

LIST OF NEWSPAPERS COVERED

ASIAN AGE

BUSINESS LINE

BUSINESS STANDARD

DECCAN HERALD

HINDU

HINDUSTAN TIMES

INDIAN EXPRESS

PIONEER

STATESMAN

TELEGRAPH

TIMES OF INDIA

TRIBUNE

CONTENTS

BACKWARD CLASSES	3-4
CIVIL SERVICE	5-11
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	12-13
EDUCATION	14-24
GOVERNORS	25-26
HEALTH SERVICES	27-31
LABOUR	32
LIBRARIES	33
MANAGEMENT	34
POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT	35-42
PROTEST MOVEMENTS	43-45
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	46
RAILWAYS	47-49
RELIGION	50-51
SOCIAL PROBLEMS	52-53
URBAN DEVELOPMENT	54

BACKWARD CLASSES

HINDUSTAN TIMES, MAY 26, 2016

HC stays Haryana govt's decision to give 10% quota to Jats, 5 other communities

The Punjab and Haryana high court on Thursday put on hold the Khattar government's move to give 10% reservation to Jats and five other communities in government jobs and education.

The stay came on a petition by a Bhiwani resident Murari Lal Gupta, who argued that the Haryana government had violated the basic structure of the Constitution.

The stay doesn't come as a surprise. A day after the assembly passed the bill, HT wrote that the move would run into legal trouble. To extend the benefit, the government had relied on a report trashed by the Supreme Court and that was argument made by the petitioner as well.

The state assembly on March 29 unanimously passed the Haryana backward classes (reservation in services and admissions in educational institutions) act, 2016, carving a new backward classes category to extend quota benefits to Jats, Jat Sikhs, Mulla Jats, Bishnois, Rors and Tyagis.

It came weeks after Jat community's agitation for job and education benefits turned violent, causing loss of life and extensive damage to property.

As the Supreme Court had already ruled that Jats could not be treated as backward, the assembly had no right to pass the law, petitioner's lawyer Mukesh Kumar Verma said.

The benefit was extended under the new act drawn on the basis of the justice KC Gupta commission report, which was quashed by the court.

The government's decision amounted to revising a judicial order, which could not be done by the legislature. Only judiciary was allowed to revisit its decisions.

The petition also referred to a similar failed attempt in 2014. The state government had introduced a bill to include Jats in the list of other backward classes (OBCs), but the court held that Jats were not backward socially, educationally and politically.

The next year, the court declared as unconstitutional the UPA government's decision to include the largely agrarian community in the central list of OBCs. The court said reservation shouldn't be decided only on the basis of caste. Other marginalised sections such as LGBTs could also be considered for the benefit.

The court gave the state government time till July 21 to file its reply.

CIVIL SERVICE

TELEGRAPH, MAY 30, 2016

Nehru praise unlocks IAS rights debate

Rasheed Kidwai

Bhopal, May 29: The transfer of a collector who had praised Jawaharlal Nehru in a Facebook post has set off a debate in the Madhya Pradesh bureaucracy whether civil servants have the right to express political views in public.

Some officials appear willing to support Ajay Gangwar, who has been removed as Badwani collector and posted as deputy secretary at the state secretariat here.

"Very few dare to stand with truth and rationale to safeguard the basic values of democracy and humanity. I salute you, my friend," a Facebook post by Rajesh Bahuguna, additional commissioner with the commercial tax department, said without naming Gangwar.

Bahuguna hasn't contradicted commenters interpreting the post as praise of Gangwar.

The 500,000-member state government employees' union has, in a statement addressed to chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, threatened a "strike" if freedom of expression is curbed.

But the state chapter of the Indian Administrative Service Association isn't ready to take the matter up unless Gangwar lodges a formal complaint, media reports have said.

Gangwar has deleted his Facebook account and has been quoted in newspapers as saying he would be forced to quit government service if harassed.

Gangwar had appeared to take a jibe at the BJP while saluting Nehru. "Is it his mistake that he prevented all of us from becoming Hindu Talibani Rashtra in 1947?" his post said in Hindi last week.

"Is it his mistake that he honoured Sarabhai, Homi Jehangir in place of intellectuals like Asaram and Ramdev... and set up universities instead of *gau shalas* and temples?"

Chief secretary Antony D'Sa declined comment but sources close to him accused Gangwar of violating service conduct rules.

They said Gangwar's reference to "Hindu Talibani" amounted to spreading hatred among communities and his reference to *gau shalas* mocked the Chouhan government's Nandishala Yojana, aimed at spreading the cowshed network.

Rule 7 in the handbook of the All India Service Conduct Rules (1964) forbids civil servants from

making "any public utterance... which has the effect of an adverse criticism of any current or recent policy or action of the central government or a state government", among other things.

Although Gangwar's transfer order does not mention any violation of service rules, the state's ruling BJP is openly saying he has been punished for expressing political opinions.

"He has violated the code of conduct. If we insult the system in the name of freedom of speech, that is wrong," Vishwas Sarang, an MLA from Bhopal considered close to Chouhan, said.

State culture secretary Manoj Srivastava, a senior IAS officer and regular Facebook contributor, said he didn't think that Gangwar had been punished for praising Nehru.

"But criticising the government of the day amounts to crossing the *Lakshman rekha*," he said.

However, Srivastava, author of several books on culture and religion, has expressed political opinions too: by criticising Kanhaiya Kumar and his fellow JNU students who are facing sedition charges.

"We cannot tolerate anybody raising anti-India slogans," Srivastava said.

Former Uttar Pradesh police chief Vikram Singh has been quoted as telling the news agency ANI in Lucknow that the Chouhan government should clarify why it had transferred Gangwar.

"If it's just because of him praising India's first and longest-serving Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, then it is just a petty issue. His transfer, solely based on what he has said about Nehruji, is not at all justified," he was quoted saying.

The Congress has accused the BJP of "intolerance".

A serving IAS officer who didn't wish to be quoted said: "It's funny and sad that the government, which wants us to use social media, is curbing freedom of expression so blatantly that the officer was forced to delete his FB post."

He criticised the IAS Association's silence. Some serving and former IAS officers said it was time the Centre formulated a clear social media policy for bureaucrats.

Srivastava, though, said Gangwar should have chosen to express his opinions in more subtle and ambiguous language.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, MAY 30, 2016

MP govt digs up IAS officer's anti-Modi Facebook post to justify transfer

The state government is crawling through the Facebook profile of IAS officer Ajay Singh Gangwar, former collector of Barwani who was transferred as deputy secretary, to justify its action as a section of officers questioned the decision.

Gangwar was removed as collector on the evening of May 26 following his comments on the social networking site that praised former prime minister and Congressman, late Jawaharlal Nehru, defended the Gandhi family and attacked the saffron brigade.

However, the transfer order by the chief secretary Anthony deSa didn't mention the Facebook (FB) post. It simply stated he had been transferred to Mantralaya as a deputy secretary.

The offending Facebook post which allegedly led to his removal reads: "Pls let me know the mistakes Nehru should not have committed...It was his mistake if he didn't allow you to become a Hindu Talibani Rashtra in 1947..It was his mistake that he brought IIT, ISRO, BARAC, IISB, IIM, BHEL STEEL PLANT, DAMS, THERMAL POWER (sic).

"...it was his mistake that he gave respect to SARABHAI, HOMI JAHANGEER instead of INTELLECTUAL like Asaram and Ramdev..It was his blunder that he opened university in place of Goshala and Mandir..It was his mistake that he showed you a scientific way in place of superstition.. Gandhi family needs to apologise to the nation for such mistakes (sic)."

Official sources said some of Gangwar's past FB activity was along similar lines.

On January 23, 2015, the former collector reportedly 'liked' an anti-Modi post which read: "Modi ke khilaph jankranti honi chaia (There should be a people's movement against Modi)".

Gangwar 'liking' a comment that was against the prime minister was in violation of the All India Service (conduct) Rules, 1968, the sources said, adding that the notice to be served will mention the FB posts.

Despite efforts, Gangwar could not be reached for a comment.

Speaking to HT earlier after his transfer orders came, Gangwar said the FB posts were his personal opinion "meant for a discussion exclusively among Facebook friends and is a kind of satire".

"Some may agree and some may not. I don't think expressing opinion on a subject in such a manner amounts to making a political comments and violates Central Civil Services (conduct) Rules," he said.

Within a couple of days of his transfer, some IAS officers came out in Gangwar's support.

Additional commissioner, commercial tax, Rajesh Bahuguna wrote in his Facebook post, "Very few dare to stand (against the system) with truth and rationale to safeguard the basic values of democracy and humanity. I salute you, my friend," allegedly in support of Gangwar.

TIMES OF INDIA, MAY 31, 2016

IAS officer gets notice for Facebook post on Modi

Bhopal : The Madhya Pradesh government on Monday sought an explanation from IAS officer Ajay Gangwar for his comments on Facebook against the Union government and PM Narendra Modi. He has a week to reply.

Gangwar had on May 26 been transferred from Barwani, where he was collector, to the secretariat for posting comments that also praised former PM Jawaharlal Nehru. Calling it a serious violation of freedom of expression, a delegation of Congress legislators met chief secretary Antony DeSa and demanded that the officer be reinstated.

"The government is trying to gag the bureaucracy," said Congress MLA Jitu Patwari. The chief secretary said that the government would act according to rules and that there was no bias against Gangwar.

ASIAN AGE, MAY 30, 2016

AAP government looks for bureaucrats overstaying on foreign assignments

[SANJAY KAW |](#)

The AAP government has started looking for bureaucrats who are overstaying beyond their approved tenures while on deputation for foreign assignments. The city government has started a mammoth exercise to locate such officers following directions from Union Cabinet Secretary Pradeep K. Sinha that states must initiate proceedings for deemed resignation from those officers who do not return from foreign assignments within one month of completion of their approved tenure and also forward a proposal to this effect to their cadre-controlling authority.

In a letter to Delhi chief secretary K.K. Sharma, the Cabinet Secretary said that a number of instances have to come to notice where officers have been overstaying beyond their approved tenures while on deputation abroad. "This trend needs to be discouraged by ensuring strict action against errant officers as per extant policy," Mr Sinha wrote in the letter.

"It may also be noted under Rule 7 (2) of the All-India Services (Leave) Rules 1955 and instructions issued vide letter No. 11019/ 95/2015-AIS-III dated 03/1/2015 state governments shall initiate proceedings for deemed resignation if the member of service does not return from

foreign assignment within one month after completion of the approved tenure and forward a proposal to the concerned cadre-controlling authority i.e. department of personnel and training (DoPT) for IAS; MHA for IPS and MoEF & CC for IFS officers for further taking further action on the issue,” the letter added.

Following the Cabinet Secretary’s directive, city deputy secretary (services) Mukesh Kumar Sharma has written to all the IAS officers of AGMUT cadre, stating that in the event of any officer overstaying for any reason, whatsoever, he or she is liable to disciplinary action and other adverse civil service consequences that would include the period of unauthorised overstay not being counted for service for the purpose of pension and that any increment due during the period of unauthorised overstay being deferred with cumulative effect till the date on which the officer rejoins the parent cadre.

“The Cabinet Secretary has once again impressed upon the cadre-controlling authorities to ensure that extant provisions in this matter are strictly followed and that the officers are made aware of the implications of overstay before they are relieved for taking up their foreign assignments. The cadre-controlling authorities are further advised to make sure that the officers do not continue their foreign assignment beyond the approved tenure and that they report back to their cadre immediately after completion of approved tenure.”

Earlier, an exercise by the cadre-controlling authorities had reportedly suggested that as many as 19 IAS officers and two of the IPS belonging to various state cadres had been missing for ages and shockingly neither Centre nor the states had any clue about their whereabouts. Most of these civil servants went abroad on study leave or some official assignments and never returned.

[DECCAN HERALD, MAY 27, 2016](#)

MP: IAS officer who praised Nehru in FB post transferred

IAS officer Ajay Singh Gangwar and Barwani district Collector, who praised the country's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in a Facebook post, was transferred by Madhya Pradesh government.

Gangwar was transferred as Deputy Secretary in the Secretariat in Bhopal. "The state government has transferred Barwani Collector Gangwar as Deputy Secretary in the Mantralaya in Bhopal," a state Public Relation department official said.

In the Facebook post written in Hindi, which has gone viral on other social media platforms, Gangwar has written that "let me know the mistakes that Nehru should not have committed...Is it his mistake that he prevented all of us from becoming Hindu Talibani Rashtra in 1947? Is it his mistake to open IIT, ISRO, BARC, IISB, IIM, BHEL steel plant, dams, thermal power? Is it his mistake that he honoured Sarabhai, Homi Jehangir in place of intellectuals like Asaram and Ramdev?"

According to the government official, the FB post had not gone down well with the top officials

as it was in "violation" of the service rules, following which an initial probe was conducted and Gangwar was transferred.

Ever since the Facebook post had gone viral, there were talks that Gangwar could be shunted out of the district any time. However, his transfer order did not mention anything about his Facebook post on Nehru, the official added.

HINDU, MAY 27, 2016

Govt. staff to strike work on June 2

State government employees working in various departments will abstain from attending to their duties on June 2 to mount pressure on the government to pay salaries and other benefits on par with Union government employees.

M.T. Mallesh, president of the Ballari district-unit of the Karnataka State Government Employees Association, told presspersons here on Thursday that the Union government has implemented the recommendations made by the Seventh Pay Commission and the State government had to follow suit. Due to the delay, the State government employees were deprived of the benefits, he added.

The difference in the salaries of Union and State government employees ranged from 44.06 per cent (minimum) to 111.33 per cent (maximum). "The association has been urging the State government to constitute a committee to look into the anomalies," he said. Submitting a number of representations to the State government urging it to set right the anomalies in the pay scale has been of no avail and the employees have been forced to strike work on June 2, he said.

BUSINESS STANDARD, MAY 27, 2016

PM keeps bureaucrats on their toes

Taking stock of Narendra Modi
Two years of Narendra Modi's foreign policy: more misses than hits
Why Narendra Modi govt needs to be transparent with its environmental policy
Narendra Modi: Governance and that Hindutva image
Narendra Modi walks on as Indian Anthem plays out

While some were taking the cleanliness pledge others were coming to terms with the "unpredictability" of what Prime Minister Narendra Modi would approve of and what he would not.

"When you go for a meeting prepared and confident, he tends to pick some point that requires you to do a course correction," a bureaucrat associated with a key ministry said.

"On other days, when you are not too sure if the decision taken is in line with the government's plan, he asks you to be confident and stick to the decision you have taken."

PIONEER, MAY 26, 2016

IAS OFFICIAL IN SOUP AFTER PRAISING GANDHI FAMILY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Praising Nehru – Gandhi family and writing about their achievements on social media could cause dear to an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Madhya Pradesh.

General Administration minister Lal Singh Arya has instructed the chief secretary to take action against Badwani collector Ajay Gangwar. Gangwar is considered close to Congress general secretary and former chief minister of state Digvijay Singh. Gangwar has also taken to task Baba Ramdev on social networking site facebook.

Gangwar in a facebook post on Tuesday wrote ‘point out the mistakes that Nehru should not have done, so that good could have happen. If he stopped the nation from becoming Hindu Talibani country then it was his mistake. He (Nehru) brought IIT, ISRO, BARAC, IISB, IIM BHEL Steel Plant, Dams, Thermal Power, this was his mistake. At the place of intellectuals like Asaram and Ramdev provided opportunity to Sarabhai and Homi Jahangeer this was his mistake. He opened universities at the place of Gaushala and temples this was his mistake. Instead of making you superstitious he showed you scientific way this was his mistake. For all these mistakes Gandhi family’s apology to the nation becomes mandatory.

Former Madhya Pradesh chief secretary Nirmala Buch reacting over the issue suggested the state government to take action against Gangwar and Narsinghpur Collector CB Chakrawarty.

While Minister Arya said that the Collectors should not make political comments over social media and instructed the chief secretary to take action under civil service conduct against Gangwar.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

STATESMAN, MAY 31, 2016

Jaitley promises structural reforms to boost growth

Wooing Japanese investors, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Tuesday promised more structural and market-oriented reforms as well as stepping up infrastructure spending to accelerate economic growth beyond the current 7.6 per cent.

He also promised to reform the tax structure to make it simpler, predictable and stable.

Speaking at 'The Future of Asia' Conference organised by Nikkei Inc here, he said India has been the fastest growing major economy in the last two years despite global slowdown.

"We had a back to back 7.2 per cent and 7.6 per cent growth rate in the last two years. This was notwithstanding the global slowdown which has also adversely impacted the trade in India," said Jaitley, who is on a six-day tour of Japan to attract investments.

The country has been able to perform despite adversities in two consecutive bad monsoons and some stress in the Indian private sector, the Finance Minister added.

"But then notwithstanding these adversities, a series of structural reforms, coupled with a large amount of enhanced public spending and a FDI, we maintained a reasonably respectable growth rate," he said.

Jaitley said a very large number of reforms have taken place over the last few years. "The objective has been to bring about structural reforms in India, and I think the consistency of that direction has helped in restoring the credibility of the Indian economy," he said.

In the last two years, 101 legislations have been passed in Parliament but there remain some which require a lot more time to build a larger consensus, he said alluding to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Bill that is stuck in the Rajya Sabha for months now.

He expressed hope the GST Bill will be passed by the Upper House in the ensuing monsoon session of Parliament.

On things to come, he said, "The direction that I have indicated is of more structural reforms, more market-oriented reforms and the future direction of stepping up infrastructure spending, concentrating on rural areas and social security, I think this direction will consistently be maintained."

While India started reforms in 1991, the second generation of reforms were unveiled when the BJP-led government came to power in 2014, he said. "We have opened out more sectors in the economy. While opening out to both international and domestic investments, we removed the unnecessary conditionalities, we eased the process of doing business in India. It is far easier than what it was years ago."

EDUCATION

TRIBUNE, MAY 30, 2016

De-bureaucratise education: Retired babus' tired ideas

A committee of retired bureaucrats set up to help the government draft new education policy has suggested an IAS-like all-India examination for appointing teachers. The existing NET (National Eligibility Test) already serves the purpose. It sets a national benchmark for quality and there is scope for improvement, if required. Bureaucrats learn to say “yes sir”, students need encouragement to question received wisdom. Autonomy and ability of regional institutions to select teachers should be respected. The suggestions for greater regulation and having a quality audit merit consideration but the HRD Ministry may use regulation to push its saffron agenda. While respecting the functional freedom of private schools, colleges and universities, certain regulatory measures can be mutually agreed upon with a credible dispute resolving authority in place. The committee, headed by former Cabinet Secretary TSR Subramanian, has stressed the recall of the no-fail policy. It has reiterated what 15 states and many concerned citizens have already demanded.

What needs to be done is to extend the State's role from being a mere education provider to a facilitator. Giving needy students vouchers and a choice to choose their school is better than funding schools that don't function. Technology can be used to spread quality education far and wide. The committee pleads for throwing the doors open to foreign universities. This should have been done two decades ago. Today online courses are available from reputed universities, even from Harvard, Stanford and MIT, enabling students to “sign up, view lectures and submit homework from anywhere in the world”, as Nandan Nilekani puts it.

Good quality, videotaped lectures are also available for school students. There is “EkStep”, which offers the basic concepts of literacy and numeracy for children. Salman Khan's Academy is an alternative model for school-level education. Teachers in this system do not teach but act as mentors and sort out students' problems in understanding, if any. Nandan Nilekani has argued that it is possible to use technology to “teach the next generation” at an affordable cost. The Central and state governments need to change their set ideas and attitudes before changing education.

DECCAN HERALD, MAY 27, 2016

Varsities get six months to comply with UGC norms

Existing deemed universities will have six months to fully comply with the revised UGC regulations, once the Centre notifies them in an official Gazette.

In an effort to maintain quality and standards, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has made tougher norms for setting-up and operating deemed universities.

The HRD Ministry is in the process of notifying the revised rules the UGC approved in its meeting last week.

“There will be six months fade-in period,” Higher Education Secretary Vinay Sheel Oberoi told DH, when asked how the revised rules would apply to existing deemed universities.

Thirty-five deemed universities out of an estimated 123 across the country are UGC funded, while 88 are managed by private entities.

New rules

Revised regulations stipulate that the deemed-to-be-universities status, otherwise called deemed universities, can be accorded to institutions with Grade A certification from National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) or the National Board of Accreditation (NBA), given after rigorous quality checks.

“For obtaining the status of deemed university, (institutions must have) a grading required for three cycles, the highest NAAC or NBA category at the time of application, and in the immediate NAAC or NBA cycle, and (they) should be in the top 20 of the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) list at the time of application and in the immediate two years,” the revised norms read. NAAC or NBA grade certification is also needed for the universities to open off campuses.

PIONEER, MAY 27, 2016

B'PUR, K'KOTE VARSITIES GET NAAC 'A' GRADE

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), an autonomous body under the University Grants Commission (UGC), has accorded “A” grade status to the Berhampur University and the Khallikote Cluster University.

Receiving the message from the NAAC team on Wednesday, Berhampur University Vice-Chancellor Prof Deepak Kumar Behera congratulated Higher Education Minister Pradeep Panigrahi for this. After 14 years, the university got “A” grade, he said.

The second oldest college of the State, now the Khallikote Cluster University, has also got “A” grade after seven years.

After assessing the activities of the universities over last five years, the NAAC team has given the grade. With this, the universities will now receive more funding by the Central Government.

University Registrar Dr Radhanath Rath said it is a pride not only for Brahmapur but also for the entire south Odisha. The universities also got national-level accreditations for this grade, he added.

The development has brought happiness among the students and teachers of the two institutes. They said it would facilitate quality education further.

HINDU, MAY 27, 2016

UGC told to retain teaching workloads

VIKAS PATHAK

The Human Resource Development Ministry has asked the University Grants Commission not to change the stipulated teaching hours of university and college teachers, weeks after a UGC notification increased the weekly workload.

The workload, including practicals, of assistant professors was increased from 16 to 18 hours and that of associate professors from 14 to 16 hours. Two hours of practicals equal one hour of teaching, as per the regulations.

The instruction comes after teachers at Delhi University called a strike.

They said this would lead to many ad hoc teachers losing their jobs. There was opposition to the plan in Maharashtra.

The reforms were based on the Nigavekar Committee's recommendations.

STATESMAN, MAY 27, 2016

Class and the clock

While research is generally considered to be a critical benchmark of a university's standing, there is a welcome focus on pedagogy in the latest notification of the University Grants Commission. It is especially welcome primarily because the campus authorities will now be expected to be riveted to under-graduate and post-graduate studies... in parallel with the almost obsessive concern with the doctoral level. When Jawaharlal Nehru University was at the conceptual stage in the early 1970s, distinguished historian and one of the finest teachers of Presidency College, the late Ashin Das Gupta, would often lament that a university cannot really flourish without a firm under-graduate foundation.

Forty years later, the chief regret must be that it took the UGC as long as it did to realise the crucial importance of teaching in the formative stages of college and university education. As often as not this is the pivotal segment of academia that suffers in relative neglect. The other

compulsion of the UGC was arguably to do justice to the enormous hike in salaries that has benefited teachers of both state and central universities and colleges as well.

Not to put too fine a point on it, the number of hours devoted to lectures doesn't quite match the thickness of the wallet. It thus comes about that the overarching authority in matters academic has now made it mandatory for assistant professors to devote 18 hours to teaching every week; for associate professors it has been fixed at 16 hours, though for professors there has been no change from the present schedule of 14 hours. In terms of classroom lectures -- excluding tutorials and practicals -- it scarcely works out to more than a few classes per week. The UGC has realised that even the minimum contribution of the teachers to the taught has been lacking either because of classes not taken or an overriding interest in research to take care of the career graph. Sad to reflect, the latter is accorded precedence over the student's search for learning. To that can be added the absenteeism, as at Visva-Bharati, where many teachers with a base in Kolkata spend more time in their permanent residence than at Santiniketan. Attending conferences and seminars, when not offshore junkets, is of lesser moment in the overall construct.

The needs of the student fraternity will hopefully be addressed with the latest stipulation of class hours, which ideally ought not to be determined by the clock. Equally, it must be conceded that the new provision to the effect that feedback from students will be one of the determinants for faculty promotions is bound to cause a flutter in the campus roost. And still more so in politically-charged or potentially volatile campuses that contend with an ideological division between teachers and the taught.

BUSINESS LINE, MAY 26, 2016

UGC eases process for deemed varsity status Govt interference reduced, Letter of Intent introduced

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has amended regulations for Deemed to be Universities (DTBU), keeping in view the changing requirements and recent policies of the government, a statement from the Ministry of Human Resources Development said.

At present, there are 123 DTBUs in the country, out of which 35 are government controlled and 88 privately managed.

Simplified process

“The application process has been simplified and made more objective.

The concept of Letter of Intent has been introduced, subjectivity has also been removed.

Instead of land requirement, built-up area has been specified and infrastructure requirement for off campus defined,” the statement said.

Stressing on quality, the DTBU status will be provisional for first five years and will be confirmed thereafter on the report of UGC review committee, among other measures. Deemed universities can open off-campuses only after five years, it said. Every deemed university will have an anti-ragging cell, anti-discrimination cell, gender sensitisation cell, internal complaints committee for prevention of sexual harassment, and barrier-free access for specially-abled students in all places.

“Moreover, deemed universities shall be allowed to take credits earned from other institutions under Choice Based Credit System as per UGC norms. Institution Deemed to be Universities shall review the syllabus every three years keeping in view the developments in the domains of knowledge,” the statement added

TELEGRAPH, MAY 30, 2016

School policy tonic: proud to be Indian

Basant Kumar Mohanty

New Delhi, May 29: A draft education policy has suggested that the curriculum be drawn up with the objective of making every student feel proud of being Indian, a source told **The Telegraph** today.

The content of every subject, particularly in school, should be designed weaving in values like righteousness, truth and the students' responsibility to themselves and the country, the source said, summarising recommendations submitted to the Union human resource development ministry last week.

"People from across the globe live in America and feel proud of being American, irrespective of their route (to the US). Similarly, students must feel proud of being Indian," the source said.

ON THE TABLE

Some of the proposals in the new education policy

- | | |
|--|--|
| ● Focus on value education so that students feel proud of being Indian | ● Class X board exams should be of difficult and easy variants to allow some students to explore vocational training after obtaining minimum education |
| ● Students must know not just their rights but also their responsibilities | ● Five-year integrated BA-BEd course after Class X to address teacher shortage |
| ● Remedial coaching for socially and educationally backward students | ● Best 10% students to be offered integrated BA-BEd course free |
| ● Compulsory medical test for every child every year to assess his or her physical fitness for study | ● Admission to engineering and medical courses through a national entrance test and a parallel exam, or selection based on Class XII marks, by each state government |
| ● Pass-fail system from Class VI and above | ● No entrance by deemed and private universities |
| ● All states should conduct board exams after Classes X and XII | |
| ● Medium of instruction should be tribal dialect till Class V in tribal areas | |

According to the draft, the social science syllabus is to present India's rich diversity of cultures, religions and civilisational heritage, the source added. Science subjects are to present the relation between man and nature in way that makes the students feel responsible for the environment.

Along with the rights guaranteed in the Constitution, the students are to be taught their duties and responsibilities, too. "Values should be part of all curricula," the source said.

The ministry is examining the draft policy, submitted by a five-member panel. The last policy was drawn up in 1986 and revised in 1992.

The panel, headed by former cabinet secretary T.S.R. Subramanian, has said the current lack of special care affects the potential of children from socially and educationally backward

communities.

It has suggested that schools provide remedial coaching to such children, perhaps with the help of students from higher classes and resource persons in the locality, such as retired government officials.

Many children lag behind because they are not physically strong: the draft has recommended compulsory medical tests for every child every year.

It has suggested that a block-level paramedical team visit schools with equipment and check the students' sight, hearing ability, dental health and overall condition. Students with any disorder should be provided medical help and follow-up treatment.

While the Right to Education Act says that no child should be failed till Class VIII, the draft policy says that automatic promotion should be allowed only up to Class V. If the policy is accepted without any change, the act will have to be amended.

To tackle the huge shortage of teachers, the draft policy has suggested starting an integrated BA-BEd course for Class X pass-outs. According to an Oxfam India report released last year, over 5 lakh sanctioned posts for teachers now lie vacant.

For the first time, the draft education policy has touched upon medical education, saying the existing 300-odd colleges are not enough. District hospitals with adequate resource persons could be upgraded to medical colleges, it has said.

The panel has found that around 3 lakh Indian students are pursuing higher studies abroad. The expenditure incurred by them amounts to what the Centre and the state governments spend on higher education, the source said.

HINDU, MAY 31, 2016

Protest against UGC notification

Teachers from various DU colleges held a march from Mandi House to Parliament Street

Teachers from various Delhi University colleges held a march from Mandi House to Parliament Street on Monday in protesting against the latest gazette notification of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

Marching under the banner of Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA), the teachers have been boycotting evaluation of undergraduate exams in protest against the new UGC criteria to ascertain their academic performance.

They feel the new amendments will lead to job cuts to the tune of 50 per cent and drastically increase pupil-teacher ratio in higher education. The protest entered Day Seven on Monday and the teachers plan to continue the boycott till Thursday.

“Narrow parameters”

“Through this march, teachers have given a powerful clarion call for a widespread movement against the Ministry of Human Resource Development’s narrow parameters on workload calculation and impossible Academic Performance Indicators [API] targets for promotions,” one of the protesting teachers said.

The teachers, who were accompanied by a few Jawaharlal Nehru University students, tried to march till Parliament but were stopped near the Parliament Street police station. A few agitating teachers then went to the Union Human Resource Development Ministry to submit a memorandum of demands.

“Bullying”

“The teachers and students are resolute in their determination to not submit to the Ministry’s bullying and will leave no stone unturned to broaden the movement to a mass campaign against the government’s attack on public-funded higher education,” another teacher said.

“By introducing such retrogressive amendments to the UGC regulations, this government is pushing the academic talent of the nation back to the trailing end of the global knowledge society,” she added.

The new gazette notification has increased the workload of Assistant Professors from 16 hours per week to 18 hours plus another six hours of tutorials, bringing the total to 24 hours. Similarly, the work hours of Associate Professors have been increased from 14 to 22 hours. This indirectly means that a lot of work being done by ad-hoc teachers will also be done by permanent teachers, putting the jobs of ad-hocs at risk.

“Stubborn stand”

“The Ministry’s stubborn stand has damaged the job prospects of 5,000 young teachers of DU alone and has put a question mark on the promotions and career advancement of the entire teaching community,” a DUTA member said.

The Ministry had last week defended the new UGC criteria for API for college and university teachers saying it provides “more flexibility”. It however ruled out any possibility of reduction in number of teaching jobs.

DECCAN HERALD, MAY 31, 2016

Make education policy report public

The committee headed by former cabinet secretary TSR Subramanian, which was appointed to give proposals on framing a new national education policy, has submitted its report. While the Human Resource Development Ministry has not made it official, some highlights of the report have come into the public realm. The committee's brief was to help in preparing a new education policy as such. The existing policy is about three decades old and it has to be updated in view of the inadequacies that came to the fore during its implementation, the changes which have taken place in society and the new challenges and tools of education that have emerged. The crucial role of the education policy in shaping the future of the country is well-known. A sound education policy lays the foundation for the social, economic and scientific development of the country and is important in moulding the personalities of future citizens.

Considering the importance of the committee's task, it is surprising that its composition was narrow and lacked authority and expertise in the area of education. Apart from TSR Subramanian, other members were former chief secretaries of Delhi and Gujarat and a former home secretary of Delhi. The only member who had some association with education is a former NCERT director J C Rajput who had become controversial during the time of the last NDA government when he faced charges of trying to saffronise education. There are many eminent educationists and experts in the country whose services the government could have utilised. It passes understanding why an important committee on education should be dominated by former bureaucrats. The very composition of the committee is bound to attract resistance to its proposals.

Subramanian has said that the members of the committee have held extensive discussions with all stake-holders all over the country before formulating its proposals. But that may not be enough to make the proposals widely acceptable.

The committee is thought to have recommended the holding of a national test for recruitment of teachers. It is not known how this is different from the existing National Eligibility Test (NET). There are also proposals on improving the quality of education at both school and college levels, the roles of private sector and foreign universities, changes in the examination system, skill development and vocational education and the restructuring of bodies like UGC and AICTE. There is the need for a wide and informed public debate on the proposals before they form the basis for the new policy. The government should make them public at the earliest.

INDIAN EXPRESS, MAY 30, 2016

UGC notification raises workload: DU teachers extend boycott on evaluating papers till June 2

All 12 evaluation centres remained virtually empty last week as teachers stayed away from evaluating answer scripts in protest over the UGC notification.

Written by **Shikha Sharma**

Delhi University (DU) teachers who have been boycotting the evaluation process for undergraduate exams over the last four days, in protest against the University Grants Commission's (UGC) latest gazette notification, have decided to continue the boycott till June 2. The teachers also threatened to boycott the university's admission system if the notification is not withdrawn.

Sources said the continued boycott may not only delay results but could adversely affect the admission process, which begins from June 1. More than 4,000 teachers signed the decision at the general body meeting Saturday.

All 12 evaluation centres remained virtually empty last week as teachers stayed away from evaluating answer scripts in protest over the UGC notification. "If our voices are not heard, we may boycott the admission process as well," said T N Jha, a Hindi professor.

As per the gazette notification, workload for assistant professors has been increased from 16 hours of "direct teaching" per week (including tutorials) to 18 hours, plus another six of tutorials, bringing the total up to 24 hours. Similarly, the work hours of associate professors have been increased from 14 hours to 22 hours.

Calling it unacceptable, teachers said the changes will not only impact the quality of teaching but will also result in a skewed student-teacher ratio. The changes would also drastically increase workload of permanent staff, they claimed.

Rajesh Jha, a professor at Rajdhani college, said, "We aren't happy boycotting evaluation. But we don't have another option. The notification has disastrous ramifications not just for DU, but

for the country's higher education system. The absolute boycott by the teaching community should tell the government that this is not acceptable”.

He added, “It was decided at the meeting that the boycott will continue till June 2. The executive committee will meet again on June 1 to review the situation and suggest ways to strengthen the struggle.” Teachers have also planned to stage a “people’s march to Parliament” on May 30.

Staff associations of different colleges also passed resolutions rejecting the notification. “The staff association of Ramjas College also urges the UGC to refrain from announcing such rules which are anti-academic and anti-teacher. The teaching community will not accept such rules lying down...,” read the resolution passed by the association.

GOVERNORS

ASIAN AGE, MAY 26, 2016

Centre to reshuffle governors, get new faces

Rajnish Sharma

After appointing former IPS officer Kiran Bedi as the Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry, the Centre is planning to reshuffle some governors and may also appoint a few new ones. Some of the states being considered by the government for fresh faces in Raj Bhavan include Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, and even Tamil Nadu. According to senior government sources, the issue has been discussed among Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union home minister Rajnath Singh, finance minister Arun Jaitley and BJP president Amit Shah.

One such round of discussions was held last week. There is a growing view within the government that though some changes and fresh gubernatorial appointments are needed, a final decision is expected only after the Cabinet reshuffle, a source pointed out.

One of the important names doing the rounds is that of Gujarat chief minister Anandiben Patel, who is being considered for Punjab which does not have a full-time governor as Haryana governor Kaptan Singh Solanki holds additional charge there. Speculation is rife that Ms Patel could be replaced as Gujarat CM by senior minister Nitin Patel.

A section within the government feels Rajasthan governor Kalyan Singh should be moved to another crucial state in north India and, if this happens, then current Uttarakhand governor K.K. Paul could replace Mr Singh in Jaipur. Dr Paul had a successful tenure as Delhi police commissioner. Sources said the name of another former Delhi police chief, B.S. Bassi, is under consideration for the governorship of Uttarakhand. He was also in the reckoning for Chief Information Commissioner when he retired from the police.

The government is also keen on appointing noted lawyer and former attorney-general Soli Sorabjee as governor of an important state. His name was also considered around the time senior Gujarat BJP leader Vajubhai Vala was appointed Karnataka governor in 2014.

The term of Tamil Nadu governor K. Rosaiah gives over in about three months so the Centre is looking for a replacement for him too.

“Discussions are on at the highest level in government on the issue of governors and several names and scenarios are being deliberated upon. But, more than an administrative decision, this also has to be a political decision,” a senior government functionary said.

STATESMAN, MAY 31, 2016

Governor exceeds brief

The Tamil Nadu Governor, Konjeti Rosaiah, has written a letter to the Election Commission directing it to hold elections to the Assembly in Aravakurichi and Thanjavur constituencies preferably before 1 June “in public interest and in the interest of all the concerned parties,” either due to his lack of knowledge of the constitutional provisions regarding the Election Commission or pressure from Chief Minister J Jayalalitha. The action of the Governor, a constitutional authority, clearly infringes on the rights and responsibilities of another constitutional authority, the Election Commission.

The intervention of the Governor in matters connected with holding of elections is without jurisdiction and is not in the interest of electoral integrity which is the prime responsibility of the EC. The Governor quoted in his letter the Supreme Court judgment in Bhim Singh vs the Election Commission of India, 1996, to justify his action without understanding its full import. The judgment categorically upholds the powers of the EC to fix the date of poll or take any other decision to ensure the conduct of free and fair elections. It said, “There can be little doubt that the aforesaid provisions read together require close consultation between the Union of India and the Election Commission in the matter of fixing the election programme. It is clearly both impossible and undesirable that any outer limit should be placed in Section 30(d) (of the Representation of the People Act) for the date of the poll.

The fixing of the date of the poll would depend upon a variety of circumstances, all of which have to be taken into account by the Election Commission acting in consultation with the Government of India, which would have the necessary material in this behalf. We do not, therefore, find Section 30(d) arbitrary or unconstitutional.” When TN Seshan, Chief Election Commissioner, postponed the Kalka by-election in Haryana in 1993, the Punjab and Haryana High Court declared the postponement invalid. But, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court turned down the High Court order and upheld the right of the CEC.

The Chief Electoral Officer of Tamil Nadu has prepared a report for the ECI as to how politicians distributed cash for votes using goons, milk vendors and newspaper boys in Aravakurichi, Thanjavur and elsewhere in the state. The ECI postponed election in these two constituencies to 23 May and later put it off till 13 June to ascertain whether polls could be held in the vitiated atmosphere. The best course would be to call for fresh elections with new nominees. The contestants in these constituencies where polling was postponed contend the alleged corrupt practices relied on by the EC could be tested in a court of law. But experience shows election petitions are seldom disposed of in time. An election petition against P Chidambaram of the Congress, who was declared elected from Sivaganga in the 2009 Lok Sabha election for allegedly resorting to corrupt practices, is still pending in the Madras High Court even after two years of the end of the five-year term. Election petitions are of little use.

HEALTH SERVICES

TRIBUNE, MAY 30, 2016

Pvt hospitals refuse to get empanelled at govt rates

Cashless health insurance scheme

The state government had sent communication to 33 government and private hospitals outside Punjab requesting them to get empanelled for offering treatment to MLAs and ministers

16 pvt hospitals, including four top hospitals like Lilavati Hospital (Mumbai), Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital (Mumbai), Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in New Delhi have not agreed to Punjab's proposal

Four hospitals, including Escorts, GB Panth Hospital, Indraprashta Apollo Hospital and Max Super Speciality Hospital in Delhi, have not responded to the state government's offer even after two months.

Punjab's ministers and MLAs' wish to seek treatment at luxury corporate hospitals have come a cropper as most of the corporate hospitals in Delhi and Mumbai have refused to get empanelled on government rates.

According to sources, the state government had sent a communication to 33 government and private hospitals outside Punjab requesting them to get empanelled for offering treatment to MLAs and ministers.

At present, the MLAs and ministers get treatment by spending from their own pocket and get reimbursement from government on AIIMS and PGI rates. The government is planning to upgrade those rates to Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) rates, which are much higher.

Though all government and charitable hospitals in Punjab and outside have agreed to get empanelled, but 16 private hospitals, including four top hospitals like Lilavati Hospital (Mumbai), Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital and Medical Research Institute (Mumbai), Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre and Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in New Delhi have not agreed to Punjab's proposal.

Four hospitals, including Escorts, GB Panth Hospital, Indraprashta Apollo Hospital and Max Super Speciality Hospital in Delhi have not responded to the state government's offer even after two months.

Among the top private hospitals, only Medanta, Medicity have agreed to treat MLAs and ministers.

Some private hospitals in Punjab located in Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jalandhar have agreed to the government's offer.

Interestingly, among Punjab's top corporate hospitals, Max Super Speciality Hospital in SAS Nagar has agreed. However, Fortis Hospital, Mohali has agreed with on its own terms and conditions. It has agreed mainly in those specialties in which implants are used like joint replacement, cardiology and oncology.

These are the branches in which medicines and implants have commonly inflated MRPs. DMC, Ludhiana and Hearo Heart Institute have also agreed but said that it will not offer CGHS rates on all the treatments.

Significantly, two months ago, the state government tried to bring all MLAs under the state's cashless health insurance scheme in a bid to reduce the burden on the treasury.

However, most of the legislators, cutting across party lines, gave the thumbs down to the scheme. They insisted on the empanelment of top private hospitals in the country. The communication in this regard was sent to the state health department by the Vidhan Sabha secretary on March 16.

STATESMAN, MAY 30, 2016

Navigating NEET

By promulgating the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test Ordinance, the government has given a one-year respite to students seeking admission in government-run medical colleges. According to the Medical Council of India, the total number of MBBS seats available in the country is 49,990; government medical colleges account for 25,330 seats and private medical colleges for the rest. The ordinance will benefit students studying in state boards of higher secondary education in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Telangana. Some of these states expressed their inability to conduct NEET, which is based on the CBSE curriculum, as time is too short to prepare students. The Supreme Court has made NEET mandatory for all medical aspirants from this year itself. The ordinance partially bypasses the Supreme Court order. A public interest suit seeking stay of the ordinance was

rejected by the Supreme Court on Friday. JP Nadda, Union Health Minister, has clarified that the second phase of NEET will take place as scheduled on 24 July and those seeking admission to private medical colleges have sufficient time to prepare for it. He confirmed that the BJP government of Narendra Modi was on the same page as the Supreme Court as far as NEET was concerned. The Congress was quick to find fault with the Modi government, accusing it of conspiring with private medical colleges which, in Tamil Nadu, charge up to Rs one crore for a MBBS seat. The truth is that it was the Congress government of Manmohan Singh which conspired with private medical colleges and obtained a ruling from the Supreme Court in 2013 that NEET was unconstitutional and never appealed against it. It was left to the Supreme Court to revisit its controversial 2013 judgment and pass an order last month making NEET mandatory.

NEET was visualised by the board of governors of the Medical Council of India in 2010 as a single entrance examination for aspiring medical students who had to try their luck in multiple tests those days. Though the Congress government accepted NEET in principle, it lacked the political will to implement it. The argument that NEET should be held in multiple languages recognised by the Constitution is specious because the 100-odd entrance examinations held by private medical colleges are all in English. Besides, the medium of instruction in medical colleges across the country is English and aspiring medical students must have basic knowledge in that language. The ordinance has provided only temporary relief in the present crisis. The government must find a permanent solution to eliminate the menace of capitation fee and profiteering by private medical colleges. More than Rs. 20,000 crore is collected annually by private medical colleges by way of capitation fees. Formulating an all-India policy for medical admissions is the need of the hour. NEET will solve the problem to some extent.

TRIBUNE, MAY 27, 2016

Doctors to retire at 65: PM

Calls himself 'UP-wala' at a rally to mark two years of his govt

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the BJP's Vikas Parv rally in Saharanpur on Thursday.
PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said his government would soon take a decision to extend the retirement age of government doctors to 65 years.

In his attempt to reach out to the Uttar Pradesh electorate ahead of the Assembly elections, he said he was a "UP-wala" who cared for the farmers.

Addressing a rally at Saharanpur to mark two years of his government, he said, “As we are facing a huge shortage of doctors in the country, our government is working on a plan to extend the retirement age of the doctors to 65 years.”

He urged private doctors to devote the ninth day of every month to examine expectant mothers coming from marginalised background. “Please spare 12 days a year for free check-up of such women to help check maternal mortality,” he said.

Declaring the entire population of the country to be his family, he said he was working for each Indian, irrespective of caste or community. He presented a report card of his government saying people had a right to know how he spent each “pal” (moment) and each “paisa”.

He said he welcomed scrutiny by the people, but also wanted them to be partners in development.

In his 35-minute address, he refrained from attacking any political party, though he said, “The country is changing, but the mindset of a few people hasn't changed yet.”

Addressing sugarcane farmers of the Saharanpur belt, he said his government was working towards clearing their dues, but there still remained arrears of Rs 700-800 crore due to the highhandedness of mill owners and the state government.

He said his government was working towards doubling the farmers' income by 2022. Issuance of soil health cards was a step in that direction.

On his government's effort that resulted in one crore households giving up their LPG subsidy, Modi said till now a gas connection was for the rich, but now it had reached the kitchen of the poor and the marginalised.

INDIAN EXPRESS, MAY 26, 2016

7th pay panel recommendations: Resident doctors in Delhi govt hospitals to go on strike

Dr Pankaj Solanki, president of the Federation of Resident Doctors Association (FORDA) in Delhi said the decision to go on a token 24-hour strike was taken after the doctors wore black arm bands while on duty Monday.

Resident doctors across most government hospitals in Delhi will go on strike for 24 hours from 9 am Thursday, to protest the recommendations of the seventh pay commission for the medical

community. The doctors will gather at Lady Hardinge Medical College at 1 pm for a protest march from the hostel premises.

Dr Pankaj Solanki, president of the Federation of Resident Doctors Association (FORDA) in Delhi said the decision to go on a token 24-hour strike was taken after the doctors wore black arm bands while on duty Monday.

Doctors said the recommendations would discourage young doctors from joining government service. “If the changes like reducing Non Practicing Allowance from 25 to 20 per cent are not reverted, doctors across the country may go on an indefinite strike from June 1,” said Dr Solanki.

Doctors from AIIMS and Safdarjung hospital, however, will not be a part of the strike. A letter by Safdarjung hospital’s RDA to the hospital’s medical superintendent Tuesday said an “extreme step” like a strike was not warranted “in the present environment of hope and negotiations with the government”. The doctors also said they did not believe FORDA represented them.

However, at Safdarjung hospital, resident doctors of several departments like ophthalmology, orthopedics, dermatology, radiodiagnosis and anesthesia wrote to their department heads, stating they would be going on mass leave on Thursday.

LABOUR

ASIAN AGE, MAY 31, 2016

No TDS for PF withdrawals of up to Rs 50,000

No tax would be deducted at source for PF withdrawals of up to Rs 50,000 from June 1.

The government has notified raising the threshold limit of PF withdrawal for deduction of tax (TDS) from existing Rs 30,000 to Rs 50,000, a senior official said.

“The Finance Act, 2016 has amended section 192A of Income Tax Act, 1961 to raise the threshold limit of PF withdrawal from Rs 30,000 to Rs 50,000 for Tax Deducted at Source (TDS),” the notification stated.

The provision will come into effect from June 1, 2016, providing relief to subscribers of retirement fund body EPFO.

The government had introduced the proposal to deduct TDS on PF withdrawals in order to discourage pre-mature withdrawal and to promote long term savings.

According to existing provisions, TDS is deducted at the rate of 10 per cent provided PAN is submitted. TDS will be deducted at the rate of 10 per cent provided PAN is submitted.

However, in case Form 15G or 15H is submitted by the member, then TDS is not deducted.

These forms are to declare that their income would not be taxable after receiving payment of their PF accumulations from retirement fund body EPFO.

While Form 15H is submitted by senior citizens (above 60 years of age), Form 15G is submitted by claimants below the age of 60 years.

TDS is deducted at the maximum marginal rate of 34.608 per cent if a member fails to submit PAN or Form 15G or 15H. However, there are certain exceptions to deduction of TDS by EPFO.

LIBRARIES

STATESMAN, MAY 26, 2016

National Digital Library up in pilot stage

The National Digital Library (NDL) project initiated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and being executed by IIT Kharagpur is up and running in its pilot form, the institute said in a statement on Wednesday.

The NDL in 2016 will bring under its fold 100 institutes and roll out a collection of one million digitised books and journals in the first phase.

Contents from as many as 16 sources (such as CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology, CSIR-Central Glass & Ceramic Research Institute, and IIT Hyderabad) were added to the NDL portal last week. Among them are IIT-JEE Advanced questions and answers from 2007.

"The limited launch pilot portal was provided to IIT-Kharagpur students who then tested and submitted feedback to project committee," according to the institute. The digital platform serves as a single-window search portal facilitating focused and quick searching for all, except copyrighted content, said Partha Pratim Das, professor at IIT-Kharagpur department of computer science and engineering and one of the core NDL team members.

MANAGEMENT

DECCAN HERALD, MAY 31, 2016

Centre scraps 5-yr management programmes UGC had forced DU to roll back a course in 2014

Reversing another decision made during the UPA regime, the Centre has scrapped five-year integrated dual degree programme in Management, directing all B-schools not to admit fresh students.

The decision has been taken recently by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), an autonomous body that functions under the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD). In June 2014, the University Grants Commission (UGC) had forced the Delhi University roll back a four-year undergraduate programme (FYUP) at the behest of HRD Minister Smriti Irani.

“Dual degree courses have been closed and no fresh admission should be permitted from the academic year of 2016-17,” the technical education regulator recently notified in a circular to all recognised management institutes. Citing reasons for its decision to scarp five-year integrated programmes in Management, the council said they were not in line with the programmes approved by the UGC.

To “safeguard” students’ interest, the technical education regulator stated in its circular that institutes offering the dual degree programmes will be given extension of approval only for a period of five years so that students already enrolled complete their courses.

However, such institutes will be given an extension of five years for “integrated MBA” courses, not in the nomenclature of the five-year dual degree programmes approved in 2012, it said.

The AICTE had in 2012 approved offering of five-year integrated programmes in Management to “educate and groom students in order to enable them get entry-level managerial positions in manufacturing and services sector or to start and run their own ventures with good business knowledge”.

Though the duration of the courses was fixed as five years (10 semesters), the council provides students with flexibility to exit the programme at the end of three years and come back later to complete fourth and fifth year of their respective programmes of studies.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

TELEGRAPH, MAY 26, 2016

A costly failing: The BJP did not understand the cultural ethos of West Bengal

Swapan Dasgupta

The outcome of the state assembly elections on May 19 has produced an understandable elation in the ranks of the Narendra Modi government and the Bharatiya Janata Party. Apart from its outright victory in the eastern state of Assam, the BJP is particularly satisfied that the Congress, a party it still regards as its principal opponent, has been ousted from power in Assam and Kerala and that the coalitions it partnered in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu have been well and truly defeated by Mamata Banerjee and J. Jayalalithaa. The BJP may be justified in believing that the Congress is fast running out of steam and that this loss of momentum will be reflected in the monsoon session of Parliament.

Apart from the discomfiture of its principal opponent, there are additional reasons for the BJP to be jubilant over this month's election results. After two consecutive - and from its point of view, unexpected - election defeats in Delhi and Bihar last year, the BJP supporters have found something to cheer about in its resounding success in Assam. Read with the staggering 15 per cent share of the popular vote it received in Kerala - the highest ever secured by a formation not associated with either the Congress and the Left parties - and the three seats it won in West Bengal, the BJP believes it is now well and truly poised for a geographical enlargement of its popular vote.

Although the 'national' character of the BJP is yet to match the spread of the Congress in the era of one-party dominance between Independence and 1967, there is the satisfaction that the caricatured view of the party as a force confined to the Hindi-speaking belt has been demolished. It was in 1991, in the wake of L.K. Advani's *rath yatra* that the BJP first won parliamentary seats outside its traditional areas: four in Karnataka, one in Andhra Pradesh and two in Assam. Since then it consolidated its hold in Karnataka, winning the state assembly election in 2008 and unfurled the saffron flag south of the Vindhya. Now with Assam under its belt, the BJP can well and truly claim that it has a meaningful presence in all the four corners of the country.

A more nuanced analysis suggests that while the BJP has done exceedingly well in Assam and bettered its 2014 record in both that state and Kerala, its performance in West Bengal has been relatively disappointing. In 2014, the BJP polled a total of 17 per cent votes in West Bengal, won two Lok Sabha seats and led in 24 assembly segments. Compared to that, it lost seven per cent vote share in 2016 and won merely three assembly seats. Although the West Bengal performance is creditable *per se*, not least because that the BJP has been unendingly thwarted in the past from winning any assembly seats (the two earlier occasions it won seats were in by-elections), the achievement is modest compared to the performances in Assam and Kerala.

The argument that Bengalis are less inclined to be enthusiastic about a party that espouses Hindu nationalism is spurious. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the predecessor of the BJP, was founded by a

Bengali notable, Dr Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, in 1951 and two of the three Lok Sabha seats it won in the 1952 general election were from West Bengal. In Assam, the growth of the BJP began from the Barak Valley in 1991 and Bengali voters in the Andaman Islands have been inclined to vote BJP for long. The belief that the Bengali Hindu personality is naturally inimical to the BJP is a self-serving myth propagated by those who see Hindu nationalism as counter-Enlightenment.

In West Bengal, following the 2014 general election, when the political class was caught unawares by the strong but silent tilt towards Modi, the BJP seemed poised to achieve a breakthrough in the state and perhaps even emerge as the principal opponent of the Trinamul Congress. In terms of these lofty expectations and considering the fall in vote share, the BJP's performance has been deeply disappointing.

The question naturally arises: what did the BJP do right in Assam and Kerala that it couldn't replicate in West Bengal?

At a very basic level it was a question of local leadership. In Assam, the BJP was able to very successfully integrate the large number of new entrants to the party from the Asom Gana Parishad and the Congress and put their skills and experience to good use. In Kerala too, assiduous work among community organizations of the Ezhavas and Nairs complemented the strong cadre base of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. In Bengal, however, the sect mentality prevailed. People who had worked thanklessly for a party that had made a habit of losing deposits in elections, were insufficiently large-hearted to accommodate people whose political experiences were far richer. In 2015, a gentleman who had distinguished himself in another party and had joined the BJP after the 2014 general election told me his impressions of the state BJP: "In BJP, the important thing is not to win but to secure the nomination." Presumably, he was alluding to the tendency of local BJP stalwarts to use their status to play liaison agents between local people and the Central government.

Far more important, however, was the inability of the state BJP to connect with the socio-cultural ethos of the state. In Assam, the BJP successfully tapped into the Assamese sub-nationalism that had emerged in the wake of the anti-foreigner agitation of the 1980s. In Kerala, the party was able to tap into the Hindu disquiet resulting from the perception that the state was a passive victim of an overdose of aggressive minorityism. In both cases, the BJP was able to successfully connect with either a pre-existing or emerging cultural ethos. In both Kerala and Assam, the public faces of the BJP were unmistakably regional, as regional as Modi had made the Gujarat BJP with the Gujarati pride theme.

In Bengal, the BJP had always suffered from the perception that it was a party of Hindi-speakers, notably Marwari businessmen of central Calcutta. The image was further bolstered by the inclination of central leaders to hobnob with only that slice of the population during their visits to the state. To be successful, *Hindutva* had also to be linked with Bengali-ness. This is where the BJP faltered horribly. Far from projecting leaders who could combine their local roots with a larger philosophy, it made no distinction between Bengali speakers and Hindi speakers. The public faces of the BJP in West Bengal tended to be imports from northern India who invariably spoke in Hindi and made little attempt to understand the distinctive cultural inclinations of the

people they were dealing with. This failing has cost the BJP dearly.

What Assam has taught the BJP is that a one-size-fits-all approach that is often the hallmark of the RSS cannot succeed all over India. A national party has to combine its larger ideological framework with a deep understanding of the local context. The communist parties were notionally internationalist but their success in Bengal over such a long period owed considerably to the fact that they were for all practical purposes imbued with a strong Bengali ethos - from the *bhadralok dhoti* to speaking in Bengali. This is an elementary lesson for the BJP if it wishes to achieve the breakthrough it seeks in West Bengal.

Shyama Prasad was a towering Hindu leader but he was also quintessentially very Bengali.

BUSINESS STANDARD, MAY 26, 2016

Pinarayi Vijayan sworn in as Kerala Chief Minister

Vijayan will be heading a 19-member ministry with 13 new faces including two women

Kerala Governor P Sathasivam administers oath to Pinarayi Vijayan as the new Chief Minister of the state in Thiruvananthapuram. Photo: PTI

Kerala assembly elections: Victory margin at Dharmadam to boost Pinarayi Vijayan's CM chances Pinarayi Vijayan hands over Kerala cabinet list to Governor Pinarayi Vijayan to be sworn in as Kerala CM on May 25 Pinarayi Vijayan to be next CM of Kerala

Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) strongman Pinarayi Vijayan was on Wednesday sworn in as Chief Minister of Kerala, heading a 19-member ministry of the party-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) that had 13 new faces including two women.

The 72-year-old Vijayan, who pipped his bitter party rival V S Achuthanandan to the top post in Kerala politics, was administered the oath of office and secrecy by Governor Justice (Retd) P Sathasivam at the Central Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram.

Hailing from a poor toddy tapper's family, Vijayan, a first time Chief Minister, took the oath in Malayalam. A CPI(M) Politburo member, he is the 12th chief minister of Kerala.

Out of the 19-member cabinet, 12 including the Chief Minister are from CPI(M), 4 from CPI, one each from NCP, Janata Dal(S) and Congress(S). The outgoing Congress-led United Democratic Front had 21 ministers.

There are 13 new faces, including two women, in the Cabinet. Five ministers had held positions in previous LDF ministries.

The CPI(M)-LDF had unseated the Congress-led UDF by securing 91 seats in the 140-member House in the May 16 assembly polls.

A huge pandal to accommodate at least 30,000 persons was put up at the stadium, adjacent to the state Secretariat.

CCTVs erected at various places enabled the large crowd, who had gathered to view the ceremony streamed live.

The slight drizzle failed to dampen the spirits of the party workers who had arrived in buses and other vehicles from various parts of the state, especially the northern districts of Kasaragod, Kannur and Kozhikode, to witness the swearing-in ceremony, which began at 4 pm.

In 2006 also, the swearing in of then Chief Minister V S Achutanandan and his cabinet colleague was held outside the Raj Bhavan.

Former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda, former Chief Ministers Oommen Chandy, V S Achutanandan, CPI(M) General Secretary Seetharam Yechury, Prakash Karat, 97-year-old K R Gowri Amma, who was Revenue minister in the EMS Namboodiripad cabinet of 1957, former union minister and lone member of BJP in the assembly O Rajagopal, religious and cultural leaders and film actors attended the function.

CPI(M) and CPI ministers took the oath and made solemn pledge, while other Front ministers took the oath in the name of God.

The ministers who were sworn in by the Governor are (CPI-M) Thomas Isaac, A K Balan, G Sudhakaran, E P Jayarajan, Kadakampally Surendran, K K Shylaja, J Mercykutty Amma, T P Ramakrishnan, A C Moideen, C Raveendranath and K T Jaleel (CPI-M-IND).

This is also the first time that a swearing in ceremony is observing green protocol to ensure zero waste event.

The capital city was a sea of red, with CPI(M) party flags and red buntings flying high in various corners. Party workers were dressed in red shirts and red caps.

BUSINESS STANDARDEAD, MAY 26, 2016

Mamata Banerjee to be sworn in on Red Road

Dignitaries including Nitish Kumar, Arvind Kejriwal, Lalu Prasad Yadav and Farooq Abdullah to attend the ceremony

Ishita Ayan Dutt

The politics of patronage in Mamata's BengalMamata confident of victoryWest Bengal Assembly Elections 2016: Here's what worked in Mamata Banerjee's favourA bittersweet storyNew political alignment may throw up surprises in West Bengal elections

TMC chief Mamata Banerjee appears to be taking a leaf out of Franklin Roosevelt's book. The American President had said: "We are going to make a country in which no one is left out." Banerjee is working towards a Bengal where no one is left out of anything, especially when it comes to some kind of celebration.

In her first innings as the chief minister of West Bengal, Banerjee had made a mass event out of an elite Kolkata Film Festival, what had deeply hurt the sentiments and sensibilities of the Bengali bhadralok, with the props of the event changing from the likes of Jafar Panahi to the Bachchan family, Shah Rukh Khan and Anushka Sharma. The idea was to change the character and scale of the event. This time, Banerjee has decided to change the scale once more, but for the swearing-in ceremony of her government.

In a deviation from the usual venue of Raj Bhavan, the event of May 27, will be held on the Red Road, one of the arterial roads in Kolkata that houses the Fort William where the Army is headquartered. And, it will remain blocked for at least five days, probably more. Among the dignitaries who have confirmed presence are: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Rashtriya Janata Dal chief Lalu Prasad Yadav and National Conference's Farooq Abdullah, leading to speculation whether the foundation for a Third Front is being laid.

The Union government is likely to be represented by urban development minister Venkaiah Naidu.

Kolkata Police had announced earlier in the week that the road would remain closed from May 23 to 29, or till the dismantling process is over. The Red Road is rarely blocked; the vehicles are kept off the road on the eve of Republic Day or Independence Day — the only two events held there — for rehearsals.

Banerjee had announced the day poll results were announced that the swearing-in ceremony would be held on the Red Road. But why Red Road?

“It's the scale of the mandate. This event is for the public,” explains Trinamool's national spokesperson Derek O'Brien.

Arrangements are being made to seat 25,000 people, but how many supporters of the 'Ma Mati Manush' party will turn up is anybody's guess. It could well be several thousands.

“It's symbolic. The idea is to go beyond the upper tiers of society,” says political analyst Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury.

Three stages are being built across the road in yet another aberration; the stages for the Republic Day and Independence Day programmes are along the road, not across.

The swearing-in would be held on the main stage while dignitaries would be seated on two interconnected stages.

The stages are a mesh of steel structure and here, too, Banerjee's favourite blue and white stripes are peeking; dismantling the structure is likely take longer than usual. Till then, the Red Road will remain out of bounds.

BUSINESS LINE, MAY 26, 2016

19-member Ministry takes office in Kerala

Leaders from across political spectrum attend swearing-in ceremony

A 19-member ministry of the Left Democratic Front (LDF) under CPI(M) leader Pinarayi Vijayan was sworn in under overcast skies here on Wednesday.

Governor P Sathasivam administered the oath of office to Vijayan and 12 of his party colleagues, as also four from the CPI, and one each from the Janata Dal (S), the Congress (S) and the NCP.

Thousands thronged the Central Stadium for the ceremony, the second time it was being held outside the Raj Bhavan. The previous LDF government under VS Achuthanandan had also taken office at the same venue in 2006.

Achuthanandan himself was among the attendees, a significant presence given that his claim for chief ministership this time round did not have many takers within the party or the LDF.

Chief Minister-designate Vijayan had created ripples when he drove down — for the first time in decades of mutual rivalry — to Achuthanandan's house, to personally invite the nonagenarian for the ceremony. That signalled an apparent thawing of relations between the two, and was reciprocated by Achuthanandan when he took to the social media to greet Vijayan ahead of his swearing-in.

Notable presences

Another special guest at the swearing-in was O Rajagopal of the BJP, who opened the account for his party in the State Assembly by winning the Nemom seat in Thiruvananthapuram. It was for the first time that the BJP made it to the swearing-in ceremony of any government in the State.

KR Gouri, the only surviving member of the State's first ministry who was expelled from the CPI(M) 21 years ago, was also in attendance, notwithstanding her age.

A large number of other guests, including members of the outgoing Oommen Chandy government, as also religious and cultural figures, were present.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated May 26, 2016)

TELEGRAPH, MAY 24, 2016

Sonowal sworn in as Assam CM, in presence of BJP galaxy

Guwahati, May 24 (PTI): Sarbananda Sonowal was on Tuesday sworn in as the 14th chief minister of Assam in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Bharatiya Janata Party president Amit Shah and other dignitaries at a huge public function at Khanapara field here.

Sonowal, who became the first BJP chief minister of the state was sworn in by Governor Padmanabha Balakrishna Acharya. He took his oath in Assamese.

Ten ministers, including two from alliance partners Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and two Bodo Peoples Front (BPF), also took their oath of office at the function.

The six from BJP to take oath as ministers were Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chandra Mohan Patowary, Ranjit Dutta, Parimal Suklabaidya, Pallab Lochan Das and Naba Kumar Doley.

The two from AGP to be sworn-in were Atul Bora (Jr) and Kesab Mahanta, while the two from BPF were Pramila Rani Brahma and Rihan Daimary.

Brahma and Daimari took their oaths in Bodo and Suklabaidya in Bengali while the rest, in Assamese.

Outgoing Congress chief minister Tarun Gogoi was also present at the function.

Also present were senior BJP leader L.K. Advani, Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari, Suresh Prabhu, Ram Vilas Paswan, Venkaiah Naidu, Nirmala Seetharaman, Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Jitendra Singh, Jayant Sinha, Kiren Rijiju and V.K. Singh.

BJP chief ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Madhya Pradesh), Vasundhara Raje Scindia (Rajasthan), Anandi Ben Patel (Gujarat), Devendra Fadnavis (Maharashtra), Manohar Lal Khattar (Haryana), Raman Singh (Chhattisgarh), Raghubar Das (Jharkhand), Laxmikant Parsekar (Goa) were present. Also present at the function were chief ministers of alliance parties Prakash Singh Badal (Punjab) and Chandrababu Naidu of Telangana.

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Kaliko Pul and Sikkim Chief Minister P.K. Chamling were present, alongwith former Jharkhand chief minister Arjun Munda and former Bihar deputy chief minister Sushil Kumar Modi were also present.

The swearing-in ceremony was conducted by Assam Chief Secretary V.K. Pipersenia.

PROTEST MOVEMENTS

TELEGRAPH, MAY 31, 2016

A new satyagraha

- In search of principles for contemporary non-violent struggles

The Thin Edge - Ruchir Joshi

The recent, controversial Jaipur Literature Festival in London has thrown up many questions about the nature of protest and methods of political engagement in the public arena. As my recent column on this page mentioned (http://www.telegraphindia.com/1160529/jsp/opinion/story_88175.jsp#.V0pyapN95E5), a question was raised about the protests that took place during the literary event in London, protests where activists walked into the theatre, stood in front of the stage and raised slogans against the sponsors, Vedanta, refusing to let the official speakers address the audience, even with speeches or poems critical of the mining company. Wasn't this perilously close to the kind of hooliganism we see from the Hindu right-wingers, Muslim fundamentalists and even the various, petty, local non-religious fascists in all parts of our country? What then is the difference between the London action and an 'outfit' here that walks into an art gallery and demands to shut down a show because one or more of the art-works 'offend' their religious/cultural/political sensibility? Is disrupting a peaceful talk session with slogans and refusing to let people speak really that different from vandalizing offending art-works in a gallery or grabbing offending books from a bookstore and burning them? Wasn't it a better idea - as one of the participants argued - to nominally follow the rules and to raise the protest against the depredatory mining corporation from the stage itself, by speaking as he did at length about the company's dreadful record and the issues involved? How can the Left, or, if you like, Left-liberals, find methods and spaces to conduct effective protests (ones that bring lasting exposure to an issue and a dissenting point of view) without 1.a) sinking to the level of the right-wingers or 1.b) giving the right-wingers a handle (or inspiration) for further provocation?

The questions are important. There are no easy answers. Solutions need to be found, and with some urgency.

As far as the protests in London go, every question/answer binary seems to have an equal and opposite one. So, for instance, while a friend chose to accept the invitation and tried to lay out the case against Vedanta from the stage, I might have chosen to stand outside the festival hall, maybe with a small stand and a big placard saying: *Here's Why I Refused to Speak at this Festival*. I might have had one of those small loudhailers or just used my voice to say exactly what my colleague chose to say inside; or I might have read out some poems about the damage companies such as Vedanta inflict, just as a poet tried to do on the stage, except I would be seen standing clearly outside the boundaries of the festival. Would the Vedanta PR team have laughed at me as much as they might have laughed at some 'inside the tent'? Probably, but no matter.

Is it right to heckle and disrupt nominally peaceful cultural proceedings? Sometimes no, but sometimes yes. The placard, shouted slogans and occasionally taking over a stage are perfectly valid methods of democratic protest and I would not want to divest myself of any of those. Hopefully, though, I would not be part of a group that indulged in any pushing or shoving or physical violence, no matter how mild. And, had the poet or the essayist laying out the case against the giant corporation asked to be allowed to continue, I, at least, would have welcomed that, however, wanting the speakers to be surrounded by the placards, so that the visual disruption stayed in place even as the aural one was temporarily paused. I would have gone in with the placards fully aware that this was the only way to grab headlines on the grotesquely unequal playing field of the media. I would have gone in knowing fully well that a 'civilized', 'reasoned', quietly delivered speech or poem may affect the immediate ticket-paying audience but not the larger audience of TV, newspapers and the net that we needed to reach.

To repeat, I would only have gone in as part of a group that maintained conservatively strict boundaries between acceptable physical action and violence - which is never acceptable. Here in this country, we've seen all too often what can happen to peaceful protests. We've seen provocateurs, either plainclothes police (Jadavpur University), or *Hindutva*-phalangists pretending to be Pakistan-lovers (Jawaharlal Nehru University) enter crowds and create mayhem; we've seen the targeted people getting Zeed and Arnabbed by fake videos; we've seen the opposition ruthlessly attack precisely the boundaries protesters have tried to maintain, to raise the ante to a level of naked and gross group assault. Does it follow that the only means of expression now available to people of the Left are quiescent and ineffective? Hopefully not.

As was the case nearly a hundred years ago, when M.K. Gandhi returned to India from South Africa, the whole conundrum has to do with the tricky relationship between means and ends. To this, inescapably, one has to add the factor of context. MKG did tap into the peculiarly British *hubris* of a being a society that believes in 'fair play', of the English of the time wanting to be seen by the Americans and other Europeans as a civilized nation on a civilizing mission in their colonies. Had Gandhi been facing the French, the Belgians or the Portuguese, the ball game might have been a bit different, as it might had Winston Churchill, by some accident, become viceroy of India and let loose RAF biplanes on unarmed civilians. To the famous question, 'What would Gandhi have done against Hitler?' the correct answer is 'It depends when'. Had German society developed a truly massive non-violent movement to counter the early Brown Shirts, history might have taken a different turn. So, to today: would Martin Luther King Jr succeed now, or would he have been gunned down first thing by some white cop sitting in an armoured Humvee? It's a fair bet that Gandhi himself would probably not have survived Narendra Modi, Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh.

But then, this begs the question: would a Gandhi of today have chosen the same tactics that MKG did a century ago? Probably not. If we proceed from only the best of the principles the old man has left us, namely, the rightness and necessity of absolute non-violence in political action, the fact that ends, no matter how noble, can never justify tainted means, that violent means inevitably lead to violent ends and to the perpetuation of that violence; if we keep these connected ideas sacrosanct, then surely we can and should define the rest of what we do

according to the needs of our time?

For example, we know the boycotting of apartheid-run South Africa was effective, so can we really dispense with all models of a boycott? We know that in the 1980s the gay community in the United States of America staged several actions, including throwing pies and cakes at government officials, and that this was what eventually forced Ronald Reagan to utter the word AIDS, after many years of ostrich-like denial to finally acknowledge the existence of the disease, leading to the beginning of official support being given to victims. Can we in India treat the throwing of even soft food items as falling within the definition of non-violence? Probably not, not given our wide range of taboos, not given the ever-present food scarcity in the country. No, what we are going to need to do, and it will only happen through the collective brain, is to develop forms of protest, not just principles but in terms of actual streetcraft and mediacraft.

The challenges for the Left/Left-liberals are several and fraught with traps. As a Bangladeshi artist friend, Naeem Mohaiemen, a member of Gulf Labor, which has organized a boycott since 2011 of the proposed Guggenheim Abu Dhabi (over labor practices in the region), points out in a Facebook comment: "...as more of us and our peers enter a stage/ space where our collaborators, partners, sponsors etc may all have linkages of contradictions... complexities need to be thought through and debated at length..." But, even while we lefties/liberals debate and try and forge larger principles, politics is not going to stop and wait for us. As we go along, trying to answer the question, 'What modes and tactics can we employ that the opposition will find difficult to pervert by any means, including gross enlargement and escalation?' or, to put it slightly differently, 'What tactics can we rightfully employ that the opposition cannot ever mimic or twist?' we are going to need honesty, transparency, the ability to openly disagree with each other with minimum rancour, and great and constant creativity and humour.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

STATESMAN, MAY 26, 2016

‘Governance paradigm has changed under PM Modi’

On the completion of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government's two years' in office, Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking “decisive steps” and putting the country back on track of development.

"The two years of the NDA government has put the country back on the right track of development and good governance. Earlier it was said that India was in transition and needed reform. NDA govt led by Modi ji has taken decisive steps," tweeted Singh.

"Governance paradigm has changed under the astute leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi," he said in another tweet.

Other NDA ministers and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders, including president Amit Shah too hailed Modi.

“PM @narendramodi's vision for #TransformingIndia & the exceptional work of the Government has redefined the idea of governance and delivery,” Shah tweeted.

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju tweeted: “2 years back Govt was sluggish, corrupt & inefficient. Now @narendramodiji's mission & vision is #TransformingIndia.”

Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje said that it was a day to celebrate the “glorious journey towards development & prosperity of India” while Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben Patel congratulated PM Modi on behalf of whole of Gujarat.

"I congratulate PM @narendramodi & Central Government on completing 2 successful years of #TransformingIndia," she tweeted.

BJP MP from east Delhi Maheish Girri too congratulated the people of the country and hoped for a “great journey towards #TransformingIndia!”

The first year of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government, which assumed office on May 26, 2014, saw the launch of several initiatives. In the second year, there appears to be a thrust on

consolidating the schemes and taking them to the people. There is also growing focus on schemes meant for the poor and the rural sector.

RAILWAYS

INDIAN EXPRESS, MAY 27, 2016

From June 15, Railways to start trial in which passengers can opt out of meals on Rajdhani, Shatabdi

Railways to begin 45-day trial on two Rajdhani and as many Shatabdis from June 15.

Written by **Avishek G Dastidar**

Four decades after the first Rajdhani Express made food a compulsory facility of premium train travel in India, passengers are finally going to get the choice to not eat railway food — and not pay for it either — served on such trains.

June 15 onwards, Railways will start the much-awaited trial in which passengers can opt out of meals while booking tickets of Rajdhani and Shatabdis.

If the passenger chooses not to eat, he/she will not have to pay either. This means paying around Rs 300 less — the catering charges levied by Railways for serving food. For trains running longer distances, catering charges are higher. The rates are different for different classes as well.

To begin with, the 45-day trial will be carried out on the Patna Rajdhani, the Delhi-Mumbai August Kranti Rajdhani, the Pune-Secunderabad Shatabdi and the Howrah-Puri Shatabdi. But officials are certain that the trial is a mere formality. The element of “freedom”, they said, will be received positively by passengers.

Complaints over food constitute majority of the negative feedback from Railway passengers. Earlier, food served on Rajdhani used to be its USP. But over the years, there has been a rise in customer complaints over quality and quantity.

The Railway Ministry has issued the policy directive and the software enabling this choice into the ticketing system has also been tested.

This is how it works: while booking tickets on the IRCTC portal, the website shows a popup that asks whether the passenger would like to opt out of the meals. Selecting ‘yes’ means the payable ticket price gets reduced after the catering charges are excluded.

For tickets issued at counters, the onus lies on booking officials and other staff to tell people that such an option is now available. “We will have to keep telling people till it becomes common knowledge,” said a senior official.

Officials estimate that once passengers opt out of meals, they would use the huge number of e-catering options available on the website or on designated phone numbers. Third party vendors — several well-known brands have already signed up — will deliver food in the compartments.

Once a passenger chooses to opt out, she cannot change the decision during the journey. This is because based on the choices, the caterer will load the required amount of food in the train.

It was also proposed that if a passenger changes her mind during the journey, she could be charged around 20 per cent over and above the catering charges for availing the facility. But in the final directive, that provision has not been included.

TRIBUNE, MAY 27, 2016

Get AI upgrade for unconfirmed Rajdhani tickets

No extra cost for 1st class ticket-holders

The wait-listed passengers of Rajdhani AC first class will not have to pay any additional amount in case they decide to take an Air India flight

In case of second and third AC class tickets, the passengers will have to pay up to Rs 2,000 per ticket as additional amount for flying Air India

Maharaja will soon come to help wait-listed passengers of Rajdhani trains as such travellers will be provided with the option to fly by Air India by paying little extra.

Air India and IRCTC have entered into a pact for the proposed arrangement which is expected to be in place “within a week”, said carrier’s chief Ashwani Lohani.

Under the proposed arrangement, people who have unconfirmed tickets across classes on Rajdhani trains would have the choice of boarding an Air India flight, provided the airline has services in the particular train route chosen by the passenger. Air India tickets would be offered to such passengers through IRCTC. Lohani, who is Air India Chairman and Managing Director, said details were being worked out and the arrangement was expected to be in place “within a week”.

The wait-listed passengers of Rajdhani AC first class will not have to pay any additional amount in case they decide to take an Air India flight.

In the case of those booked on Rajdhani second and third AC classes, the passengers will have to pay up to Rs 2,000 per ticket as additional amount for flying Air India, Lohani said. “The details are being worked out and we hope to have this in place within a week,” Lohani, who himself is a Indian Railways Service (IRS) officer, said.

The move is expected to help Air India increase occupancy on its planes amid the carrier working on ways to turnaround its fortunes.

The Air India is also chalking out ambitious expansion plan to operate more number of smaller aircraft in various states as they look to increase regional air connectivity.

In this regard, Air India’s subsidiary Air Alliance plans to increase the number of ATRs in its fleet to 35 in the next four years. — PTI

RELIGION

ASIAN AGE, MAY, 26, 2016

China warns people to shun practice of Islam and stick to 'marxist atheism'

Hong Kong: China's top leadership, led by Party General Secretary and President Xi Jinping, has warned the Chinese people, especially those living in the Xinjiang province to shun the practise of Islam and to stick to China's state policy of "Marxist Atheism".

General Secretary and President Xi Jinping's remarks made at the Second National Work Conference on Religion are being widely reported by state media led by China Central TV.

President Jinping's warning is directed at the Uyghurs, who in recent times, have become very aggressive in their protests against the state. Large parts of the population living in Xinjiang province have become radicalised and the Chinese Government is only now realising the gravity of the situation.

Xinjiang borders Pakistan from where the hardline Islamic teachings flow. China has also been subtly warning Pakistan to stop the flow of Islamic messaging to Xinjiang but to no avail. President's Xi's speech at the religious Conference was also a veiled message to Pakistan, say observers.

Making China's State policy of intolerance towards Pan-islamic tendencies very clear, President Xi warned Chinese citizens "not to confuse themselves with non-CCP approved tendencies" and to "never find their values and beliefs in this religion or any religion."

Among the other warnings issued by him, was one to resolutely resist overseas infiltration through religious means and to guard against ideological infringement by Islamic extremists.

Other senior Communist Party Officials who spoke on this occasion highlighted the dangers that Islam is assuming in some parts of China, making the nation vulnerable to extremist infiltration.

Communist Party Officials strongly backed President Xi's statements and cautioned citizens to be vigilant against Islamic tendencies like Halal products. They made it clear that Halal products will remain banned in China as these "promote religious segregation."

While coming out strongly against Islam and Islamic traditions, the Second National Work Conference on Religion also promoted a number of articles that expressed support for the new policies.

One such article in the official newspaper of the CCP's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. It criticised Officials for having forgotten party discipline and engaging in the practise of physiognomy and fortune telling, burning incense and praying.

This was followed by a report in the Xinhua on May 9 urging all Chinese Communist Party Cadres at all levels to engage in propaganda, political unity and to guide the masses away from religions, especially those which disrupt the Chinese state.

China has already declared 2016 as the "Year of Ethnic Unity and Progress", a move aimed squarely at ridding the nation of Islamic influences.

President Xi Jinping is making efforts to tighten control over religious practises, as it is his belief that religion, especially Islam, could emerge as a competing force in society unless it is nipped in the bud now.

China's Communist Party has declared that the growing influence of radical Islam is a national security issue and the declarations of the Work Conference on Religion have made it clear that Beijing will target all those who assist in the propagation of Islam.

In Xinjiang, there is already considerable resentment over the control being exercised over the practise of Islam, such as the growing of beards, observation of fasts during Ramazan, the wearing of the Hijab, dietary restrictions like consumption of Halal food, prayers five times a day and so forth. These practises are perceived as "anti-state" and are the subject of crackdown by the authorities

President Xi has now made it clear that these policies will be reinforced with renewed vigour, as China is looking at Pakistan-sponsored Islamic radicalism as the number one threat to its society.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

HINDUSTAN TIMES, MAY 30, 2016

Soon, ID proof must to place matrimonial ads online

Moushumi Das Gupta

An Aadhaar card or a driving licence or any government-approved identity proof will soon be required to place matrimonial advertisements on websites.

The user will also have to give an undertaking to the online service provider, confirming his intent to enter into a matrimonial alliance, before he registers on such sites.

These are part of the draft guidelines finalized by the government to regulate matrimonial websites check growing instances of men setting up fake online profiles to cyber stalk or dupe women.

“The guidelines, which are in line with the Information Technology Act, 2000, will be notified soon by the Department of Electronics & Information Technology,” said a government official.

Presently these websites only ask for cell phone numbers of people who put their profiles and do phone verification only.

According to the guidelines, matrimonial websites will have to publish on its site the name of the grievance officer and his contact details along with the complaint redressal mechanism that will be made available to any victim.

The government had to step in with growing instances of men setting up fake profiles on such sites. It was women and child development minister Maneka Gandhi who first raised this issue in 2014 after her ministry was inundated with complaints from women who were cheated while looking for grooms online.

Gandhi had met senior representatives of leading websites such as Bharat Matrimony and Jeevansathi.com and suggested that they strengthen security features of their respective sites to prevent such fraud.

“In most cases victims are women who fall prey to these fraudsters after getting introduced through fake profiles on matrimonial portal. There is a need for strengthening protective measures for all users of such websites,” a government official said.

The draft guidelines, made after consultations with leading matrimonial websites, will also require that such websites store the IP address of profile creation and access logs for a period of one year from the date of account deactivation by a user.

The websites will have to caution users against possible fraudsters who ask for favours, money, etc. and other possible misuses as known to or reported to the matrimonial websites. “Registered users will be encouraged to report any fraudulent activity to such websites as well as to law enforcing agencies,” the draft guideline states.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

STATESMAN, MAY 31, 2016

Sustainable urbanisation

India's position on what it calls sustainable urbanisation is quite clear, if incomplete. The counselor to India's permanent mission to the United Nations, Amit Narang, said a few days ago that sustainable urbanisation is not just a developing world issue, but must also include settlements in developed countries. They must therefore ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. At first, the comment may seem to be an innocuous defence of consumption patterns in developing societies, one that purposely fails to point out the difference in consumption patterns across various sections of a developing society.

There is little doubt that the West has a larger responsibility when it comes to evolving a new pattern of consumption, making its consumption more environment-friendly and constituted on the necessity of leaving resources for future generations. However, developing societies also have an equal responsibility in aligning their consumption trends to what is beneficial for the environment and future generations. Narang was reported to have said, "The foremost challenge in developing countries is to create functioning cities that are able to provide affordable access to better and adequate public services and job opportunities". Such a change will demand a divergent consumption pattern and rigorous urban planning. The latter is a much-neglected sphere of governance in most Indian cities and towns. According to the World Cities report 2016, India will add 300 million residents to its cities. The process of urbanisation usually runs in parallel to industrialisation. The expected massive population influx is bound to create problems related to the basic provisions of living - food, water, shelter and employment - unless governments regard urbanisation as an integral part of their modernisation schemes and efforts towards industrialisation.

The report highlights the importance of efficient multi-level governance in achieving low-carbon cities, increasing urban resilience for the future and linking urban policy with economic development to raise the level of competitiveness and attract investment. The imperative to address local circumstances and needs must have a pre-eminent position in urban planning, and especially in developing societies there is a strong need for specialised urban planning, education and training. Cities are places where most Indian citizens will live and work in future. Thus it is essential to have adequate physical and social infrastructure in place. The process of development should not be disconnected from social needs.