

LIST OF NEWSPAPERS COVERED IN THIS ISSUE

ASIAN AGE

BUSINESS LINE

BUSINESS STANDARD

DECCAN HERALD

ECONOMIC TIMES

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

HINDU

HINDUSTAN TIMES

INDIAN EXPRESS

STATESMAN

TELEGRAPH

TIMES OF INDIA

TRIBUNE

CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. AGRICULTURE	3-4
2. AUDIT	5-6
3. CIVIL SERVICE	7-8
4. CORRUPTION	9
5. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	10-11
6. EDUCATION	12-16
7. ENVIRONMENT	17
8. FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	18
9. HEALTH SERVICES	19-20
10. LABOUR	21-22
11. LIBRARIES	23-24
12. MINORITY GROUPS	25
13. POLICE	26-29
14. POLITICAL PARTIES	30
15. POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT	31-37
16. PROHIBITION	38
17. RAILWAYS	39-41
18. URBAN DEVELOPMENT	42

AGRICULTURE

ECONOMIC TIMES, JAN 8, 2014

NAFED to cut salary of employees by 10 pc, offer VRS

The mounting debts have been worrying NAFED as the Agriculture Ministry has rejected the Federation's two proposals for loan restructuring submitted in 2012.

NEW DELHI: Faced with Rs 2,000 crore debt, agri-procurement agency [NAFED](#) has decided to cut salaries of employees by 10 per cent and also offer voluntary retirement to bring down the running cost.

"It was a difficult and painful decision. The Nafed Board had to take this decision, which could not be postponed any longer in view of administrative expenses being almost double the business income of the organisation," a senior official of the federation told PTI.

At present, National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED) owes around Rs 2,000 crore to banks and has negative [net worth](#) of Rs 147 crore. The federation's debt has increased due to huge losses faced after alleged financial irregularities during 2003-06.

The mounting debts have been worrying NAFED as the [Agriculture Ministry](#) has rejected the Federation's two proposals for loan restructuring submitted in 2012.

In a meeting held on December 30, 2013, the board decided to cut 10 per cent of the salary from this month, the official said.

NAFED has also sought immediate release of Rs 25 crore from the Agriculture Ministry to meet the financial requirement of the [voluntary retirement scheme](#) ([VRS](#)) that it has offered to its 500-odd employees, he added.

This move is aimed at bringing down the surplus work strength of the organisation, rendered due to halt of the commercial operations and continue with only the price support operations that it undertakes on behalf of the Centre.

Emphasising the need to restructure NAFED business, the official said the federation

needs to focus more on price support scheme (PSS) or other business in order to meet its administrative expenses.

Under PSS, NAFED procures 16 commodities at minimum support price on behalf of the government.

Despite uncertainties, the federation is handling PSS efficiently. It has already made market intervention for procurement of groundnut, sunflower seed and urad this kharif season, the official said.

AUDIT

BUSINESS LINE, JAN 8, 2014

‘CAG is not entitled to go beyond Govt entities’

A.M. JIGEESH & RICHA MISHRA

A day after the Delhi High Court verdict that allowed the Government auditor to examine the books of private telecom operators, Abhishek Manu Singhvi, senior Supreme Court lawyer and counsel for the telecom service providers, said: “All taxes, all collections of any kind unless earmarked specifically by Parliament, will go to the Consolidated Fund of India. Does this mean that all the entities that contribute to this collection are also auditable by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India?”

In a conversation with *Business Line*, he said with a caveat that whatever he says should be taken with a pinch of salt as he is an interested party as a counsel for someone affected. **Excerpts:**

What is your perception of the verdict?

There is no question of perception on judgements. All judgements have to be respected. Ultimately, anybody who disagrees with them has to simply challenge them. Whether it (the High Court verdict) has to be challenged or not is for the person affected or the client to decide.

What are the key issues dealt with in this judgement?

Issues regarding Constitutional law — namely the articles of the Constitution involving the CAG, issues involving the Constituent Assembly debate — where the nature, form and jurisdiction of the CAG were considered, and issues regarding the CAG Act of 1971 are the important to jurisdictional issues, which were discussed in this case.

If the Court would have upheld our contentions, the CAG’s jurisdictions would have remained as it is. But now, I consider that a definitive judgement by the apex court would be desirable for the country as a whole.

Now, there are interesting facets such as the issue of revenue sharing on which the High Court has based its verdict. A question arises — what happens to the industries where there is no revenue sharing model? Is that a valid distinction? Does revenue sharing in any manner make the entity a Government firm?

Which are the industries likely to be impacted by this verdict?

The CAG is not entitled to audit anything other than a Government entity. If you start applying this verdict, how far will the matter go? First, you will go to the Government departments, then you will go to the public sector units. Then you will go to the Government-supported or funded bodies.

Then you will have to decide on the funding pattern – whether the Government body is 51 per cent funded or 49 per cent or less funded. You will have to consider NGOs with Government aids. This will also apply to the (Government)-aided educational institutions. Then a host of other private trusts, etc — those who are aided, supported or getting loans — will also come into the ambit.

So, how does the system draw a line? I don't think the High Court has given that degree of clarity. Indeed, at the moment, it can even be said this is applicable only to telcos, not to power distribution utilities, as they do not have a revenue sharing concept.

It also needs to be seen whether the CAG has adequate staff, legal empowerment and the resources.

Do you think the Court has worked under public pressure?

Constitutional law, jurisdictional questions in particular, does not change and cannot change according to the politics of the moment.

Our courts are the ones that decide abstract issues in a clam atmosphere and are not influenced by all buffeting winds of politics or social change. Ultimately, public interest is the concern. The feeling of people has never been a basis for interpretations.

“Constitutional law does not change and cannot change according to the politics of the moment.” Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Senior Supreme Court lawyer

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated January 8, 2014)

CIVIL SERVICE

DECCAN HERALD, JAN 8, 2014

Officers facing inquiry can now access UPSC advice

A government servant facing an inquiry can now access the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) advice tendered to the disciplinary authority and will be given a second opportunity to defend themselves before the final action is taken.

Earlier, the officer who was charged could not see the UPSC's advice on the matter and had only one chance to defend themselves.

According to the new rules set by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), the disciplinary authority will examine the inquiry report it received from the investigator and forward it to the UPSC with its observations.

After the UPSC revert, the disciplinary authority will examine the advice rendered and forward it to the charged officer along with the inquiry report and the tentative reasons for disagreement with the inquiry report and the advice of the UPSC.

The officer can offer the written submission to the authority within 15 days, irrespective of whether the inquiry report or advice of UPSC is in the officer's favour or not, the new rules has said.

This provision is a new addition as earlier the officer could write such a submission before the file is moved to the UPSC.

The disciplinary authority would consider the representation of the charged officer and take further action, they said.

All cases, where final orders have not been issued, will be processed as per the new guidelines, it said.

Formation

The new rules were formed after the Centre found that the manner of communication of the advice of the UPSC to the delinquent government servant had been subject matter of litigation in some cases in the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) and High Courts.

Earlier in 2007, the Supreme Court had held that the disciplinary authority is not required to furnish a copy of the advice tendered by the UPSC to the charged officer before the final order of penalty is passed.

TRIBUNE, JAN 15, 2014

HC bars removal of staffer hired on compassionate grounds
Saurabh Malik

In a significant judgment, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has made it clear that a Haryana government employee hired on compassionate grounds due to his parent's medical incapacitation on the basis of a 1995 circular cannot be removed by relying on the 2003 rules.

A Division Bench of Justice Hemant Gupta and Justice Fateh Deep Singh also made it clear that the rules framed in 2003 could not be deemed to have superseded the instructions issued in 1995.

The judgment is significant as the right to compassionate appointment on account of medical incapacitation was conferred vide a circular dated August 31, 1995. The policy permitted grant of appointment on compassionate grounds to dependents of government servants declared mentally unfit, blind or incapacitated by a special board and retired on or before attaining the age of 55.

But it was claimed that instructions stood repealed in terms of Clause 19 of the Haryana Compassionate Assistance to the Dependents of Deceased Government Employees Rules, 2003.

Taking up a petition on the issue by Harmeet Singh, the Bench asserted: "In the present case, the petitioner has been offered appointment in terms of government instructions dated August 31, 1995.

"Such instructions cannot be deemed to be superseded by framing of the rules which deal with only appointment on compassionate grounds of the deceased government employee. Such rules do not take into their ambit the appointment to the dependents of government servants who are declared medically unfit".

Harmeet Singh was offered appointment on compassionate grounds on account of medical unfitness of his mother in June, 2005. But in March, 2006, the offer of appointment to him was recalled.

Ordering his reinstatement, the Bench added: "The petitioner was offered appointment and has joined service as well. The termination effected for the reason that the rules do not contemplate appointment on compassionate grounds is wholly unjustified and illegal.

"The termination order is also unwarranted for the reason that it was passed without giving an opportunity of hearing. Consequently, we allow the petition by setting aside and quashing the order dated March 2, 2006. It is further ordered that the petitioner — Harmeet Singh — be reinstated by granting continuity in service forthwith preferably within one month, but he shall not be paid the wages for the period he has not worked for the department.

CORRUPTION

ASIAN AGE, JAN 8, 2014

China probes almost 37,000 officials for graft

China investigated almost 37,000 officials suspected of corruption in more than 27,000 cases between January and November, state media said on Sunday.

Out of the 27,236 cases, 12,824 resulted in “losses for the people” involving a total of 5.51 billion yuan (\$0.9 billion), Xinhua news agency said without elaborating.

It cited a statement from the Supreme People’s Procuratorate, China’s top prosecuting body, which could not be reached for comment on Sunday.

China’s top prosecutor Cao Jianming told the National People’s Congress parliament in October that 200,000 people had been probed for embezzlement or bribery between January 2008 and last August.

Communist Party chief Xi Jinping has taken a hard line against graft since coming to power a little over one year ago, warning that corruption could destroy the party.

He has threatened to stamp down on high-ranking officials, or “tigers”, along with low-level “flies” to maintain the purity of the party.

At the same time he has mounted an austerity drive, with a range of measures including limits on banquets and bans on gift-giving.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

BUSINESS STANDARD, JAN 8, 2014

A K Bhattacharya: AAP's good politics, bad economics

It is time Arvind Kejriwal drew a connection between the economic needs of the common man whose cause he proposes to champion and the kind of economic policies that he has proposed so far

A K Bhattacharya

No event in recent times has made as big an impact as has the emergence of the Aam Aadmi Party as an alternative to traditional political parties. Looking for comparisons, old-timers recall the [Jayaprakash Narayan](#)-led movement against Indira Gandhi's [Congress](#) that eventually led to the imposition of the Emergency in 1975 and the formation of the [Janata Party](#). There is then the [V P Singh](#)-led movement against Rajiv Gandhi's Congress and the Bofors deal.

In both instances, a new government was formed as a consequence. The Janata Party trounced the Congress in 1977 to form the short-lived government led by Morarji Desai. And in 1989, V P Singh led a coalition of parties to form the [National Front](#) government, which too had an even shorter tenure of a little less than a year.

Not surprisingly, therefore, few of India's political pundits believe that the Aam Aadmi Party will be able to sustain its movement for long or even complete the full term of the Delhi government it has formed with the support of the Congress. The contradictions within the Janata Party came out in the open within a few months of its assuming [power](#) at the Centre. One by one, all the key constituents of the Janata Party broke away to form their own outfits and the Janata Party experiment, as an alternative to the Congress, was over by the end of 1979. A similar fate awaited V P Singh's National Front government that had promised to usher in clean governance. Thanks to his brand of politics(remember the Mandal Commission?), Singh was unseated even before he could celebrate the first anniversary of his prime ministership.

Yet, it would be naïve and a bit premature to conclude from history that [Arvind Kejriwal](#)'s Aam Aadmi Party would meet the same fate as did the movements launched by Jayaprakash Narayan or V P Singh. This is because Mr Kejriwal has fashioned his movement quite differently and the parallels with the past may be misleading. The two movements - one in the 1970s and the other in the 1980s - had mainly targeted the Congress as the political force that needed to be defeated through the electoral process. In that battle, they had made an alliance with different anti-Congress forces to stay in power.

Mr Kejriwal, however, is targeting not just the Congress but all the established political parties, including the Bharatiya Janata Party. The movement draws its strength from the popular disenchantment with the failure of the political classes in ensuring clean and effective governance after years of independence.

Thus, as long as Mr Kejriwal can sustain his campaign against the established political parties, riding on their indifference to the common man's need for more responsive governance, the Aam Aadmi Party should be able to maintain its distinctive identity and retain its connect with the ordinary voters of this country. Note that he has already redefined - and indeed expanded - his constituency to include all those citizens who, irrespective of their economic background, have no "political connection or influence" to get things done in this country. This is Mr Kejriwal's new definition of the common man.

The danger in this game, of course, is when the Aam Aadmi Party is seen as behaving like any other political party. Mr Kejriwal's unique selling point among voters of Delhi is not his anti-Congress or anti-Bharatiya Janata Party stance, but the promise that he and his party would try to deliver governance without behaving as though they are the rulers. This is likely to work in most parts of India and the chances of the Aam Aadmi Party's appeal spreading across the country look very bright.

The problem, however, is not with the politics of the Aam Aadmi Party. Its major stumbling block is likely to be its economic agenda. Can it afford policies like providing [free water](#) to all, instead of focusing first on fixing distribution leakages or improving overall availability of water through universal metering of all water supplies? Can it reduce power tariff by half to please the common man, without undertaking a proper audit of the actual costs and revenues of power distribution companies? Does it realise that the same common man will turn against the party when such economically imprudent policies over time will deny him uninterrupted power supplies? Can it oppose foreign direct investment in the retail sector in the economic environment that prevails in this country today?

It is time Mr Kejriwal drew a connection between the economic needs of the common man whose cause he proposes to champion and the kind of economic policies that he has proposed so far. Mr Kejriwal's common man would like the subsidies to be transparently targeted to the real needy and not wasted inefficiently across all sections of people, leading to wastage and leakages. Unfortunately, most of his economic policies have paid no heed to this basic economic reality that prevails today.

Mr Kejriwal has got his politics right. Now, he needs to rethink his party's economic policies.

EDUCATION

PIONEER, JAN 8, 2014

PUSH THE RIGHT BUTTONS, GRIEVANCE HELPLINE A CALL AWAY

Coming to the aid of parents, anxious over nursery admissions which begin in a week, the Directorate of Education launched a grievance redressal mechanism on Tuesday. The step from the DoE came following the hue and cry raised over the recently issued admission guidelines.

Parents will now be able to complain against the schools flouting guidelines or resorting to any kind of harassment to the Education Officers. In order to facilitate speedy redressal of grievances of the parents, the DoE has directed the Education Officers of each zone in the Capital to address their grievances of parents. "It will be the overall responsibility of all Deputy Directors of Education (DDEs) to ensure that grievances of parents are redressed in time," said a statement by the DoE.

"Flex boards must be put outside every school with the details of the Education officer of the zone the school lies in by January 10. Non-compliance of the order shall be viewed seriously," said the DoE, adding that in case parents are not satisfied with the action taken by the EOs, parents may dial the helpline number on 27352525 to contact the Ministry of Education directly. "This mechanism is to tackle erring schools in the best way possible. I hope it works out well for the parents," said Sumit Vohra, founder, admissionsnursery.com.

DECCAN HERALD, JAN 8, 2014

Centre launches novel project to reward government schools

To improve public perception of government schools and encourage them to do better, National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) has called upon people and civil society to identify government schools doing commendable work.

NUPEA, which works under the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development towards planning and management in education, has launched "1000 Schools Project" across the country to encourage government schools to perform better. "We have already received a number of entries. Since it is an ongoing process, we want more people to send their views. Over 80 per cent of children go to government schools and we want to identify those that are offering quality education," said NUEPA vice chancellor R Govinde.

He was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a state-level conference of Deputy Directors of Public Instruction and Block Education Officers here on Wednesday. In addition to this, best practices adopted by education officers at district and block level while implementing any education policy will also be recognised and replicated at the national level.

This under the National Scheme on Innovations in Educational Administration. “Normally, we see only teachers and principals rewarded. Whereas educational officials at the grassroots levels implementing policies get left out. □ This scheme seeks to reward them for their efforts,” said NUEPA Department of Educational Administration □ Head K Sujatha who looks after the scheme.

States will be required to send nominations to NUEPA □ which will be evaluated. A maximum of eight nominations (six for block and two for district level officials) will be allowed. The winning innovations will be given awards and their practices documented so that their methods could be replicated by others.

“The last date for sending nominations is January 31,” Sujatha said. Those interested can visit NUEPA website for details or send entries to 1000schoolsproject@nuepa.org. Asked about the State’s participation in the two schemes launched by NUEPA, Commissioner for the Department of Public Instruction Mohammed Mohsin said: “We will definitely encourage and publicise “1000 schools programme” so that people are aware and send their opinions.

Regarding nominations for recognising block and district-level officials are concerned, the department will do it soon.”

Primary and Secondary Education Minister Kimmane Ratnakar told reporters that whatever mistakes were made and problems that cropped up last year during the admission process of seats under RTE quota will be rectified this year. He was answering questions relating to a large number of seats under 25 per cent quota of RTE going vacant last year.

[STSTESMAN, JAN 8, 2014](#)

Citizenship education

It has been realized the world over that citizenship training relates to an awareness of and respect for the law and precepts of democratic fair-play. It is the finer art of training in patriotism and love for the land. Such education can bind us as a powerful cohesive force, promote confidence among our children and enlighten them on our laws and their working and give them the power to take well-informed decisions so vital in any democratic functioning ~

RUDRASHIS DATTA

The primary purpose of education is to prepare students for a well-adjusted life both during the process of education and later. What began as the art of political education in ancient Indian kingdoms, Greek city-states and the Roman republic has evolved into a complex discipline, covering law, democracy, human rights, national duties and obligations. Therefore, citizenship education has emerged as a primary subject in school education across the world in order to enable school children, especially adolescents, to be aware of the basis of socio-political and legal institutions of the land, the rights and

duties of citizens, the rudiments of law and its operation. It is only during adolescence that such vital issues can be weaved into the collective psyche of the students, thereby creating a generation of citizens for whom respect for the land and its laws shall be natural and paramount.

Also, since we live in an age in which internationalism is more the norm than an exception, the onus remains on every nation to equip its citizens, especially students with the precepts of democracy, its laws and processes. It was perhaps with this objective that UNESCO conducted its first-ever conference on 'Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy' in 1995, involving Ministers of Education of member-nations. The Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action of the conference resolved that "We, the Ministers of Education strive resolutely to pay special attention to improving curricula, the content of textbooks, and other education materials including new technologies with a view to educating caring and responsible citizens committed to peace, human rights, democracy and sustainable development, open to other cultures, able to appreciate the value of freedom, respectful of human dignity and differences, and able to prevent conflicts or resolve them by non-violent means. It is necessary to introduce, at all levels, true education for citizenship which includes an international dimension."

The Indian scenario is at once encouraging and perplexing. We have been one of the few countries to begin courses in political science and law at the graduation and post-graduation levels nearly a century back. We have produced a galaxy of talent in these spheres. However, our involvement with the discipline has been stuck in the stage where students have overgrown their adolescence into adulthood. It is a stage of learning where most of the learners tend to become more specialized and less malleable. Furthermore, the scope of such subjects shall be limited to only those students who will specialise in them in their graduation and post-graduation levels.

Citizenship education ought ideally to be introduced as a compulsory discipline in schools to influence students when they are young and impressionable. The idea is to train them in law and democratic functioning; they will be in a position to respect law and order and cultivate a sense of fellow-feeling, so important in a democracy. It was with this primary aim in mind that the National Curriculum of England introduced Citizenship Programmes of study for school children in 2002 with the aim of "fostering pupils a sense of awareness and understanding of democracy, government and how laws are made and upheld." Professor Bernard Crick, who chaired the Advisory Group on Citizenship in England, in his report 'Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools', 1998, famously declared that "the purpose of citizenship education in schools is to make secure and to increase the knowledge, skills and values relevant to the nature and practices of participative democracy; also to enhance the awareness of rights and duties, and the sense of responsibilities needed for the development of pupils into active citizens; and in so doing to establish the value to individuals, schools and society of involvement in the local and wider community."

In contrast, citizenship studies in the Indian school curriculum leaves much to be desired. The National Curriculum Framework, 2005, had envisaged an overhaul of the curriculum planning and delivery systems in schools. But it is silent on the introduction of this discipline, even as a part of Social Studies in our school curriculum. The recommendations of the NCF have been limited to a rather cursory renaming of ‘Civics’ to ‘Political Science’ without overhauling the content of the existing syllabi. The NCF declared: “It is suggested that instead of Civics, the term Political Science be used. Civics appeared in the Indian school curriculum in the colonial period against the background of increasing ‘disloyalty’ among Indians towards the Raj. Emphasis on obedience and loyalty were the key features of Civics. Political Science treats civil society as the sphere that produces sensitive, interrogative, deliberative, and transformative citizens.”

Paradoxically, the NCF document does not mention the need to bring citizenship training into focus in Social Studies, with most state and national boards relegating Civics to the Social Studies syllabi, overshadowed by such subjects as History and Geography. A study of the curriculum in force across the 31 national and state examination boards highlights the neglect of citizenship studies. As many as 18 of these boards have treated Civics as optional areas in Social Studies, leaving nearly 50 million students generally ignorant of our legal and democratic systems. Among the other examination boards, which have retained the subject, the syllabi has more to do with the dead wood of superficial political history around the time of framing the Constitution, leaving the finer nuances and spirit of the Constitution, democracy and legal structures out of consideration. Sadly, most state boards follow the token practice of printing the Preamble of the Constitution as a compulsory content in the opening pages of text-books without leaving any provision for the important document to be read and explained to the students in our classrooms.

It has been realized the world over that citizenship training relates to an awareness of and respect for the law and precepts of democratic fair-play. This must be taught to children as they develop their world-view while in school. Citizenship education is not about creating an army of conformist individuals, but about promoting a love for our legal and social institutions through debate, interrogation and divergence of opinion. Without this provision, our school children shall grow into individuals for whom socio-political and legal institutions are either to be shunned as needless or feared as imposing, authoritative entities. The wisdom that such institutions are structures organically linked to our lives irrespective of where we are or what we do, ought to be inculcated in our children with care and meticulousness. In fact, citizenship education is the finer art of training in patriotism and love for the land. Such education can bind us as a powerful cohesive force, promote confidence among our children and enlighten them on our laws and their working and give them the power to take well informed- decisions so vital in any democratic functioning.

INDIAN EXPRESS, JAN 13, 2014

Schools accepting donation to be fined 10 times: Govt order

Section 13(2) of the Right to Education Act says that no school or person, while admitting a child, can collect any capitation fee and subject the child or parents or guardian to any screening.

unaided private schools in the capital from charging capitation fees and screening aspirants for nursery admission, the Directorate of Education (DoE) has issued an order that makes schools liable to pay a fine “which may extend up to 10 times of the fee charged” in case they are found taking donations.

The DoE order states, “All unaided private recognised schools of the capital are directed to comply with the provisions of Right to Education Act, 2009, in letter and spirit and not to indulge in the practice of demanding and accepting donation/capitation fee of any kind, directly or indirectly, while admitting a child, from parents.”

Section 13(2) of the Right to Education Act says that no school or person, while admitting a child, can collect any capitation fee and subject the child or parents or guardian to any screening. Any school contravening the provision “shall be punishable with fine which may extend up to ten times of the capitation fee charged”.

It further cites a Delhi High Court order which says, “It is common knowledge that though there is obligation on the state to provide free and compulsory education to children and the corresponding responsibility of the institution to afford the same, educational institutions cannot be allowed to run as ‘teaching shops’ as the same would be detrimental to equal opportunity to children”, warning of stern action in case of violation.

ENVIRONMENT

HINDU, JAN 15, 2014

Environment and development

The decision of the Ministry of Environment and Forests to revalidate the environmental clearance issued to South Korean steelmaker Posco for the proposed steel plant in Odisha is based on a piecemeal approach, rather than a comprehensive and cumulative assessment of all parts of the project. It cannot claim to rely on sound judgment. What distinguishes the proposal from the welter of projects before the Ministry is its major Foreign Direct Investment potential, estimated at more than Rs.50,000 crore. There is little doubt that it will take massive investments to pull the masses out of deep poverty, and new industries are vital to achieving this goal. Significant expansion of the economy has taken place over the past two decades, creating much wealth. Unfortunately, this has also coincided with grossly uneven distribution of negative externalities. In the case of Posco, the acquisition of land has been a contentious issue, evoking strong protest from local communities which remain unconvinced about the benefits. Evidently, neither the project proponent nor the Odisha government has come up with persuasive arguments over the past eight years on why villagers should part with their land when their livelihood is linked to it. Moreover, there is no effort to reach a consensus on the renewal of environmental clearance, now for a production capacity of eight million tonnes per annum, even with conditionalities that include spending on 'social commitments' by Posco.

Grant of environmental clearance for the steel plant addresses only one of many components of the Posco project — mines, a port, railway lines and a housing facility that are integral to the functioning of the steel plant have been delinked. That point has already been made by the National Green Tribunal, which had recommended to the Centre that it consider the cumulative impact, and the concerns expressed by review committees set up to evaluate it. If the Ministry's decisions must carry credibility, it must provide a detailed report on how these suggestions have been complied with. In the case of the equally high-profile Vedanta bauxite mining project in Niyamgiri in Odisha, the Ministry has deferred to the sentiments of the tribal residents and rejected the bid. Appropriating natural resources for development remains a contentious issue in a populous country where land is scarce and rehabilitation systems are weak. It has to be done selectively, and only after careful study of the impacts by credentialled specialists. There is little scope in a democracy to override public opinion, and impose unpopular decisions. It is also misleading to cast environmental safeguards and development as conflicting imperatives when they are vitally interlinked.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

HINDU, JAN 8, 2014

RBI panel moots bank accounts for all by 2016

A committee appointed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday recommended a Universal Electronic Bank Account (UEBA) for every Indian resident above 18 years of age by January 1, 2016. The account would provide citizens with access to credit and investment options.

“By January 1, 2016 the number and distribution of electronic payment access points would be such that every single resident would be within a fifteen minute walking distance from a point anywhere in the country. Each such point would allow residents to deposit and withdraw cash to and from their bank accounts and transfer balances from one bank account to another, in a secure environment, for both very small and very large amounts, and pay reasonable charges for all of these services,” said the Committee headed by Nachiket Mor, Central Board Member of the RBI.

At least one of the deposit products accessible to every resident through the payment access points would offer a positive real rate of return over the consumer price index (CPI), it added.

HEALTH SERVICES

STATESMAN, JAN 8, 2014

Govt disbands hospital management society due to corruption charges

Following a large number complaints of corruption against hospital management society, the Delhi government has decided to disband the existing body functioning in government hospitals.

The government's move comes after the mission director of the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) directed that the Rogi Kalyan Samitis be disbanded. The Samitis were functioning under the NRHM.

According to Mr Satyendra Jain, health minister, the decision is motivated by a large number of complaints of corruption against the Samitis.

“We received a lot of complaints regarding corruption in the Samitis. So, I decided to disband them,” he said, adding he was still “considering its reconstitution”.

The Samities, which acted as an interface between hospitals and people, were chaired by the area MLA and other members including hospital administration and doctors.

According to the health department officials, there is a plan to initiate Jan Swasthya Samitis which will act as an interface between hospital administration and patients so that there is no “political interference.”

“They will begin at dispensaries and later we may replicate them in hospitals,” said Mr Jain.

BUSINESS STANDARD, JAN 8, 2014

Maha govt launches unique 'blood-on-call' scheme

Maharashtra Chief Minister [Prithviraj Chavan](#) today rolled out "[Jeevan Amrut Yojana](#)" ([blood-on-call](#) scheme) across the state.

The ambitious plan, said to be first-of-its-kind in the country, is aimed at facilitating blood supply to patients scheduled to undergo surgeries and medical procedures, at cheaper rate by dialling a dedicated helpline number "104".

The scope of the scheme is widened to entire state following its successful implementation on the pilot basis in Satara and Sindhudurg districts. Chief Minister

Chavan, deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Health Minister Suresh Shetty were present at the function to launch the scheme at J J Hospital blood bank here.

With facilitating timely blood supply, the scheme is also aimed at reducing hardships that are usually faced by patients and their relatives in procuring blood.

Under the scheme, the request for blood will have to be placed by hospitals.

The patients will have to pay Rs 450 towards the cost of blood and Rs 50 to Rs 100 as the cost of transportation depending on the distance involved.

Upon receiving the call, the required blood and blood components will be transported on motorcycle to hospitals and nursing homes in specially fitted cold storage boxes.

LABOUR

BUSINESS LINE, JAN 15, 2014

Employees' Provident Fund to fetch 8.75%

Trustees' decisions to be forwarded to FinMin's approval

Over eight crore depositors will get a higher interest rate of 8.75 per cent on their provident funds for the year 2013-14, against 8.5 per cent in the last fiscal.

"We have decided to recommend to the Government 8.75 per cent rate of interest for 2013-14 to its subscribers," Oscar Fernandes, Labour Minister, told reporters after a meeting of the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) of the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) here on Monday.

The trustees, who met after a gap of one year, also decided on early actuarial valuation of the Employees Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme. Pending actuarial valuation, it decided on an interim hike of 20 per cent over and above the admissible entitlements.

"This effectively means that the maximum limit of Rs 1,30,000 will now be Rs 1,56,000," it said.

The decisions by the trustees will now be forwarded to the Finance Ministry for clearance, after which they will be notified.

The decision to hike interest rates comes at a time when the country is heading for general elections in April-May. Recently, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had admitted that price rise was a factor in the Congress party's defeat in the recent Assembly elections.

Sources said the higher interest rate was approved as the retirement body, which received Rs 77,000 crore as contributions in 2012-13, said it had surplus funds. The EPFO is estimated to have an income of Rs 20,796.96 crore in the current financial year.

According to the annual accounts approved in Monday's meeting, the negative balance of the suspense account had been fully accounted for and there was now a positive balance. It also shows a growth rate of 16.14 per cent, 9.18 per cent and 9.48 per cent in respect of contributions of EPF, Employees Pension Scheme and EDLI scheme, respectively.

Employee representatives in the CBT, who were demanding an interest rate of 9.5 per cent, however, maintained that EPFO was in a position to declare 9 per cent for 2013-14.

"Rs 24,000 crore has been lying in inoperative accounts. With the norm that interest will not be credited to subscribers after a lapse of three years, there must be enough interest income to provide for at least 9 per cent rate," D.L. Sachdeva, Secretary, All India Trade Union Congress and a CBT member, told *Business Line*. In 2010-11, provident fund

deposits fetched an interest rate of 9.5 per cent, after which it was brought down to 8.25 per cent in 2011-12 and 8.5 per cent in 2012-13.

Other decisions Ex-post-facto approvals for Rs 870 crore worth ready to build office space and residential apartments Waiver of Rs 6.62 crore damages in respect of 11 sick industries

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated January 14, 2014)

LIBRARIES

TIMES OF INDIA, JAN 8, 2014

Patna University library to reopen today after 26 days

B K Mishra

PATNA: The PU Central Library, which was closed on December 12 following violent clash between two groups of students, will reopen on Wednesday. The university administration has already returned the belongings of some students kept in the library.

VC Arun Kumar Sinha said he has already ordered for opening the library only from 10.30am to 5pm on working days. Students will be allowed to enter the library only on showing their valid identity cards and will not be allowed to carry their own books inside the library.

Pre-PhD course: [Patna University](#) (PU) is set to introduce pre-PhD course work for research scholars of science faculty. The six-month course, which is mandatory for all PhD scholars as per UGC guidelines as well as the revised PhD ordinance of PU, is likely to be inaugurated on Wednesday.

PU science faculty dean Amarendra Mishra said that about 40 scholars have been enrolled for the course work. The course work would consist of two papers — one on research methodology and other on the subject concerned. The candidates would be allowed to undertake research work only after successful completion of the course work, he said.

PG exam begins today: PU has made necessary preparations for holding the second semester examination of post-graduation conventional courses commencing on Wednesday. The examination, being held more than six months behind the schedule owing to some technical reasons, will be held at two centres — Patna College and Patna Science College. The examination of self-financing courses would be held sometime later this month, said examination controller B K Jamuar.

Patna Science College principal and centre superintendent [U K Sinha](#) said that examinations would be held under strict invigilation. Frisking of examinees would be done before allowing them to enter the examination halls. The district administration has been requested to provide adequate police force, including lady constables, for ensuring fair examinations, he said.

Science College: The Science College administration has girded up its loin for freeing the campus of undesirable elements. A number of committees consisting of senior teachers have been constituted for keeping constant vigil on the entry of outsiders and maintaining law and order on the campus. Principal U K Sinha said no private vehicle

from outside would be allowed to be parked inside the campus. An FIR would be lodged against the guard on duty if any unauthorized vehicle is found parked on the campus, particularly during nights, he said.

HINDU, JAN 13, 2014

Library halts at Khajamalai Colony

The residents of Khajamalai Housing Board Colony can now get books from the District Central Library delivered to their doorsteps, thanks to the mobile library facility introduced in their locality. T.P.Poonachi, State Khadi and Village Industries Minister, inaugurated the facility introduced by the District Central Library at a brief function held at the colony on Sunday. He handed over the books to the new members in the presence of Jayashree Muralidharan, Collector, R.Manoharan, MLA, and Assembly Chief Whip .

A total of 92 residents enrolled themselves as members by paying Rs.30 (caution deposit of Rs.20 and subscription fee of Rs.10 per book) on the very first day. The subscription fee for two books is Rs. 50 and for three books it is Rs. 60. The members can keep the books for a fortnight. According to A.P.Sivakumar, District Library Officer, the mobile library currently halts at 44 points in a week and serves over 3,100 members. The mobile unit will halt at Khajamalai Colony for about an hour from 10.15 a.m. on Saturdays. About 7,000 books on various titles and subjects are available in the mobile service.

MINORITY GROUPS

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JAN 8, 2014

Poll sop: Govt set to give minority status to Jains

Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the government has finally decided to provide minority status to the Jain community at the national level. For now, Jains enjoy minority status in 14 states. The law ministry has given its go ahead to a minority affairs ministry proposal for making the Jains, with an estimated population of five million (50 lakh) in the country, eligible for minority status nationally.

So far, five communities - Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Parsis — were recognised as national minorities under a central law.

The ruling UPA has now decided to add the Jain community to this list, finally accepting the community's decades-old demand.

A minority status enables a community to run and administer exclusive educational institutions and derive benefits from the government's welfare schemes for minorities.

The decision of the government's legal arm is based on the revised opinion from its top law officer, Attorney General GE Vahanvati, who stated that "it is constitutionally permissible to issue a notification declaring Jains as a minority community....and if the government were to accept the recommendations of the National Commission for Minorities, it will not be not be illegal."

The revised opinion was sought since the AG had in 2010 and 2011 told the government that any decision on the issue would be subject to the outcome of pending cases in courts and would therefore be vulnerable to a legal challenge.

Jains are already declared as minorities in 14 states – Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal and West Bengal.

The minorities recognised by the government can also approach the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) for safeguarding rights and grievance redressal.

The law ministry has justified its decision. "An earlier judgment of the Supreme Court that the Jain community was a part of the Hindu tradition does not interfere with the government's decision to accord it the minority status, which will become effective after the cabinet approval," said an official.

POLICE

INDIAN EXPRESS, JAN 9, 2014

Our right to revelry

The police in India tries to regulate 21st century culture with 19th century laws and a 15th century mindset.

Abhinav Kumar

The turn of the year festive season draws to a close, and as it is with most festivities, it was a time of high alert for most police forces across the country and indeed around the world. As a serving officer, one wishes the fraternity the very best in dealing with the sudden influx of large crowds of inebriated and exuberant revellers that inevitably descend on our metros and most important tourist centres all over the country. While it is a testing time, I believe it is also a tremendous opportunity to earn goodwill and showcase our professional competence and progressive leadership.

Unfortunately, as the recent intervention by the Mumbai High Court shows, we are not doing so.

Policing revelry in India is still held hostage to past dogma and a mai-baap mentality that is anachronistic and deeply offensive to present-day democratic sensibilities. The writ in the Mumbai HC against the decision of the Mumbai police to clamp down on New Year's Eve celebrations, and the court's rejection of the stance of the Mumbai police is a case in point. What I am suggesting is perhaps against the prevailing sentiment in the IPS fraternity, but I think this is the worst kind of high-handedness that shows us in a poor light and is simply against the tenets of policing a liberal, democratic, aspirational society.

It is also a sad commentary on our stunted growth as a tolerant society that we in the police see it as our natural right to tell the public how they shall entertain themselves. Of course, the police exercise this regulatory function in all societies, but in India we seem to do it with a peculiarly sadistic mindset. As it is, 21st century urban India is starved of regular forms of accessible, affordable public entertainment, other than cinema and cricket. Concerts, gigs, performances and exhibitions that citizens of most civilised societies take for granted as a matter of right, are a luxury and a privilege in India. Out of reach for the common citizen due to their high price and limited occurrence and of course also due to our in-built intolerance for the offbeat and the provocative. And then, to add insult to injury, we have the police trying to regulate 21st century culture with 19th century laws and a 15th century mindset.

To my mind, the priority for the police on occasions such as New Year's Eve, Valentine's Day and any other occasion that has been enthusiastically embraced by our young urban citizens should be the following: first, ensure the safety and dignity of women in public places, irrespective of what they are wearing and what or how much they have had to drink. Second, ensure public order, especially clamp down on drunken

brawls and curb misbehaviour mainly by those who take pride in obnoxious displays of power and position. Third, zero-tolerance for drunk driving and rash driving. Fourth, ensure silence norms in designated zones and prevent loud public nuisance, especially in residential areas.

The trick is to do this without coming across as killjoys and puritans who take a perverse delight in flaunting their powers to curb the general public's desire to let their hair down and enjoy themselves. I don't see how enforcing a curfew order of 1.30 am, or even later, without consulting the stakeholders in a transparent manner really helps us achieve any of the above objectives. It is true that we are overworked and understaffed, but this is a petty way to make this point. Especially when we know that our enterprising juniors will ensure that these curfew orders will be given a go-by for a price. All we do achieve by such decisions is to reinforce our reputation for high-handedness and corruption. The message that we are sending to our most well-educated and affluent citizens, who form the bulk of these revellers, is that we are either incapable or unwilling to ensure that the above objectives are met in a manner that is both effective and acceptable. No wonder that in turn we refuse to gain their support on issues that are critical to us, such as reforms and autonomy. At the risk of breaking ranks with the IPS fraternity, I am delighted that the Mumbai HC did not uphold the views of the Mumbai police. The rights of our citizens to enjoy themselves should not be trampled under our jackboots. Had the court ruled otherwise, it would have been a Pyrrhic victory. Neither the rule of law nor our credibility would have gained much. At best, it would have been a temporary victory for the law as laid down by us, the self-proclaimed Lords of Police, but a setback for policing through legitimacy and the informed consent of our citizens. Hope that after this rap, in future, better sense prevails in police jurisdictions across the country. For all my pride in the uniform and the IPS, I really don't want to live in a society where my right to revelry without endangering the well-being and safety of others is decided by the diktat of any police commissioner. The writer is a serving IPS officer.

TIMES OF INDIA, JAN 13, 2014

Now, IPS officers need CM's nod to leave state for work

KOLKATA: Managers who micromanage or look into each and every thing their subordinates are doing may be a fast disappearing breed. For the Mamata Banerjee government, however, it is different.

[State home secretary Basudeb Banerjee](#) in a December order has directed all IPS officers, who are IGP and above, to take permission from chief minister Mamata Banerjee for leave, even if they have to attend work-related meetings at the Centre's behest. In October, last year, the IAS officers were also directed the same. Earlier, IPS and IAS officers took such a permission from the state home secretary or the chief secretary - their reporting boss.

Micromanagement, in today's world, has a negative connotation in bigger organizations.

It is "not right" for managers if they closely observe or control the work of subordinates or employees instead of delegating work. It is believed not to augur well with other workplace parameters - meeting performance deadlines, competence, trust and teamwork. For many, micromanagement suggests to employees that a manager does not trust their work or judgment. Not all is wrong though.

As [IIM-C professor](#) Anindya Sen argues, "It also exposes process or system deficiencies. If the reporting matrix is clear and precise, it will never lead to micromanagement. We have to first understand whether such decisions are due to lack of defined approval processes in the state government. On the flipside, this will delay timely decisions. It is physically not possible for a manager to decide on everything if one considers an organization as big as the state government."

The home secretary's order reads, "It has been observed that senior duty officers of the [Indian Police Service](#), at times, have to frequently move outside the state to attend meetings convened by the Government of India. Lest (sic) there is any dislocation of work due to absence of officers in the process, it is hereby directed that senior duty officers at the level of inspector general of police and above may attend meeting convened by the GoI outside the state headquarters only with permission from the honourable chief minister through the home secretary." The order is dated December 3, 2013, and came to effect immediately.

A senior minister refusing to be named finds nothing wrong in it though. "Forget that she is the chief minister. She is also the state home (police) minister. So technically, all cops - and that includes the IPS officers - report to her finally. Also the mandate is for IGP and above. There are around 40-45 such officers in the state," the minister said.

He also points to the fact that the chief minister has a hands-on approach of management style.

"One has to realize that she is trying to usher in a fast-paced, accountable administration. For that she completely has to resurrect an ailing administration. If she macromanages affairs, it will only lead to non-performance. Once the administration completely adapts to her style of functioning, there will be no need for further micromanagement," the senior minister reasoned.

Professor [Biju Paul Abraham](#), also an IIM-C professor, says, "The problem with micromanagement is that it is detrimental to timeliness and responsiveness. If all approvals are to be routed from the top, managers will dither to take decisions. This to my mind doesn't augur well for an administration which is fast-paced."

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JAN 8, 2014

Durga 2.0: IPS officer transferred for booking corrupt

A Delhi IPS officer posted in the Andaman and Nicobar islands paid the price for acting against the corrupt when she was transferred shortly after acting against eight government officials on charges of corruption.

In October and November, Aslam Khan, superintendent of police, anti-corruption unit, arrested four officials of the Port Blair Municipal Council for the purchase of electrical items at exorbitant rates. She later arrested four more, including a traffic police sub-inspector, for taking bribes. In December, the local administration transferred her as principal of the Police Training School in Port Blair.

Khan's case is reminiscent of that of IAS officer Durga Shakti Nagpal, who was suspended by the UP government last year, after she cracked down on the sand mafia in Noida. She was later reinstated.

POLITICAL PARTIES

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JAN 15, 2014

BJP starts drive for 'transparent' collection of funds

In moves seen as inspired by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the BJP has launched a fund-collection drive where the buzzword is transparency.

It has also set up a new campaign website and created a special platform for urban professionals, a constituency that is seen to be rapidly veering towards AAP.

BJP president Rajnath Singh set up the 'Modi-for-PM fund', where people can donate funds ranging from Rs. 10 to Rs. 1,000, through cash, credit card and debit card. Each contributor, the party said, would be given a paper trail and receive confirmation either through a text message or online. Singh paid Rs. 1,000 while launching the drive.

The BJP has revamped its website, which focuses on top leaders, their speeches, the party's position on core national issues, and encourages interactivity with supporters. Singh also launched the BJP Technocratic Cell, with a focus on recruiting alumni of the Indian Institute of Technology (IITs), Indian Institute of Management (IIMs), and other management and engineering colleges.

He highlighted the NDA government's achievements in the realm of infrastructure and encouraged technocrats to participate in 'nation-building'. Subodh Sharma, formerly of IIT Roorkee, was appointed as the convener of the cell. While BJP leaders denied their initiatives had anything to do with AAP, observers were quick to draw comparisons.

The AAP had launched an open-fund collection drive in the run-up to the Delhi assembly elections, and closed it once they achieved the stated target of Rs. 20 crore.

The new party's success in the social and digital media space has been lauded even by critics. And BJP is increasingly wary of AAP's growing appeal among urban middle classes, which it has traditionally seen as its support-base.

Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, himself is from IIT, and has tapped into old alumni networks in the process of expanding his outfit.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

STATESMAN, JAN 15, 2013

Will change overtake AAP?

The populism generated by the party up till now could be a mere passing phase. Very soon people will tire of gimmicks and look for real change. Some of Mr Kejriwal's decisions indicate change for the worse. The decision to conduct administration through forays into the street instead OF from inside offices, romanticised by sections of the media, is downright silly. The invitation to the public to conduct sting operations in order to expose corruption is worse. Sting operations conducted by greenhorns instead of by experts are an invitation to disaster ~ RAJINDER PURI

Aam Admi Party (AAP) leader Mr Arvind Kejriwal has deservedly come in for praise. He worked hard to exploit the public mood to garner support for his party. His efforts to expand his party's base across the nation continue vigorously. But it would be a grievous error for him and his senior party colleagues to conclude that they have success in the bag. Few people perhaps, including the leaders of AAP, seem to have appreciated what the success thus far of the new party signifies. It reflects the national mood for a strong desire for change. AAP has up till now exploited this mood to garner support. It has accomplished nothing till now to offer hope of real political reform. Indeed, some AAP decisions have created the opposite effect.

The populism generated by the party up till now could be a mere passing phase. Very soon people will tire of gimmicks and look for real change. Some of Mr Kejriwal's decisions indicate change for the worse. The decision to conduct administration through forays into the street instead of from inside offices, romanticised by sections of the media, is downright silly. The invitation to the public to conduct sting operations in order to expose corruption is worse. It can lead to criminality, blackmail, entrapment and create a haunted atmosphere of insecurity in the public. Sting operations conducted by greenhorns instead of by experts are an invitation to disaster.

Mr Kejriwal's most recent decision to hold a public hearing of complaints ended in chaos and farce. He said that arrangements broke down because instead of 500 expected, 5000 people turned up creating chaos. But if only 500 had come, what did Mr Kejriwal expect to accomplish in redressing grievances from a public platform in a period of one or two hours? One hopes the adulation earned through cheap populism has not intoxicated his judgment. The basic principles of good governance are being trashed by the approach he has adopted till now.

One would have thought that with his experience in bureaucracy Mr Kejriwal would have fine tuned the use of modern technology to enable accessible, quick and efficient redress of grievances. Mr Narendra Modi is right to have rubbished Mr Kejriwal's public

hearings of people's grievances that violate all principles of good governance. In Gujarat the Swagat system of receiving complaints, processing them, and then addressing them, as established by Mr Modi since 2003 should have provided a leaf to AAP leaders. Technology today allows easy access and quick disposal of grievances and complaints as never before. It would be a folly to ignore this and instead attempt a form of administration favoured by Haroun-al-Raschid, the eighth century Caliph immortalised in the 1001 Arabian Nights who in disguise made surprise checks of his subjects. The truth is that both Mr Modi and Mr Kejriwal have displayed uncommon skill to win popular support and future votes. Although it is puzzling why neither aspirant has made the most obvious move to attract votes. The public would like to hear hard and direct allegations backed by facts against top UPA leaders for mega corruption scams. But both leaders have maintained a mystifying silence. The first to launch an attack on big ticket corruption would gain votes. The one who might follow would be perceived as a copycat. Nor has either leader offered concrete proposals to address the many burning problems facing the nation. Mr Modi has relied on his record of administration in Gujarat to win support. But Gujarat is not India. He has yet to outline policies to address problems that bedevil the nation. Mr Kejriwal has not gone beyond exploiting public disenchantment with the current lack of governance. To be fair the experts who mentor both campaigns are presently concerned only with winning votes. Possibly they will open their cards on serious national policy issues at a later, more appropriate, time.

There is urgent need to formulate a policy for affirmative action to deliver social justice which does not splinter society. Even as this is being written, the Jats are on the warpath to get their own quota for jobs which will add one more caste to the over 3000 already listed in the OBC reservation list. There is need to formulate a policy on Kashmir that can defuse public resentment without compromising territorial integrity. There is need to formulate a policy to counter terrorism and stabilise relations with Pakistan . There is need to diplomatically curb Chinese aggression without endangering peace. There is need to accelerate economic growth without increasing disparities. There is need to curb corruption and expel it from our political system. There is need to review the working of our Constitution in order to remove the distortions that have crept into our democratic system. There is a host of problems that beset our nation. These need urgent and practical remedies.

In conclusion one would like to point out to the leaders of AAP that although they deserve high praise for their efforts up till now, they did not create change. Change was created by a new generation, the information revolution, and the stagnating political culture out of sync with youth. Mr Kejriwal did not produce change. Rather it was change that produced Mr Kejriwal. If Mr Kejriwal falls short on performance he will fall by the wayside. Others will emerge. The process of change will not stop. India's political renaissance is unstoppable.

TELEGRAPH, JAN 13, 2014

ELECTIONS AND AFTER

The Awami League is not the sole custodian of the 1971 spirit

Deb Mukharji

Elections to the Bangladesh parliament were held on January 5 and the results have been declared, barring a few seats where repolling is required. Held amid and following unprecedented levels of violence, the elections were boycotted by the BNP, the main Opposition party. The Jamaat-e-Islami remains unable to contest elections following a court order as the party's Constitution does not accept the supremacy of the Constitution of the State. As may have been expected, the Awami League has won a large majority of the seats, many uncontested, the number being about the same as in the last fully-contested elections, above 230 in a House of 300. Other participating parties supportive of the elections have won the rest. The turnout has been low due to a combination of voter apathy and the violence to voters, and election officials threatened and practiced by the cadres of the BNP and the Jamaat. According to Western media, many voters did not go to cast their votes after the morning's television reportage on attacks on the polling booths.

The elections came after months of on-and-off discussions between representatives of the government (Awami League) and the Opposition (BNP). In essence, the BNP demanded that elections be held under a caretaker government (as on the last few occasions). The government maintained that with the amended Constitution as it stands, this was not possible. Hence, elections were held within the time frame required by law. The absence of the main Opposition has deprived the people of choice and, hence, cast shadows on the credibility of the process.

Two separate issues interacted to make the last few months among the most violent in Bangladesh in recent times. Besides the methodology of holding elections, on which there were differences as well in 1996 and 2006-7, the issue of the war crimes trial has been rocking Bangladesh since the Shahbag movement in the spring of 2013. Throughout the country, there continued sporadic acts of violence and sabotage by the cadre of the Jamaat. These reached a crescendo in mid- December after the hanging of Abdul Quader Mollah, the first of the war criminals of 1971 to be executed. Even earlier, on the calls for strikes and blockades by the BNP, the attempts to enforce and the accompanying violence were largely by Jamaat activists. A symbiotic relationship between the BNP and the Jamaat was becomingly increasingly manifest.

In the mayoral elections last year, the BNP had achieved sweeping victories over candidates supported by the ruling Awami League. Even though the record of the government in terms of basic parameters like the

economy and law and order had been good over the past years (in terms of most social indicators, Bangladesh remains well ahead of India), charges of corruption and apparent disconnect from the people had placed it well behind the BNP in terms of projected electoral success.

In view of this, it is curious that the BNP should have adopted its uncompromising and rigid stand in discussions with the government, when its victory appeared assured. Though the political establishments have usually decried all results as manipulated if it did not suit them, it is also a fact that the elections of 1996 (June), 2001 and 2008 had been broadly accepted as free and fair. There was no reason to believe that these elections would be any different. In the overall context of Bangladesh politics, it is possible that this was an election that the BNP was unwilling to win. Following the institution of the war crimes trial and, particularly, the Shahbag movement for condign punishment to the guilty, the BNP would have been obliged as an incumbent government to carry on with the trials to their logical conclusion. This would have been unacceptable to many in the top leadership, and more so to their Jamaat allies.

On the other hand, derailing the trials would have gone against strong public sentiment and exposed the party to charges of being soft on the perpetrators of murder and mayhem in 1971. By opting to stay out, the party can now continue to be ambivalent and avoid taking any clear position on the issue of war crimes. It can wait it out till the issue comes to its closure, while flaying the government for being ‘undemocratic’.

The BNP is an established political party and has been twice elected to government. The Awami League and the BNP are seen as, and have been since the restoration of democracy, alternatives before the electorate. Right of centre, its credentials to being committed to the essential spirit of Bangladesh have never been seriously questioned. Recently, however, it is openly tying itself with the Jamaat, which continues to be unapologetic about its role in 1971 and its commitment to an Islamized society. It is noteworthy that the Pakistan National Assembly passed a resolution expressing ‘grief and concern’ at Mollah’s execution and termed him a patriotic Pakistani who had stood by his convictions. How this tactic of the BNP would play itself out in the public consciousness remains to be seen. It is well known that many members of the BNP are uncomfortable with these developments. Also disturbing are the messages emanating from Tarique Rahman, senior vice-chairman of the party and son of Begum Khaleda Zia — in London for several years undergoing medical treatment — strongly advocating an unrelenting confrontation. His latest message describing the 1972 Constitution as having no popular support raises some obvious and uncomfortable questions about the party’s intentions, and has caused a reputed analyst to comment, “When a party has lost its marbles....” The 1972 Constitution remains the foundation of the State, even if tampered with by the military regimes of Zia-ur Rehman and H.M. Ershad, some of the changes made by them removed later by the judiciary.

As in the post-election phase in 2001, the Hindu minority is being targeted by Jamaat and BNP supporters in many areas. Earlier stray incidents have acquired much wider dimensions, and there is outrage in the media both at the attacks as also the government’s inability to afford protection. The chairman of the Bangladesh human rights commission has said that the State must use whatever degree of force necessary to counter the post-election violence, preserve the State and maintain its secular character.

The most critical foreign comments to emerge on the elections have expectedly come from the United States of America, never, since 1971, known for its correct judgement on Bangladesh affairs and incipient antipathy to the Awami League. I recall from my Dhaka days that during the soon-to-be-annulled elections in February, 1996, the US had supported the holding of elections by the BNP as a constitutional requirement, contrary to its views now. Others, including the secretary generals of the United Nations and the Commonwealth, have been more balanced, with due emphasis on the unacceptability of violence as a political tool.

Major powers such as Russia and China have kept their counsel. India described the elections as a constitutional requirement and held that “violence cannot and should not determine the way forward”. It is appropriate that Salman Khurshid should have pointed out that, “While the US is at some distance from Bangladesh, we are right next to it. So, our understanding of the region and understanding of sentiments of the people in the region should be helpful in the positions they want to take.”

Having weathered the storm, the first task of the government should be to restore law and order with firmness, which it has not done effectively over the past months as innocent people were being killed daily and State property wantonly destroyed. Statements from the Awami League leadership indicate that it is aware that, while the elections were a legal requirement, the absence of any opposition detracts from its credibility. Hence, the offer of further negotiations with, it is implied, an out-of-turn election before the full term is over. But this would require both the parties to approach the issue in a spirit of give and take.

Clearly, the unremitting confrontation prescribed from London by the senior vice chairman of the BNP is a road to nowhere. The BNP would also have to assess if its identification with the Jamaat is good for Bangladesh, or even good politics. If the future of the polity of Bangladesh is at stake, then the Awami League may like to cease considering itself the sole custodian of the war of liberation or the spirit of 1971. It may then find supporters from a far broader spectrum of citizens concerned about the future of their country.

The author is former ambassador to Nepal and Bangladesh

TRIBUNE, JAN 8, 2014

One-sided elections

Sheikh Hasina needs to establish her credibility

PRIME Minister Sheikh Hasina has declared victory in the recent polls in Bangladesh, but even as the country fulfilled its constitutional requirement, there are doubts whether these polls reflect the will of the people. The Awami League party led by Sheikh Hasina has won 104 of the 147 seats it contested. Together with the 127 seats it won uncontested, the party now has 231 seats, which give it a three-fourth majority. However, given that the general election was boycotted by the Opposition, this is a victory that struggles for credibility.

Violent clashes between supporters of the government and those of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party led by Khaleda Zia marred the election process, as did the boycott by the BNP, which demanded that the elections be conducted under a neutral caretaker government as was traditionally done rather than an all-party government as advocated by the Awami League. The two main parties of Bangladesh have a history of acrimonious relations. In 1996 it was the Awami League that boycotted the elections, leading to a short-lived victory of the BNP, till fresh polls were conducted.

Even as India has recognised the Awami League's success, there is a growing recognition of the credibility cloud over the victory. Sheikh Hasina has been tough in not allowing her country to be used as a base for anti-India terrorist operations, and the relationship of the two neighbours has largely been positive under her watch. However, it is also important to establish friendly relations with Khaleda Zia and other opposition groups. Bangladesh's Prime Minister has been widely blamed for not effecting participatory elections. Sensing the need of the hour, she has extended an olive branch to her *bête noire*. India too must contribute towards a dialogue between the two opposition parties. New Delhi needs to work with all political elements committed to Bangladesh's democratic process even as it continues its engagement with the government in power.

TRIBUNE, JAN 8, 2014

Of masters and servants

AAP puts aam aadmi on centre stage

WITH its decision to contest Lok Sabha seats in 20-25 states and all assembly seats in Haryana and Maharashtra, to start with, the Aam Aadmi Party is looking beyond Delhi for a role in national politics, promising to be an "alternative" and not a "substitute" of the Congress and the BJP. AAP's citizen-centric agenda, ability to cut across the barriers of caste and religion and focus on issues that agitate ordinary people have found resonance with people in many states, given the rush for its membership. The party hopes to become a game-changer with its thrust on corruption-free and efficient governance though it has yet to spell out its larger political and economic ideology.

The AAP effect on the established political parties is already evident. Rahul Gandhi of the Congress has started talking about corruption. The BJP has decided that its workers will go from door-to-door to connect with people and collect funds. In Rajasthan Vasundhara Raje has cut her security and refused to shift to the Chief Minister's residence. The CPM says AAP has done what the Left wanted to do. Sukhbir Singh Badal claims AAP has followed the Akali policy of free electricity and cheap water, forgetting AAP's tirade against corruption and rejection of the VIP culture and dynastic politics so widely practised in Punjab. But will political masters ever turn public servants?

With corporate leaders queuing up for its membership, AAP can be a threat to the BJP's urban vote bank and put a spoke in Narendra Modi's wheel in his march towards the Prime Minister's Office. Though Modi too has orchestrated his humble origins, he is no match to Arvind Kejriwal's "aam-aadmi" act. He plays divisive politics, moves around in

helicopters, hobnobs with industrialists and carries the 2002 stigma. The AAP threat is serious in Maharashtra and Haryana, where assembly elections are due later this year. The mishandling of the Adarsh housing scam in Maharashtra and the cash-for-CLU fraud in Haryana along with the infighting in the Congress may help AAP, though the party is yet to be tested in rural India.

PROHIBITION

HINDU, JAN 13, 2014

Gutkha is now 'legal' in State

RAHUL DEVULAPALLI

Little interest shown on implementing/extending its ban

Consumption of gutkha is now legal in State. Not just that, even manufacturing and distribution of this chewable tobacco product does not amount to any kind of violation, thanks to the State government's reluctance in extending a ban on these products.

As per a Government Order issued by the Chief Secretary, the usage or distribution of gutkha was prohibited in the State with effect from January 10, 2013 till a period of one year under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. However, there seems to be no move to extend it.

"This is a grave issue concerning public health as gutkha and its related products are known to cause cancer and other serious ailments. Gutkha is banned in 23 States in the country, but our State government is taking its own time to extend the ban or implement it," said former I.F.S. officer and secretary of Forum for Good Governance, M. Padmanabha Reddy. He has written to the Chief Secretary demanding that the ban be extended. Mr. Reddy, who procured information under RTI relating to the implementation of the ban, criticised the administration for being indifferent to the issue.

RAILWAYS

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, JAN 9, 2014

Firefight: Rlys to set up special fund for safety upgrade

[Rajat Arora](#)

SUMMARYAfter two consecutive railway fire incidents within 15 days, the railway board is looking to set up a special safety fund to upgrade fire preventive

After two consecutive railway fire incidents within 15 days, the railway board is looking to set up a special safety fund to upgrade fire preventive measures in all its trains. The railways is planning to make modifications in fuse distribution boxes and ventilators of non-air conditioned coaches and increasing the number of fire extinguishers in the coaches.

The railways is also planning to adopt Australian smoke detectors and fire alarms to make the coaches safer. "We are currently doing the test run of the Australian fire alarm in Jammu Rajdhani. If successful, we'll equip all our trains with the same technology," a railway board official said.

In an early morning incident on Wednesday, nine people were charred to death when three coaches of the Bandra-Dehradun Express caught fire.

The railways is also planning to upgrade its safety certification. The gas-based fire equipment are being certified by the authorised agencies of oil companies. "We'll also train our on board staff on preliminary fire fighting, rescuing and operation of fire extinguishers," the official added.

Also, creation of a fire stimulation software facility at RDO in Lucknow is under works. There is also a proposal of setting up of a fire-test lab at RDSO. "There's a need for development of stronger and more fire worthy material for roof in coaches. We also need fire-retardant material as per international norms to be used for coach furnishing material," a railway board official said.

Last month, a fire killed 26 passengers in an Andhra Pradesh train even as scores scores managed to escape by smashing windows.

The dearth of funds due to poor financial health has made it difficult to make all such modifications.

"There's a need for reintroduction of a non-lapsable railway safety fund (RSF). The previous RSF with a corpus of R17,000 crore was started by the NDA government in 2002-03 by the then railway minister, Nitish Kumar, which lapsed on April 1, 2008," the official added.

After the Centre infused R17,000 crore for safety upgrade, the railways overachieved its committed target of reducing frequency of consequential accidents from 0.44 to 0.17 accidents per million train kms.

“We’ll also write to the finance ministry to waive off the dividend we pay on the gross budgetary support. Every year, we pay dividend of around R6,000 crore, so, if that amount is waived off for five year, we’ll get around R30,000 crore in that fund,” the officer said.

The CAG audit report submitted in Parliament in May studied the implementation of the policy with respect to safety works between 2006-07 and 2010-2011.

During the period, the railway department not only made less budgetary allotment from the funds available with the RSF, but also surrendered a major part of it that was allotted in the Budget.

HINDU, JAN 8, 2014

Railway stations to get child protection panels

DEVESH K. PANDEY

Stations are a major hub of human trafficking

Known to be major transit points for human trafficking, railway stations will soon get Child Protection Committees (CPCs), as per the standard operating procedure developed by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).

The committees are being instituted in compliance with a Delhi High Court directive on safeguarding child rights.

The procedure mandates a provision for CPCs, comprising a station manager, superintendent or master, representatives from the Government Railway Police and the Railway Protection Force, a ticket inspector and a section engineer.

“The CPCs at every major railway station will be responsible and authorised to set and ensure the mechanism for care and protection of children at and around railway stations. It will function as a nodal and apex body for provision of all child protection issues at the railway station-level,” said a recent note of the Railway Board.

Instructions have also been issued to establish children assistance centres at railway stations, with a pre-defined provision for food, temporary shelter, clothing, toilet facilities, first-aid and medicines for the children in need.

A woman Railway employee will manage the centre to ensure that girls get proper attention till they are produced before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC). The centre may be managed with the help of non-government organisations.

The Committee, which will be required to hold monthly review meetings, has been made responsible for the upkeep of the assistance centres, arranging emergency support, maintaining emergency contact numbers of stakeholders, monitoring child protection systems, maintaining records of the children and displaying advocacy messages.

It will also coordinate with the CWC and the Juvenile Justice Board, besides ensuring pro-active vigilance on potential child abusers loitering about the stations.

The responsibilities of ticket-checkers have also been outlined; they are to keep a close watch on potential child abusers/traffickers and alert the security personnel accordingly.

The station's Assistant Manager (Commercial) will be appointed the nodal officer on behalf of the Chairman of the Railway Board.

Railway officials, as part of the unit, will undergo training on issues of child rights and protection.

Several non-government organisations working with victims of child abuse and trafficking have welcomed the initiative, stating that it would help check crimes against minors.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

HINDU, JAN 8, 2014

Govt. cancels merger of 36 villages with GHMC

The government on Tuesday issued orders cancelling its earlier notification on merger of 36 surrounding villages into the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) following the A.P. High Court orders.

The Municipal Administration & Urban Development (MA&UD) Department had notified the merger of these villages spread out in the mandals of Rajendranagar, Shamirpet, Shamshabad, Qutbullapur, Ghatkesar, Keesara, Medchal, Saroornagar and Hayathnagar.

The orders issued today cited the High Court orders which passed interim suspension orders on grounds that rule 12 (2) of A.P. Gram Panchayats (Declaration of villages) Rules, 2007 was not followed while merging gram panchayats into the GHMC.

Vehement opposition

The move to merge 36 gram panchayats was earlier vehemently opposed by the GHMC corporators and the GHMC Council which met in July last year and had unanimously passed a resolution rejecting the proposal.

The corporators observed that the GHMC which so far failed to ensure development of surrounding municipalities that merged few years ago, would not be able to handle the addition of new gram panchayats to its fold now.

During the debate then, MIM floor leader Mohammad Nazeeruddin had pointed out that the gram panchayats were primarily agriculture lands providing fresh vegetables and pulses to the city. "If the merger happens, then roads, layouts and plots will wipe out the agricultural assets which will be a huge loss for all," he had said.

Corporators also stressed that the GHMC lacked funds and manpower to handle the expansion of its jurisdiction and that the move would not only hamper development in existing areas but result in neglect of new areas.

Reacting to today's cancellation order, TDP floor leader Singireddy Srinivas Reddy welcomed it.