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AGRICULTURE

BUSINESS LINE, JUN 30, 2014

The ground beneath your feet

A SRINIVAS

Ploughing a crisis Will the new law hit farmland owners? MA SRIRAM

That could shift if the land acquisition law is changed

The real action on economic policy is set to take place outside the Budget. A major move on the cards (which Rural Development Minister Nitin Gadkari sought to downplay late last week) is to amend the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act to reduce the cost of land for industry. Is the country prepared?

This newspaper had reported that the 'consent clause' in the LARR Act may be amended. At present, private projects require the consent of 80 per cent of the affected parties, while government ones require 70 per cent. The proposed reduction in the consent requirement is not just an attempt to expedite land acquisition but also bring down the market value of land by reducing the sellers' bargaining power.

As for the compensation norms, a multiple of 2-3 times the market price stated in the law for urban and rural areas, respectively, is no big deal when the registered sale price is 10-20 per cent of the market value. Therefore, industry, which finds this Bill unacceptable, would rather press for diluting the consent clause and restricting the application of the law to much larger parcels of land than at present. Now, it is 50 acres for urban areas and 100 acres for rural areas.

Back to the future

How will this pan out? The law is an outcome of numerous agitations over land acquisition — at Singur, Nandigram, Kalinga Nagar, Raigad, Greater Noida, Kochi — which questioned both the terms of acquisition and the ultimate use to which the land would be put. As regards the terms, the idea was to create a level playing field between the buyers and the Government on the one hand, and sellers on the other. The law does mark a step forward in this respect.

However, issues of land use, raised by the Singur agitation, remain unresolved. Simply put, is the social value of a car factory more than that of three crops of paddy in a year? Do we need more cars or rice? The question assumes a different meaning, depending on the industrial good in question and the productivity of the land. If, for instance, degraded land is taken over to set up a rail factory, the social value of the industrial project will perhaps exceed that of its farm output.

Farming crisis

But the really disturbing part is, what if any industrial project begins to look good only because farming is in crisis? The innate value of the land is then not captured by the market price. That dips because of the farmers' willingness to exit. To take away the consent clause when farming is under pressure seems like a double whammy. The market value then falls well below the true value of land.

We may see a subtle consensus towards keeping farming depressed in regions where industry is keen on land acquisition.

There could be large-scale acquisitions and a dip in market values in a drought year, when despondency among farmers peaks.

The law is farsighted in that it goes beyond market-based compensation for land. But both this government and the UPA have not engaged with the question of land use. It is fine to aim at moving large sections of people out of agriculture, but that should be achieved by retaining the land for cultivation. Today, both farm land and the people are moving out, without the Government giving a thought to food security consequences.

Despite the crisis in small-scale farming, the Government is taking a big political chance if it believes that the willingness to exit will lead to easy acquisitions. We could see more Singurs and Nandigrams.

Political consequences

Political unrest may also break out if the Government pushes projects in fragile environments by amending the existing law that calls for the approval of the gram sabhas concerned. (Environment agitations, it is not generally understood, are basically around livelihood issues.) The Niyamgiri bauxite mining project was held up on this score, as were some ventures in Goa. Generally speaking, a rise in legal disputes is on the cards.

But it appears that New Delhi does have a political formula up its sleeve. The Prime Minister's exhortation to make "development a mass movement" basically indicates that the large, vocal, young and aspirational urban and semi-urban population will be given a political voice. They backed this government; for them *acche din* is the good life that is so achingly within their grasp.

Their impatience could drive our growth and development engine — while the rest put up with the consequences. Or will they?

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated June 30, 2014)

CIVIL SERVICE

BUSINESS STANDARD, JUN 27, 2014

Gujarat chief secy gets 2nd extension

The state government on Thursday extended for another three months the service of IAS officer [Varesh Sinha](#) who had retired in April 2014. Sinha has been given second [extension](#) after retirement from services.

In April he got extension of three months till June 30, 2014. With his term coming to an end the state government today decided to extend his term for another three months from August 1 to October 31. A notification in this regard has been issued by the government on Thursday.

Sinha was appointed as [chief secretary](#) of Gujarat state in January 2013 following the retirement of the then chief secretary A K Joti.

The 1977 batch Indian Administrative Service officer Sinha was serving as additional chief secretary (ACS) of finance department, government of Gujarat before being appointed as CS. He had also served as ACS, home and labour and employment departments. Prior to that Sinha was principal secretary, education department.

Sinha is a graduate in Science (physics & maths) and has completed his masters in 'Mathematical Statistics'. He has also done Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Ph.D. (Statistics).

ECONOMIC TIMES, JUN 25, 2014

PMO tells babus to interact directly with Narendra Modi via website

By Aman Sharma

NEW DELHI: Bureaucrats should interact directly with Prime Minister Narendra Modi through the PM's website for suggesting "changes in sphere of governance and suggestions for reforms," the PM's office has said in a letter sent to all ministries recently.

In the letter, PM's principal secretary Nripendra Mishra has said the bureaucrats should use a special link created on the website of the PMO to interact with the prime minister.

The move follows a meeting chaired by Modi with all 77 secretaries in the government on June 4 where he had said that "he was accessible to all officers and encouraged them to approach him with their inputs and ideas", according to a statement from the PMO at the time.

"The intention is to receive any new thoughts, ideas and suggestions for reforms and

changes in the sphere of governance, in an organised manner," the letter said.

The website of the PMO has created a new section, 'Interact with the Hon'ble PM', to enable the bureaucrats to share their views on 16 subjects - economy, agriculture, rural, urban, infrastructure, foreign affairs, security, grievances, education, health, science, population, law and order, women's issues, environment and social justice.

Suggestions can be sent in Hindi or English, with a maximum length of 1,000 characters and the bureaucrats must specify their details including email address, name and residential address on the website.

"The Prime Minister's Office plans to respond promptly by e-mail to the sender of useful suggestions and acknowledge," a senior government official told ET. All ministries have subsequently forwarded the PMO's communique down the bureaucratic hierarchy to "encourage" officials to interact with the PM in this format.

ECONOMIC TIMES, JUN 25, 2014

Government to weed out confidential reports of retired employees

NEW DELHI: In order to ensure clean working space, the government today decided to weed out confidential reports of select categories of retired employees after normal retention period of about five years.

The Annual Confidential Report (ACR) or Annual Performance Assessment Report (APAR) of retired Private Secretaries (PSs), Principal Private Secretaries (PPSs) and Senior Principal Private Secretaries (Sr PPSs) are kept with different units under the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

On review, a large number of old dossiers of ACRs or APARs in respect of PSs, PPSs and Sr PPSs retained in this section are being considered for weeding out, the Central Secretariat division under the DoPT said in a circular to all unit heads. According to rules, the ACRs or APARs of a government employee may be destroyed after five years of his retirement. However, the confidential performance report can be provided to a retired employee after completion of the retention period.

Accordingly, all cadre units are requested to intimate the details of ACRs or APARs of more than five years old in respect of which requests, if any, have been received for handing over from the retired officer concerned, it said. "In case no information is received from a cadre unit by June 30, 2014, it will be presumed that the requisite information pertaining to that cadre unit is nil," the directive said.

The move assumes significance as Cabinet Secretary Ajit Seth has recently written to secretaries of various central government departments, stressing the need for clean working space.

"There are several unnecessary files which are being destroyed after following due procedures. Other departments will also be told to destroy ACRs of retired employees after completion of retention period," a senior DoPT officer said.

Cleaning drives are also being carried out in central government office premises. "There are certain office premises where construction material is lying for years. In some office premises, unused or junked vehicles are also parked. The department concerned will ensure that no such vehicles or building material are lying," he said.

There will also be regular visit by senior officers to ensure that cleaning drive is not stopped mid-way, the officer said.

ECONOMIC TIMES, JUN 25, 2014

Prime Minister seeks timeline from bureaucrats

By Dipak Kumar Dash

NEW DELHI: Soon after going through presentations by different departments, the Narendra Modi government wants secretaries to set the timeline for each and every task that they have listed in their slideshows.

Sources said that Cabinet secretary Ajit Seth called a meeting of infrastructure secretaries at a short notice on Monday afternoon to discuss the issue. Four infrastructure ministries - shipping, road transport, railways and civil aviation - had made their power point presentation to the Prime Minister on Saturday.

Government officials said soon each department will prepare the detailed action plan with deadlines considering the fact that there will be strict monitoring of everything. Secretaries are likely to take inputs of all wings and key officials before coming out with a timeline.

This strategy is being seen as a move to hold secretaries accountable to deliver what they have committed to the PM.

DEFENCE, NATIONAL

BUSINESS LINE, JUN 27, 2014

Govt notifies defence items that need industrial licence

Streamlining will help attract investments, say analysts

In an effort to streamline the industrial licensing process for defence equipment, the Government, on Thursday, notified the list of defence items requiring industrial licences.

Industrial licences will now be required to make warships of all kinds, arms and ammunition and allied items of defence equipment, tanks and other armoured fighting vehicles and defence and spare aircraft and their parts.

According to sources, dual-use items that have military as well as civilian applications, other than those especially mentioned in the list, will not require industrial licences from the defence angle. Sources also maintain that these clarifications will help attract investment from private companies.

Terming the move by the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) as a “great move,” Amber Dubey, Partner and India Head, Aerospace and Defence, KPMG, said that it will help create a conducive policy environment which is not just FDI-centric but encompasses the entire gamut of the defence procurement process.

“This will significantly increase the ease of doing business in India especially for dual use items,” he pointed out.

According to Amber the Government must ensure time-bound grant of licences and complete clarity on terms such as ‘accessories and parts thereof’ to avoid ambiguous interpretations.

Pruning of list

Welcoming the decision, Baba N Kalyani, Chairman, CII National Committee on Defence, said with this move the Government had pruned the list and kept it to the bare minimum. A section of the industry is also viewing the Government’s move as an attempt to prepare the ground for allowing foreign direct investment in the defence sector.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated June 27, 2014)

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

INDIAN EXPRESS, JUN 26, 2014

Bengal gets 20th district

Alipurduar carved out of Jalpaiguri, Mamata makes formal announcement.

Mamata Banerjee formally declares Alipurduar as 20th district of West Bengal

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Wednesday formally declared Alipurduar as the state's 20th district, carved out by bifurcating the Jalpaiguri district in North Bengal's Dooars region. "Turning the Alipurduar sub-division into a district was a long standing demand of the people and we have fulfilled it," Mamata said addressing a meeting in the new district.

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The CM, however, said it will take time to smoothen things out. "When you set up a new home, you have to fix lot many things — doors, windows, furnishings, fittings. Similarly, the new district may have some teething trouble, but we will overcome those with time," Mamata said.

Justifying the move to create the new district, she said since the administrative headquarters of Jalpaiguri was over a 100 km away, the people of Alipurduar faced hardships in availing government services. Mamata warned against any divisive politics which might threaten the peace in the Hills and plains and reiterated her stand against any division of Bengal. Without naming the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha, which wanted a separate Gorkhaland, she said, "Darjeeling Hills are smiling and Terai and Dooars are also smiling."

Alipurduar, with a population of about 15 lakh, has a large concentration of Adivasi people and has around 70 tea gardens. Chief Minister said her government would lay emphasis on tea tourism, besides improving small scale industries in the district, which comprises eight blocks — Alipurduar, Falakata, Shamuktala, Kumargram, Birpara, Kalchini, Jaigaon and Madarihat. The CM announced names of Alice Vaz and Anup Jaiswal as the District Magistrate and Superintendent of the Police, respectively, of the new district. Of the 17 police stations in Jalpaiguri district, eight will now be under Alipurduar. Mamata also asked the members of the local chamber of commerce to meet the new DM and SP and give suggestions on industrial prospects of the district and send a detailed report to her at the earliest. She said that her government would request the Centre to speed up some of the railway projects undertaken during her tenure as the railway minister in this region for better connectivity. Among others, top government officials including the chief secretary, the home secretary, and ministers, MPs, MLAs, the Speaker of the West Bengal Assembly were present in the meeting.

EDUCATION

STATESMAN, JUN 27, 2014

DU comes up with patch-up formula

New Delhi, 26 June: Delhi University today tried to break the deadlock over the four year undergraduate programme with the University Grants Commission by offering a compromise formula of sorts. It forwarded to the UGC a proposal made to the university by some 'eminent citizens' yesterday.

The proposal, which was forwarded by DU Registrar Alka Sharma to Jaspal Singh Sandhu, secretary of UGC, seeks to draw a parallel between FYUP and the three-year course that existed before the introduction of FYUP.

However, by reducing the honours courses that are not of honours stream, the proposal provides for a "three-year Honours programme", the major directive of UGC which DU had been declining so far.

DU spokesperson Malay Neerav addressed a press conference today where he said, "We had received a letter from the UGC yesterday asking the DU to comply with its order on FYUP and begin the admissions for the three-year undergraduate programme immediately. The university sent a new proposal to the UGC suggesting that the B.Tech should remain a 4-year course while honours degrees can be validated in three years, as is the demand of UGC. We are awaiting a response on the new proposal from UGC."

STATESMAN, JUN 24, 2014

HRD ministry refuses to intervene in FYUP row

The Smriti Irani-led Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has refused to meddle in the row between the University Grants Commission (UGC) and Delhi University over the four-year undergraduate programme (FYUP) and instead asked them to resolve the matter themselves. However, it appears to be less a principled stand and more a clever move to get things done without dirtying its own hands. Meanwhile, uncertainty mounted for students and aspirants to Delhi University. HRD Minister Smriti Irani today held two meetings with UGC chairman Ved Prakash, a day after the higher education watchdog directed DU and all 64 colleges under it to conduct admissions only under the three-year undergraduate programme or face "consequences".

The UGC chairman also held a meeting with Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Dinesh Singh in the presence of Secretary, Higher Education, Ashok Thakur. Interestingly, all of them in one way or other were party to the hasty decision to introduce FYUP in the country's premier university last year.

The UGC chairman had turned a deaf ear to the massive protests against introduction of FYUP a year ago, obviously to please the then political boss, Now he is bent on reverting to the previous three-year programme.

Ms Irani is understood to have expressed her displeasure over the delay in solving the matter with the DU authorities as the admission process to the undergraduate programme was scheduled to start from tomorrow.

Ms Irani is of the view that the government should not intervene and that UGC and DU should sort out the matter between themselves and ensure that precious time of students is not wasted, sources said. They said DU had not taken the mandatory permission of the UGC before introducing the FYUP course and thus it has “no legal validity”

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JUN 25, 2014

UGC scores, 57 colleges of DU switch to three-year course

[Mallica Joshi and Vanita Srivastava](#)

Fifty-seven of the 64 Delhi colleges Tuesday agreed to go back to the three-year undergraduate course, signalling end to the logjam that has pitted the UGC against DU.

There was still no clarity on admissions through the day that had its fair share of drama with conflicting reports of "resignation" of Delhi University vice-chancellor Dinesh Singh coming in. Singh had pushed for the controversial four-year course that the University Grants Commission wants scrapped.

At 3pm, the university media coordinator sent a message to reporters saying, "VC has resigned." An hour later, writer Madhu Kishwar stepped out of Singh's residence and denied that he had quit. Teachers and university officials, who meet Singh subsequently, said the same. There was, however, no word from the V-C.

THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE

- Delhi University vice-chancellor Dinesh Singh joined office in October 2010 and is left with a tenure of more than a year
- His entire stint has been marred with controversy, first over the semester system and then FYUP
- Before he assumed the position of V-C, he was the director, south campus, DU, and was among the more popular professors
- He is an alumnus of St Stephen's College in Delhi and Imperial College, London. He is a professor of mathematics
- Singh was awarded the Padma Shri earlier this year, which had also created quite a stir in the university, especially among those who opposed his moves



Though the colleges sent compliance letters to the UGC, they said admissions, which should have begun Tuesday, would start only after they get clear directives. Hundreds of outstations students landed at the campus, unaware that admissions had been put on hold.

Watch: DU teachers backing FYUP, go on hunger strike

**[Read: Delhi University-UGC standoff: Teachers go on hunger strike
Blood and chaos on campus as UGC-DU war delays admissions](#)**

"While I firmly believe that academic matters are the privilege of the university, after I heard that the V-C had resigned I had no option but to send a report," a prominent north campus college principal said. "The report simply mentions that I have no problem with what the UGC has stated in its letter."

According to principals, the UGC called them repeatedly to send in the letters.

The regulator, which holds the purse strings, had on June 22 told the colleges to admit students only under the three-year programme and junk the four-year course. It had threatened to withdraw aid for failing to follow the directive.

With the majority of colleges giving in, DU faces a peculiar situation. On Wednesday, it is expected to send in a compliance report to the regulator so that admission process can begin. The colleges that have not sent their response are mostly evening colleges.

During the day, the Supreme Court declined to hear DU executive council member Aditya Narayan Mishra's public interest litigation against the UGC order and asked him to approach the high court.

Meanwhile, students enrolled in Delhi University's B Tech courses - commenced under the four-year undergraduate programme (FYUP) - heaved a sigh of relief Tuesday, as the UGC assured that their interests will be kept in mind when taking a final decision on the controversial issue.

"We have met the representatives of UGC and have been assured that they will give priority to the demands of B Tech students. Therefore, we have decided to call off the protest," said Amit Kumar, a student of B Tech who was protesting for four days against UGC's order to scrap FYUP.

Hindustan Times reported on Monday how these students will suffer, since they took admission in a

B Tech degree course but will be handed a B Sc degree if the university reverts to the three-year programme.

Earlier in the day, the students held another protest to protect FYUP. There are close to 2,500 B Tech students in computer science and electronics in the university currently. Around 1,50,000 applications have been received for the two courses this year as well.

"We are the ones who are part of this system and it seems that an opinion has been sought from everyone but us. Talk to us and ask us if we want the course or not. We have said repeatedly that the programme should not be scrapped but be made better," said Shreya, a B Tech student who only uses a first name.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JUN 25, 2014

FYUP row: It's time to put the institution first

[Nandini Sundar](#)

If it were not so near home, the farce unfolding over Delhi University's Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) would be entirely funny. To have Madhu Kishwar accuse HRD minister Smriti Irani of being an agent of the Left, and to have the Left describe the UGC takeover of the university as a great victory is bad enough, without the added spectacle of a divided Congress unable to decide whether the FYUP is much-loved or much-hated. The fact is that the university had no business passing the FYUP in the manner that it did, but the UGC has even less business going over the heads of the university administration and the academic council. If today it can write directly to college principals, threatening to withdraw funding unless they revert to a three-year

programme, tomorrow it might do the same unless they agree to implement courses in Vedic astrology or compulsory Hindi teaching in all courses.

It is true that the DU administration has violated so many academic conventions and laws in its haste to push through the FYUP that claims to academic autonomy sound sour in its name. Faculty have discovered major changes only through the media, been ordered to frame syllabi within weeks, the administration refuses to meet professors with alternative points of view and dissenting departments are punished in myriad ways. Faculty appointments have been unpardonably delayed, and even those appointments that have been made have been hostage to the vice-chancellor's grand plan. The right to critical thinking and expression by faculty is the basic bloc of a university's autonomy.

However, there are genuine differences over the FYUP. Not all those who supported it did so because of some corporate agenda to decimate DU's 'flagship programme' to pave the way for private sector entry in liberal higher education. Many genuinely believed that the potential for interdisciplinarity it afforded, and the chance for a student to exit with some degree after two years would be a good thing. Yes, the vice-chancellor and his team were adept at mobilising support, but are the UGC and ministry of human resource development saying that all the college principals and department heads who voted for the FYUP — including many BJP stalwarts — in the academic council were mere puppets?

The spectacle of thousands of students applying to DU shows that it is not three or four years that matters to them, but the brand that DU offers. Ultimately, it is not the course but the teachers who matter, and unless they are able to have a discussion around courses on academic rather than political lines, this brand is doomed to fail.

If DU has violated laws, so has the UGC, which sat on the issue for a year before changing its mind. The UGC is meant to be a statutory and autonomous body to regulate education, but its willingness to serve whichever party is in power has never been more evident.

As usual, with the BJP's doublespeak, the HRD minister is claiming to have outsourced the decision to the UGC, even as the NDTF and ABVP are taking credit for the change. Far from the HRD minister being a "Left agent", it is the DUTA and Left student unions which have so far fought a principled struggle, who run the risk of becoming unwitting agents of the RSS-supported destruction of institutional autonomy.

There is still a way out if all parties put institutions first. Let the UGC take its directive back, let the UGC panel to overhaul the programme be reconstituted as a DU committee, and let the academic council deliberate again, this time taking proper heed of anti-FYUP views. A short delay in admissions is a small price to pay for the educational future of this country.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JUN 24, 2014

DU's four-year UG scheme row: who failed the students?

'The [Delhi] University treated us like guinea pigs'. This is how thousands of students are feeling after being caught in a tug-of-war between the university and the University Grants Commission (UGC) over the four-year undergraduate programme (FYUP), which the university rolled out last year. Last week, the UGC asked DU to scrap the programme and revert to the three-year programme, failing which, it has warned, the university will face dire consequences. At present, there are 60,000 students under the FYUP. This controversy has also cast a shadow on this year's admission process, which was due to begin on Tuesday, putting the future of more than 200,000 students in jeopardy, including thousands of outstation students.

Read: St Stephen's postpones admissions until DU's decision on FYUP

The FYUP has had its share of critics: Many have accused DU of copying the American undergraduate format without having the required infrastructure and staff strength. In his defence, vice-chancellor Dinesh Singh told media houses that this is not the first time that a four-year course has been introduced in India: Both the Allahabad and Bangalore universities run such courses, and that students' interests were always uppermost in his mind while devising the programme.

Read: Centre keeps off UGC-DU row on four-year undergraduate scheme; admissions delayed

Both DU and the UGC are responsible for this confusion in equal measure. If DU did not do its homework and failed to bring all stakeholders on board before rolling out the programme, the UGC shirked its responsibility in the first instance. If the UGC, which controls the university's purse strings, is now telling DU to fall in line, what stopped it from doing so when the programme rolled out?

Read: FYUP row: Delhi University hopefuls, students anxious about future

What is it trying to achieve now by sending letters to the university's 70-odd colleges, asking them to follow the three-year undergraduate course, and issuing notices in newspapers informing that "FYUP is not in consonance with the National Policy on Education, 1986 and the 10+2+3 structure envisaged under it"? The BJP in its manifesto during the Delhi elections had promised to scrap the FYUP while the Congress had taken the opposite view. Now at this critical juncture both have waded into the controversy, fighting out their political war inside and outside the university, leaving the students to fend for themselves.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JUN 26, 2014

UGC standoff triggers debate over DU's autonomy

[Neha Pushkarna](#)

Is Delhi University free to decide on academics or not?

The standoff between Delhi University and University Grants Commission has forced many to repeat this question. While some say it is the UGC's responsibility to prevent any violation of norms, others find it over-stepping its mandate in DU.

Former UGC chairperson Sukhadeo Thorat said the education system in India has a set framework, giving autonomy and rights to stakeholders at all levels.

“It's alright as long as issues in an institution are dealt with peacefully. When a change as major as the four- year-programme is introduced, it should be done with consensus. Rushing through the change caused all the problem and UGC as an overarching body has to intervene. It's the commission's responsibility,” said Thorat.

The former UGC chief said the three-year programmes were launched after much deliberation by the Kothari Commission.

Even the critics of DU administration believe that UGC has no business to threaten the university to budge on the issue of FYUP or lose funds. It's dangerous for the autonomy of any institution, they suggest.

“UGC, for a whole year, not only tolerated FYUP but also praised it to high heavens. But now there's a complete turnaround. It is giving ultimatums after ultimatums to the university. So what has changed in this one year? There has been a change in UGC's stand after the elections,” said Professor Harish Trivedi, who headed the department of English at Delhi University.

He said the UGC's role primarily has been to issue general guidelines, make suggestions and act against any violation of its norms like it did in the case of deemed universities.

According to teachers, a university has to act in accordance with its academic and executive councils unlike the UGC that is simply giving orders to colleges to revert to the old system of three-year undergraduate programmes or “face consequences”.

However, protesting teachers also insist that DU has itself been quite ambiguous about its autonomy.

“When it came to paying teachers their financial dues, the university chose to wait for the UGC to take a call. Where was its autonomy then? It cannot be autonomous selectively,” said a teacher, who did not wish to be named.

BUSINESS LINE, JUN 26, 2014

[Death by degrees](#)

The battle over Delhi University's four-year programme has much more at stake than mere academics

The ongoing controversy over scrapping Delhi University's Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) and the resultant stand-off over admissions reflect poorly on all the parties concerned. Worse, it puts the future of lakhs of students — those seeking admission to this year's programmes at India's premier university, as well as the over 55,000 students who are already part-way through the FYUP — at risk. The human resources development ministry, which used its might to push through the FYUP programme last year and is now using the same muscle to scrap it, must bear a bulk of the blame. However, the actions of the supposedly autonomous University Grants Commission (UGC), Delhi University's Vice-Chancellor Dinesh Singh, as well as its politicised teaching staff, deserve the strongest condemnation. Academics are expected to resolve differences through dialogue and discussion, not intrigue and street action.

Any resolution now attempted needs to bear in mind some key issues. First, the idea of the FYUP is not inherently flawed. The option of exiting after a two-year tertiary programme which will equip students with basic skills required in a variety of jobs without necessarily adding academic specialisation in areas that are unlikely to find widespread application outside the world of academics has the potential of addressing India's growing skills shortage in the labour market. Critics have rightly pointed out the huge shortfalls in the programme as it was implemented — the foundation courses were laughably basic, and the colleges simply did not have the physical or academic infrastructure to cope with the additional load. However, the solution was to try and improve the shortcomings, not dumping it unceremoniously.

More disturbing is the politicisation of higher education. The UGC is supposedly autonomous but is in fact a rubber stamp for the political dispensation in power. Politicisation of appointments of vice-chancellors, chopping and changing courses and programmes at the behest of political whims and fancies, and an increasing recourse to courts or street politics over issues which need to be settled through consultation, have all combined to erode the quality of higher education and undermine the few centres of excellence which do exist. It is no coincidence that many top politicians are majorly invested in the education business. But allowing political capture of higher education puts the future of our society at peril. "Upon the education of the people of this country, the fate of this country depends," said British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli while arguing the case for appointment to the British Civil Services on the basis of competitive examinations, thus changing the equation from patronage to educational merit as the route to success. It is a dictum which the current day inheritors of his legacy in India will do well to remember.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, JUN 30, 2014

Reforming higher education

[C Raj Kumar](#)

The new Modi government has committed itself to reforming the higher education sector. Smriti Irani, the Union HRD minister, has begun her work in all earnestness and is conscious of the aspirations and expectations that the government has generated. But there are big challenges facing the Indian higher education sector.

Quality, excellence and faculty: First, we must raise the quality of our universities by promoting research and publications. Not even a single Indian university got featured in the top 200 universities of the world in all major rankings and this is a serious concern. Second is the issue of attracting quality faculty. There is a crisis relating to faculty recruitment and retention in our universities. Even the central universities are facing difficulty with 35-40% of their faculty positions remaining vacant. Third, there is an urgent need to increase the capacities of the higher education sector. This will involve significant investment in higher education; we need to build more colleges and universities, but that should not lead to any reduction in quality. This balancing act of maintaining the quality of education while increasing the quantity of institutions is a critical challenge.

Public, private and the regulator: The existing dichotomy between public sector efforts and private sector initiatives in the higher education space needs to be dismantled. The yardstick to measure the quality and effectiveness of higher education institutions in India should not be based on whether it is public or private, but through benchmarks that are universally applicable. There is a need for radical regulatory reform in the higher education sector, and an examination of the powers and functions of all regulatory bodies. The regulations should focus on creating an enabling environment for the higher education sector to grow in which public, private and international institutions can thrive—all with a view to advancing the goals of excellence in higher education. The need for internationalisation and global opportunities in education and research for our students and faculty has to be promoted by the government. Further, we need to address the issue of increasing the gross enrolment ratio from 18% to more than 30%, and this calls for substantial investment in higher education.

Knowledge, skills and perspectives: We have to develop significant capacities for promoting vocational education and develop skill-sets. Whether we examine a developed country like the UaS or a developing country like China, there is a strong emphasis on maintaining rigorous standards and research excellence among universities, while providing strong impetus to promoting vocational education and skills development. Public policy needs to recognise that knowledge creation and excellence in research can and should go hand-in-hand.

There is no single answer as to how we can transfer knowledge from university to industry. We must understand the importance of collaboration between academia and the industry. Unfortunately, these two worlds have been operating independently with a fair amount of indifference and scepticism of the other. This has not helped in any form of knowledge transfer. We need to facilitate conversations between academia and industry. It is also necessary for industry to recognise that universities are about creating ideas and promoting innovation, but not all of them can be driven by industry demands and market expectations. This balancing act is critical.

Universities and economic growth: The experience of many countries has shown us that innovation and research in universities contributes to the creation of new opportunities and the growth and development of many industries. Many countries in South East Asia are shining examples of this. There is no doubt about the fact that universities have to redefine their role in India, but this is not only in relation to their contribution to economic development, but also in relation to their social, cultural and intellectual development of the nation. There is a strong case for making Indian universities more accountable and this accountability is not to the government or to the regulator, but to the society at large.

Prof C Raj Kumar, a Rhodes Scholar, is the founding vice-chancellor of the OP Jindal Global University

PIONEER, JUN 24, 2014

TOTAL MESS IN DU

Admissions postponed, students face uncertain future

The row over the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) has left the University of Delhi stuck in limbo with massive confusion arising in all wings of the institution. While colleges have not received any intimation from the university so far, the Principals' Association of the university held a meeting on Monday and decided to defer the admission process that was to begin on Tuesday.

This is the first time that such a situation has arisen in the university. Delhi University has always been known for sticking to timelines and not delaying its admission procedure. However, this year uncertainty looms over the admissions. Students are not even sure which course they would be admitted under, putting aside the anxiety regarding when the cut-off lists will be released.

Principals of 36 colleges of the university held a meeting on Monday to deliberate on the issue. In the meeting, they unanimously resolved that unless unambiguous guidelines are issued, the admission process will be deferred. They said that they needed time to release cut-off lists after the sudden revocation of the FYUP.

Principal of Hindu College Pradumn Kumar said: “Due to the short notice of the meeting, only 36 principals turned up on Monday and we all unanimously decided that the cut-offs need to be delayed. All other colleges have agreed as well. We have to follow the UGC’s instructions otherwise they may take away our grant and we can’t even go ahead without instructions from the university. Thus, in this confusing state, it is better that we wait for the university to give us instructions and then release cut-offs.”

The main contention of the principals is the reallocation of seats which may take place with the sudden rollback of FYUP. Principal of Ram Lal Anand College Vijay K Sharma said: “There are conflicting expectations from us. If the courses, which were scrapped with FYUP, are reintroduced, then there will be a reallocation of seats. We need time to solve that. Thus, all colleges will wait for the university’s directive to release cut-offs.”

Principals are hopeful that in two to three days, there will be some communication from the university. “The university should be able to finalise something in the coming days. The moment we hear from them, we will take out the cut-off lists. Even if it is a delay of three days, we should manage completing admissions on time as we had made a schedule ahead of time this year,” said Kumar.

EMIGRATION

ECONOMIC TIMES, JUN 24, 2014

Union Home Ministry rejects visa free entry for Bangladesh national

By Bikash Singh

GUWAHATI: The Union home ministry has rejected the proposed visa-free entry regime for Bangladesh nationals who are below 18 or over 65 and visa-on-arrival facility for the rest of Bangladeshi visitors.

The MHA response came to a foreign ministry suggestion ahead of the visit of external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj to Bangladesh later this week. It is unclear if the issue will figure in the bilateral discussions during the foreign minister's visit.

Assam chief minister Tarun Gogoi was the first to raise the issue. Gogoi had said a few days ago that the BJP-led NDA government was proposing to grant a visa-free entry to Bangladesh nationals of certain age groups and said the state government was opposed to it.

Following the controversy, home ministry officials on Monday blamed an "over-enthusiastic" bureaucrat in the foreign ministry who chose to take up the issue with the home ministry after the Bangladeshi side had raised the demand at a bilateral meet some time ago. The opinion of the home ministry was sought both on visafree entry for certain age group of Bangladeshis and a visa-on-arrival regime for all Bangladeshi nations, an official said.

"Both proposals were rejected. The demographics of Assam and two other states has been changed due to Bangladeshi infiltration and a visa-free regime, even for select age-groups, or a visa-on-arrival facility is not feasible in this light," a home ministry official said.

Gogoi, meanwhile, said he had "not compromised with national security" by divulging the said proposal as he stressed that BJP was taking a U-turn on the issue of Bangladeshi migrants by proposing to relax the regime after promising to tighten the same during the 2014 election campaign.

FINANCE

TRIBUNE, JUN 24, 2014

Union Budget on July 10

The Narendra Modi government will present its first Budget on July 10, three days after the commencement of the Budget session of Parliament that is expected to last six weeks.

The decision to call the session between July 7 and August 14 was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs chaired by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh. The Rail Budget will be presented on July 8 and the Economic Survey will be tabled on July 9. Sources in the government said considering the need for Parliament to approve the Finance Bill well before July 31, when the vote-on-account authorisation is scheduled to expire, this time it could do away with the practice of Demands-for-Grants to be examined by the Standing Committee.

As per convention, the outgoing government seeks a vote-on-account allowing it to draw from the treasury and avoid any lock-down. The new government presents a regular budget.

Session begins July 7

- * The Budget session commences on July 7 and is expected to last six weeks
- * The Rail Budget will be presented on July 8 and the Economic Survey will be tabled on July 9.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

DECCAN HERALD, JUN 24, 2014

Tread cautiously

Ashwani Mahajan

The effort to raise cap on FDI in defence from 26 per cent, which started during UPA regime in 2010 and was put off after strong opposition from the then defence minister A K Antony, is once again being pushed vehemently after new government under Narendra Modi has come to power at the Centre.

It is notable that permission for FDI was first granted during the previous NDA government under the stewardship of A B Vajpayee.

According to Press Note-4 in 2001, this policy was first announced, whereby Indian companies were allowed 100 per cent and foreign entities 26 per cent in defence sector.

It is said a cabinet note regarding FDI in defence has already been sent to the ministries concerned. The government says that today 70 per cent of our defence equipment needs are being met by imports and hardly 30 per cent by domestic production.

The major problem about the defence equipments being imported into India is that suppliers are not in a position to provide sufficient maintenance facilities. Therefore, these equipment are not very reliable during war. Therefore, in the interest of modernisation of our defence industry, its further exposure to FDI may prove to be a boon. However, critics argue that by allowing FDI in defence, our dependence on foreigners will increase. It is feared that our dependence on some countries and their blocs may amplify in the future.

They also argue that during war time, foreign companies, while trying to serve the strategic interests of their countries of origin, may even block the supplies at the time we require them most. This is also possible that they produce arms and ammunition in India and supply to our enemy nations or even terrorist organisations.

It is believed that at present, foreign companies are reluctant to transfer their technology with the present cap on FDI at 26 per cent, they want greater share in the business. If we raise the limit beyond 26 per cent, they may be willing to transfer technology.

Not only that this would improve technological base for defence industry, other sectors would also be benefited due to improvement in technology. Defence goods could be produced within the country and help us in saving valuable foreign exchange.

Liberalisation of FDI in this sector may also help us in increasing our exports of defence goods. Today India exports hardly 2 per cent of its defence production, whereas other countries including China, Israel, South Africa etc export much more than India.

Technology denial

Those in favour of FDI in defence give the argument that with this measure, the nation will get hold of latest technology in defence. But this is an open secret that technology denial regime is at work in advanced nations, USA in particular - it is known to possess advance technology in defence production.

Example of cryogenic engine is well known to all - USA not only refused to supply cryogenic engine for our PSLV programme, they even forced other nations not to give the same.

The US law does not permit its companies to make their technologies available to other countries, even if they are carrying out production activities in these countries. Therefore, if we open our doors for FDI in defence even further, technology transfer is not guaranteed.

It is known to all that today India is excessively dependent on other countries for supply of defence equipment, arms and ammunition fighter, aircraft etc.

Not only that it causes a big drain on our valuable foreign exchange, we are also forced to pay much higher prices. After the disintegration of USSR, today India is purchasing defence goods on a large scale from USA, Western Europe etc. Therefore, theoretically the nation can benefit by inviting global players, as they may produce these defence goods with their latest technology and may serve our needs.

However, giving them managerial control in this strategic sector may not be good for the strategic interest of our country.

Major worry with regard to foreign investment is that of mindset of the policy makers, who feel that foreign investment is the solution to every problem.

The basis for deciding whether or not the country should go in for FDI in defence should not be how much investment is attracted by this act, rather it should be based on the how much help it would provide for self reliance in the field of defence, technological upgradation and strategic preparedness.

Reality remains that after Independence, there have been major efforts in the field of defence production although they were generally concentrated in the public sector. Further, there were insufficient efforts towards research and development.

Wherever the government made efforts, we achieved excellence - development of Agni missiles, nuclear deterrent, PSLV, satellite launching etc have been astounding the world.

Therefore, it is imperative that government takes up pro-active approach towards R&D

activities for technological excellence. At present, there is no provision with regards to isolating Chinese investment, while going ahead with foreign investment, government has to adopt cautious approach.

No doubt the nation cannot wait indefinitely for encouraging defence production at home, but at the same time, strategic interests too cannot be sacrificed. Therefore, a guarded approach is the need of the hour. There is no reason for haste in this matter.

GOVERNORS

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JUN 27, 2014

Ruling the roost in Raj Bhavan: do we really need governors?

[Rajdeep Sardesai](#)

A former UPA minister relates a delightful story of an ex-judge who had been identified to head the contentious ‘Snoopgate’ probe. The judge declined the offer but had an alternative proposal in mind: “Why don’t you make me a governor instead!” suggested the venerable judge. The reason was obvious: As head of an inquiry commission that was politically controversial, the judge would be in the line of fire. As a governor, he was seemingly assured of a five-year term and a wonderful sinecure in a cosy Raj Bhavan.

The story is relevant in the context of the ongoing debate on governors sparked by the [Narendra Modi](#) government’s attempt to ease out a few Raj Bhavan occupants who are seen as Congress ‘loyalists’. Actually, the Modi government has been a shade more gentle in dealing with the issue than the UPA government, which in 2004 almost overnight obtained the resignation of all governors who had been BJP members. The then home minister, Shivraj Patil, had been rather brusque when justifying the move: “These governors have an ideology which is contrary to that of the ruling party in power,” was the argument.

Then, the acting NDA chairperson, LK Advani, had vigorously protested, calling the move “dangerous” and a “violation of constitutional principles”. Now, exactly the same language is being used by Congress leaders. If Patil in 2004, described the move to remove governors in ideological terms, the BJP today justifies its actions on the basis of “set traditions” and the need to replace “political appointees”.

The truth, of course, is more prosaic. The fact is that the BJP too has its fair share of 70 and 80-year-old gerontocrats who need to be ‘accommodated’, especially as the Modi government has now imposed an unwritten rule of 75 years being a cut-off age for becoming a Cabinet minister. Moreover, when it comes to constitutional propriety, it almost seems as if the only thing that has changed in the last 10 years is the face of the alliance in power: The hand has been replaced by the lotus, but the instincts to ensure that Raj Bhavans are extensions of the political authority at the Centre remain the same.

One thing has changed in the interim though: A Supreme Court order of 2010 in the BP Singhal vs Union of India case where the apex court made it clear that though the President can remove a governor at any time without assigning any reason in public, the Constitution guarantees that this power cannot be exercised in an “arbitrary, capricious or unreasonable manner”. Gleeful Congressmen have latched on to this verdict to suggest that governors cannot be removed simply with a change in government.

But the attempt to seek refuge in law is misconceived. If the removal of a governor should not be arbitrary, then neither should the appointment. And the fact is, over the

last four decades, stretching back to the 1970s, that is precisely what has happened. Mrs Indira Gandhi started the practice by ensuring that Raj Bhavans were packed with ‘committed’ civil servants and politicians. Almost the first thing the Janata Party, which came to power in 1977, did was to dismiss all the Indira appointees and anoint their own supporters instead. This rather inglorious tradition has since continued.

Was it really necessary, for example, for the previous UPA government to ‘reward’ its three-time Delhi chief minister, Sheila Dikshit, within days of suffering a massive election defeat, with a convenient resting place in Thiruvananthapuram? When defeated ruling party politicians, be it a Dikshit, Shivraj Patil or a Margaret Alva, are sent to Raj Bhavans, then the implication is obvious: The individuals are being rewarded for ‘services’ to the party and will be expected to be loyal and partisan to their benefactors.

If you have to make a politician a governor, then that individual must be legally made to give up active politics or holding an office of profit for a minimum of 10 years after their tenure. Else you have an SM Krishna-like situation where, after hibernating in the Raj Bhavan in Mumbai, he was suddenly catapulted into the ministry of external affairs. Or a Sushil Kumar Shinde, who did a similar trapeze act from the Raj Bhavan in Hyderabad to the Union Cabinet in Delhi.

There is, of course, a more dramatic solution, which is to simply get rid off the office of governor and, maybe, put the luxurious Raj Bhavans to better use. Frankly, the institution is a colonial relic, a derivative of the pomp and pageantry of the state from another era. The role of the governor is principally ceremonial: Cutting ribbons, attending official functions, delivering banal speeches. How does a governor contribute meaningfully to the democratic institutions of the country?

The only time the governor plays a more crucial interventionist role is if there is a hung assembly and the confidence vote is obtained through engineering splits and defections. And even here, more often than not, the governor’s position is controversial. Recall Romesh Bhandari in [Uttar Pradesh](#) in the late 1990s. He had the dubious distinction of swearing in Jagdambika Pal as chief minister for just a day only to have the decision overturned in court. I remember meeting Mr Bhandari at the time and he appeared to relish the political uncertainty. “This is why you have governors,” he told me almost ecstatically, “to make sure all these crazy politicians are not allowed to step out of line.” I did not dare to argue. Governor saab was on his third chota peg!

Post-script: My other favourite story revolves around a former governor of Goa. The gentleman had been a distinguished politician and I asked him whether he found life in the Raj Bhavan a tad boring. “Ah! Boring it can be sometimes, but then just look at the view!” pointing to the spectacular Arabian Sea that the house overlooked.

HUMAN RIGHTS

HINDU, JUN 24, 2014

Independence from the government

SWAGATA RAHA

ARCHANA MEHENDALE

Although meant to function as watchdogs, human rights institutions in India are treated as subordinate departments with scant regard for their autonomy or statutory character

NEED FOR AUTONOMY: Freedom from government interference is one of the most crucial elements in building effective human rights institutions.

A change in the occupancy of 7, Race Course Road, is spelling change in the composition of statutory bodies in India. With the Governors of various States, the office-bearers of the National Disaster Management Authority and the Chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) having been asked to resign, there is a sense of déjà vu: in 2005, the UPA government sacked three members of the National Commission for Women (NCW) before the completion of their term, in gross violation of the removal process stipulated by the NCW Act. Nirmala Sitharaman, a Union Minister of State in the current government, who was one of the members who was removed then, had reportedly called it an “unconstitutional”, “condemnable” and “ill-advised” move. On June 9, when Kushal Singh, Chairperson, NCPCR, approached the Delhi High Court urging it to restrain the government from compelling her to resign, the Court asked, “Where is the cause of action? They have not done anything to remove you.”

Lack of procedures for selection

Although meant to function as watchdogs, human rights institutions in India are treated as subordinate departments with scant regard for their autonomy or statutory character. The political establishment uses them to accommodate their favourites and this explains the pressure on members to quit. Such brazen display of power is possible because of a lack of clear provisions in legislation on selection procedures along with a complete disregard for procedures for removal of members. In the case of the Commission for Protection of Child Rights, appointments are increasingly coming under the judicial scanner as governments have been sluggish in notifying detailed guidelines that can ensure open, transparent and competitive selections to these important public offices.

In two separate judgments (*Association for Development v. Union of India, 2010 and 2013*), the Delhi High Court emphasised the need for fair and transparent appointments and urged the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) to develop “objective evaluation methods” to appoint members to the NCPCR. In the 2013 decision, the source of recommendations for candidates was brought on record. Unsurprisingly, of the 130 applications, 35 had been recommended by Union Ministers, 18 were political party functionaries (of which 17 were Congress leaders), 33 had been recommended by MPs and MLAs, seven by Chief Ministers and State Cabinet Ministers, 10 by NCPCR, and three by the Prime Minister’s Office. The petitioners claimed that the Selection

Committee “took no steps to verify the credentials” of the candidates. The Delhi High Court quashed the appointment of Dr. Yogesh Dube as Member of the NCPCR on the ground that it was “not based on any objective guidelines.”

Dr. Dube appealed this decision before the Supreme Court, which, in its order dated February 25, 2014, scathingly observed that it saw “no reason why norms and guidelines for selection of candidates should not be framed and published so that the entire process of selection is fair, reasonable, objective and transparent.” The Court observed that “[r]eceiving applications from candidates recommended by people who have no role to play in the process of selection may in fact have the effect of rendering the selection process suspect, for any such recommendations are most likely to influence the selection process in a subtle manner to the prejudice of other candidates who are not resourceful enough to secure such recommendations, no matter they are otherwise equally, if not more, meritorious.”

Eligibility and selection norms

After being judicially rebuked thrice, the MWCD amended the NCPCR rules twice this year (in March and May) to specify eligibility and selection norms. Only Indian nationals who are graduates from a recognised university, who have no record of conviction or imprisonment for an offence or have been removed or dismissed from government service, are eligible. Vacancies have to be advertised in at least four national dailies and also publicised on the Ministry’s website. The Selection Committee is chaired by the Minister-in-charge, with the Secretary of the Ministry and one independent expert nominated by the Minister as members. These provisions may not entirely check political interference and are marginal steps toward streamlining the process.

In many States, appointments are being challenged for having been made on political grounds and this should compel State governments to amend their rules and include selection guidelines in order to insulate appointments from political interference. An important judgment came on February 11, 2014 from the Gauhati High Court, where a Single Judge quashed the appointment of Juriti Borgohain as Chairperson of the Assam State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (ASCPCR) on grounds that it was arbitrary and in gross violation of the selection procedure mandated under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005 (CPCR Act). Justice Ujjal Bhuyan observed that the Selection Committee did not record its satisfaction about Ms Borgohain’s suitability, nor did it recommend her or anyone to the State government for appointment, and that “...it was a decision of the Chief Minister which was imposed on the Selection Committee.” It termed this lapse not only a “procedural defect” but “an infirmity” that “strikes at the very root of the decision-making process itself,” which the court has the power to review. It concluded that the breach of the mandatory procedure stipulated under the Act rendered the appointment untenable.

While the MWCD was compelled to amend its rules and specify selection procedures as a result of court directions, the Gauhati High Court gave no such directions to the Assam government and it is unclear how similar episodes of political interference will be

prevented from recurring. Assam is the only State in the country to have constituted the Commission as early as 2010, but has still not notified the rules detailing the selection process, salaries and allowances, and administrative matters, thereby leaving matters to political uncertainties and executive discretion.

According to the Paris Principles Relating to Status of National Institutions (1993), which serve as an international benchmark, independence from the government is one of the most crucial elements in building effective human rights institutions. This principle is seriously undermined whenever there is political interference in appointments and whenever the tenure and stability of these institutions is subject to the whims and fancies of the government. The judiciary has played its part well by revoking such arbitrary appointments, but now it is for the government to demonstrate its willingness to establish strong and independent institutions according to the rule of law.

Change for the sake of change is meaningless; change in the guise of political opportunism is condemnable.

(Swagata Raha and Archana Mehendale are independent researchers working on human rights institutions for children.)

The judiciary has played its part well by revoking arbitrary appointments, but now it is for the government to demonstrate its willingness to establish strong and independent institutions

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

HINDU, JUN 24, 2014

Upholding the Five Principles

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Six decades ago, during Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai's visits to India and Myanmar, Mr. Enlai along with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Myanmar Prime Minister U Nu issued joint statements and initiated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which are mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. Since then, these principles have been widely recognised and observed by the international community, and have served as basic norms of state-to-state relations. They have withstood the test of time and made significant contributions to the cause of world peace and progress.

Historical background

The Five Principles prevailed against specific historical backgrounds. After World War II, the global colonial system collapsed and a large number of national states emerged independent in Asia and Africa. The most urgent task for these countries at the time was to safeguard national independence and sovereignty, prevent external invasion or interference, and establish relations with other countries on an equal footing, so as to strive for a peaceful international environment. China, India and Myanmar are among those countries that first won national independence in Asia and jointly initiated the Five Principles. In April 1955, the first Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, adopted these Principles. Since then, they have been written into a large number of important international documents.

The world today is very much different from that of six decades ago, with peace, development and cooperation becoming the trend of the times. China, India and Myanmar, along with other emerging markets and developing countries, are becoming more and more important in the international arena. While the international situation is moving toward a direction more in favour of peace and development, the world today is still faced with many difficulties and challenges. We still have a long way to go to establish an international order that is more just and reasonable. Under the new circumstances, we should continue to uphold and implement the Five Principles.

The first is to firmly safeguard sovereign equality among all states and stand against interfering in other countries' internal affairs. The second is to actively seek peaceful and common development in order to realise our common dream. The third is to promote the New Security Concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination, and advocate common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. The fourth is to fully respect diversity of the world and encourage various civilisations, cultures and religions to respect one another. The fifth is to push the process of multi-polarisation and

support larger representation and influence of developing countries in international affairs.

China and India are among the first to initiate the Five Principles, which have been the cornerstone of our respective foreign policies. Over the years, the Five Principles have helped us to properly handle our bilateral issues left over by history, such as the Tibet-related issue and the boundary question. We have pushed forward all-around cooperation in political, economic, cultural and other areas, established the Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity, and become good neighbours.

India-China relations

Today, China and India are both faced with the task of developing the economy and improving people's lives; therefore, both need a peaceful and stable neighbourhood and global environment. As two important emerging markets and members of BRICS, both countries wish to improve existing international governance, so that emerging markets and developing countries can have more say in international affairs. Compared to the situation six decades ago, the Five Principles have become more relevant to China-India relations. We should continue to uphold and carry forward this common property.

First, we will continue to respect each other and accumulate mutual trust. For historical reasons, there remain some outstanding issues between China and India. We should draw wisdom from the Five Principles, always treat China-India relations from a strategic viewpoint, and take stock of the whole situation, with full confidence that we have far more common interests than differences.

Second, we will continue to carry out practical cooperation based on mutual benefit. As neighbouring countries with the largest populations and greatest market potentials, China and India are highly complementary in economy, and are natural partners of cooperation. We are both implementing a 12th "Five-Year Plan." China's further opening up to the West echoes well with India's "Look East" policy. China and India should give full play to each other's advantages, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, cooperate on the BCIM Economic Corridor, the Silk Road Economic Belt, the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, and establish a China and India double-engine powered "Trans-Himalaya Economic Growth Region," so that our dreams of development and prosperity can interconnect.

Third, we will continue to treat each other on an equal footing. We should proceed from overall interests of bilateral relations and handle the boundary question through peaceful and friendly negotiations to find a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution. Before that, we should improve relevant mechanisms on border affairs, properly manage differences and jointly maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas. With regard to the issues of trade imbalance and transborder rivers, we should treat each other on an equal footing, give full consideration to each other's concerns and find a proper solution.

Fourth, we will continue to promote people-to-people and cultural exchanges to foster friendship among our two nations.

We should be inspired by our ancestors and encourage more youth, media, academia and other people-to-people exchanges to promote mutual understanding. And we should pass on our friendship from generation to generation, in order to make new contributions to world peace and development.

(Wei Wei is Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to India.)

The Five Principles have withstood the test of time and made significant contributions to the cause of world peace and progress

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JUN 24, 2014

India needs to move diplomacy into high gear

Economic considerations must take primacy in foreign policy. This is the message from Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) and explains why the ministry of external affairs has summoned its envoys posted in the neighbourhood for a conclave on India's regional policy. External affairs minister Sushma Swaraj engaged ambassadors posted in the Saarc countries, Central Asia, China, Myanmar and Iran and discussed ways to advance India's priorities. Improving regional cooperation and connectivity are the key thrust areas even as diplomats are expected to be mindful of the wider security challenges. Such meetings are useful for acquainting the new government with the perspective from posts; for identifying policy priorities and for the government to discern where political intervention is required to make progress.

The envoys have hopefully spelt out the need for confidence-building initiatives, such as a long overdue prime ministerial visit to Nepal, the Teesta water-sharing agreement with Bangladesh and pressing on with India-Pakistan trade. The envoys will have alerted [New Delhi](#) to China's increasing footprint across the region. China's trade volume with Bangladesh is more than India's as are its investments in Myanmar, Afghanistan and Central Asia. The MEA envoys will convey to New Delhi that India's presence in the region fades in comparison with the number of personnel that Beijing devotes at home and away on foreign affairs. India's lack of capacity in this area has been well known for a while but the situation has barely improved.

The MEA has around 900 officers on its rolls; China is said to have 4,200, while Britain, Germany and France each have more than 6,000 officers. Indian diplomats plod on with unmanageable remits as a result. Joint secretaries handle several key countries at once. When they deal with one major visit or a crisis, like the one currently about Indian nationals being abducted in Iraq, every other issue ceases to become priority. The MEA does remarkably well under the circumstances but the tendency to always

operate in a frantic mode is hurting its ability to effectively and thoughtfully pursue India's interests.

Mr Modi and Ms Swaraj must cut through bureaucratic resistance and ramp up IFS recruitment. They should focus particularly on inducting professional talent through lateral entry. The MEA must have a range of mid-career and senior specialists in its ranks including strategic analysts, economists, linguists and experts from other fields. The United States has done this for decades, enriching both government and academia.

HINDU, JUN 26, 2014

What India needs to do

SUHASINI HAIDAR

Bangladesh's government has reversed Indian public opinion by creating a favourable atmosphere. It is time India does the same

A LOST CHANCE:The biggest missed opportunity of the UPA government was to deliver the Land Border Agreement, first agreed to by Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1974. Picture shows the two Prime Ministers signing the treaty of friendship, cooperation and peace in 1972 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.—

Ten years ago, the results of such a survey would have sent shockwaves. After all, in 2003, Bangladesh was considered a dangerous terror hub for anti-India groups — it was the headquarters of the Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami (HuJI), the group that was responsible for gun-running and coordinating several attacks in India, a haven for the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and a training ground for ISI-backed groups. Bangladeshi forces exchanged fire with jawans from the Indian Border Security Force frequently. The image of the bodies of 16 jawans killed in Pyrdiwah in 2001, hanging from poles like animals and being carried by Bangladeshi villagers, was etched in every Indian's memory. Not to mention India's constant worry of Bangladeshi illegal immigrants, an estimated million-plus at the time, crowding the country's cities, wrecking the economy and straining resources. Yet in 2013, in a survey commissioned by *The Hindu* and conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), more Indians had a favourable opinion of Bangladesh than of any of the other countries named. According to CSDS, when asked which countries India should trust a "great deal" or "somewhat", 48 per cent chose Bangladesh, even ahead of India's old friend Russia (46 per cent).

Reasons for turnaround

There are several reasons for the turnaround in Indian public opinion. The first, of course, is the election of Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina as Prime Minister in 2009, which transformed relations from those of the hostile regime between 2001-2006 of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party's Begum Khaleda Zia, allied with the anti-India Jamaat-e-Islami. Within months of being elected, Prime Minister Hasina embarked on a crackdown of anti-India terror groups. She shut down camps and handed over more than 24 wanted militants to India. Ms. Hasina also ordered the prosecution of others who may have colluded. In several instances, like the sentencing of Paresh Barua along with 13 others including 2 former Bangladeshi ministers in January 2014, these efforts were

backed by court judgements. The 4,000 km-long India-Bangladesh border has been largely peaceful, with weekly border haats (markets) taking over from the once-regular flag meetings. Adding to the favourable impression was Bangladesh's own economic progress at 6 per cent, rivalling India, as well as improved human development indicators that bettered India. In 2013, for example, Bangladesh ranked higher than India on life expectancy, infant mortality rates, and the United Nation's Gender Inequality Index.

However, while Bangladesh has worked hard on bettering India's impressions, India's own standing with its neighbour has suffered. Every broken promise made by the UPA government has played havoc with India's image in the country. The failure of former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to deliver the Land Border Agreement (LBA), first agreed to by Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1974, must rank as the biggest missed opportunity here. While the Congress blamed the BJP for refusing to ratify the agreement in Parliament, despite assurances from former Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi, and former Leader of the Opposition Sushma Swaraj in meetings with Bangladeshi officials in February this year, the BJP held that the Congress simply hadn't made the issue enough of a priority to bring it before the House in time. It is only fitting then that Ms. Swaraj make some sort of a commitment on her visit to Bangladesh beginning June 25, to bring the LBA to its logical conclusion in Parliament at the earliest opportunity.

The UPA disappointed on other scores too — it failed to sign the Teesta river water settlement because of opposition from the West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, and blocked market access to Bangladeshi companies that former Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee had promised many years ago. Perhaps the biggest broken promise was contained in Mr. Mukherjee's own words when Ms Hasina visited Delhi in 2010. He said in an interview, "If you deliver on terror, India will deliver on every other promise."

Signs of disillusionment

Already, the signs of that disillusionment are visible in Bangladesh. The worry for India will always be a return to the period from 1975-1996, when the Army and the BNP-Jamaat turned public opinion against India despite its assistance in Bangladesh's birth. Textbooks were changed, history was rewritten, and Jamaat activists worked assiduously to Islamise the population while attacking all signs of Bangla culture that ties the country to India as "un-Islamic."

It was this atmosphere that allowed groups like HuJI and ULFA to make inroads in Bangladesh, along with a sense of ill-use by 'big brother' India. In the first worrying signs this time around, there has been a rise in criticism of India's actions in the past year. Of particular concern has been the reported increase in firing by the BSF against civilians who were allegedly trying to cross into India. In the past decade, Bangladeshi officials say, more than 1,000 civilians have been killed by the BSF at the border. The reported rejection by the Home Ministry of a proposal to give Bangladeshi senior citizens and children visa exemptions has also received widespread critical coverage. The Hasina government has been restrained in expressing any criticism, in part because of the support

India has given it, including during the January elections. But the opposition may get more vocal soon. Already Khaleda Zia and the Jamaat leadership are threatening another round of hartals and bandhs after Eid ul-Fitr in July-end. Bearing the brunt of that anger is often the minority Hindu community, which faced hundreds of targeted attacks. Dozens of temples were destroyed by Jamaat activists in 2013.

Ms. Swaraj's visit to Bangladesh at this juncture then carries an urgent responsibility: to assure Bangladeshis that India intends to keep the promises it has made, while being mindful of the ones that Bangladesh has kept. Small steps like extraditing wanted criminals to Bangladesh and increasing India's infrastructural commitments on ports and highways maybe a start. In the light of developments in Iraq, and the poor working conditions for labour in parts of West Asia, India and Bangladesh may discuss a coordinated approach to evacuate overseas workers, as well as a united front in dealing with Gulf countries that enforce strict laws on them. Ms. Swaraj has already shown her concerns on this issue when she coordinated meetings of MPs on the situation of overseas workers, even as the Ministry works its 24 hour-helpline to manage the fallout of the Iraq crisis.

In a sense, the light at the end of the tunnel for India-Bangladesh relations was switched on in November last year when Bangladesh connected its electric grid with India for the first time, importing 500MW of electricity, with India promising an additional 100 MW from the grid in Tripura. Soon, say officials, India hopes to draw power from its own plants in the remote north-east via transmission lines across Bangladesh, showing just how quickly the two countries can create easy interdependencies between them.

It is for India to now take the next step down that road with this visit of the External Affairs Minister, to ensure that the two countries can return to the trust and the friendship they shared during the birth of Bangladesh.suhasini.h@thehindu.co.in

Sushma Swaraj's visit to Bangladesh carries an urgent responsibility: to assure Bangladeshis that India intends to keep the promises it has made

JUDICIARY

HINDU, JUN 26, 2014

Borking Gopal Subramaniam

SANJAY HEGDE

When the Judiciary is in charge of its own appointments, something more substantial than a report based on innuendo is required before impugning a candidate's integrity

Gopal Subramaniam has been publically borked. Bork as a verb is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as U.S. political slang, meaning: "To defame or vilify (a person) systematically, esp. in the mass media, usually with the aim of preventing his or her appointment to public office; to obstruct or thwart (a person) in this way."

Robert Bork was Solicitor General of the United States under President Nixon. In 1973, when Nixon wanted to fire Archibald Cox, the Special Prosecutor in Watergate, Bork passed the necessary orders after the Attorney General and the Deputy Attorney General had declined to do so. He later explained that he took the decision as he felt constitutionally bound by Presidential directive. The consequences of this action and his other political positions came back to haunt him in 1987, when President Reagan nominated him to be judge of the U.S. Supreme Court, a move opposed by Democrats and some Republicans.

The proposed appointment had Senator Edward Kennedy memorably denouncing Bork's appointment from the Senate floor: "Robert Bork's America is a land in which women would be forced into back-alley abortions, blacks would sit at segregated lunch counters, rogue police could break down citizens' doors in midnight raids, schoolchildren could not be taught about evolution, writers and artists could be censored at the whim of the government, and the doors of the Federal courts would be shut on the fingers of millions of citizens for whom the judiciary is often the only protector of the individual rights that are the heart of our democracy..." Bork did not consider any of these lines to be true, but the attack was deadly effective. Bork's candidature failed on the Senate floor; 58 voted against his confirmation and 42 in favour of it. Six Republicans voted against his appointment.

Reason for opposition

Gopal Subramaniam did not deserve a Borking. He would have been an asset to the country as a Supreme Court judge. He was literally born and brought up in the Supreme Court as his father was one of the Court's earliest regular practitioners. Mr. Subramaniam and Rohinton Nariman were among the youngest persons to be designated as senior advocates by the Supreme Court. A lawyer highly regarded by the late Justice J.S. Verma, it was Mr. Subramaniam and his team's extraordinary effort which formed the basis of the Verma report which led to amendments to the rape law after the Delhi gang rape incident in Delhi in 2012. Mr. Subramaniam has served as Additional Solicitor General and Solicitor General for over eight years. He worked on Ajmal Kasab's appeal for a nominal fee of one rupee. Recently, acting as amicus curiae in safeguarding the

wealth of the Anantha Padmanabhaswamy temple, Mr. Subramaniam went out of his way in cleaning its sacred tank and spending nearly a crore from his own pocket. The Central Bureau of Investigation, which trusted him with cases of national importance, such as those of Ajmal Kasab and David Headley, has now unfairly chosen to weasel out by giving the recent events a colour which they did not originally possess.

Based on reports by the CBI and Intelligence Bureau, the government had returned the recommendation of the Supreme Court for reconsideration by the collegium. The IB report cited an old complaint against Mr. Subramaniam by two CBI officers in the 2G probe along with some references made about him in the Radia tapes. The report seemed to be procured on purpose — to be used as a convenient excuse to avoid an inconvenient appointment. It is no secret that the unstated reason for the government's opposition was that Mr. Subramaniam was the *amicus curiae* in the Sohrabuddin encounter case (Sohrabuddin Sheikh was prosecuted by the same CBI) and in other cases, where senior figures of the current government are allegedly complicit. The government probably apprehended a certain sub-conscious bias against it on Mr. Subramaniam's part.

The government is mistaken in its belief because even if appointed, Mr. Subramaniam would have recused himself in all these matters. However, Mr. Subramaniam's withdrawal of consent to be a Supreme Court judge has rendered the question moot. In a country where the Judiciary is in charge of its own appointments, something more substantial than an IB report based on innuendo and hearsay is required before impugning the integrity of the candidate and the appointment process.

During the hearings of the second constitution bench of the Advocates-on-Record Case which dealt with procedures for judicial appointments, Justice Kripal from the Supreme Court bench narrated an experience from the Delhi High Court. An IB report in the case of a prospective appointee mentioned that he was a drunkard. The appointment did not go through at that stage, but the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court knew that the report was not true. When enquiries were made, it turned out that the appointee drank only on occasion while his friends were habitual drinkers. He was nicknamed 'boozier' because of the company he kept, even though he stayed sober. IB sleuths who were charged with finding out more information about the man stumbled on this nickname and drew a damning conclusion. The person concerned was later appointed to the Delhi High Court in a subsequent batch of appointments. The injustice to the candidate was temporary in this case, but in Mr. Subramaniam's case the damage is permanent.

Toeing the line

This Borking makes the government look like it is seeking a "committed judiciary" in tune with its political philosophy and short-term objectives. Impartiality of a higher judiciary that is vetted and approved is unlikely to be universally accepted. India was ill-served in the past by Mohan Kumaramangalam's call of the early seventies. Four decades later, it is ill-served by Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad's subservience to his party interests. One must remember that the supersession controversy of 1973 had as its inarticulate major premise Indira Gandhi's desire not to have Justice K.S. Hegde

appointed as Chief Justice of India. She won the battle, but the damage caused served as the backdrop to the Emergency and the ADM Jabalpur case, which destroyed her as a democrat.

If engagements as counsel are likely to be seen as disqualifications for judicial office, lawyers of eminence who would have taken unpopular briefs professionally will no longer let their names go forward for consideration. After all it takes great financial sacrifice for a successful lawyer to accept judgeship for a limited period of time. The country will be the loser and not the individual if he is not appointed as a judge. Not very many years ago, before the collegium system was established, Ram Jethmalani had thundered, “There are two kinds of judges — those who know the law and those who know the law minister.” I hope and pray that those days are not coming back.

(Sanjay Hegde is a Supreme Court lawyer.)

If engagements as counsel are likely to be seen as disqualifications for judicial office, lawyers of eminence will no longer let their names go forward for consideration

LABOUR

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JUN 30, 2014

Modi govt eyes first labour overhaul in decades to create jobs

Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) has set in motion the first major revamp in decades of the archaic labour laws, part of a plan to revive the flagging economy, boost manufacturing and create millions of jobs.

Successive governments have agreed labour reform is critical to absorb 200 million Indians reaching working age over the next two decades, but fears of an ugly union-led backlash and partisan politics have prevented changes to free up labour markets.

Now, with the benefit of a single party majority in Lok Sabha for the first time in 30 years, laws that date back to just after the end of British rule are set for an overhaul. Officials at the labour ministry say this is a top priority in the government's first 100 days in office.

India has a forest of labour laws, including anachronisms such as providing spittoons in the work place, and are so complex that most firms choose to stay small.

In 2009, 84% of India's manufacturers employed fewer than 50 workers, compared to 25% in China, according to a study this year by consultancy firm McKinsey & Co.

The World Bank said in a 2014 report that India has one of the most rigid labour markets in the world and "although the regulations are meant to enhance the welfare of workers, they often have the opposite effect by encouraging firms to stay small and thus circumvent labour laws".

Business leaders hope Modi, who advocates smaller government and private enterprise, will be a liberaliser in the mould of Margaret Thatcher or Ronald Reagan. Perhaps the most important change, they say, is to rules making it hard to dismiss workers.

First up, though, to win public support, his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government is looking to make changes that benefit workers, three senior officials at the labour ministry said. Among the changes: making more workers eligible for minimum wages, increasing overtime hours and allowing women to do night shifts.

"We are trying to provide a hassle free environment that helps both workers and industry," a senior labour ministry official involved in the deliberations said. "It is a priority for us."

Next on the reform agenda will be the most sensitive issue of loosening strict hire and fire rules. Officials said they have begun preliminary talks with concerned groups about slowly implementing the changes.

"There is a definite push ... you will see more measures," said another official at the ministry who is privy to the discussions within the government.

Reforms key to manufacturing jobs

India's 20-year streak of fast economic expansion is often derided as "jobless growth" since the service sector-led model has been capital rather than labour-intensive.

India does not produce reliable, regular jobless data, but long-term surveys by the statistics department show the country only created 5 million manufacturing jobs between 2004/5 and 2011/12. In the same period some 33 million people left farms looking for better paid work. The majority were absorbed into low productivity and irregular work on construction sites.

Moreover, research suggests India needs 12 million new jobs every year to absorb the largest youth bulge the world has ever seen. It has fallen far behind that target.

Companies complain that current laws requiring rarely granted government permission for layoffs make it impossible to respond to business downturns, and blame the laws for the country's relatively small manufacturing sector.

Manufacturing contributes just 15 percent to India's nearly \$2 trillion economy. [New Delhi](#) says it wants to lift that share to 25 percent within a decade to help create 100 million jobs. Comparatively, manufacturing accounted for 45 percent of China's GDP in 2012.

"If business cycles are volatile, the ability to downsize and upsize should be freely available," said R. Shankar Raman, chief financial officer at Larsen & Toubro, one of India's biggest conglomerates.

In what is seen as a test for Modi's labour reform agenda and is intended to inspire other states, [Rajasthan](#) this month proposed amendments to the central law to allow firms in the state to lay off up to 300 workers without government permission. Currently, clearance is required to fire more than 100 workers and this is rarely granted.

Labour militancy declines

Labour unions cutting across party affiliations have opposed the state government's move and have asked Modi to intervene. The BJP's own union has called a meeting of its officials early next month to chalk out a strategy to protest what it said was a lack of consultation over the shake up in Rajasthan.

Since almost all the unions in India have political affiliations, their opposition to reforms has a risk of turning into a full-scale political agitation. But the risk that the reforms could also bring full-blown street protests similar to that seen in Thatcher's Britain are unlikely.

Labour militancy has declined in India, although sporadic violent protests like one at a Maruti Suzuki factory in 2012 which resulted in a death of a company official are enough to make policymakers wary on the pace of reform.

The labour ministry has asked for public comments by early July on the changes it plans to the Minimum Wages Act, which sets minimum wages for skilled and unskilled labours, and the Factory Act, which governs health and safety.

The proposed changes would standardize minimum wages nationally while increasing the frequency of salary revisions based on consumer prices. Although potentially inflationary, the move could bring millions of workers into the formal economy.

The ministry also wants to extend the amount of overtime workers can clock and scrap a 1948 rule that prohibits women working at night in factories, suggestions that have been welcomed by both labour groups and employers.

BUSINESS STANDARD, JUN 24, 2014

Labour ministry initiates steps for skill development

The labour ministry has formed a mentor council each for sectors such as automobiles and textile, to revamp various courses run by the NCVT

Somesh Jha

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government is pushing hard for enhancing skills of labour in various sectors to suit the changing needs of the economy — a promise Prime Minister Narendra Modi has quite often made in his speeches.

The [labour ministry](#) has formed a mentor council each for sectors such as automobiles and textile, to revamp various courses run by the National Council for [Vocational Training\(NCVT\)](#).

According to the ministry, the mentor councils will “suggest ways of scaling up training of trainers with quality and identify and suggest methods of improving on-the-job training and placement of various courses approved by NCVT”.

The council will have industry experts, academicians, representatives of industrial training institutes (ITIs) and professionals. The ministry will put in efforts to impart training according to the industry needs. More industry-driven courses that are run under the state council for vocational training (SCVT) will be brought under the NCVT for giving national recognition.

“It was recommended that ITIs and industry might enter into MoUs to conduct training programme to meet the specific manpower requirement of the industry with high employment potential specially designed courses with NCVT certification,” a ministry note stated.

Meanwhile, the labour ministry will hold a meeting on Friday to strategise the skill upgradation for workers in the unorganised sector, particularly the construction sector, as a part of its [National Employment Policy](#) (NEP).

The NEP aims to “enrich skill base and productivity level in non-farm sectors such as construction”. For this, the ministry will assess the method — recognition of prior learning (RPL) for the workers in the construction sector — successfully adopted in countries such as Australia and France.

RPL is a process of gaining knowledge and skills outside the formal learning processes. It is “transforming informal skills into formal skills,” according to the ministry. It recognises a particular skill and sets the competency level to certify if the person meets some of the specified criteria.

According to a background note prepared by the ministry, the share of employment in construction sector has almost doubled in India from 5.6 per cent in 2004-05 to 11.6 per cent in 2011-12.

LIBRARIES

TIMES OF INDIA, JUN 27, 2014

Library turns over new leaf, digitizes 200-year-old books

CHENNAI: The heritage building of the Madras Sanskrit College may be surrounded by new structures but within the concrete walls of the tall buildings are treasures more than 200 years old. The Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute has hundreds of rare books and palm-leaf manuscripts in Sanskrit with English translations. The institute is now turning over a new leaf and is digitising its books and manuscripts dating back 200 years.

"The treasure trove in our institute will soon be online. We have identified several Sanskrit books that are 200 years old and which are not available in the market any more. We have outsourced the digitisation job to a private company, which has brought its equipment to set up a small facility on the campus," said institute director V Kameswari.

The staff give 50 books at a time for digitisation and get it back the same day. "We do not allow our books and manuscripts to be taken out. That is why we refused an offer from Google to do the digitisation for free," said institute deputy director K S Balasubramanian. "Google wanted to take all the books and manuscripts to the US for a month, digitise them and return them but we refused and started digitisation on the college campus itself."

But the institute is short of funds to carry out research on the palm-leaf manuscripts that have details of various branches of science. "The institute needs funds to decode the details in the manuscripts. There are people ready to conduct research but lack of funds prevents us from undertaking the job," said Kameswari.

The institute is busy with the release of the Sanskrit grammarian Pathanjali's work by scholar P S Subramanian. There are 14 volumes of the work and 12 volumes have been released. The institute hopes to release the other two volumes with the help of Subramanian's family, said Balasubramanian.

The institute, one of the three involved in Sanskrit research in the country, has been surviving on private donations. Without enough resources, the management is unable to pay the faculty the benefits of the sixth pay commission.

The institute was started as a private non-profit organisation in 1944 in memory of Kuppuswami Sastri, a renowned Sanskrit scholar. It has a library with books on astronomy, architecture, fine arts, mathematics, Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads and various branches of science.

TIMES OF INDIA, JUN 25, 2014

Libraries fail to attract youngsters

[Manmohan Singh,](#)

Libraries, once considered indispensable by those seeking knowledge, are facing an uncertain future in this fast-paced internet age. And this also applies to the seven odd libraries in Ranchi. Once overflowing with patrons, these libraries are now trying all out to attract youngsters back to the reading tables. But the battle is getting tougher every passing day. The International Library (formerly British Council Library), which had more than 2,000 members a few years back, has to contend with less than half that number today. "Most youngsters who come to us are mostly interested in getting study material for competitive examinations. Rarely do we get requests for classic novels or other casual reading material. Hence, we are also forced to buy study material to retain our members," librarian Laxman Lal said.

Union Club Library vice-president Subir Lahiri, on the other hand, blames the academic and professional pressure on youngsters these days for their lack of time for leisure reading. "Being amongst the oldest libraries in the country, we have a good collection of books, including some rare ones. But in the past 10 years, we have witnessed a steady decline in the number of youngsters visiting the library. Apart from a lack of time because of increased workload and studies, the proliferation of internet and ebook readers has also made the situation worse," Lahiri said.

The youngsters, however, had a different story to tell. And they didn't mince their words. "I'm an avid reader, but prefer to buy my own books rather than visit a library. Almost all libraries in the city are in a state of decay; they rarely stock new books and even when they do, they do it pretty late. So going there is a futile exercise," said Vanshika Agarwal, a student.

The easy availability of ebook readers is also prompting readers to buy digital editions rather than rushing to a library. "I find reading an ebook more convenient, as it just needs to be downloaded. Then again, when I can download and store thousands of ebooks and create my own digital collection, why waste time visiting a conventional library," said Sanket Mishra, a young entrepreneur.

Jharkhand Information and Library Association secretary Shiv Prakash, however, blames the dismal state of affairs on government apathy. "The union government is providing ample funds to all libraries in the city to help them stock their shelves with latest books. But the local administration is not doing much. A case in point is the WiFi connectivity on the State Library premises. But none of the nodes are working condition because of a lack of maintenance. This kind of mismanagement is costing us readers, but I hope things will improve, as the internet can be a source of reference, not research," Prakash said.

POLICE

ASIAN AGE, JUN 25, 2014

33% quota for women in Gujarat police force

Gujarat CM Anandiben Patel on Tuesday announced 33 per cent reservation for women in the police force.

“It is necessary to empower women for their uplift in the society. My government has decided to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in new recruitment in the police force. It will be implemented in all cadres,” Ms Patel, the state’s first woman chief minister, said.

Ms Patel made the announcement during an interaction with the media after attending the passing out parade at Gujarat Police Academy. “Women have served in every position in the police force. When a mother has prepared herself to serve the society, state and the country, we have to provide them special training and special space,” she said.

“Gujarat will be the first state in India to implement 33 per cent reservation for women in the police force,” state’s DGP P.C. Thakur said. “In Maharashtra... they account for 10 per cent of the total strength of the police which is highest in country,” Mr Thakur said, adding women constitute 4 to 5 per cent of Gujarat’s police force now.

DECCAN HERALD, JUN 27, 2014

Model to follow

The Gujarat government has taken a good decision to reserve 33 per cent of the posts in the state police force for women.

It would be cynical to view it as an attempt by a newly-appointed woman chief minister to create a personal constituency of support for herself. Giving better representation to women in the uniformed forces, including the police, has received much attention in recent years, but the idea needs to be more actively followed up. The national average of representation is only less than 6 per cent, with about 95,000 women among 17 lakh police personnel in the country. Some states have only 1-2 per cent women in the forces. Even the rule that only women police personnel should arrest women is sometimes difficult to implement. The image and effectiveness of the police will only improve with more women in it.

It is necessary that any organisation that interacts and deals with people should be representative of society. Women, minorities, other social classes and people from different regions should be fairly represented in these bodies to give them more legitimacy and acceptance. This is more so in the case of law enforcement bodies. The wrong idea that policing is a male job is still strong. This is perhaps because it is still associated with physical strength. Policing actually calls for other and better qualities which women are not lacking in. They have also proved themselves to be capable of meeting any challenge with their performance in all areas, including policing. Greater

representation for women can make the police forces more efficient and even more human.

It is also wrong to think that there should be more women in the police because crimes against women are increasing. Women in the police forces should be complete police personnel equipped to meet all professional situations and needs. Selection of women in good numbers will also give employment opportunities to many and contribute to their greater empowerment.

Other states should also follow the example being set by Gujarat and open the doors of police forces wider for women. The performance of states in this respect is very uneven. States like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have better representation than the national average. Bihar has a low representation but has decided to set a 35 per cent quota for women in fresh recruitments. Ample representation will be achieved only over a period of time but the efforts should start now.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JUN 25, 2014

Modi's agenda for governance can help him attain his ambitious goals

Hardeep S Puri

Two weeks constitute only 1.12% of a five-year mandate and provide bare breathing time in the life of a new government, especially in a country facing multiple crises. The two weeks after the swearing-in to the President's address outline the contours of the [Narendra Modi](#) government's vision of India and provide sufficient annotation and direction of the shape of things to come.

The Modi victory has raised expectations that are truly frightening. The financing, targeting and delivery of public goods have to be organised within the same structure and system whose mismanagement was the cause of the Congress' decimation in the polls. The instruments available to the State, it could be also argued at a cynical level, could be characterised as being less than optimally efficient.

Writing in Hindustan Times (Respond to his clarion call, By Invitation, May 22), I urged India to respond to Modi's clarion call. I wrote then that Modi's victory is about being bold, sagacious and exuding confidence. While the new government's priority would naturally be the revitalisation of the economy, Modi symbolises a more inclusive India and that his pledge to make every Indian a part of a glorious and progressive India is a promise. I had gone on to say that the 21st century belongs to India, our foreign policy will be robust, strategic and proactive, not inert and defensive. The first two weeks of the Modi government establish this beyond any doubt. The invitation to heads of State/government of Saarc to the swearing-in ceremony and other initiatives currently in the pipeline show both sense of purpose and proactive functioning.

The key concepts that are beginning to take shape involve a revisioning of India — naveen swapan ek mahan Bharat ka. This will necessarily involve repairing what is degraded and broken — punar nirman, creating anew — shrusti karan and reinvention/rebirth — punar jeevan of a nation and its people.

An India that takes everyone forward and leaves no one behind has to be economically prosperous, socially inclusive and cohesive, politically democratic and integrated. No nation can achieve this unless it is at peace with itself and its immediate neighbours.

The targets being set are not unrealistic. On poverty, the target no longer is 'alleviation' but 'eradication'. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) being negotiated in the United Nations reinforce this. Specifically, the proposals call for eradicating extreme poverty by 2030 by bringing the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day to zero.

Interestingly, the SDGs cover most of what is being envisioned in India, assuring universal access to essential quality services such as health, education, energy, water,

housing and sanitation. The assertion that, by the time India completes 75 years of its Independence, every family will have a pucca house with water connection, toilet facilities and 24x7 electricity may actually end up setting a new benchmark for the SDGs to emulate.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls everywhere is another area where the new government's pronouncements and commitments will draw applause globally. Thirty-three per cent reservation in Parliament and the legislative assemblies, the proposed mass campaign on the 'beti bachao, beti padhao' and zero tolerance for violence against women and the strengthening of the criminal justice system for its effective implementation will hopefully curb the savage bestiality for which India is acquiring a new notoriety.

Programmes of social inclusion and integration, to produce a truly caring society, to which the prime minister has committed his government, will require hard decisions. On that alone will rest the aspirations of 1.25 billion Indians.

The need to revive manufacturing to kickstart the economy, large public spending and an environment where millions of decent jobs are created is well understood. This will have to be done in agriculture, in green manufacturing, in services, the knowledge economy and in technology to keep up with the expectations of young men and women joining the job market.

What is noteworthy is that we are seeking to create a caring society where the poor, weak, vulnerable and marginalised are protected, where all have effective connectivity — roads, rail, air, ICT, new media and the country is knit into one Bharat as never before.

The government will need the cooperation of the private sector and civil society to reform the country's scientific, innovative and technological temper and spirit. The government alone cannot find key solutions to our major problems in areas like water desalination, purification, harvesting and renewable, clean and efficient energy and food security. The new emphasis on trade, 43% of our GDP, will need to be combined with a fresh look at FDI, technology, and IPR generation.

Good, efficient and corruption-free government has to be transparent and accountable. Access to justice and speedy dispensation of justice has to be part of the new culture that needs to be built around the rule of law.

The prime minister's call for development to become a national obsession and a mass movement will require comprehensive, focused and sustained follow-up.

The actualisation of this vision will converge with the SDGs by 2030 in the world's largest, most populous and heterogeneous democracy. The new government will need to combine strategic thinking and direction, commitment to clean and good governance, human rights and public service with solution-oriented policies, measures and a multi-

stakeholder approach. A new definition and culture of citizenship will need to be propagated. It has got off to a fantastic start.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JUN 24, 2014

Home ministry cleans up, destroys 1.5 lakh files

On the direction of Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#), the Union home ministry is on a cleanliness drive and, in less than a month, has destroyed nearly 1.5 lakh files that had gathered dust for years.

While going through the steel almirahs of North Block, officials also found some interesting files which gave an insight to some historic moments.

One of these files was about the presidential sanction given to pay India's first Governor General Lord Mountbatten a princely sum of Rs. 64,000 as TA/DA allowance for moving back to his country.

In today's time, the amount will be equivalent to several crores of rupees, a ministry official said.

Another interesting snippet that came out was that after India's first President Rajendra Prasad refused to take any pension, it was eventually sent to the government's calamity fund.

Even the salary of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri was sent to the calamity fund after he refused it, the files showed.

Another file has details about the Cabinet meeting that was called before the death of Mahatma Gandhi was announced, an official said.

Asked if these files of historic value were saved or junked, an official expressed ignorance.

"It was only after the Prime Minister himself directed a clean-up and senior officials said so that this clean-up drive was undertaken," an official said.

Many ministries have junked old files and broken furniture that had piled up over the years.

The files are first shredded before being given out as junk.

According to the procedure, the files are divided into three categories. 'A' category is for files which are five years old. Category 'B' is for files that are 10-15 years old.

Category 'C' usually deals with files that are older than 15 years. Files of historic importance are to be sent to National Archives of India.

According to officials, though directives say that files have to be reviewed every six months and disposed of, this is hardly done.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, JUN 24, 2014

Intel bureau clearance mandatory for appointing private person as OSD

SUMMARYAn Intelligence Bureau clearance is not needed in case of a government official being appointed as OSD to a minister, according to the directive

The Central government has made the Intelligence Bureau's clearance mandatory for appointment of a private person as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to a minister.

In a directive, the department of personnel and training (DoPT) has asked ministries to send a proposal including approval from the concerned minister, willingness of the person to be appointed as OSD and educational qualification certificates (attested by an officer not below the level of under-secretary) to it.

Besides, it has been made mandatory to send to the DoPT the biodata or earlier service details of the candidate duly attested by the minister concerned, post creation details with the approval of DoPT and the ministry of finance, IB report and police report on verification of character and antecedents for processing requests for appointment of private person as OSD, it said.

An Intelligence Bureau (IB) clearance is not needed in case of a government official being appointed as OSD to a minister, according to the directive.

As per procedure, the final appointment of OSD will be made after the approval of Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC).

In a related development, the new government has asked all its ministers not to appoint officials who had served in key positions in the erstwhile UPA government as former ministers' personal staff.

RAILWAYS

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JUN 26, 2014

Managing the Railways: Canny business, uncanny populism

The tendency to give fiscal rectitude a pause runs strong in India, especially for a new government. The Indian Railways, over the past few years, have had to deal with precarious finances and political one-upmanship. The [Narendra](#) Modi-led government first announced a 14.2% across-the-board hike in train fares. The howls of protest that followed, however, forced a roll-back on second-class suburban travel up to 80 km. Admittedly, the new government has not inherited a winning hand. The expenses are set to shoot up by around `17,000 crore while earnings are expected to just about keep pace.

According to the interim budget presented in February, the railways' total expenses are projected to grow at 13.2% this year, while earnings would expand at 14.4%. The growth in earnings is predicated on the fare hikes that were factored in the interim budget. The railways' operating ratio — the rupees spent to earn every extra `100 — is now at 89.8 in 2014-15 after deteriorating to 95 in 2011-12. Eventually, the top line could have a significant upside: The railways are targeting nearly 13% growth in freight earnings and with the freedom to change haulage rates throughout the year, it might pull a few rabbits out of the hat if the economy picks up steam.

The partial rollback also points to the inherent tension between populism and reform that the government will have to deal with as there are strong constituencies in the establishment that back both positions. Soaring food prices have pushed up the inflation rate, compounding worries for the new government weeks before it presents the budget. The NDA rode to a landslide victory in the polls, but faces the challenge to deliver quickly on its electoral promises to cool inflation and revive the economy. The government needs to spin jobs for tens of millions of restive hopefuls while the elbow room in the treasury remains limited in the backdrop of high inflation and borrowing rates. For a behemoth like the Indian Railways, this would imply that the government should no longer baulk at taking the next logical leap of corporatising large chunks of the network. And also not remain content in seeking joint ventures at the fringes. Plans to allow FDI in high-speed trains and rail cargo passageways, even for those that are currently operated through public-private-partnership programmes, are long overdue, given the capital required to expand and modernise the network. The government, thus, will have to display dexterity to accomplish a marriage of canny entrepreneurship with uncanny populism.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JUN 30, 2014

Why rail minister can't go slow in fight against corruption

[Subir Roy](#)

After a long time the country appears to have got an effective railway minister in DV Sadananda Gowda. He has come with a positive reputation and lived up to it with a

quick decision to hike passenger fare and freight rates as also his initial comments on the task ahead and how he wishes to fulfil it.

His key problem, though, is that he has not identified one effective weapon he could have had in his armoury. This is really not his fault but that of his party and the system that it has chosen to belong to. So at the end of the day Gowda may be able to do just a little despite having almost everything going for him.

Gowda, known for his clean image, briefly became chief minister of [Karnataka](#) when BS Yeddyurappa, the first BJP chief minister in the south, had to resign following the Karnataka lokayukta moving against him. One of Gowda's key acts as chief minister was to introduce the Sakala scheme, which promised time-bound delivery of government services. But Gowda's tenure as chief minister was shortlived as Yeddyurappa was able to get the national leadership of the BJP to oust him as he was not doing the bidding of the discredited former chief minister.

The clear-headed efficiency that Gowda may bring to his job is apparent from his sense of priorities. His first concerns are safety, security and service and then, only then, speed. This rather downgrades the pet project of the BJP — a high-speed rail network — though he has separately plugged for it in line with the party's thinking. My guess is that by the time he gets a handle on the monumental threesome, it will be time to go to polls again.

In his first weeks in office, the railway minister has also done one right thing and expressed one positive thought. He has had a meeting with the iconic E Sreedharan, who has delivered the Konkan Railway and Delhi Metro. If Sreedharan were younger and put in charge of the special purpose vehicle for bringing in the high-speed network then it would in all probability have taken off speedily. The issue of funding could also be resolved as Gowda appears to be very open to ideas of public-private partnership and foreign direct investment.

Global high-speed railway equipment manufacturers will be happy to take a stake in the project to secure large orders. Equity via the FDI route for such a long-gestation project will be difficult to come by but long-term concessional finance, which will also serve the purpose, can come from development agencies like the Japanese one already engaged with the dedicated freight corridor.

But there is one problem in all this. If Sreedharan starts a massive operation to create the high-speed network he will invariably poach some of the most capable railway officials from the railways proper. Now the supply of these is not just finite but fairly limited. This will denude the parent of the best skills currently available with it and amount to a setback. This is particularly so because the recent spate of accidents, some through fires on running trains, indicates the organisation is in a state of crisis. At such times, if you want to dramatically turn things around, you need all capable hands on deck.

Gowda has also correctly highlighted the critical state of railway finances and pondered how they will fund all the investments needed for the projects already announced and launched. His observation that at current rates of funding, some of these projects will take 30-50 years to complete is telling.

The one weapon he has availed of, which was studiously sidestepped by most of his predecessors, raising passenger fares, will not be enough. But if fares still have some leeway, the case of freight is different. Raising these rates significantly (that's where the big money is) will be counterproductive, leading to further surrender of market share to road transport.

Since budgetary support will be severely limited where does Gowda go from here? Unfortunately, he has chosen not to dwell on one major way of making ends meet — by tackling head on the issue of corruption. It is as layered as it is endemic in the railways. A recent study available to the railways points out that in three years the railways spent on repair and maintenance of capital assets as much as it takes to acquire them in the first place.

Corruption in tendering for repair and maintenance, and a lot else, is entrenched. Gowda has lamented that no more than `25,000-30,000 crore is available yearly as investible surplus to the railways. If by addressing the corruption in tendering the railways can save a few thousand crores a year, that will be a significant additionality.

But there may be a reason why a practical politician like Gowda is not banking much on cutting down corruption. That is not a key agenda of the BJP, as it is of the Aam Aadmi Party. The BJP wants to get things done and not acquire a corrupt image like the Congress. It will take pains to ensure this and not allow entrenched negative practices to get in its way and certainly distance itself from those party men who come under a cloud.

How significant corruption is in the railways can be gauged from the fact that fires in running trains have spread quickly, turning them into major accidents with high fatalities, because the railways' declared policy of using flame-retardant material for passenger coaches did not deliver. If the enquiry reports finally bear this out then it will point to corruption, compromising the tendering process for material used in a unit like the Integral Coach Factory in Perambur.

So the railways will probably run a bit better but not overmuch so and in significant ways it will be business as usual.

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The views expressed by the author are personal