for meritorious faculty, she had to embark on the unpleasant task of removing a few of the not so excellent people who had little other than political patronage in support of their prolonged association with the institution.

As it turned out, the difficulty of the task was double edged. Quite apart from ensuring a smooth transfer of a section of the existing faculty to destinations elsewhere in the West Bengal Education Service, she ended up generating displeasure in the minds of eminent academics elsewhere in the state, who believed that many of the new appointees did not fit the bill either. In spite of the total transparency she worked hard to ensure, feathers were ruffled and the media too did not lose an opportunity to berate her under every conceivable excuse. Much to her credit, though, she withstood the rebukes with stoic indifference.

This is not to suggest that each and every new faculty appointment stood up to the standards defined by the mentor group. Some probably didn't, a phenomenon that is not unique for this university. Even the best universities in the world are known to make appointments which they undo later through the extant tenure system, an instrument that

is practically not available in government universities in India and in many other parts of the world as well. This unavoidable damage can be rectified to some extent in the Indian case by taking recourse to a demanding promotional policy. Of course, militant unions often stand in the way and in this context, Presidency University enjoys an advantage in being delinked from the Educational Service. It is an independent organization and the mentor group along with the academic council will hopefully stand behind vice-chancellors to ensure that promotions are not automatic. Thus, even if questionable candidates were chosen in certain instances, it is not impossible to rectify errors.

Having said this, one needs to bear in mind yet another unavoidable problem. Although the mentor group wishes to impose international standards on Presidency University, it is highly unlikely that too many faculty members will be lured away from reputed universities to move in the direction of College Street. And this for two reasons. First, in most of the departments, the research environment still leaves a lot to be desired. Temporary visits by talented scholars have therefore been suggested to meet the shortfall. However, in the opinion of this columnist, visiting faculty cannot address the needs of a student community adequately through their irregular presence.

Secondly, even though the state government has arranged for lavish research funds for the faculty, total emoluments still fall drastically short of those prevailing elsewhere even within the country. Money unfortunately matters in attracting talent, but there is no way a cash strapped state government can join that race. It has several goals to achieve and Presidency University is only one of those. Given its limited means, it has done the best it could do. First, by arranging for the research funds and offering excellent medical facilities for the faculty and its families. Secondly, and this is more important, by scrupulously refraining from politically interfering in academic decisions.

The objective of turning the university into an international centre of excellence will therefore remain unfulfilled if one relies too much on bright young researchers to flock here from distant shores. Yet, does that mean that the dream should be dispensed with? Probably not. If excellence has to be achieved then it should happen from within than from without. Going back to the most glorious days of the erstwhile Presidency College, the teachers who brought it international acclaim were self-groomed within the institution. Clearly, they were bright scholars, but more importantly, they were people who were committed to the building of the institution. Research was probably not the hallmark of their contribution during those days, but they kept themselves well-informed about the progress of the subjects they taught. Besides they taught their students with unparalleled devotion. The result was that the college produced a steady stream of bright scholars who were motivated towards research and contributed significantly to their disciplines both at home and abroad following graduation.

If Presidency University has to prosper therefore, it is important to locate competent teachers and researchers with a commitment to spreading higher education in the state of West Bengal. Such scholars do exist and a section of them is even known internationally. However, commitment towards the state should receive priority over their international visibility. There will hardly be any noteworthy progress in the university until it manages

to find a core faculty that considers the rejuvenation of the institution to be a goal that overrides its quest for salary packets and other benefits. The illustrious institution they wish to work in has to be built by themselves.

This is easier said than done of course. However, it is an important concern that applies to the choice of a vice-chancellor too. Short of a miracle, it is unlikely that the search committee consisting of the three eminent persons will be able to convince a recognized academician from a faraway continent to take charge of affairs at Presidency University in the capacity of a regular vice-chancellor and agree to spend most of the year in Calcutta. Not an impossible event, needless to say, but it is highly improbable.

The clamour surrounding the current incumbent's tenure therefore is uncalled for. During the period of her successive contractual appointments, a lot of improvements have occurred in the university. Changes mostly for the better. In spite of the limited resources available with the university, students are being exposed to video-conferenced lectures by professors of repute from abroad. Classrooms are equipped with state-of-the-art facilities. Student elections are being held in a civilized climate. There is little doubt that there are more things on the anvil and one wishes that, given her demonstrated commitment, Sarkar be allowed to give a concrete shape to her plans, especially since her enthusiasm surrounding the Presidency exercise is adequately established.

The new vice-chancellor need not be unenthusiastic either. However, it will only be fair to the person if Sarkar completes the major tasks she has initiated before handing over charge. Most importantly, it will help the regular vice-chancellor to serve a complete term.

Right now though, one wonders if finding a correct long term replacement for Professor Sarkar will not amount to an absurd drama at best. We could well be waiting for Godot.

**HINDU, FEB 25, 2014**

**Amartya reaffirms Nalanda's commitment to equity**

**'No quota for different countries, no compromise on quality of education'**

The Nalanda University will not implement reservation for Indians or foreign nationals, but it is deeply committed to equity, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen said here on Sunday.

"We have a deep commitment to equity, to get students from backgrounds, where they don't get an opportunity for higher education. The University's process is geared towards it. There will be no quota for different countries. We are guided by equity and there will be no compromise on quality of education," Mr. Sen, the University's Chancellor, said at a press conference after a meeting of the Governing Board.

A high-power selection panel is currently screening applications for faculty members. So far the University has received 500 applications, including about 22 per cent from foreign nationals, Sugata Bose, part of the Board, said.

The varsity plans to begin course this September for the School of Historical Studies and the School of Ecology and Environment Studies.

A total of 20 faculty members, 10 for each school will be recruited from the 500 applications.

The process of student enrolment was expected to start by March end, Vice-Chancellor Gopa Sabharwal said.

While building of the physical infrastructure for the University was still to get a head start, classes would be held in the seminar halls of the Rajgir Convention Centre in Nalanda. Two floors of the State owned Tathagat Vihar hotel would serve as a hostel for students, Ms. Sabharwal said.

On Monday, the first meeting of the International Advisory Panel will be held in Rajgir, Nalanda district. The meeting will be attended by several foreign dignitaries, including the former Foreign Minister of Singapore George Yeo and Thai Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

**PIONEER, FEB 25, 2014**

### **SCHOOLS KID AROUND WITH NEW NORMS**

Aditi Gupta

Despite the Government laying down strict guidelines regarding nursery admissions in the Capital, several schools are illegally charging hapless parents tens of thousands in fees up-front. Openly flouting admission norms some schools are forcing parents to pay huge sums of money in advance in order to get a seat reserved for their child.

According to a parent, Doon Public School, Paschim Vihar, has allegedly made calls to parents asking for huge sums of money in exchange for seats for their wards. Sharing his experience, Raman Singh a parent residing in West Delhi's Tilak Nagar area said: "I was charged Rs 500 for the prospectus and after I submitted the form I received a call from Doon Public School asking me to deposit Rs 78,000 if I wanted to see my child's name in the list of selected candidates."

Just like Singh, several other parents are being harassed by schools asking for money illegally. They either have to pay the amount or abandon all hope of their child getting admission in that school. "I didn't pursue the school after I was asked for this capitation fee," Singh added.

Another parent seeking admission for his child in Indraprastha International School, Dwarka, revealed on the condition of anonymity that after being called by the school for document verification they were asked to deposit a sum of Rs 51,000 to reserve a seat for their child.

"These schools do not provide any acknowledgement slip in return for the payment made and hence are extracting money illegally," he said.

Giving the broader picture, Sumit Vohra, founder of admissionsnursery.com said: “After management quota was scrapped, schools have found different ways to extract money. Schools are either asking parents to pay for booking a seat for their child in the first list or are going by first-come-first-serve basis and prioritising parents who pay in cash without asking for a receipt.”

On being asked whether a complaint has been lodged against erring schools in the grievance redressal mechanism initiated by former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, parents retorted that these helplines were an eyewash.

“I lodged a complaint against several schools like Doon Public School, Indraprastha International and St Mark’s Kindergarten in PaschimVihar for openly flouting norms but did not get any response from education officers. If any action was taken, the schools would have stopped, but nothing happened,” said Satvik Jain, another harried parent.

**HINDU, FEB 25, 2014**

### **Varsities should look beyond educating youth: experts**

Academicians, experts from the industry and administrators came together at a UGC seminar on ‘Effective Governance and Brand Building in Higher Educational Institutions’ held at Ethiraj College for Women on Monday.

K. Rosaiah, Tamil Nadu Governor, talked about the importance of assuring quality in the educational institutions of the country. A university now has also got to meet the additional requirement of addressing the developmental needs of the society, he said.

H. Devaraj, vice-chairman, UGC, said while Tamil Nadu had done extremely well in terms of gross enrolment ratio, there was a need to move towards excellence.

J.A.K. Tareen, vice-chancellor, B.S. Abdur Rahman University of Science and Technology, listed the basic characteristics of world-class universities. He said diversity was the key for excellence, which could be achieved through collaboration, interaction, and integration.

According to Victor Louis Anthuvan, professor, Loyola Institute of Business Administration, the primary role of education was to humanise people.

“Students should not only focus on learning from books and teachers but should also go beyond classrooms and look at contributing to society. They must learn from the lives of great men.”

Madras University V-C R. Thandavan, chairman of Ethiraj College trust V.M. Muralidharan, principal, Ethiraj College, Jothi Kumaravel, and other professors and students of the college participated in the event.

**HINDU, FEB 26, 2014**

### **Panel recommends BU be split into five varsities**

### **Academicians have suggested that it be split for better functioning: Deshpande**

A seven-member expert committee constituted to look into the division of Bangalore University (BU) has recommended that it be split into five varsities. The previous two committees, headed by N. Rudraiah, the former Vice-Chancellor of Gulbarga University, and N.R. Shetty, the former Vice-Chancellor of BU, had proposed the trifurcation and bifurcation of BU respectively.

The draft proposal of the expert committee has been submitted to the government.

Higher Education Minister R.V. Deshpande said: “The committee has submitted the report to the government but it has not yet reached me. We will have to consult the stakeholders concerned about the recommendations. It has to be placed before the Cabinet and in the public domain. Only then can it be sent to the legislature.”

According to the draft proposal, BU will be divided according to the Assembly constituencies — as Bangalore University North, Bangalore University South, Bangalore University East and Bangalore University West. University Visvesvaraya College of Engineering (UVCE), which will soon celebrate its centenary, had been proposed as a ‘special institution’, said K. Narahari, who has been part of all three committees.

He said that by adhering to the 100 colleges per university policy of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, roughly 100 to 150 colleges would be affiliated to all the new universities.

Another member, on condition of anonymity, said the new varsities would be eligible for a minimum of Rs. 55 crore each under the Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA).

“BU has 614 colleges from Bagepalli to Nelamangala. These colleges come under 47 Assembly constituencies and six Lok Sabha constituencies. It has 3.5 lakh students and an estimated 21 lakh answer scripts to be evaluated. Research, administration and evaluation have been affected because of this.”

### **HINDU, FEB 27, 2014**

#### **Miranda House students and teachers to get connected the Google way**

Delhi University’s Miranda House has announced an agreement with Google to provide all students and faculty with a special “Google Apps Platform” in which more than 3,000 students and educators at the college will now be able to connect to a common e-mail, chat and calendar system.

Cloud collaboration tools like Google Docs, Google Sites, Google Groups, Google Hangout and Google+ will enable them to work together and learn more effectively.

All services are hosted by Google and are available to users via any Internet-connected computer and many mobile devices. Google Apps includes Google Calendar, which allows easy coordination of work or class schedules, meetings and events online; Google Video, which is an online video private to a school's domain; and Google Docs, which allows users to create and collaborate on documents, spreadsheets, presentations, forms, and drawings in real-time as well as upload and share any file type.

Jamia Millia Islamia's three-day inter-university cultural fest "Miraas 2014," which began with a recitation from the Quran, concluded with a prize distribution programme here on Wednesday. A movie created by a student about previous Miraas festivals and scenes depicting university administration also made it to the inaugural ceremony.

Vice-Chancellor S.M. Sajid talked about the founding days of the university and announced that by 2020, it would be the endeavour to make Miraas become an international inter-university festival.

Indian Vocal (Solo), Business Idea Competition, Poetry Composition and Recitation (in Urdu, Hindi, and English), Indian Vocal Group (Case Study Competition) and Western Vocal (Solo and Group) were some of the events that took place during the fest.

National Law University, Delhi, held its special convocation on Monday with External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid, as the chief guest. On this occasion, the university also conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (LL.D. Honoris Causa) on Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada David Johnston.

In his acceptance speech, Mr. Johnston said students were the future of this country and its legal system reminded them of their responsibility to society to serve beyond the needs of specific clients.

"Students in addition to knowing law, must possess a sense of justice. You must always ask whether the particular law you are working with is just or not. And if you find it to be unjust, ask yourself what will you do about it."

Mr. Johnston further urged the students to "remain in constant pursuit of justice, because without justice, law is mere empty words". He cautioned that failure to do so "would only see legal system lose trust of those it serves".

Mr. Khurshid in his convocation address told the students to "never give in to handicap in pursuit of excellence".

[TIMES OF INDIA, FEB 25, 2014](#)

### **Delhi University teachers slam helpline on absenteeism**

NEW DELHI: Though still in the dark about the details, teachers think the helpline is a "rebuttal" for their series of protests and march to Parliament against the four-year undergraduate programme. The [Delhi University administration](#) announced a new

helpline on Saturday, this one for students to report teacher-absenteeism on. Given the lack of details-especially on the process through which such grievances will be redressed-teachers fear misuse. Many students are just baffled. They thought they were the ones not coming to class.

"Delhi University didn't become what it is because teachers don't come to class," says Abha Dev Habib, member, [Delhi University Teachers' Association](#)-which too issued a statement-and physics teacher at [Miranda House](#). "This is just a rebuttal for the February 18 march. Whenever there's a successful demonstration, they announce something. But a helpline can only lead to further break down in the environment. What they should do is see why systems are working and replicate those."

Teachers also wonder how such a helpline will work seeing as the bulk of the evaluation for the foundation courses is in their hands. "This could be used for blackmail as well, to settle scores," says Habib. "You have to be much more innovative when you deal with lives of students and teachers."

Students, on their part, are a bit confused. "It's students who are more unwilling to go to class," says one from a South Campus college. "Sometimes teachers have to cancel because there are very few students in class." Another student who's trying for some relief from the university about the genetics and genomics paper-a large number of students who have otherwise performed well have failed this paper-says he has "no problems with teachers". "They come to class and teach us. We have been asking the DU administration to intervene but they aren't doing anything," he says.

"Quite a few students have responded to this online. They are smart enough to guess the motivation behind these measures," says Sunny Kumar who's a member of All India Students' Association and teaches at Miranda House.

Meanwhile, since Saturday, a brief, sarcastic "open letter" to vice-chancellor [Dinesh Singh](#), supposedly from students, is floating about the internet. "We (the voice of hundred thousand students of Delhi University) are writing an open letter to express our gratitude for being the lucky ones experiencing the semester system, FYUP and other awesome experiments," it says and goes on in a similar vein - once digressing to rudely draw a parallel between 'Sir' and Rajnikant - finishing with "Your ideas and thoughts are very innovative but they should be presented in a better way by proper planning and organization. Giving your innovations a thought and engineering it in a way to gain mass acceptance might be a better idea instead of implementing it rapidly."

"We only have 'hopes' left with us," it says. "And we hope you will take this sarcastic appeal in a positive manner."

## ELECTIONS

HINDU, FEB 26, 2013

### **Assembly, LS polls in A.P. to be held together Bifurcation is expected only after elections**

Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh will be held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha polls scheduled for April/May.

While President Pranab Mukherjee is expected to give his assent to the Bill for bifurcation of the State in the next few days, the division will take place only after the elections.

Several Congress leaders from Seemandhra want the Assembly elections postponed for six months as they believe that the time gained could help the party retrieve lost political ground on account of Telangana creation.

But, the polls cannot be deferred as the Election Commission is constitutionally mandated to hold elections to the Assembly, whose term is ending on June 1.

It took three months for the then government to fix the appointed day for creation of Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh — the last time division of States took place — from the day of gazette notification of the Act.

Though it has been over a week since Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy resigned and quit the Congress, the Union government is yet to take a call on the next course of action. The Congress Legislature Party has not elected a new leader to replace the caretaker Chief Minister.

It is an incongruous situation where the State is headed by a caretaker Chief Minister, who does not represent any political party, and the single largest party does not have a leader. The Centre is in a bind over imposition of President's Rule in Andhra Pradesh as the ground for Central rule does not exist.

President's Rule can only be imposed if there is a constitutional breakdown or if a party or combination of parties conveys to the Governor that they are not in a position to form the government.

## EMPLOYMENT

DECCAN HERALD, FEB 27, 2014

### **Toilets to solve unemployment!**

How can Karnataka, where the unemployment rate is as high as 20 per cent due to the downturn in industrial sector, generate jobs? By building toilets along the highways and employing men and women to manage them.

This is one of the recommendations submitted to the government by MLAs back from a tour to Australia, New Zealand and Fiji recently. The population of these three countries put together does not exceed 3 crore, while Karnataka's population is 6.11 crore.

The committee headed by Congress MLA B.R. Yavgal had toured the countries for nearly two weeks. As many as 10 MLAs and three officials were part of the study tour sponsored by the government. Nearly Rs 1 crore was the projected expenses. Despite stiff opposition from various quarters against the junket, Yavgal defended the trip by arguing that "heaven did not fall just because we went on a tour".

They submitted their tour report to the Assembly on Wednesday. Referring to experiences they had in New Zealand, the members spoke highly about the quality of road construction and maintenance. Their report had a particular emphasis on the roadside toilets. These modern structures, maintained well and supplied water, were built at an interval of every 40 to 50 km. Besides these pay and use toilets, the MLAs had also seen shopping malls and coffee/tea shops along the roads. "Here, along Indian highways, toilets should be built to help travelers. Also, each toilet can create job for both men and women. This would help in reducing unemployment at least to some extent," the legislators said in their report.

In another vague observation, the report noted that the legislators did not find any caste and sub-caste system or discrimination against anyone in any of these countries. "People were found to be honest, sincere, time-conscious, patriotic, law abiding and disciplined.

Similarly in Karnataka too, the government must take steps to ensure every citizen adopts such principles. The government must take stringent action in this regard," the report said. However, the report is silent on the caste system prevalent here.

The MLAs also mentioned the nuclear family system. They noticed that parents do not take care of their children once they cross 18 years. "In India too, nuclear families are increasing. Here too, the government must provide insurance facilities to the poor besides providing old age home accommodation," said the report.

In all, 15 recommendations have been made by the panel to the government. These include encouraging drip irrigation, sprinkler system, developing tourist places by providing ropeways and constructing a 'Dream Theatre' on the lines of the Opera House in Sydney.

## HOUSING

HINDU, FEB 25, 2014

### **50,000 flats for Bengal government employees**

Two days after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced that her government has allotted Rs.100 crore for building houses for government employees, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Partha Chatterjee spelt out the details of the scheme here on Monday.

“Initially 50,000 flats will be built for State government employees. These will be done in a PPP (public-private- partnership) model by the Public Works Department and the Housing Department”, he said.

Of these 50,000 flats, 30,000 will be built by the PWD and the rest by the Housing Department.

Apart from allotting funds for the project, the State government has also made the facilities of loans on simple conditions, added Mr. Chatterjee.

He also reiterated Ms Banerjee’s earlier announcement that the government had extended the period for a health scheme providing health insurance to government employees until 2015. It had expired last year.

“The hospitals that will come under this scheme have already been identified. The State government will bear the medical expenditure of every government employee up to a maximum amount of Rs.1 lakh,” he said.

If the expenditure exceeds Rs.1 lakh the remaining has to be paid by the employee.

TIMES OF INDIA, FEB 25, 2014

### **DDA offers penalty relief**

NEW DELHI: In its board meeting on Monday, DDA decided to launch a one-time relief scheme for those who stayed away from the [leasehold to freehold conversion camp](#) conducted recently.

According to senior DDA officials, a decision was taken to provide a special 'one-time' relief, wherein a maximum period for levy of misuse charge (levied on misuse of property) will be restricted to five years from the date of detection of misuse.

Officials said the scheme was aimed at mainly facilitating the payment of the charges and allow conversion of property from leasehold to freehold. "Many cases of conversion of leasehold to freehold have been pending for years due to heavy misuse charges, which at times exceed the cost of the plot or flat," said a senior DDA official. The move by DDA is expected to benefit hundreds of property owners in areas like Karol Bagh, Daryaganj and Paharganj.

## JUDICIARY

INDIAN EXPRESS, FEB 26, 2014

### **Perils of restraint**

[Upendra Baxi](#)

The court's refusal to recognise that the right to adopt is an integral part of Article 21, which guarantees the rights to life and liberty, is striking.

On gender justice and human rights, court can't hold back or abdicate responsibility.

On gender justice and human rights, court can't hold back or abdicate responsibility.

At a time when millions of orphans await legitimate adoption, the Supreme Court's judgment in *Shabnam Hashmi versus Union of India and Others* is managerial, howsoever cleverly crafted. It takes the "small step" of recognising adoptions under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, and the rules flowing from it, especially the amendments of 2006. Now, Indian Muslims may adopt Muslim children.

The act "does not mandate any compulsive action" by a foster or adoptive parent. It is wholly facilitative and no person violates any obligation to adopt, simply because there is no duty imposed on any one. As with the Special Marriage Act, 1954, very few Muslims would take recourse to the Juvenile Justice Act for adoption.

More striking is the court's refusal to recognise that the right to adopt is an integral part of Article 21, which guarantees the rights to life and liberty. After nearly two decades of social action litigation, which has expanded the judicial role in almost every sphere of national life, to say that the Supreme Court has no constitutional responsibility to discharge the obligation under Article 44 to strive towards the enactment of a uniform civil code (UCC) is not convincing. The court had the opportunity to do a repeat of the larger bench's decision in the *Shah Bano* case, however meagre and provocative it might have been.

Instead, the Supreme Court now says that the "elevation" of this right to the status of a fundamental right under Article 21 will have to wait for another day. The court stresses that it is for Parliament to meet the constitutional obligations of Article 44, that it is for future generations to craft a UCC once there is "a dissipation of conflicting thought processes... prevailing in the country". Judicial self-restraint stands commended; judicial activism stands downgraded.

One may still ask the court: How long will Indian Muslim children have to wait till they can rightfully be adopted by other pious Muslims? Is nearly 65 years of the Indian

republic not long enough to fulfil the obligation of a UCC? Is the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) to be the decisive voice for them or the Constitution of India, which gives them the freedom of both conscience and religious beliefs and practice, as well as the right to complex equality? How about India's own obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child? What happens to Indian law, policy and administration in that context? Finally, what would happen if succeeding generations were to ignore, or find it even more difficult to implement, the judicial advice so mildly expressed in the judgment?

The court does not pay much heed to the AIMPLB's argument that Islamic personal law only follows the system of Kafala, under which foster care is permitted for Muslims but not adoption. The AIMPLB asked the court to direct authorities acting under the juvenile law to take full note of that position. The court refused to oblige, though reiterating that a UCC could only be achieved by the "collective decision of succeeding generation(s) to sink conflicting faiths and beliefs that are still active".

The court had no inclination to note that many a Muslim jurist is, after all, interpreting "Fiqh (jurisprudence)". This is distinct from the Sharia, which is defined as divine in origin. If you follow the maxim that the law is a matter of divine reason, which can be interpreted by humans who have been given the gift of reason, even the Sharia remains a matter of conflicting human interpretation. Such interpretation is not permissible only when the commandment emanates from divine will: all conflicting and customary interpretation must then cease.

Whether Quranic verses on adoption articulate this distinction is the question that the court should have confronted. Many Muslim-majority countries (such as, Malaysia, Somalia, Tunisia, and Turkey) have deemed adoption legal. Algeria, Jordan and Morocco also allow for the adjustment of the Kafala system to render Muslim foreign adoptions valid.

Whatever the justification for legislative inaction earlier, had the Supreme Court consulted the 2011 report of the Global Muslim Women's Shura Council, an organisation based in the United States, the reasoning and the result in this case would have been vastly different. The council finds that "instead of banning adoption, Islamic sources have brought various ethical restrictions to the process, condemning dissimulation and foregrounding compassion, transparency, and justice". And "these restrictions closely resemble what is known today as the practice of 'open adoption'", that is, where adoption does not result in the severance or erasure of genetic ties.

Accordingly, "when all efforts to place orphaned children with their extended family have been exhausted, open, legal, ethical adoptions can be a preferable, Islamically

grounded alternative to institutional care and other unstable arrangements”. Thus, a modified Kafala system in which the state and the law have more than a facilitative role is not anti-Islamic. It carries forward the imperative of international human rights — namely, the best interests of the child in state and civic enterprise.

In the second decade of the 21st century, the court is clearly at a crossroads. Its present judgment — as well as the recent judgment re-criminalising same-sex relations as “against nature” — appeals to Parliament to perform its constitutional obligations. Yet, given electoral arithmetic and the politics of human rights, the legislature is unable to engage with constitutionally legitimate law reform.

At the same time, the court adores Article 21’s right to liberty, both to render “complete justice” and to enhance its own jurisdiction. It thus counsels self-restraint and judicial activism at the same time. In itself, the judicial preference for legislative action is understandable, but the court also legislates in the interests of governance, development and justice.

In the charismatic moment that saw the inception of social action litigation, the court carved out a social niche for epistolary jurisdiction for the disenfranchised, the dispossessed and the disadvantaged in India. In that moment, the Supreme Court became, in Justice Goswami’s immortal words, “the last refuge for the bewildered and the oppressed”.

Today’s court seems to fail not just episodically but also structurally. It needs a cohesive — collectively disciplined — adjudicatory leadership. At least, the sorry spectacle of smaller benches ignoring the decisions of larger benches should now end. The court should take a more determined stance when any personal law system violates the norms of gender justice and the human rights of sexual minorities.

The writer is professor of law, University of Warwick, and former vice chancellor of the Universities of South Gujarat and Delhi  
[express@expressindia.com](mailto:express@expressindia.com)

## LIBRARIES

TIMES OF INDIA, FEB 27, 2014

### **Nilamber Pitamber University library has winged guests**

DALTONGANJ: A look around the Central Library of [Nilamber Pitamber University](#) and you would know that pigeons frequent the place more often than scholars. Having made this their home for decades now, they are quite oblivious to the presence of visitors, if any.

Anyone walking into the library is greeted with droppings and white feathers littered on the floor. A horde of pigeons have made holes on the walls, meant to serve as ventilators, their nests, thus keeping alive this rather sedate library. The staircase leading to the library prepares a visitor for what lies ahead.

The library is set to be revamped with funds of Rs 20 lakh already released for the purpose. The state human resource development department has allotted rupees one crore for the upgradation of libraries of postgraduate departments, the Central Library, college libraries, etc.

Apart from Rs 20 lakh earmarked for NPU's Central Library, the modernization of the libraries of 16 postgraduate departments of the university is set to be done at a cost of Rs 48 lakh. Each department is entitled to a sum of Rs 3 lakh for upgrading their library.

The balance, which adds up to a sum of Rs 32 lakh, is to be split between four constituent colleges - Rs 11 lakh for GLA college library, Rs 9 lakh for YSNM college, Rs 4 lakh for JS college and Rs 8 lakh for SSJSN college in Garhwa, said pro-vice chancellor of the university A N Ojha.

Ojha said, "If any PG department is unable to utilize funds, they will be prefixed to other PG departments where it can be put to better use."

A high-level meeting for modernization of the Central Library, postgraduate departmental libraries and college library was held under the chairmanship of Ojha here in which university officials, registrar Amar Singh and convener college development council (CCDC) R R Kishore had a threadbare discussion with the heads of postgraduate departments and professors in charge of the colleges of constituent colleges under this university. Prof [Anita Sinha](#), P Jain, Sudhir P Sinha, D P Pandey, JGD Dubey, R N Choubey, S K Mohan, B K Gupta and others attended the meet.

Ojha has set up a seven-member team of senior teachers for the task of suggesting ways and means to upgrade the Central Library. Similarly, a five-member team is set up for upgradation of PG library and college libraries.

The registrar, who is known for his eco-friendly approach, got a dozen plantations done in the premises of [NPU](#) said, "The pigeons would not be rendered homeless rather they will be given more privacy with some sheets covering their shelters here." The library is to be fitted with an inverter, generator set, internet, fax machine, Xerox machine and better seating and reading arrangements.

TRIBUNE, FEB 25, 2014

### **Pash library vacated for demolition**

Pash library built in memory of revolutionary Punjabi writer Avtar Singh Pash two decades ago has been vacated for demolition. The 'shaheed smarak' will be shifted to the new Police Lines, under construction on Kaithal road.

Books and furniture of the library have been shifted to other places. These will later be shifted to Pash library, which will be built at the citizen service centre to come up on police land near Mahatma Gandhi chowk.

As per the government plan for Kalpana Chawla Government Medical College, the hospital road will be widened to 15 metres and the library will be demolished.

Dr Yogesh Sharma, Deputy Medical Superintendent, Kalpana Chawla Government Medical College, said Pash library was being demolished and had been vacated.

## POLICE

HINDU, FEB 25, 2014

### **Mamata inaugurates State police directorate**

#### **Sub-departments brought under one roof**

Bringing together the different wings of the State police under one roof, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee inaugurated here on Monday a directorate of the West Bengal Police at Bhabani Bhawan located at Alipore in the city's southern parts.

Ms. Banerjee, who also holds the portfolio of Home, said while the Kolkata Police had its entire set-up headquartered at Lalbazar, the West Bengal Police did not have such an arrangement.

“The West Bengal Police has been neglected for a long time. With this initiative, different sub-departments of the police have been brought under one roof for better coordination,” she told journalists.

The administrative building, Bhabani Bhawan, has so long housed the headquarters of the Criminal Investigation Department of the West Bengal Police, besides certain other quasi-judicial bodies.

“The police directorate means all the police together... the CID is here, the Enforcement Branch is here [to name a few],” she said.

Certain other quasi-judicial bodies, like the West Bengal Human Rights Commission, have been shifted from the administrative building, Ms Banerjee said, adding that the space crunch led to problems in functioning of the State police.

She said Director General of Police G.M.P. Reddy, whose office is located at the State Secretariat, would, “sit at the directorate for one or two hours regularly.”

## **POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT**

DECCAN HERALD, FEB 26, 2013

### **Nitish, Mulayam in 11-party front to battle Cong, BJP**

Regional parties and the Left Front on Tuesday announced a pre-poll alliance for the Lok Sabha elections to put forward an “alternative” to both Congress and BJP. In the presence of leaders, including H D Deve Gowda, Nitish Kumar, M Thambi Durai and Mulayam Singh, CPM’s Prakash Karat announced the coalition but did not name any prime ministerial candidate.

The parties in the front are the AIADMK, Samajwadi Party, Janata Dal-United, Janata Dal-Secular, Biju Janata Dal, Jharkhand Vikas Morcha, CPI, CPM, RSP and the Forward Bloc. Mulayam Singh said the number of parties will swell to 15 as some more outfits were being contacted.

The leaders claimed that the Third Front would not have any problem in deciding a prime minister. “Earlier too, we have elected prime ministers after polls without much difficulty,” JD-U president Sharad Yadav told mediapersons at Tripura Bhavan. He referred to the election of Morarji Desai, Deve Gowda and I K Gujral to the top post.

Karat also clarified that Jayalalitha did not want to project herself as the prime ministerial candidate right now. “Jayalalitha has said in my presence that no party should raise this question,” said the CPM general secretary.

Articulating the nature of the alliance, Karat said every party would go into a seat sharing arrangement to strengthen the front. The leaders also tried to dispel apprehensions over a possible split in the Third Front after the elections.

While Mulayam Singh said he would not ally with the Congress, Nitish Kumar asserted that his party would keep away from the BJP. “There is no question of a relationship and we will not even have any contact,” he said.

Representatives of two important constituents, Asom Gana Parishad and Biju Janata Dal, were conspicuous by their absence. Karat said both parties have been consulted. Their leaders could not attend the meeting due to personal engagements. The Third Front released a joint declaration saying it was time for a change. “The Congress should be thrown out of power,” they said. “The BJP and communal forces must be defeated and prevented from coming to power.”

The coalition promised “strengthening of democratic framework, ending corruption and ensuring accountability in government, establishing a secular order, people-oriented development path which addresses concerns of inequality, social justice, protecting farmers’ interest and women’s rights and creating a true federal system”.

## RAILWAYS

HINDU, FEB 25, 2014

**Now, a website for hassle-free Tatkal booking**

K. BALCHAND

Now just log on to IRCTC Lite for hassle-free and faster booking of your Tatkal ticket.

This additional facility, which opens 30 minutes before commencement of Tatkal booking at 10 a.m., is shorn of links and pop-ups to ensure better speed.

The Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation says it has removed all links, images, advertisements, services and features, banners, alerts and updates and floating tabs from the home page.

Facilities such as enquiries on refund status and cancelled history have been kept out of this section to reduce unnecessary hits, which hamper transaction speed.

Travel agents cannot access the link during the two-hour duration given to the public; a separate link is provided to them for ticket cancellation.

The new software has resulted in increased bookings during the two-hour period. The average purchase has shot up from 83,000 to 92,000 tickets.

The speedy and easy access helped in record sales of 1.05 lakh Tatkal tickets on February 9.

## URBAN DEVELOPMENT

BUSINESS STANDARD, FEB 26, 2014

**Rajiv Lall: Why Indian urban administrators are poor service providers  
Governance structures have left municipalities uniquely incapable of developing  
efficient delivery and planning mechanisms**

The lack of resources is only a part of the challenge of [urban development](#) in India. I focus here on how the planning and administrative machinery of cities makes it hard to deliver the essential services they so desperately need. For this, I rely mostly on a recently released and highly recommended collection of papers edited by Ahluwalia, Kanbur and Mohanty<sup>1</sup>. This is a most welcome contribution to the literature precisely because it shines the light on the non-financial challenges to sustainable urbanisation.

Service delivery to our urban population of 377 million living in 4,041 statutory towns and 3,894 census towns<sup>2</sup> has been deteriorating. More than a third of the urban population is without access to piped water connections. The average daily per capita availability of water has declined over 20 per cent in the past 15 years to an estimated 100 litres, available for one to six hours a day. Only a fifth of waste water generated in our towns is treated, down from an estimated 37 per cent in 1999. Less than six per cent of our cities and towns (excluding census towns) have a sewerage network. Almost a fifth of urban dwellers do not have access to toilets. Untreated sewage in our very congested cities, especially from slums unconnected to sewerage networks, flows into storm water drainage systems and ends up polluting water sources. Solid waste collection coverage in our smaller cities has declined to 50 per cent from 75 per cent since 1999 and leaching from land-fills further threatens our groundwater resources. Officially, our urban housing shortage is 19 million dwelling units, but our slum population has swollen from 55 to 80 million between 2001 and 2011. Public transport now accounts for only 22 per cent of urban transportation with increasingly damaging consequences for air pollution.

Our administrative machinery was designed to serve only two tiers of government: the Centre and state. The third tier has never had any meaningful administrative support, leaving our [municipalities](#) with chronic capacity constraints. Barring a few exceptions there is very little project planning or management capacity today at the municipal level to supervise or undertake [infrastructure](#) development or operations management at any meaningful scale.

Such capacity, as exists to deliver urban services, resides in entities like development authorities and utilities sponsored and overseen by state or central government organisations such as the Indian Railways (which is involved in providing mass transportation of suburban commuters in several cities). This has contributed to systematic failures in co-ordination across a complex web of agencies with overlapping jurisdictions.

The malaise of dysfunctional coordination is not just restricted to service providers. It also affects various aspects of [urban administration](#) and planning. For example, at the

central government level, separate ministries for urban development and housing and poverty alleviation makes it harder to implement policies and programmes that integrate inclusion with infrastructure development. At the state level, land management falls within the overlapping ambits of the state governments' revenue and urban development departments respectively. Both departments regulate the use of land independently of each other. Because of their historical function dating from colonial times, revenue departments have a rural focus and maintain a cadastre (or public record) focused on the taxation of land. The urban development departments, on the other hand, maintain a separate cadastre focused on property taxation. The result: multiple land records with different statutory statuses and levels of accuracy. This undermines the security of tenure, increases corruption and adds substantially to the risk of land related transactions. Other related functions such as conversion of land use, taxation and registration of land transactions, are also rendered infinitely more complex. All of this only makes the shortage of land for urbanisation more acute.

Administrative fragmentation has also been fatal to the process of urban planning. Urban planning in India has typically been undertaken in larger cities through master plans under the supervision of town and country planning departments of state governments or state-sponsored development authorities. Most master plans embody a narrow, rigid top-down spatial planning perspective with little attention to socio-economic, inclusion or financial considerations and little connection to district or regional development plans. Except a few cities such as Bhopal, Indore and Ahmedabad, that are trying to integrate comprehensive mobility plans into their city master plans, transport planning has also been left out to be pursued independently by separate departments of transportation at the state or central government level. The result has been traffic congestion, poor connectivity between cities and the hinterland, and under-development of low-income housing.

A recurring cause of dysfunction in urban administration is that state- and national-level agencies with the responsibility for delivering services to municipalities have no accountability to that tier of government. The 74th Amendment to the Constitution circa 1992 recognised the need to empower the third tier of government, and through the Twelfth Schedule identified a list of 18 functions<sup>3</sup> to be devolved to municipal bodies. However, the actual devolution of functions was left to the discretion of state governments who continue to jealously guard administrative power at their level. Although, following the constitutional mandate, cities do now have "institutions of self-government" comprising directly or indirectly elected mayors and councils of elected "corporators", executive authority remains substantially in the hands of state government appointed municipal commissioners. And despite the mandate of the 74th Amendment, state finance commissions have still not allowed any meaningful fiscal autonomy to urban local bodies.

In a nutshell, urban administration is a mess. Generalisations are hard to make across the urban landscape that includes giant metropolitan areas and tiny *nagar panchayats*, but in general, four priorities need to be addressed. First, we must build the capacity of

municipal cadres covering expertise in areas ranging from regional and city planning to finance, accounts and project management. Recruitment into this cadre could be through a competitive examination while allowing flexibility to hire some professionals with special skills laterally<sup>4</sup>. Second, along the lines suggested by the administrative reforms commission over seven years ago, states should undertake "activity mapping" for municipal governments to be clear about which activities are essentially for them to manage, which require them to act as agents for higher tiers of government, and which involve sharing responsibility with other tiers of government. There is no "one size fits all here" - the answer will vary across municipalities. Third, the office of an empowered mayor (instead of the municipal commissioner) must take responsibility for administrative co-ordination internally between municipal departments, and externally with state and central government agencies. Fourth, urban planning mechanisms need an overhaul to unify land record keeping, integrate land use with transport planning, and embed municipal plans into district and regional plans.

## WASTE TREATMENT

HINDUSTAN TIMES, FEB 25, 2013

**Trash trouble: No new dumping grounds, Delhi sits on garbage bomb**

**Darpan Singh**

Delhi is staring at an acute waste disposal crisis as daily generation of garbage may jump to 19,100 tonnes, or 4,775 truckloads, by 2024, up from the current 9,200 tonnes or 2,300 truckloads, a parliamentary panel has said. This comes even as the government has failed to find new landfill sites despite repeated interventions by the courts.

Indicting the government, the standing committee on urban development said three of the four landfills in the city have become 'stinking mountains', far exceeding their closure deadlines.

In addition, people are bitterly opposed to landfills coming up in their neighbourhoods, officials admit, since existing ones aren't maintained scientifically, turning them into massive polluting heaps.

"The mountain of waste produced every day has to be managed in a manner that will ensure least pollution and nuisance to the nearby population," the panel said.

Pointing out that only 10 of 44 waste-management projects have been completed, the committee asked the urban development ministry to sanction more projects. "The ministry should adopt eco-friendly systems in Delhi like developed countries," it said.

Yogendra Mann, spokesperson for the east and north municipal corporations, however, shifted blame, saying "We have suggested possible sites to the DDA since only they can provide land but no allotment has been made."

Almost 85% of the city doesn't have a formal door-to-door trash-pickup system, leading to 2500-odd unhealthy dhalaos (waste dumping enclosures) serving as secondary collection centres. Many dhalaos overflow and spill garbage on the streets. The problem is likely to worsen with the city's population ballooning to 24.5 million by 2024.

The ministry, in its reply to the committee, which was rejected, had said local municipal authorities are responsible for collection, and disposal of waste. It also claimed to have forwarded a note to the Delhi government to promote decentralized compost plants to take pressure off landfills.