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BACKWARD CLASSES

INDIAN EXPRESS, JUN 24, 2015

‘Converted’ Muslims can get backward class benefits: HC

The HC also directed the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission (TNPSC) to treat the petitioner, Ayesha, as a backward class Muslim candidate and consider her for the post of typist, she had applied for earlier.

The court came to the rescue of Ayesha after she was denied a government job, which she had applied for in 2014.

[Arun Janardhanan](#)

Making the argument that caste mark continues even after conversion, though the degree may be less in Islam, the Madras High Court has ordered that a Hindu backward class (BC) person, who embraces Islam, shall be considered as backward class Muslim. The court delivered the verdict on a petition filed by R Ayesha, a backward Hindu by birth, who embraced Islam.

The HC also directed the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission (TNPSC) to treat the petitioner, Ayesha, as a backward class Muslim candidate and consider her for the post of typist, she had applied for earlier.

The court came to the rescue of Ayesha after she was denied a government job, which she had applied for in 2014. Ayesha, a Hindu by birth, embraced Islam in 2005 and also obtained a community certificate of Muslim Labbai community, a recognised BC community in Islam as per a 1994 government order.

According to her petition, she wrote the examination for “junior assistant/typist posts” in December 2014 and scored 153 marks. Later her application was rejected on the ground that she was not eligible for the post as she was not a Muslim by birth, forcing her to move a petition in the Madras HC.

TNPSC said Ayesha could have applied only under “others” category where the upper age limit was 30 years. She was aged 32 years, and thus not eligible.

Her counsel, citing a previous order from Justice D Hariparathaman, who heard the case, argued the woman would be eligible if she is considered as a BC Muslim, and not in open category. The court, citing other judgments, directed TNPSC to treat Ayesha as a BC Muslim and accept her application.

BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, JUN 24, 2015

Narendra Modi led Cabinet nod to proposal for India to join AIIB likely today

The Union cabinet is likely to give a formal approval to a proposal on Wednesday for India to join the China-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), in which it will be the second largest shareholder.

By: [Prasanta Sahu](#)

The Union cabinet is likely to give a formal approval to a proposal on Wednesday for India to join the China-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), in which it will be the second largest shareholder. The cabinet approval would come just days ahead of an agreement signing ceremony in Beijing on June 29 for the new regional bank's formation.

As per the shareholding worked out among 57 prospective founding member countries, based on gross domestic product (GDP) and purchasing power parity (PPP), India would be the second largest shareholder with around 8%, after China's 25%, in AIIB, sources said.

India's capital share would be around \$8 billion in the \$100 billion regional multilateral lender, seen as a competitor to another established lender in the region, the Asian Development Bank (ADB). As the paid-in ratio of the capital would be 20%, India would contribute \$1.6 billion (around R10,000 crore) over a period of five years, or R2,000 crore a year. The government would seek a supplementary demand for grants for R2,000 crore for its share of capital contribution for this year.

"India would immensely benefit after AIIB starts lending to big ticket infrastructure projects (rail, road, etc.) in the region," one source said. India, which does not share the best of relations with China, did not want to miss the bus when such a big financial institution for infrastructure development was being set up. Also, given the funding limitations of the World Bank and the ADB, which usually provide around \$2 billion

annually, it made sense for India to tap the new sources of funding for its massive infrastructure development requirement.

India's infrastructure investment requirement was pegged at \$1 trillion in five years through 2017. Joining AIIB would enable India to access resources for the financing of national and cross-border infrastructure projects from this bank. It is expected to start operations by end-2105.

Analysts expect China, which will have veto power in AIIB — as decision-making requires at least 75% of the votes — to significantly enhance its influence in the region through the new bank.

Asia agenda

Under the shareholding worked out among 57 prospective founding member countries, based on GDP and PPP, India would be the second largest shareholder with around 8%, after China's 25%, in AIIB.

India would contribute R10,000 crore over a period of five years, or R2,000 crore a year.

CIVIL SERVICE

HINDU, JUN 25, 2015

Foreign Service must remain elitist

T.P.SREENIVASAN

As the Indian Foreign Service is already a shadow of its former self, India should not fritter away its strengths by diluting its specialised and professional character

carefully chosen: “The aptitude of the candidates to the IFS should be ascertained before their selection.” File photo shows Indian Foreign Service probationers call on President R. Venkataraman at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi in 1990.

Whether at the time of uncertainty over foreign policy before the Lok Sabha elections, or after Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s reinvigoration of foreign policy, foreign service reforms have focussed on expansion, lateral entry of officers and general dilution of the service’s elitist character. But no attention is given to the fact that the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) is already a shadow of its former self, and does not appeal to civil service aspirants. Most of those who join the IFS are those who did not qualify for the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). If IFS has to perform effectively, its elitism should be preserved, its attractiveness enhanced, and it should be brought to the centre of international relations as it was originally intended to be.

Partners in foreign policy

Nobody disputes the academic Amitabh Mattoo’s argument that “India’s foreign policy must be seen as a shared partnership across departments within the government of India, and academia and think tanks outside the traditional corridors of power” (“A new foreign policy agenda”, *The Hindu*, April 8, 2014). But the answer is not to merge the various partners while destroying the identity of each, but to allow each of them to develop in their own spheres and provide inputs to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). No one seems to suggest that the IAS and Indian Police Service should be expanded through lateral entry to improve their performance. The logic of this argument for the IFS seems to defy the need to preserve a specialised and professional foreign service. IFS, it should be noted, is no less professional or specialised than the other services.

Foreign policy is framed by various departments of the government, academia, think tanks and the media. They should all have their own defined roles in drafting foreign policy and must remain independent of each other. The MEA should not absorb them into a monolithic institution that has no diversity. Think tanks and the media should shape foreign policy from outside rather than from within the government. Is the right remedy to recruit media experts into the IFS in order to get their inputs on foreign policy? Would they fit into the bureaucratic milieu with its hierarchical and political constraints?

The usual lament is that the IFS is smaller (900 officers) than Chinese (4,000) and American (20,000) diplomatic services. This number is insufficient to meet the requirements of our 120 missions and 49 consulates. It is a fact that India started off with more missions than it could manage. It is not easy or politically correct to close down missions once they have begun; India, therefore, maintains them with a skeletal staff in marginal posts. Its larger missions are well-endowed and it does not need to be envious of bigger missions maintained by the U.S. or China. The right mix of need and affordability must determine the numbers. The information revolution should lead to a reduction, rather than an increase, in the number of missions abroad. The size of the service should not by itself detract from the efficiency of diplomacy.

Those who argue for expansion and lateral entry seem unaware of the fact that in most of India's important missions, the IFS is in a minority, as it is staffed by officers of other Ministries. Many Ministries have preserved positions in the name of specialisation, but most of them are IAS officers, who may have been recruited specifically for assignments abroad. They may not even have gained experience in the concerned Ministries before being posted abroad. When there is such a practice, there should be no need to induct them into the foreign service itself. Moreover, Ministries such as Commerce, Finance, Industry, Environment, Science and Technology, Atomic Energy, Space and the Cabinet Secretariat have officers who specialise in various international negotiations. The missions are merely asked to service these delegations; even the heads of mission receive only a courtesy call and a cursory report. These officers function, in effect, as diplomats, and they should be added to the strength of the IFS when functional requirements are taken into account. In other words, we have more diplomats in action internationally than the strength of the IFS indicates.

If officers who claim their seniority on the basis of their services in totally unrelated areas enter the IFS laterally, this would only dilute the service's quality. Past experience has shown that such entrants do not leave the service after a term or two, but remain to claim higher positions, spending their whole careers in diplomacy. If there is a need to induct officers from outside, the procedures available should be used rather than induct those who had once spurned the IFS. The expectations of advancement in the IFS should not be belied.

The MEA has already begun to recruit more officers every year, and that is the only way that such a specialised service should be expanded. If necessary, there are retired officers with proven ability, to fill the gaps without claiming high positions and salaries.

Reforms needed

The suggestion here is not that reform of the diplomatic service is unnecessary. First, it should be made more attractive so that the best candidates are chosen. Like Jawaharlal Nehru did, the aptitude and readiness of the selected candidates should be ascertained

before they are chosen. It is patently wrong to take in officers who qualify without English proficiency. No amount of language training after entry into the service would equip them for the rigours of the work abroad. The recruitment of a large number of doctors and engineers is by no means negative, particularly in the context of the growth of technology. Some of India's best diplomats have come from the medical profession. But we should not lose sight of the recent trend in management to deploy more graduates of social sciences and humanities. Training should be constantly revamped to equip officers to deal with different regions.

The present practice of posting on an *ad hoc* basis should cease. Officers should develop expertise in countries and regions. Multilateral postings should not be meant for rotational blessings, but for those who have the talent and experience. Instead of rotating officers so that they retire comfortably, we should give them other incentives to stay in tough assignments. Those in difficult places must be compensated financially. Postings, an art at present, should be made a science, with a clear criteria. There should be no vagaries of political influence or acceptability.

The real shortage of officers is not in missions abroad, but at the headquarters. Many heads of divisions cover whole continents with very little support. Temporary deputation of officers from various disciplines can strengthen the headquarters till we have a sufficient number of IFS officers to return. The style of the present Prime Minister seems to be to rely on a small number of people to work intensively on issues; this method could be developed into a system.

The role and relevance of the policy planning and historical divisions are often exaggerated. Policy planning cannot be done in a vacuum; it is the territorial divisions which can help formulate policy. The historical division should be a service unit, helping policymakers, as it is functioning right now. Nothing prevents the Ministry from drawing on the experience and wisdom of people from other fields, without absorbing them into the Ministry.

Many youngsters who aspire to the IFS have begun to believe that it really does not call the shots in foreign policymaking, as decision-making has passed on to the technical Ministries. They believe that the MEA has been reduced to a post office. Unless this impression is removed by concrete action, real talent cannot be attracted to the Videsh Bhawan. Foreign services are elitist in most countries, and India should not fritter away its strengths by diluting its specialised and professional character.

(T.P. Sreenivasan is an IFS officer of the 1967 batch. He is former Ambassador of India and Governor for India of the IAEA.)

Those who argue for expansion and lateral entry seem unaware of the fact that in most of India's important missions, the IFS is in a minority

DEFENCE, NATIONAL

STATESMAN, JUN 29, 2015

5-star General

Ashok Kapur

A handful of retired Generals keep talking about it; some Air Marshals and Admirals have also joined the discourse. Fortunately for the country, the discussions are confined mostly to retired officers. The tempo picks up whenever the political executive is perceived as weak and indecisive. The participants are in large measure a disgruntled lot; some of them have shifted their headquarters to media studios after retirement.

No one has ever been able to define the concept of a five-star General. It has vaguely been described as a newly-created post, a source of 'single-point advice' to the Government on defence matters. At present, the chiefs of the three wings of the armed forces are termed as 'four-star' soldiers who have been equated with the Union Cabinet Secretary in terms of pay. Incidentally, there is no cap on their perquisites. In theory, they head the Directorates under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defence, the last bastion of civilian control. It is quite another matter that this authority is tenuous.

The Defence Ministry is headed by the Defence Secretary - a civilian and counterpart of the Permanent Secretary in other established democracies the world over, such as UK. The Permanent Secretary reports to the Defence Minister, the elected head of the Ministry. This arrangement ensures civilian control of the armed forces, a basic postulate of Constitutional democracy. The controlling departments of the Government, headed by elected ministers, ensure the accountability of the directorates, including the Forces' directorates to Parliament.

That the norm is fundamental to democratic governance is reinforced by the fact that the first Constitutional Review Commission in independent India, headed by a distinguished former Chief Justice, had recently reminded the Government about it. Incidentally, the mandate of the Commission was not related to control over the armed forces, but to further strengthen Constitutional governance. It is significant that it felt obliged to do so. Reverting to the hypothesis of 'single-point advice', it has no basis in modern military strategy. The advent of weapons of mass destruction and the lurking danger of a nuclear bomb that could wipe out cities if not countries within minutes lends a catastrophic dimension to the concept of war. The deadly hypothesis of a 'single-point advice' would necessarily imply that at the first sign of tension, the country could, in advance involve all the three military wings in combat, including the air force.

The fingerprint of the hypothesis is the creation of the post of Defence Supremo, a five-star General who would report directly to the Prime Minister. At present, the three Chiefs - all four-star - report to the Ministry even if nominally. A General reporting directly to the Prime Minister would, in effect, be reporting to no one. Of course, the task of ushering a military, or a para-military state would thereby become easier.

A Defence Supremo would have all the three wings reporting to him. Nothing could then possibly stop him from committing all the three wings in the event of war. Military strategy defines war as continuation of politics by other means. It logically follows that the political executive - the Cabinet - must at all times remain in control. To surrender such authority to a military Supremo would not only be disastrous from the point of view of democracy, but strategically unsound as well.

General von Clausewitz, the 19th century Prussian thinker, is universally acknowledged as the world's foremost military strategist. According to him, the deployment of various forces in times of war depends on the overall political objective. It may or may not warrant the deployment of all the three wings. This would be possible only if the three wings remain independently under civilian control. If a 'single-point' Supremo were to commit all the three wings, the army, air force and navy would be totally out of civilian control.

Clausewitz has further argued that even if a single military wing is deployed - say, the army - it may not be required to deploy it in all theatres of action. The political objective may vary from theatre to theatre. The civilian executive may formulate different objectives for various theatres, and then pass them on to commanders directly. The overall control and direction of war must, however, always remain with the civilian executive.

All the three military wings were involved in the Second World War, seventy years ago. Since then, there have been short-duration conflicts, involving selective deployment of either the army or the navy. With the development of atomic and nuclear weapons, the concept of all-out war has been increasingly junked. This is borne out by experience of several conflicts - the Arab-Israeli wars, the confrontation in Cuba, the India-China conflict, the Indo-Pakistan conflicts, the Balkan wars, and more recently the annexation of Crimea.

Ever since the Second World War, the world has gradually realized that modern warfare would be catastrophic not only for the losers but also for the nominal winners. As a

British military strategist has put it, “There will be no winners or losers, only survivors.” Arguably, it is the only doctrine of the great Clausewitz that is outdated today. It is horrifying to imagine that war can any longer be an extension of modern politics.

This rethink has happened for two reasons. First, the development of modern weapons of mass destruction, post-Hiroshima. If just a bomb or two could destroy whole cities instantly, nuclear bombs can destroy not merely cities but nations as well. Thus, modern armies are increasingly viewed as shields and not as swords. Undeniably, they continue to be an indispensable supporting pillar of the edifice of the modern state - but only as an absolute last resort.

The second reason is connected to the first - the frightening advances in technology that seem to have turned conventional wisdom on its head. Policy once used to determine technology. Now, technology threatens to determine policy. Mass destruction can be ensured at the touch of a button. Modern technology no longer serves man, but is increasingly becoming its master. For the first time in history, man is on the threshold of losing control over himself. The nuclear button threatens to press itself.

Science has served notice. We cannot claim that we were not warned. Einstein’s dire warning should serve as a gospel for all governments - “I do not know with what weapons the third World War will be fought. But I can confidently say that the fourth World War will be fought with bows and arrows”.

Speculation over a Defence Supremo would have been dismissed as cocktail tittle-tattle but for the reported statement of the Defence Minister who appears to have jumped onto the military bandwagon. He has been quoted in the national media as saying that his Ministry is considering the creation of the post. The Defence Minister has been badly advised. A ‘five-star’ General could become a five-star luxury that could prove fatal to India’s democracy, perhaps even its existence.

HINDU, JUN 24, 2015

Indian Army chasing pipe dreams forever

RAHUL BEDI

Overambitious norms in Qualitative Requirements are largely responsible for the alarming equipment shortage that the forces face today

unrealistic goals: “It would appear that the Indian Army’s search for matchless and globally unavailable equipment triumphs over and over again.” Picture shows Indian Army tanks in the Republic Day parade in New Delhi in 2014.

The Indian Army recently dispatched a global Request for Information (RFI) for a multi-purpose Future Ready Combat Vehicle (FRCV), which has generated much mirth in military-industrial circles, for its sheer ridiculousness and operational folly.

The Army’s request is for an FRCV that will not only serve as a ‘medium’-sized main battle tank to replace the Army’s ageing fleet of licence-built Russian T-72s but also as a ‘light-tracked and wheeled tank’, built on the same platform. In layman terms, this is like asking for a Humvee and a Maruti 800 on the same platform. Hopefully, the document will be either withdrawn or amended before its July 31 deadline.

Surely, the Directorate General of Mechanised Forces at Army Headquarters, responsible for issuing the request, realises the irony and irrationality of drawing up such absurd general staff qualitative requirements (GSQRs), which are technologically impossible for any manufacturer to fulfil.

What is all the more surprising is that such QRs are formulated after extensive discussion, not only by the division concerned — in this case, the Mechanised Forces — but finally approved by the Army’s Deputy Chief (Planning & Systems), who is responsible for acquisitions. His office, as are those involved in formulating the requests and the subsequent proposals, or tenders, is purportedly staffed by competent scientific and technical advisers.

Senior Army officers concede that such over-ambitious and flawed requests for information, leading to equally over-stretched, faulty and diluted tenders, are largely responsible for the alarming equipment shortage that the forces face today. The shortfall includes small arms, howitzers, assorted helicopters, armour with night-fighting capacity, air defence capability and varied ordnance, among other things. Although Army Headquarters blames the hidebound and ill-informed Ministry of Defence (MoD) bureaucrats for this, it also has largely itself to blame for the glaring deficiencies.

‘Blinkered views’

“The whole process is carried out with limited knowledge and blinkered views,” said former Maj. Gen. Mrinal Suman, the Army’s leading authority on acquisitions and offsets. Poorly conceived, formulated and drafted QRs create confusion and delays, resulting in the entire process being aborted much later, he said. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence concurs.

In its report tabled in Parliament on April 30, 2012, the Committee declared that as many as 41 of the Army's proposals for diverse equipment in recent years were withdrawn or terminated. The reasons included faulty or over-ambitious qualitative requirements. The Committee report unambiguously pinned responsibility on the Army. The MoD and attendant financial advisers had no role in framing weapon QRs. Service Headquarters consult with the largely uniformed Directorate General Quality Assurance (DGQA), sometimes with inputs from the Defence Research and Development Organisation.

The typical process is this: all available literature on the equipment is gathered and its multiple characteristics collated. The idea is to include as many features as possible to demonstrate how exhaustively the task has been performed. Thereafter, as the draft travels up the chain of command, it gathers additional parameters, as each officer feels compelled to suggest more improvements. "The final QR takes the shape of a well-compiled wish list of utopian dimensions, which simply do not exist," stated Gen. Suman.

For instance, in 2004, the Army issued a tender for 168 light utility helicopters to replace the obsolete fleet of Cheetahs and Chetaks inducted into service in the mid-60s. The proposal required the chopper to hover uninterruptedly for 30 minutes, a capability no helicopter in the world possessed at the time. The maximum hover time then available, with a U.S. helicopter, was seven minutes. The Army was forced to withdraw the tender soon after.

Similarly, a tender to upgrade FH-77B 155mm/39 calibre howitzers, acquired in the 1980s, had to be scrapped twice, first in 2006 and again in 2009, as the QRs drawn up by the Artillery Directorate were unworkable. A BAE Systems official associated with the upgrade at the time said that the requirements were 'unrealistic' for these old guns, expecting more capability than even new howitzers.

In 2013, the request sent to at least five overseas vendors to replace the Army's obsolete Bofors 40mm L-70 and Soviet ZU-23mm 2B air defence guns had to be scrapped. All five vendors declared the requirements to be unreasonable, as they demanded a firing rate of 500 rounds per minute, a capability no gun in the world possessed.

The same has applied to tenders for tank fire control systems, long range observation systems and for different ammunition types, all terminated over the years on grounds of overreach and unrealism. It would appear that the Indian Army's search for matchless, and globally unavailable, equipment and capabilities triumphs over and over again.

(Rahul Bedi is a defence analyst.)

EDUCATION

INDIAN EXPRESS, JUN 29, 2015

Gujarat govt plans to make yoga mandatory subject from Class IX

In new curriculum, there will also be chapters on popular programmes such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

From June 2016, yoga will be introduced in all government schools in Class IX onwards.

Written by RITU SHARMA | Ahmedabad | Updated: June 29, 2015 9:29 am

The Gujarat government is planning to introduce yoga in the curriculum of all 15,000 secondary and higher secondary schools across the state from 2016. This is in line with Union HRD Minister [Smriti Irani](#)'s recent announcement to make yoga a more integral part of the physical education programme in the central government-run schools.

The decision to introduce yoga in government and non-government schools from the next year was recently taken by a committee led by education minister Bhupendrasinh Chudasama. Already, the process of new curriculum framework for Class IX onwards is in the final stages, where review meetings under respective panels are being carried out before it is incorporated by the Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board (GSHSEB).

In the new curriculum, there will also be chapters on popular central government programmes such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. There are also proposals to add a few inspirational chapters on renowned personalities from Gujarat like Dhirubhai Ambani and Nanji Mehta.

“From June 2016, yoga will be introduced in all government schools in Class IX onwards. For this, during the Diwali vacations, this year, all teachers will be trained in yoga. The expert committee has been designated the task of formulating the curriculum for yoga that aims at not only training them in different asanas, but also impart knowledge on the benefits of yoga,” said minister Chudasama.

Sources said Lakulish Yoga University will help frame the curriculum for the state education department. The university, was inaugurated by then chief minister [Narendra Modi](#) in April 2013, was the nodal agency for the International Day for Yoga celebrations in the state and had trained the participants, including ministers, school and college students, ahead of the June 21 event.

Directions have also been given to the committee members that includes senior education officials apart from education experts to frame chapters on a few social issues that can be taught to students in schools. In this direction, the secondary school students from the next year will be taught central government campaigns like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao and Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan.

“It is an attempt to make students as well as teachers understand about social issues like gender gap and cleanliness. This way, it can percolate down to the society and help in bringing a change in the longer run as children are the future,” revealed one of the committee members.

The education minister too said he has asked the committee members to frame the curriculum in such a way that it seeks greater participation on these issues from the students and teachers. “Merely teaching them is not the aim but how to motivate them to contribute in taking these campaigns to another level,” Chudasama said. The new curriculum will have dedicated chapters on traffic rules, environment awareness, tree plantation and deforestation.

Further, the education department is planning introducing chapters on popular Gujarati personalities — Dhirubhai Ambani and Nanji Mehta. The founder of Reliance Industries Dhirajlal Hirachand Ambani, the business tycoon who is popularly known as Dhirubhai Ambani was born in 1932 in Chorvad village in Junagadh.

While, industrialist and philanthropist Nanji Kalidas Mehta, who had set up the Mehta Group of industrial conglomerate, was born in 1887 in Gorana village near Porbandar. His grandson Jai Mehta, husband of Bollywood actor Juhi Chawla is the owner of Mehta Group.

These names have come up during the meeting headed by the education minister on Friday. The final selection will soon be done by the expert committee.

Previous year too, there was a decision to introduce a chapter on Narendra Modi, which later turned into a controversy forcing the Gujarat government to shelve the plan. The Prime Minister himself had expressed displeasure over the state government’s earlier decision and tweeted that he believed living personalities should not be taught as a part of curriculum.

HINDU, JUN 26, 2015

Let IIMs be free of government stranglehold

BEHERUZ NARIMAN SETHNA

World-class institutions are not built by politicians, but by those working within them. The proposed IIM Bill not only curbs the freedom of the 13 IIMs, but also dilutes their quality

need for autonomy: “The IIMs have built a national and international brand. This is to be applauded as it was done without governmental management.” Picture shows students of the IIM Bangalore at the 37th annual convocation.— Photo: G.R.N. SOMASHEKAR

Change is most dangerous when it is brought forth not because it is necessary but because someone simply has the power to initiate it and wishes to exercise this power. This seems to be the reason for the Human Resource Development Ministry’s proposal for an Indian Institutes of Management Bill, 2015.

It is important to note that world-class institutions are not built based on the decisions of politicians, but by those within the institution — those who spend a lifetime in their respective fields and make important decisions concerning the functioning of the institution. This is especially because political parties and agendas come and go, and therefore their temporary presence should never be allowed to influence academic decisions and excellence.

The IIM Bill, in its present form, intends to take away that decision-making power from the hands of the very people who created these great institutions through decades of hard work.

Provisions of draft Bill

In the present draft bill, a majority of clauses cited indicate that the government wants to take over the autonomy of the IIMs and establish its own hegemony. Here are some instances: Clause 17 (2) says, “The Director shall be appointed by the Central Government with the approval of the Visitor, on such terms and conditions of service as may be prescribed.” Clause 21 (1) and (2) say, “Without prejudice to the foregoing provisions of this Act, the Institute shall, for the efficient administration of this Act, be bound by such directions on questions of policy, as the Central Government may give in writing to it from time to time; the decision of the Central Government whether a question is one of policy or not, shall be final.” Clause 30 of Chapter V says a co-ordination forum will be established and goes on specify who the members of the same will be. Clause 31 elaborates on this. Clauses 35 and 36 in Chapter VI, among others, also indicate the government’s overreach.

The government dictates that the IIM administrations be completely dependent on it, right from matters of appointing the director to matters of admissions; fees charged by the institutes; and tenure, remunerations and conditions of employment. It not only makes the board of IIM (Ahmedabad) a vestigial organ, but also takes away the freedom of the institution’s faculty. In fact, the Bill attacks the freedom of these great institutions rather than giving them the freedom to excel.

The IIMs have a great reputation simply because of this: they have been given the freedom to experiment and excel. This is why many well-known academics join the institutes. With freedom comes responsibility, and nobody knows this better than the faculty at the IIMs. There are several instances where people have left their cushy, high-salaried positions in the corporate world to join IIMs at a much lower remuneration. As a result, these institutes have been able to produce some of the brightest minds in the country and in the world. IIM alumni have gone on to become leaders in various fields. It is for these reasons that I would request the government not to take away the one quality that makes the IIMs the most sought-after — their freedom.

Even in terms of the legacy of a government, one is far more likely to be remembered for reducing restrictions and governmental interference than for increasing them.

Diluting the brand

The IIMs have built a national and international brand. That is to be applauded and supported, especially because this was done without governmental management. The institutes have functioned without interference from the government in the past, and can continue to do so in the future. Does the government desire to take control over the best institutions in India and turn them into bureaucratic non-entities? Do they want institutes from other countries to overtake these institutes in terms of excellence? What is the need to gain control over an institute that is already performing well?

As someone who has spent a lifetime with some of the best educational institutions in the world, I would urge the government to abandon these hostile takeovers. The MHRD's time could be better spent in other ways. The IIMs should be able to retain and enhance their autonomy, and in this endeavour they could assist Prime Minister Narendra Modi's objectives of making India a great nation.

Some of the clauses mentioned above may not be new ones. But if they are poor clauses that do not enhance academic excellence, it does not matter if they are new or old. I hope that the government thinks of ways of increasing autonomy rather than reducing it.

Trust is crucial in any field, in any exercise. Experts in every field have respectable credentials, a lifetime of relevant experiences. If their views are not taken into consideration and their area of expertise is suddenly taken over by the government, this indicates an attempt to undermine their decision-making abilities.

The question to be asked is: Is the government really interested in supporting and enhancing world-class institutions or does it want to engage in one more bureaucratic exercise? For the sake of India and its students, for the sake of corporate India, and for the sake of jobs and academic excellence, I plead with the government to abandon these initiatives.

(Beheruz Nariman Sethna is a 'Distinguished Alumnus' of IIT-Bombay and IIM-Ahmedabad. He is the first person of Indian origin to become president of a University in the U.S. — a position he held for 19 years.) A government is more likely to be remembered for reducing restrictions than increasing them

INDIAN EXPRESS, JUN 24, 2015

Teachers' body asks DU VC to start new courses

The letter asks the VC to "expedite" the process of introducing these courses.

The [BJP](#)-backed National Democratic Teachers' Federation (NDTF) has written a letter to DU Vice-Chancellor Dinesh Singh, asking him to start new courses in various colleges and departments which have already been approved by the standing committee of the Academic Council.

Every year, colleges send requests to the university to begin certain courses, following which inspection committees visit the college and submit their report to the university in which they mention whether a particular course can be started or not. Thereafter, approval has to be sought from the standing committee and Academic Council.

“This year there was a demand for courses like BSc in Computer Science, Chemistry, Mathematics, BA in various languages and Journalism from colleges where these courses are not taught like Bhaskaracharya College of Applied Sciences and Shaheed Rajguru College of Applied Sciences For Women. Some of these requests have been passed by the AC but there was some suggestion that they may be implemented from next year. We want the courses to begin from this year itself,” NDTF member A K Bhagi said.

The letter asks the VC to “expedite” the process of introducing these courses and argues that since the common admission form only mentions the course and not the college, the change should not hamper the admission process.

“The start of these courses will bring relief to students looking for admission in DU where there is an unexpected rise in competition. Here, it is important to note that in the common admission form only the name of the course is given and not that of college, therefore admission can be granted on the basis of these very common admission forms..” the letter states.

The letter is signed by various Academic Council members.

DECCAN HERALD, JUN 30, 2015

Draft IIM bill draconian, drop it

The draft Indian Institutes of Management bill, which the government has put out for comments from the public, will seriously undermine the autonomy of these centres of excellence and do much harm to them. In the first place, the very need for the bill is unclear. There are 13 IIMs in the country. The five older IIMs have earned reputation as premier business schools and others are establishing themselves. All the institutes cater to the growing demand for management education. One reason given for the bill is that it will change the diplomas now being awarded by the IIMs into degrees. But does the name of the certificate make any difference? Those who hold diplomas from the IIMs have made their mark at the national and international levels in business, public service, entrepreneurship and other areas. They have done better than many others who hold degrees from other schools.

The IIMs have earned their present status because they have the power to take their own academic, administrative and other decisions without interference from outside. It is this

autonomy which will be undermined with the bill. If the bill is enacted, the IIMs will have to seek the approval of the government for most decisions. Apart from selecting the chairman, the government will have a say in the constitution of the governing board. It also envisages a co-ordination forum chaired by the Human Resource Development Minister and consisting of, among others, other Central and state ministers, "to deliberate on matters of interest" and to perform functions decided by the central government. These new structures give a clear indication of where the decisions will be taken. In fact, the government will have the power to influence matters relating the appointment of faculty, fee structure, expansion plans, opening of new departments and even the construction of buildings.

Such interference will degrade these institutions and dilute the quality of the education they impart. India does not have any educational institutions of high international standing. The IIMs, with the IITs and the IISc, are among the better known centres of learning. Even they are now under threat, as seen in some earlier decisions relating to the IITs and the present move. These institutions are funded by the public exchequer. But they achieved their present stature because they had the freedom to grow and develop on their own. This freedom should not be compromised on the pretext of regulation. The directors of the IIMs and many of their distinguished alumni have criticised the provisions of the bill. The bill, or at least its unwelcome provisions, should be dropped.

STATESMAN, JUN 30, 2015

Digital learning

Ashit Baran Aich

In 1982, Time magazine deviated from 'The Man of the Year' as the topic for its cover-story and instead featured the computer on its cover. The change had aroused the curiosity of readers throughout the world as the story dwelt on the enormous impact of the computer on society, indeed its potential to transform human lives and activities. The advent of the computer was indeed a historical event.

The other phenomenon is the correlation between this technology and young minds. There is little doubt that the young have a better grasp over post-modern means of communication, pre-eminently the computer and the mobile phone. They are also remarkably prompt in adapting to new ideas and/or technology. Is this because of the inherent novelty or the challenge posed by modern technology? The pathfinders, it would be useful to recall, were in their twenties when they first treaded into this domain, notably Steve Jobs, Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg. To social psychologists, this could be an interesting research topic.

In India, the enrolment of learners needs to be increased at all levels of education, most importantly in order to be relevant in terms of international ranking. The generally used

indicator of participation in education is Gross Enrolment Ratio. This GER is a statistical measure and, in the case of higher education, it is the percentage of people in the age-group of 18-23 years who are actually enrolled in higher educational institutions that offer courses above Class 12. Mathematically, GER is defined as the ratio X/Y , where X is the number of people actually enrolled in higher education at a particular point of time while Y is the total population in the age-group of 18-23 years. The ratio is usually expressed as percentage. When the GER target is fixed by policy-makers, it is assumed that a pre-assigned number of learners (X), which is equal to the product $GER \times Y$, would hopefully enroll themselves in the higher education institutions. The quantity of Y is determined by the natural growth of population and is estimated statistically.

To reach a given level of GER, two basic steps should be ensured - (1) sufficient number of higher education institutions; and (2) a specified number of learners to attend these institutions. Even if suitable infrastructure is available, the second step might get impeded considerably by drop-outs at different levels of learning, beginning with the primary level. As the educational structure is pyramidal in nature, it is imperative that the problem posed by drop-outs is properly addressed. A holistic approach should therefore be adopted to plug the loopholes with regard to drop-outs, and the factors need to be identified.

India's GER in higher education had been hovering around the 12 per cent mark for the past few years. The current GER of nearly 20 per cent is definitely encouraging. However, a 30 per cent GER in higher education by the end of the 12th Five Year Plan is an unduly optimistic target, given the present level of infrastructure. This can only be achieved if avenues other than the conventional mode of teaching and learning are thoroughly explored. This naturally leads us to the open and distance learning (ODL) system of education with its extraordinary potentiality.

Currently, a significant percentage of learners pursuing higher education are enrolled in ODL institutions such as the open universities, including Netaji Subhas Open University in West Bengal. This percentage is likely to increase rapidly. The credibility of the ODL system has been enhanced considerably after the University Grants Commission (UGC) assumed the role of regulatory authority of ODL as well. The challenge is to devise ways and means to lift the ODL institutions to a level that is at par with the conventional institutions of higher learning and also to ensure that the learners graduating from the two systems are treated in a similar fashion. This is definitely possible if technology is judiciously woven into the system of teaching-learning.

The stakeholders of open universities are learners who are mostly from the age group of 18-23 years. They are easily amenable to any technological change or innovation in the teaching and learning process. The days when renowned teachers were teaching a few students in a small classroom appear to be over, with the possible exceptions of research and certain institutions of higher and specialised learning. Students nowadays have become extremely adept in downloading from the net quality course materials, rather than attending otherwise mundane lectures in a classroom day after day. Technology can transform education not least because there is a dearth of qualified teachers. In parallel, there has been an unmanageable increase in the number of learners. The infrastructure, such as it exists, has thus been rendered totally inadequate.

The main task of a teacher in online courses would be the creation of content, or more specifically, e-content which has to be uploaded and then used by learners scattered across a vast geographical area. Teachers will be in a position to convey instructions online, sitting possibly in front of a computer. Learners will benefit even at a distance. Digital learning materials will in due course of time replace the textbook. Technology is not an end in itself; the teacher will have to impart an element of artistry and joy into the e-content, apart from quality.

The ODL system of education bears a striking resemblance with the Green Revolution. Its objective is to take education to the doorstep of the masses. Steve Jobs, in an interaction with President Obama in 2010 (Jobs died of cancer the following year), commented: “All books, learning materials, assessments should be digital and interactive, tailored to each student and providing feedback in real time”. The students would watch the video lessons and lectures on their own, and use the personal contact programmes (PCPs) for discussions and solving problems. Jobs even spoke of destroying the textbook industry and engaging renowned teachers to write the content for online courses. This effectively defined the scope as well as the challenge of the online courses being envisaged by the providers of ODL throughout the world.

The recently launched programme of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) by the Ministry of Human Resource Development has been widely acclaimed and adopted by the IITs and IIMs. It is destined to be the real face of education. However, it remains to be seen if this ambitious project can ultimately benefit millions of prospective learners who traditionally stay away from the mainstream of society. We fervently hope that the MOOC will be able to reach the unreached.

EMPLOYMENT

HINDU, JUN 30, 2015

Delhi Govt. to organise job fairs

The Delhi Government will shortly organise a series of “employment fairs” in the Capital for providing employment to the youths in accordance with their skills and qualifications. The fairs will help the youths explore employment opportunities in the private sector.

Labour and Employment Minister Gopal Rai said in reply to a question raised by party MLA Alka Lamba in the Delhi Assembly on Monday that he had appointed a task force of employment officers which would collate information on the openings available with the private sector employers. These employment opportunities will be displayed in the fairs.

Besides, the Delhi Government’s Information Technology Department had approved a proposal to create a web portal with this information, said Mr. Rai. The Directorate of Employment has already offered the facility of online registration of unemployed youths and sponsoring of their names to meet the demand of prospective employers.

The Minister pointed out that the Delhi Government had helped in the placement of 9,666 youths in different sectors during the last two years. Of them, 8,661 were employed in 2010-11 and 1,005 in 2011-12.

Govt-appointed task force will collect information on job openings in the private sector and display the information at the employment fairs

FINANCE

ECONOMIC TIMES, JUN 26, 2015

AAP brings out '1st swaraj budget', pumps funds into education, health & welfare

By Neha Lalchandani

Calling this India's first 'Swaraj Budget', the deputy CM unveiled the AAP vision by creating 'Swaraj Nidhi'.

NEW DELHI: The Aam Aadmi Party-led Delhi government in its maiden [budget](#) tried to warm up to its core supporters, the poor, by boosting spending on [education](#) and [health](#) while increasing taxes on movies, cable TV, DTH services and eating out or staying in 'luxury' hotels.

Deputy CM and [finance](#) minister Manish Sisodia's Rs 41,129 crore budget steered clear of any new taxes and sought to present a "welfare agenda" hinged to the vision of "Swaraj" promised in the party's 70-point election manifesto. It also sought to address Delhi's air pollution problem through an entry fee ranging from Rs 100 to Rs 1,500 on commercial goods vehicles entering Delhi.

Besides the poor, the government made a pitch to traders by steering clear of enhancing the value added tax on any item and emphasizing that it was against a "raid raj".

Promises of a smart city through free wi-fi hotspots in all colleges and rural Delhi in the current financial year, and of making the capital a knowledge and skill hub, were other aspects Sisodia was keen to drive home.

The burden of Manish Sisodia's unusually long budget speech was that the government was striving for change by adopting a consultative approach to budget-making, by more than doubling the allocation for education infrastructure and hiking health infrastructure outlays by 45%.

The budget proposed increasing the retail liquor vend fee of corporations from Rs 2.5 lakh per annum to Rs 4 lakh per annum and also hike fees for other liquor licences. The luxury tax is to go up from 10% to 15%. An entertainment tax of Rs 40 is to be levied on monthly cable TV/DTH services, while the entertainment tax on cinema halls is to be enhanced from 20% to 40%.

Calling this India's first 'Swaraj Budget', the deputy CM unveiled the [AAP](#) vision by creating 'Swaraj Nidhi', a fund to execute projects selected through mohalla sabhas held in 11 constituencies under the participatory budgeting exercise in April. A Delhi Urban Development Authority is proposed at the district level to clear projects selected under Swaraj Nidhi and MLA Local Area Development Funds.

Women's security for now remains focused on CCTVs and marshals on buses while social welfare is spread far and wide from creches under ICDS, pensions, old age homes, nutrition for mother and children among other things.

While there was no mention of specific anti-graft plans and measures including the fate of AAP's ambitious Jan Lokpal Bill, the budget banks heavily on better tax compliance generating the revenues needed to fund its ambitious pending targets. The government proposes to crack down on corruption using a nuanced "information based system" to identify and punish evaders.

"There is so much leakage in the tax system that plugging the gaps will bring in enough money to deliver on our vision," CM Kejriwal insisted at a press conference after the budget. He described his government's first budget as "pro-poor and middle class".

While making the point that the AAP government inherited a set-up with a revenue shortfall of over Rs 4,000 crore, Sisodia sought credit for steering a turnaround with VAT collections showing a 37.6% increase over the last two months. The VAT target for the current fiscal has been pitched at a steep Rs 24,000 crore. Sisodia also cited how Delhi has been given a step motherly treatment by the Centre with Delhi's share in central taxes stagnant at Rs 325 crore since 2001. Delhi's AAP government on Thursday presented its Rs 41,129 crore budget.

Following are the highlights of AAP govt's 'Swaraj Budget'.

- * Pilot project in 11 constituencies with each constituency getting Rs 20 crore.
- * Every district to get a Delhi District Urban Development Agency for micro-management of issues.
- * E- governance and m-governance to be promoted.
- * Rs 50 crore set aside for free Wi-Fi in all private colleges.
- * Rs 9,836 crore for education. Out of a total 1,011 schools 50 schools to be developed as model schools.
- * Special training programmes for teachers as well as exchange programmes.
- * 20,000 new teachers to be appointed and to make teachers more accountable, CCTV cameras will be installed in all classrooms in government schools.
- * Government school playgrounds to be made available to children from colonies. If private schools don't work with transparency, strict action will be taken against them.
- * Amendment to be made to make private schools more accountable. Planning a 'skill university' to make Delhi into a knowledge and skill hub.
- * Diploma courses will be started in each government polytechnic college and the number of seats to be increased by 100.

Rs 4,787 crore has been allocated for health. 1,000 neighborhood clinics to be opened, out of which 500 will be completed this year, Rs 125 crore has been allocated for this.

* Proposal to have integrated fare for public transport, study for the same is on.

* Rs 5,085 crore have been allocated for transport. By the end of 2016, 1,380 low-floor buses, 500 mini buses and 1,000 cluster buses will be brought in, 1,200 new bus shelters to come up in the city.

* For women's safety, CCTVs in all cluster and DTC buses will be installed. Hostels for working women to be set up.

* Rs 927 crore set aside for social welfare schemes. Families of police, home guard, civil defense personnel who die in line of duty will be given Rs 1 crore by the government.

* Polluting vehicles entering Delhi will be taxed.

* Taxes have been increased on cable television and cinema; luxury tax to be increased.

HEALTH SERVICES

HINDU, JUN 26, 2015

President to open AYUSH centre at Rashtrapati Bhavan

SMRITI KAK RAMACHANDRAN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message to popularise ancient Indian medicine practices has found resonance with Rashtrapati Bhavan.

On July 25, President Pranab Mukherjee will begin his fourth year in office with the inauguration of an AYUSH wellness centre that will be run from a heritage building in the President's Estate.

Being set up in collaboration with the Ministry of AYUSH, the wellness centre will offer elaborate and therapeutic services, including mud baths and oil massages, physiotherapy and yoga to de-stress the mind and body.

The services at the centre, being housed in an old circular building which is currently being renovated, will be offered to residents of the sprawling President's Estate, said Omita Paul, Secretary to the President.

The decision to open the centre has not been taken after the recent show of India's "soft power", Yoga, at the international level, but is the culmination of a proposal that has been in the pipeline.

The centre is Mr. Mukherjee's way of lending "his passion and support" to the ancient forms of medicine.

While the President is fond of taking long walks in the immaculately laid out Mughal Gardens, his predecessor APJ Abdul Kalam had introduced a herbal garden.

Mr. Mukherjee's fourth year in office will also include a host of functions such as the biggest-ever conference of 114 institutions of higher learning.

The President is Visitor to these institutions and has in the past hosted annual conferences of Vice-Chancellors of Central Universities and started in-residence programmes for artists, students, writers, teachers and grassroots entrepreneurs.

A conference of Indologists in collaboration with Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) is also in the works.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

ECONOMIC TIMES, JUN 25, 2015

India announces \$1 billion aid for rebuilding Nepal

India will give an aid of \$1 billion for rebuilding Nepal, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said at an international donors meet in Kathmandu.

KATHMANDU: India today pledged \$1 billion in assistance to quake-ravaged [Nepal](#) for its massive reconstruction programme, asserting that it will strongly stand behind the Nepalese government which is seeking to "wipe the tears" of every Nepali.

The announcement was made by External Affairs Minister [Sushma Swaraj](#) during an international donors' conference here. Swaraj hoped that a "stronger, united and more confident Nepal will rise" from the debris of destruction.

She said one fourth of the \$1 billion assistance will be grant and it will be over and above India's existing bilateral developmental assistance of another \$1 billion over the next five years which takes the total assistance to \$2 billion.

Swaraj conveyed India's "deep and abiding commitment" to rebuilding of Nepal and highlighted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi ensured a prompt rescue and relief operation within six hours of the 7.9-magnitude April 25 quake.

"Today I convey to you the deep and abiding commitment of the Government and 1.25 billion people of India and the personal commitment of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to stand shoulder to shoulder with you as you seek to wipe the tears of every Nepali," Swaraj said.

"We reacted as if a disaster had struck India," Swaraj said.

There has been an overwhelming outpouring of sympathy, support and solidarity with Nepal and people in India "opened their hearts" to come to the country's assistance, she said.

The [International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction](#) has been organised by the Nepalese government to raise funds for rebuilding the country devastated by a powerful earthquake that struck exactly two months back on April 25, killing about 9,000 people and injuring around 23,000 others besides flattening over five lakh houses.

"I am happy to announce Government of India's pledge for Nepal's post-earthquake reconstruction of Nepali Rupees 10,000 crore, equivalent to \$1 billion, one fourth of it as Grant," Swaraj said.

"This pledge is over and above our existing bilateral developmental assistance of another \$1 billion over the next five years, forty per cent of which would be Grant," she said.

The conference was attended by several countries, including China, Britain, Norway, Japan, Sri Lanka, the European Union besides the UN, World Bank and Asian Development Bank.

"I salute the resilience of the people of Nepal and reassure you of India's full support. The terrible disaster and continuing aftershocks have not diminished the indomitable spirit of the Nepalese people. They are calm and dignified in their tragedy," Swaraj said. "I see a quiet confidence and a steely determination as they seek to rebuild their lives and their communities. Every challenge is an opportunity. Out of adversity comes strength. Without doubt, from the debris of destruction, a stronger, united and more confident Nepal will rise," Swaraj said.

Emphasising that the entire world celebrated the first international Yoga Day, symbolising the coming together for a common, higher purpose, Swaraj said, "Today, let us take inspiration from the ancient philosophy of Yoga and join hands to create a more resilient Nepal."

Talking about ties between the two neighbours, she said "Ours is a 'Roti-Beti ka Sambandh' (a bond of family and kinship)."

The External Affairs Minister said India's response was "swift, spontaneous and substantive" as its rescue teams arrived in Nepal within six hours of the earthquake.

"Operation Maitri was our largest ever disaster assistance effort abroad, valued at nearly four billion Indian Rupees. But what is important is not that this support was larger than other foreign countries; what matters is the strong feeling of empathy and the instantaneous, instinctive and heart-felt response from Indians for their Nepali brothers and sisters," Swaraj said.

Observing that Nepal's challenge would be to ensure efficient and transparent utilisation of the funds, Swaraj said India will continue to work closely with the Nepalese government.

She also congratulated the National Planning Commission of Nepal for their comprehensive recovery needs assessment, prepared in collaboration with more than 200 international experts.

"The PDNA (Post Disaster Needs Assessment) has been a participatory and credible international effort, to which India was privileged to contribute. It will be the framework for donors to finalise their relief packages and pledges," she said.

The PDNA report estimates huge reconstruction needs of \$6.7 billion.

"Mobilisation of resources of this magnitude is a challenging task. But Nepal is not

alone...India stands ready to provide a lead and shoulder its responsibilities towards Nepal, our oldest and closest friend and neighbour," she said.

Swaraj said India stands ready to depute its professionals to share their expertise and experience in Nepal's reconstruction efforts.

She said India can share its expertise in sectors including agriculture, housing, roads and transport, electricity, health, education, cultural heritage, and disaster risk reduction.

Noting that the two visits of Prime Minister Modi to Nepal have given a significant impetus to bilateral cooperation, Swaraj said, "Hydropower projects now need to be speedily implemented and work on construction of the Kathmandu-Nijgadh fast track road and the Nijgadh airport with India's participation should be expedited."

These projects will create new job opportunities, contribute to revenue, and facilitate long-term recovery," she said.

LABOUR

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, JUN 26, 2015

Minimum wage hiked to Rs 160/day

Workers could benefit if states follow national-floor wage scale

[Surya Sarathi Ray](#)

Come July 1, industrial workers and employees in sectors including plantations and services could benefit from a wage hike, if the states follow the revised national wage floor. The Centre has raised the national floor-level minimum wages (NFLMW) to Rs 160 per day from Rs 137 now and sent advisories to the states to comply with the new threshold, official sources told FE.

They added that the Centre has also mooted making NFLMW mandatory given that there continues to be instances of some states keeping minimum wages for many “scheduled employments” lower than the NFLMW. There are also wide disparities between the minimum wages actually enforced among states and across sectors, a situation that could partly be explained by the differences in income levels and the prices among states, leading to significant variations in purchasing power.

In order to have a uniform structure and to reduce the disparity in minimum wages across the country, the concept of NFLMW was first mooted on the basis of the recommendation of the National Commission on Rural Labour (NCRL) in 1996. However, the NFLMW has practically had only persuasive value as it lacked statutory backing.

NFLMW was fixed at R35 per day in 1996 and has since been revised almost regularly every two years taking into account the increase in the Consumer Price Index number for industrial workers, CPI (IW). NFLMW was last raised in July 2013 from R115 a day fixed in 2011.

The CPI (IW) index stayed in the range of 6.4-12% since 2008. After hitting as high as 12% in 2010, CPI (IW) has maintained a roller-coaster ride — it eased to 8.9% in 2011

before rising to 10.9% in 2013 and dropping again to 6.4% in 2014. In the current calendar year, it has slowed almost consistently from 7.2% in January to 5.8% in April.

Labour ministry data showed workers in the cashew and coconut gardens in Andhra Pradesh get R125 per day wage against the present national floor of R137 per day. In Puducherry, security guards get R100 per day, same as the agarbatti making workers in Gujarat. Those in the onion cleaning job in Maharashtra get R120 per day. Workers in the North East region get the lowest wages. It varies in the range of R72 and R89 per day in Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

The Minimum Wages Act, 1948, covers a wide spectrum of employment-creating sectors ranging from industry, construction, agriculture to services sectors like automobile work shops, rice and flour mills and domestic helps. In many of these areas, practically, the wage floors are not strictly implemented.

LIBRARIES

INDIAN EXPRESS, JUN 30, 2015

Renovation under way at PU library, students to be shifted to exam hall

PU Dean Students' Welfare Navdeep Goyal on Monday said students would be shifted to the examination hall at the earliest in view of the ongoing renovation work at the AC Joshi Library.

Renovation in progress at the Panjab University library.
Meghna Malik

PU Dean Students' Welfare Navdeep Goyal on Monday said students would be shifted to the examination hall at the earliest in view of the ongoing renovation work at the AC Joshi Library.

“I have received a letter regarding the approval for shifting the students from the outer library hall till the renovation of the library is completed,” Goyal said. “The shifting of students will, however, be done on a temporary basis until the renovation work at the main library hall is completed.”

The DSW added that the shifting process was expected to be finished within a week. A proposal was sent to the V-C last week, after a meeting was convened with the DSW and Controller of Examination (COE) regarding this issue, which was also highlighted in Chandigarh Newslines.

Since an approval has been received from the COE's office as well, the PU's library will now be taking possession of the examination hall until its renovation is completed. The renovation work, which has been held up due to administrative hurdles, is now expected to be carried out in full swing; it is likely to be finished by the end of July.

Due to the ongoing renovation work at the library, students have been facing inconvenience in the outer reading hall of the library for over a year now. Members of the Panjab University Students Organisation (PUSO) had submitted a memorandum to Vice-Chancellor Arun Kumar Grover in this regard. A delay in the approval was caused due to the National Eligibility Test (NET), which was scheduled to be held in the examination hall on June 28.

According to PUSO president Navaldeep, “The renovation work was proving to be a disturbance to the students who come to study in the outer reading hall. That is why we had requested for shifting the students to the examination hall.”

NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

HINDU, JUN 29, 2015

NGOs' foreign funds and a trust deficit

TRILOCHAN SASTRY

There is no organised conspiracy against NGOs. It is in the nature of power to exercise greater control, and exempt itself from accountability

Testing time: "We need to hold citizens as well as governments accountable, and save both from needless harassment." Seen in picture are Greenpeace activists coming down in ropes from their office building in Bengaluru to unfurl banners related to the account freezing by the Union government.

The recent changes in the rules governing foreign funding of NGOs under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) have been widely discussed. The last word on it will perhaps never be written. The UPA government initiated this and we see some concrete changes now. Sifting through the bewildering range of issues discussed, a few stand out. First, there is a sharp polarisation on the issue between the government and civil society, and even within civil society. Second, the polarisation is based on lack of trust, bordering on fear, with each group highlighting faults of the other. Behind all this are differing ideas of India we all hold.

It is ironical that what is at stake is not that important — a relatively small amount of money that does not significantly help or harm India. The total FCRA funds coming in was Rs.11,546.29 crore for 2011-12, the latest year for which the government has put out figures. Of this, the funds for explicitly religious activities were to the tune of Rs.270.83 crore; Rs.227.4 crore for maintenance of priests, and Rs.208.71 crore for religious schools, together coming to 6.12 per cent of total foreign funding. Similarly, those that are clearly identifiable as lobbying advocacy, awareness building, and so on, are Rs.539 crore for research and Rs. 241 crore for awareness, or 6.76 per cent of total foreign funding. Even if all these funds are used for anti-national activities, what will we do if they are domestically funded? The major uses of foreign funds are for rural development, education of the poor, health, and so on. Out of 22,702 NGOs registered under FCRA, 13,193 actually received grants, making it on average Rs.87.52 lakh per NGO that year. About 9,000 NGOs have rightly got their FCRA permissions cancelled for not submitting accounts or responding to repeated reminders.

Meanwhile, there is a list of 109 international agencies that are exempt from the FCRA, consisting of the World Bank group, UN agencies, and so on. The World Bank funding in 2013-14 was \$5.2 billion or about Rs.3.22 lakh crore. This funding goes to the government and not to any NGO. Indian bureaucrats are among the largest beneficiaries of World Bank and UN assignments at dollar salaries that entitle them to life long pensions after five years of deputation.

There are other foreign funds coming into India. In 2010, the RBI reported that FDI totalled \$23.7 billion or about Rs.1.40 lakh crore, about 12 times the FCRA funding. By 2014-15, this had gone up to Rs.1.76 lakh crore. This is about 10 per cent of the Central government budget of about Rs.18 lakh crore. This would have been much higher but for the global slowdown, as India got \$40 billion in 2008 before the global meltdown. We periodically see announcements of relaxation in FDI rules for various sectors like retail, insurance, and so on.

In short, foreign funding of NGOs is dwarfed by other foreign money coming into India. Of this, the amount used for potentially questionable purposes is about 13 per cent. Let us look at another set of issues. All organisations working in society need to be transparent and accountable, including NGOs, whether domestically or foreign funded. The RTI tries to do that for the government. But beyond the NGOs, corporates and the government, there are political parties and religious organisations.

The Supreme Court has admitted a petition saying that India's two major political parties, the BJP and the Congress, receive illegal foreign funding. Like other major democracies, India also does not permit political parties to receive foreign funding. But no notice has been issued by the government to the political parties. One of the parties said they have returned the money, and the matter was laid to rest after that. Would other organisations, including the corporate sector and the NGOs be permitted to respond similarly? The political parties have also violated the RTI Act by refusing to comply with CIC orders.

Meanwhile, the Maharashtra Government has passed an ordinance that an FIR cannot be filed against legislators and senior officers without prior approval to avoid frivolous allegations. But there is no protection for ordinary citizens against harassment whether by the police, income tax or other authorities. The police investigate allegations against themselves and give themselves a clean chit. There is no remedy for citizens who need some permission from the government and there is no reply for months or years. The government has publicly used the phrase 'tax terrorism,' but has so far done nothing to protect the citizen. It is well known that several religious organisations and their affiliates receive foreign funding. Those that indulge in anti-national and subversive activities will not be affected by the new FCRA rules — their work is underground.

So we see a trend where government officers and elected representatives, political organisations and some religious organisations and affiliates are protected, but others are harassed. This is in line with some of the erstwhile Communist countries, such as Hungary and Russia, which are also clamping down on NGOs getting foreign funding. Interestingly there is no such clampdown in the West. Are we moving towards a free market economy along with totalitarian controls? The major reason that is offered for these controls is that sometimes NGOs indulge in activities that are "detrimental to national interest, likely to affect public interest, or likely to prejudicially affect the security, scientific, strategic or economic interest of the state." This was the classic

language used by the British colonials in order to justify new laws and regulations aimed at curbing civil liberties. This is not to say that no NGO ever does anything wrong. If they break the law, they should be brought to book. There are more than adequate laws to ensure that this happens.

Blanket ban

There is no organised conspiracy here. It is in the nature of power to exercise greater control, and exempt itself from accountability. Unfortunately, the Indian way of doing this has a colonial legacy — it is often through more red tape, leading to petty corruption and harassment. For a handful of NGOs who may be doing something wrong, about 13,000 are completely paralysed. It would be more honest if as a nation we take a decision to ban all foreign funding.

Behind all this is the question of the kind of India we want to build. These clampdowns are really for that. Protest against economic policies is becoming more and more embarrassing, with fallouts leading to political victory or defeat. We have to find a balance between religious freedom and its misuse, accepting funds from overseas to aid in the economy but not for civil society, and people's interests and corporate interests. We need to hold citizens as well as governments accountable, and save both from needless harassment. Deep down, there is mistrust between the different ideas of India, with each group trying to impose its world view. Neither will succeed in the long run. Equally disturbing is the lack of trust between the people and the government. The first task really is to rebuild that trust.

(Trilochan Sastry is professor at IIM Bangalore and Founder, Association for Democratic Reforms.)

The justification for the clampdown on NGOs is reminiscent of the logic used by British colonials to justify new laws and regulations to curb civil liberties

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

STATESMAN, JUN 24, 2015

Concentration of power dangerous

Kuldip Nayar

I am sorry to revert to the emergency yet again, for the second week. R.K. Dhawan, Mrs Indira Gandhi's confidante, has disclosed that Sonia Gandhi had no qualms about the emergency. This is contrary to what I had heard when the emergency was imposed. It was reported that both her husband Rajiv Gandhi and she were thinking about returning to Italy to bring up their children in a "free atmosphere."

Dhawan's observation about Sonia Gandhi makes it all the more obligatory for her to explain her stand on the emergency. Even after 40 years, the dynasty is not coming out clear on switching off the lights of democracy. The dynasty alone is responsible for what happened. Mrs Indira Gandhi was indicated by the Allahabad High Court in a poll petition and unseated for misusing official machinery.

The Supreme Court gave a reprieve. Dhawan's remarks show that there was no regret in the dynasty. However, Mr Manmohan Singh tried to make up for the dynasty's deliberate silence. It is but fair that the sooner the Gandhis apologise to the nation, the better it would be for them and the country.

Dhawan has, however, come a long way from the deposition before the Shah Commission that was appointed by the Janata government to go into the excesses of the emergency. He had deposed before the commission that he was not willing to say anything against the dynasty and put the entire blame on Siddharth Shankar Ray, then West Bengal chief minister.

In the light of Dhawan's revelations, the case should be reopened. More than that, there needs to be a probe on how institutions were diluted and the power got concentrated in Indira Gandhi. BJP's senior leader L.K. Advani's warning that the emergency can return becomes significant. He has not named anybody but the obvious reference is to Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has made all other institutions irrelevant and reposes all power in the PMO. In other words, the PMO has become the real power centre.

I do not think that the emergency will be re-imposed because the amendments effected in the Constitution by the Janata government make it impossible. Yet, conditions can be created to bring in an emergency-like situation without legal sanction.

The rule of Modi becomes ominous in the sense that no cabinet minister counts in the BJP government and the joint consultation by the Cabinet is only on paper. All political parties should put their heads together to stall any emergency-like rule before it actually comes to exist.

If there was one-person rule of Indira Gandhi a few decades ago, today it is that of Narendra Modi. Most newspapers and television channels have adapted themselves to his way of working, if not thinking, as they had done during Mrs Gandhi's period.

Against this background, the murder of a journalist in Madhya Pradesh, which is one of the better administered states in the country, does not surprise me. The reason was familiar. The journalist, Sandeep Kothari, dared to cross the line which those who represent the establishment have drawn. Beyond that the freedom of expression is not tolerated because it challenges the interest of entrenched elements.

The 44-year-old Kothari disclosed how the sand mafia was operating with the assistance of the police. That is the reason why they have said that Kothari's death was not connected with journalism. The reading is, however, more harrowing than what has come to light. It is apparent that the police was in league with the sand mafia's illegal doings.

Some activists had raised their voice many months ago. But the authorities took no action. The sand mafia went on increasing the area from where they filled trucks with sand throughout the day. They were once operating at night. But as they were able to 'buy' more and more functionaries they shed fear or hesitation.

Kothari had gone missing from his home in Katangi town of Balaghat district in Madhya Pradesh on a Friday, a couple of weeks ago. His family members had lodged a missing person's complaint the next day, Saturday. However, reports said that three youths, who were closely linked to the sand mafia, had kidnapped and killed Kothari over his refusal to withdraw a court case. The report added that Kothari was out on bail for the last two months in a rape case.

During investigation, the police rounded up the three youths from Katangi on Sunday and they confessed they had killed Kothari, set him on fire and buried him in the forests in Nagpur district. The police are yet to establish whether Kothari was murdered and then burned or if he was burned alive and buried.

Since all the facts about the case have not come to light, it is difficult to apportion the blame. But there is no denying Kothari's killing or his journalistic credentials. That the corporate sector has become more influential and more demanding than before is not something which can be denied. It is intelligent enough not to vitiate the fundamental rights like freedom of expression. They now have roughnecks at their command to fix journalists.

Kothari was a victim. Burning him alive shows how the establishment on the one hand and the mafias on the other are indulging in more heinous cruelty to instill awe. This is what the political parties are accepting. Because of petty rivalries, they are allowing the democratic polity to be mutilated. That India has compromised with anti-democratic ways and the demands of one-person rule has had an impact on the establishments in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The two countries cite the example of India to suppress critics. This process has become more effective in Bangladesh where the once liberal Sheikh Hasina has now turned into an autocrat and has gone to the extent of creating conditions where there are no fair elections.

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) boycotted the last general election because it felt that the conditions obtaining in the country did not allow a free and fair election to take place.

The writer is a noted journalist, columnist and commentator.

POSTAL SERVICES

HINDU, JUN 24, 2015

e-stamping to be introduced in State Cabinet approves amendment to Kerala Stamp Act, 1959

SAFER REVENUE TRANSACTIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● e-payment of stamp duty to government ● Vendors can transact e-stamp certificates 	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">  <div style="text-align: left;"> <p>Stockholding Corporation of India to act as central record keeping agency</p> </div> </div>
<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Secure, tamper-proof system ● Online payment of stamp paper fee ● Verification by user, government ● Round-the-clock availability of stamp papers 	<p>Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Easy accessibility ● Faster processing ● Security ● Cost saving ● User friendly
<p>Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sale and mortgage deeds ● Rental agreements ● Lease deeds ● Power of attorney 	<p>UIN</p> <p>UIN is a unique system-generated number on the e-stamp certificate. Anybody having the UIN can check the authenticity of the certificate through www.shcilestamp.com</p>

The government is preparing to introduce e-stamping to prevent malpractices in land registrations and make revenue transactions safer.

The Cabinet on Wednesday approved an amendment to the Kerala Stamp Act, 1959 to facilitate introduction of the e-stamping project which involves electronic payment of stamp duty to the government. Registered vendors can transact e-stamp certificates.

The e-stamp is a Web-based, secure, tamper-proof system to replace the conventional registration documents. Authorised stamping centres will collect the payment for stamp duty and issue stamp certificates. Besides the convenience of online payment of stamp paper fee, the system enables verification by the user and the government and round-the-clock availability of stamp papers.

It also offers the facility to deposit the exact fee and avoid fleecing by vendors. The stamp certificate generated by the system comes with a unique identification number that can be verified online.

The Stockholding Corporation of India has been authorised by the Centre to act as the central record keeping agency for the e-stamping project.

The e-stamping system will be applicable for all documents, including sale and mortgage deeds, rental agreements, lease deeds, and power of attorney. It is touted as an effective method to curb corruption and prevent fake stamp paper circulation.

Light Metro

Briefing the media after the Cabinet meeting, Chief Minister Oommen Chandy said Delhi Metro Rail Corporation principal adviser E. Sreedharan would be taken into confidence on the Light Metro project to be implemented in Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode. “The Finance Department has mooted an alternative proposal that was discussed twice at meetings. The government is trying to work out a consensus to take the project forward,” he said.

RAILWAYS

ECONOMIC TIMES, JUN 24, 2015

Now, pay hefty fines for littering at railway stations

Anvit Srivastava

Next time you visit New Delhi Station & throw paper, leave eatables on the floor, or spit in public, get ready to cough up a fine between Rs 200-500.

NEW DELHI: The next time you visit [New Delhi Railway Station](#) and throw paper, leave eatables on the floor, or spit or urinate in public, get ready to cough up a [fine](#) between Rs 200 and Rs 500.

[Northern Railway](#) has been collecting between Rs 75,000 and Rs 90,000 as fines every week through this drive. Teams of RPF officials and ticket collectors have been formed to keep an eye and catch offenders. Officials added that those who refused to pay were taken to a magistrate.

"We have tried to educate passengers to keep the stations clean, but now we have started imposing hefty fines. We will soon extend this to other stations soon," said Arun Arora, Delhi divisional railway manager, Northern Railways.

Officials said fines collected are expected to increase as the drive is going to be intensified in the coming weeks. "It is not possible to keep stations clean unless passengers, vendors and those using the premises contribute equally. Vendors have been strictly told to have a waste bin near their stalls. We are also ensuring that dustbins are emptied every two hours. We expect weekly fines to increase to Rs 1 lakh. The drive will be extended to Old Delhi station within a week," Arora said.

In June, Northern Railways collected Rs 2.3 lakh as fines at New Delhi railway station. Also, 50 people were prosecuted for not paying fines and taken to a [magistrate](#), where they eventually paid the penalty. RPF personnel have been assisting railway staff as many people aggressively defended themselves and refused to pay the fine.

"Officials have been strictly directed not to be lenient. However, in cases where the offenders could not pay the entire sum, they were fined Rs 50-100 and let off with a warning," the DRM added.

TAXATION

HINDU, JUN 24, 2015

New set of Income Tax return forms notified; deadline for filing returns extended to Aug. 31

TCA SHARAD RAGHAVAN

The Income Tax Department on Monday notified a new set of income tax return forms for the assessment year 2015-16, and has extended the deadline for the filing of returns to August 31.

With the publication of the Gazette order by the Finance Ministry, taxpayers can now file their returns till August 31. The changes to the forms were made public on May 31, but they were notified only on Monday.

The previous deadline for the filing of returns was July 31, but this was extended because of various changes the government made to the return forms.

In the new and simplified forms, filers no longer have to provide the details of their foreign travels. In addition, they need furnish only details about “total number of savings and current bank accounts” held by them “at any time during the previous year [excluding dormant accounts]”.

The most simplified form, ITR-2A, to be filled by those individuals and HUFs who do not have income from business, profession or by way of capital gains and do not hold foreign assets, only asks for the passport number of the tax-filer, “if available”.

With regard to bank accounts, filers only need to provide the IFSC code of their bank and the account numbers of all the current/savings accounts held at any point of time during the previous year. This does not include dormant accounts. In an additional feature, tax filers have been given the option of indicating to which account they would like their refund credited.

In the ITR-2 forms, for individuals and HUFs having income from business or profession, filers will also have to declare if they hold any assets abroad or have any income from any source outside India. Although the notification of the new forms means individuals can begin filing their returns, they were not available on the Department’s e-filing website (<https://incometaxindiaefiling.gov.in/>) as of 8.30 p.m. on Tuesday.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

DECCAN HERALD, JUN 29, 2015

Urban schemes: Implementation key

Make socially, economically inclusive centres of smart cities.

Three new flag ship schemes of the government, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, are meant to change the face of urban India and life in India's cities and towns. The three schemes are the Smart Cities Mission, the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (Amrut) and the Housing for All Mission. The Smart Cities Mission is a new idea but the other two are redone packages of the previous government's programmes. Amrut is a new version of the UPA's JNNURM and the housing programme is Rajiv Awas Yojna with a new name and style. Governments cannot resist the temptation of the politics of rebranding projects. But what is important is how they are reconceived and reworked. The needs and challenges sought to be addressed by the earlier schemes are important enough to demand the serious attention for the new government too. The government has done well to take them seriously.

All the programmes are ambitious in scope. Setting up of 100 smart cities and rejuvenation of 500 cities amounts to building a new urban landscape in the country. Economic development and urbanisation are mutually dependent processes. About 30 per cent of the population lives in cities and towns and with about 250 million people expected to leave rural areas in the next two decades, the country will be experiencing an urban explosion. The smart cities and Amrut programmes aim to make urban areas modern, efficient and most suitable for living and work. Small cities will serve as centres of growth and are expected to create a sustaining network in the coming years. It is important to provide employment opportunities, basic infrastructure like good transport, drainage and waste disposal facilities, make the environment pollution free and above all, ensure housing for the residents, especially those in the lower and middle income categories.

Housing is the biggest challenge and the Housing for All programme aims to create 20 million houses by 2022. It rightly gives a greater role for states in formulation and implementation of plans and offers more Central subsidy. The states should be encouraged to devolve the programme further down. In all, in the plans for urban renewal, the need is to create economically and socially inclusive and interdependent centres of life rather than islands of better life. Tens of thousands of crores of rupees are going to be spent in the coming years, and the spending itself can help the economy. But large government programmes have a way of losing themselves for obvious reasons. There are high stakes in the success of these programmes and so, effective implementation is more important than conception.

DECCAN HERALD, JUN 26, 2015

PM launches 3 mega schemes for urban development

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday launched three flagship schemes for urban development and promised that states and Union Territories (UT) will have a greater say in the implementation of the these programmes.

While releasing operational guidelines for implementation of Smart Cities, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and Housing for All by 2022, Modi said the residents of the cities should decide how their city should grow and not private property developers.

The prime minister stressed that aspirations of migrants from rural areas and slum dwellers should be balanced with the changing global environment and said ensuring a good life for them is the government's responsibility.

While 500 cities will be developed under AMRUT scheme, 100 Smart Cities will be built over five years and Housing for All aims construction of 2 crore houses in urban areas in the next seven years. A Smart City will be selected through a competition among cities while 500 cities are being identified under AMRUT.

Referring to Smart City, Modi said, "For the first time in India, a challenge was being floated, in which the citizens of urban India could contribute in the formulation of development visions of their cities."

Those cities which were able to competitively meet the required parameters would be developed as smart cities. According to the guidelines, the states and UTs will have full liberty and flexibility in formulation, approval and execution of projects under the three missions.

WATER SUPPLY

BUSINESS STANDARD, JUN 29, 2015

Delhi govt notifies 80% reduction in water, sewer charges

The revised rates are applicable on properties falling in D, E, F, G & H categories of unauthorised colonies

In a relief to people living in unauthorised colonies, Delhi government has notified its scheme of 80 per cent reduction in one-time sewer and water development charges for new connections.

Last month, the Aam Aadmi Party government had declared to slash sewer and water development charges, collected by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), by 80 per cent in such colonies.

According to a senior government official, residents of around 1,700 unauthorised colonies will now be able to avail the benefit of this scheme with urban development department on June 26 notifying the reduced sewer and water development charges.

"The reduction has been drastic and historic with water development charges reduced from Rs 440 per sqm to Rs 100 per sqm while the sewer development charges have been brought down from Rs 494 per sqm to Rs 100 per sqm," the official said.

The revised rates are applicable in case of properties falling in D, E, F, G & H category of unauthorised colonies, being used for residential purposes with plot area up to and including 200 sqm under domestic and mixed use category.

The revised rates will be valid only till September 25, 2015 and thereafter, original rates will be applicable.

According to DJB officials, consumers can also apply online on DJB website www.djb.gov.in or www.delhijalboard.nic.in after logging in Revenue Management System, or can also apply at area zonal revenue office.

DJB CEO Sajjan Singh Yadav said DJB has also launched a liberalised scheme for regularisation of all unauthorised water connections.

"Domestic consumers who have unauthorised water connection may get it regularised on payment of Rs 3,310 instead of Rs 18,000. Similarly, commercial consumers may also get their unauthorised water connections regularised under this scheme," he said.

This scheme is operational till August 27, 2015. However, regularisation of such unauthorised water connections would be done only where technical feasibility exists and Delhi Jal Board water distribution system has been notified and subject to fulfilment of formalities, Yadav added.

DJB has also launched a drive to prosecute people having unauthorised water and sewer connections and are misusing their connections for commercial or industrial purposes.

In the last one month, 1,000 people have been prosecuted for various offences including unauthorised water and sewer connections. The enforcement drive will be intensified and those who do not take legal connection from DJB will be prosecuted.