

**LIST OF NEWSPAPERS COVERED**

**ASIAN AGE**

**BUSINESS LINE**

**BUSINESS STANDARD**

**DECCAN HERALD**

**ECONOMIC TIMES**

**FINANCIAL EXPRESS**

**HINDU**

**HINDUSTAN TIMES**

**INDIAN EXPRESS**

**PIONEER**

**STATESMAN**

**TELEGRAPH**

**TIMES OF INDIA**

**TRIBUNE**

## CONTENTS

<b>CIVIL SERVICE</b>	<b>3-12</b>
<b>COMMUNALISM</b>	<b>13-14</b>
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CORRUPTION</b>	<b>16-19</b>
<b>ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>20-24</b>
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>25-31</b>
<b>HOUSING</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</b>	<b>33-36</b>
<b>LABOUR</b>	<b>37-39</b>
<b>LIBRARIES</b>	<b>40-41</b>
<b>OMBUDSMAN</b>	<b>42-44</b>
<b>PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>RAILWAYS</b>	<b>46-48</b>
<b>SOCIAL PROBLEMS</b>	<b>49-50</b>
<b>TRANSPORT</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>WATER SUPPLY</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>WOMEN</b>	<b>53-55</b>

## CIVIL SERVICE

HINDUSTAN TIMES, NOV 27, 2014

### **Delhi: Jung suspends babus for dirty govt buildings**

Driving home the point that the Clean India campaign is to be taken seriously, Delhi Lt Governor Najeeb Jung suspended six public officials on Wednesday after surprise inspections of government buildings.

The municipal deputy commissioner of Shahdara north, two school principals, a vice-principal and two public work department officials were suspended for not implementing the Swachh Bharat campaign properly.

A show-cause notice was also issued to municipal deputy commissioner of Civil Lines, who is an IAS officer. Written warnings were issued to municipal deputy commissioner of Shahdara South and the medical superintendent of NC Joshi Hospital in Karol Bagh. The principal of a public school in Rohini has been transferred while the contract of cleanliness at Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital in Rohini was cancelled.

Jung inspected eight hospitals, 20 schools and six municipal deputy commissioner's offices.

"These surprise visits will become a weekly affair. I along with my officers would lead these visits to various departments and offices every week. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is an important mission and anyone found lacking shall be shown no mercy. Let this be a warning. More action will follow," Jung said after the review.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, NOV 28, 2014

### **Age before duty: Babus to retire at 58 instead of 60**

**Arun S**

#### **SUMMARY**

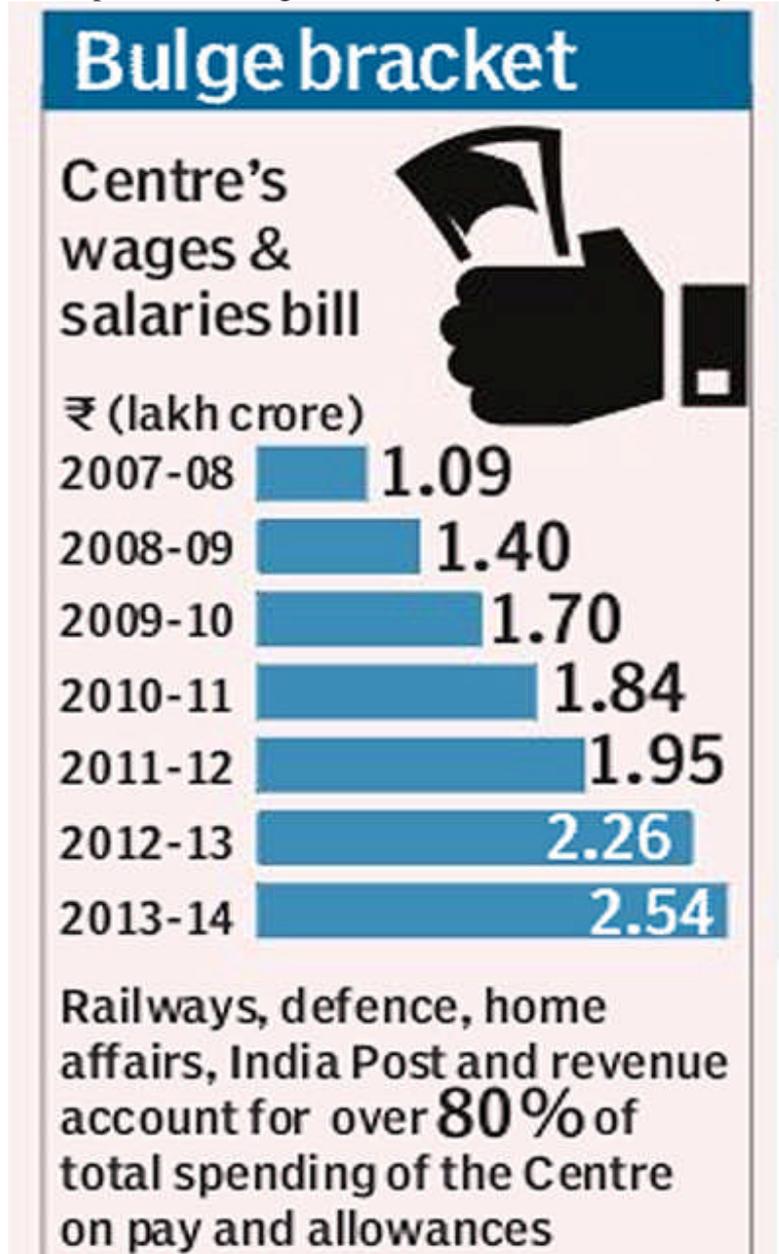
In a move that would help curb the relentless increase in the Centre's non-Plan spending and ease the way for infusion of more young blood...

Narendra Modi government is planning to reduce the retirement age of central government employees from the present 60 to 58. (Reuters)

In a move that would help curb the relentless increase in the Centre's non-Plan spending and ease the way for infusion of more young blood and professionalism into the country's largely moribund bureaucracy, the Narendra Modi government is planning to reduce the retirement age of central government employees from the present 60 to 58. The move that comes at a time when the Seventh Pay Commission is mulling another sharp boost to the pay structure of the Centre's 5-million-strong workforce is also aimed at creating the requisite space for lateral entry of technically qualified professionals into the government,

official sources told FE. The retirement age was last revised in 1998, when the then NDA government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee raised it from 58 to 60 years. The last UPA government had reportedly considered enhancing the retirement age further to 62 just before the general elections, but dropped the move.

The superannuation age was increased from 55 to 58 way back in 1962.



The total wage and salaries bill of the central government, excluding PSUs but including the railways, rose sharply between 2008 and 2010 due to the revised pay scales (along with payment of arrears) implemented as per the Sixth Pay Commission's proposals.

The wage bill rose from Rs 1.09 lakh crore in 2007-08 to Rs 1.4 lakh crore in 2008-09, and further to Rs 1.7 lakh crore in 2009-10, before the growth moderated to Rs 1.84 lakh crore in 2010-11. The government spent Rs 2.54 lakh crore in wages and salaries in 2013-14. The railways (with 1.4 million employees), defence (civil), home affairs, India Post and revenue account for more than 80% of the total spending of the Centre on pays and allowances.

Thanks to successive pay commissions, the salaries and other emoluments of government employees have, on average, more than doubled in every decade since independence even though lack of sufficient performance incentives is still considered to be a drawback.

A merger of 50% of the dearness allowance with the basic salary, likely to be part of the Seventh Pay Commission's award, which is to be implemented from 2016, is expected to hike the Centre's wage bill by a third and strain its fiscal situation. In February this year, the government hiked DA to 100%, from 90%, benefiting both its employees and 3 million pensioners.

The Centre's expenditure on pension stood at Rs 74,076 crore in 2013-14 and the estimate for the current fiscal is Rs 81,983 crore. However, growth in the outgo on pension is expected to moderate due to the National Pension System based on the concept of defined contribution, launched in January 2004. The NPS has been accepted by large sections of central government employees and most state governments have shifted their employees to the new system.

According to Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at CARE Ratings, reducing the retirement age will give the government an opportunity to outsource more jobs, including by bringing in people as temporary consultants, who will then have to be paid only a fixed salary but not pension or provident fund. Their salary component will then show up as administrative costs, rather than as wage bill.

The finance ministry is weighing the pros and cons of the proposal to cut the retirement age. The move, sources said, is also in line with the BJP's manifesto, which had promised to rationalise and converge ministries, departments and other arms of the government, open up government to draw expertise from industry, academia and society and tap the services of the youth in particular to contribute to governance.

TRIBUNE, NOV 26, 2014

### **Haryana staff retirement age back at 58**

### **Khattar Cabinet reverses Hooda govt's decisions, removes HSSC Chairman Geetanjali Gayatri**

Reversing the previous Bhupinder Singh Hooda government's decision, the Haryana Cabinet today reduced the retirement age of government employees from 60 to 58 years. The Cabinet which met under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Mahohar Lal Khattar also increased VAT on diesel and decided to do away with toll tax at six locations on roads recently declared as national highways.

In what could be the beginning of the Khattar government's attempt to pave way to appoint its members in Boards and Commissions which control recruitments, the Cabinet cleared the removal of the Chairman and members of the Haryana Staff Selection Commission (HSSC). The Cabinet also scrapped the Haryana School Teachers' Selection Board (HSTSB) while repealing the state Act passed by the Congress-led Bhupinder Singh Hooda government. The Cabinet, however, allowed those teachers to continue who have been issued appointment letters.

Speaking to mediapersons, Khattar said that the government had taken the decision to reverse the retirement age of government employees from 60 to 58 years in an attempt to open job opportunities for the youth. The retirement age of Class IV, visually impaired and handicapped employees has been reversed from 62 to 60 years.

Employees who have completed 58 or 60 years in their respective categories and are still serving would retire on November 30, 2014. The upper age limit for fresh recruitment would remain 42 years.

Announcing the scrapping of the HSTSB, Khattar said: "There are many ways of recruiting teachers. We will find an alternative." The HSTSB is presently headed by KS Sangwan and has three members who are due to complete their term in February 2015. Khattar said although VAT on diesel had been increased from 9.24 per cent to 12.07 per cent, the retail sale price with revised tax rate would be around Rs 53.19 per litre, still lower than the prices in the neighbouring states of Punjab, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

The Cabinet also decided to close down toll points at six locations as Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has declared these as national highways.

These are TP-1 on the Gurgaon-Sohna road (near Badshahpur), TP-6 on the Bahadurgarh-Jhajjar-Dadri-Loharu-Pilani road near the Rajasthan border, TP-9 on the Sardulgarh-Sirsa road near the Punjab border, TP-14 on the Sonapat-Gohana road near the UP border, TP-16 on Sohana-Nuh-Ferozpur Zhirkha-Alwar road near Rajasthan the border and TP-19 on the Narnaul-Singhana road near Rajasthan the border).

### **Key decisions**

- Retirement age of 'Class IV employees reduced from 62 to 60 years
- Those who have completed 58 & 60 yrs of service to retire on Nov 30
- Haryana School Teachers' Selection Board scrapped
- VAT on diesel hiked from 9.24% to 12.07%

TRIBUNE, NOV 24, 2014

### **Govt bans purchase of new vehicles for officials**

The Delhi government has imposed a ban on purchase of new vehicles for all officials as part of an austerity measure, including those of civic bodies in the city, until the old ones complete their required life cycles.

The government order, issued recently, is applicable to all its departments, the three Municipal Corporations of Delhi (MCDs) and the New Delhi Municipal Council. As per the new move, officials are also not supposed to buy new vehicles costing up to Rs 4.75 lakh.

"Ban on purchase of new vehicles (including staff cars) will continue except against condemnation. If the old car has completed its required life, officials can then purchase new one, which costs up to Rs 4.75 lakh," said a senior government official.

The government's move comes after the Centre recently issued directions to all its ministries in this regard. "We have directed all officials of the state government to follow its new instructions strictly. The new move is being taken as a part of its austerity measures," he added.

The official also said new vehicle may be purchased only through directorate general of supplies and disposals rate contract mode, adding that during buying cars, it may be considered on the model base and parameters like fuel economy, eco-friendliness, among others.

The government recently also announced expenditure ceiling for its official meetings and lunches and even has set a limit on the amount of fuel consumption for vehicles. The government had recently fixed 200 liters of fuel per vehicle and fixed an expenditure ceiling for an inaugural function at Rs 10,000.

Besides, a department can spend Rs 300 on working lunch during meeting and conference with a ceiling of Rs 10,000 per occasion.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, NOV 24, 2014

**Babus get instructions on how to deal with MPs**

**Aloke Tikku**

The prime minister's office has ordered corporate-style ethics norms for civil servants, regulators and watchdogs to ensure that their private interests do not affect their performance as public servants.

The government's stress on ethics comes in the backdrop of PM Narendra Modi's promise to back them all the way if they get into trouble for doing their job honestly.

But the government also needs to ensure that extraneous reasons do not influence their decisions.

Government sources said the cabinet secretariat had told the department of personnel and training to enact a law for civil servants on the lines of the provisions in the companies act to prevent conflict of interest.

The first draft prepared by the department, which has been sent for vetting by the committee of secretaries, goes a step further. It not only requires all government officers to declare financial interests of their family but also their association with all organisations, public or private. Besides, it proposes to make them file an annual declaration that they and their families haven't derived an improper advantage due to access to "inside information".

The proposed rule would cover all 4.7 lakh Group A and B officers of the central government.

Since it would be difficult to monitor deviations of such large numbers, a government source said one suggestion was to go public with this information and impose punitive penalties on those found providing wrong information.

Citizens will have to wait for some more time before they can expect basic courtesies from babudom.

Members of Parliament — who rank higher than all civil servants except the cabinet secretary in the pecking order — are still struggling to get the same.

Last week, the department of personnel & training (DoPT) sent out another circular to all central departments reminding them about the ground-rules in dealing with MPs after a nudge from a parliamentary panel.

The DoPT had put all its instructions laying down the courtesies that officials need to keep in mind in interacting with parliamentarians in one place after a nudge from the Lok Sabhs's committee on violation of protocol norms and contemptuous behaviour of government officers with MPs.

In its report to Parliament in February, the panel had asked DoPT to sensitise all civil servants for strict compliance of its instructions. The panel — reconstituted after the General Elections — made a similar point and asked DoPT to send out the instructions again.

Noting the “important place” of parliamentarians in a democracy, the government pointed to instances where the parliamentarians seek information from departments at the centre or the states, make suggestions or seek an appointment with the officers.

According to the guidelines, communications from parliamentarians have to be acknowledged within a fortnight and the final reply sent across over the next 15 days.

In case the matter does not relate to the officials who have received the communication, they can't just chuck the letter into the files but have to send it to the officials concerned.

“All ministries are requested to ensure that the basic principles and instructions are followed... both in letter and spirit,” the order by DoPT director JA Vaidyanathan said.

The state governments have been asked to similarly sensitise its officers. The basic principles of the civil servant-MP interaction requires officers to show courtesy and consideration to the elected representatives.

“An officer should be meticulously correct and courteous and rise to receive and see off a Member of Parliament/State Legislature visiting him,” the guidelines say.

It, however, stresses that the officers must listen to the elected members but always act according to their best judgment as per the rules.

DECCAN HERALD, NOV 24, 2014

### **Move to lessen pensioners' hardship**

The Jeevan Pramaan scheme, launched by the Central government last week, will go a long way to reduce the hardship faced by many pensioners in drawing their pension. It introduces a digital life certificate in place of the present practice of pensioners producing a life certificate every year to the pension disbursing agency.

The life certificate is required to certify that the pensioner is alive and can continue to draw the pension till the time of the next certification. It is usually produced in November. While the need for it cannot be disputed, it is a recurrent hassle for most pensioners. They have to either physically present themselves before the disbursing agency or submit a certificate issued by agencies specified by the central pension accounting office. Old and infirm people, handicapped persons, women and those who live with their children in faraway places have all to go through this. The new system will make the process simple and easy.

Jeevan Pramaan uses a software application developed by the Union department of

science and technology. It enables the recording of the pensioner's Aadhaar number and biometric details from a computer or a mobile phone with a reading device.

Details about the identity of the pensioner, along with the date, time and biometric information, are then uploaded to a central data base which enables the pension disbursing agency to directly access a digital life certificate. It establishes that the pensioner is alive at the time of certification, without actual physical verification.

The software will be made available to individual pensioners and all stakeholders like banks on a large scale at no extra cost. The reading device will also be inexpensive.

The certification can even be done from homes. The facility will also be made available at all common service centres under the national e-governance plan so that people living in distant and inaccessible areas can make use of it.

At present, there are over 125 lakh pensioners in the country. There are about 50 lakh people who get pension from the Central government and about the same number of people get it from state governments. Armed forces give pension to about 25 lakh persons. There are many who get it from the public sector undertakings. All of them will benefit from the new scheme. It will reduce the workload of the pension disbursing agencies also and cut the use of paper. It is expected that the new system will be operationalised next year. Most of the pensioners are senior citizens and they will welcome the introduction of the new system.

[STATESMAN, NOV 24, 2014](#)

**IAS & decentralisation**

**ARUNABHA BAGCHI**

When I left India in the late Sixties, the IAS was the most coveted career option for the brightest middle class students in Calcutta. None of us knew how to get “boxwallah” jobs. We all knew that if IFS or IAS did not work out, we might be lucky to be selected for the IPS or some other less glamorous senior central service. It was common knowledge that the UPSC examination was nerve-wrecking, followed by an even more frightening interview. It was, therefore, a big relief when the Engineering School at UCLA offered me a research position to do Ph.D. there. Once in Los Angeles, I thought that there must be an even more prestigious “steel frame” ~ an administrative Service in the United States running the mightiest and richest country on the globe. When I enquired about this from my American friends, they all admitted their ignorance, with a few adding that there might be something similar in the State Department. I forgot all this, as I had neither knowledge, nor interest, in public administration.

It all came back to me as I read in the newspapers that our PM planned to celebrate 31 October, the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhai Patel, as National Unity Day throughout India. It is, of course, universally acknowledged that it was Sardar Patel who

coerced princely states to merge with India, and even sent our armed forces to take over the Nizam's fiefdom of Telangana. I then remembered that Sardar Patel was also instrumental in continuing the Indian Civil Service (ICS) in the new garb of the Indian Administrative Service after our Independence. The much-detested ICS was the overt face of colonial exploitation and of torture against our freedom-fighters. This proposal of Sardar Patel, therefore, was strongly challenged by many members of the Constituent Assembly. State Chief Ministers rightly construed this as a surreptitious means of controlling them from Delhi, instead of London, and argued that it was a gross violation of the basic tenets of federalism. Sardar Patel, however, prevailed in the end and the Indian Administrative Service was born. The decisive argument in his favour was the crucial role he envisioned for IAS officers in enhancing our national unity.

Although IAS officers are centrally selected, they are dispatched to the states to form the highest administrative cadre there. To achieve the goal of national unity, the cadres are deliberately mixed with one half selected from residents of the state and the other half from those outside the state. With 33 per cent IAS officers promoted from the State Civil Service members, "outsiders" actually dominate between the direct IAS recruits in each state. In reality, an overwhelming majority of new recruits prefer to be posted in their home states. Forcing them to be posted against their will to achieve national unity by just dangling the carrot of their office is weird indeed. How could the governance of a state be improved by bringing recalcitrant recruits from another state?

Another argument advanced in favour of this unusual practice was that it would reduce nepotism and local political pressure on the administration. If we extend this kind of reasoning one level higher, we should have continued to recruit a large part of our senior civil servants in Delhi from England. In fact, if an administrator does not have emotional connection or instinctive knowledge of a state, he would most likely go with the prevalent political wind there. It is also common knowledge that there is hardly any interest for the fresh recruits to join the cadre of states in the North-east or Jammu and Kashmir. These are the only challenging states in terms of national unity. If these young "idealistic" recruits shy away from this mission, it does not speak very highly in favour of maintaining a colonial system to further the cause of national unity.

Civil service in a country is broadly classified as a "career based" system, or a "position based" system. In the "career based" system, prospective candidates are picked up right from the university, or shortly thereafter, by means of a nationwide competitive examination and groomed for the career path leading to top civil service functions. India, France, Italy and Spain, among others, share this system. In the "position based" system, initial appointments of bright candidates are done through departments. At the level of senior civil service appointments recruitment is done by advertisement where potential candidates from all departments, and sometimes from outside the civil service, are allowed to apply. The United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Belgium are some examples of countries in this category.

Both systems have their benefits and drawbacks. In the “career based” system, senior civil servants develop the esprit de corps and have a total view of the whole administration. The disadvantage is the development of cliques and lack of specialisation in an increasingly knowledge-based environment. In the “position based” system, senior civil servants are drawn from a wider pool of candidates who might have grown in their jobs. The disadvantage is their lack of holistic picture of the administration because of limited mobility earlier. The administrative reform attempted by all OECD (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development) countries during the last decade consisted largely in modifying their existing system by incorporating positive aspects of the other system.

In India we may be able to do much better. Barring the outlying regions, national unity has become an irrelevant issue in India today. On the other hand, our PM championed the cause of decentralisation in his election campaign. To achieve this, all IAS officers recruited for a state must know the state thoroughly and instinctively. This may be achieved easily by adding in the main examination conducted by the UPSC two state-specific papers, one on the principal language of the state and the other on general knowledge related to all aspects of the state. Based on the ranking, and leaving aside those opting for IFS, every state would recruit IAS officers it needs only from the list of candidates that chose state-specific papers of that particular state.

Many IAS officers want to move to ministries in Delhi later in their career because of abundant power and patronage there. Here is a quote from S.R. Maheshwari’s book *Public Administration in India ~ The Higher Civil Service* ~ “It is only a small number of 300 officers who keep hovering around Delhi out of the total membership of 5000 and who act as gate-keepers preventing their other colleagues from getting central postings.” This resulted in Delhi becoming the worst businessman-politician-bureaucrat nexus in India generating the lion’s share of black money in our country. It also deprives our crucial central administration from the services of the most competent IAS officers available in the country. Switching over to the “position based” system for senior appointments in Delhi at the deputy secretary level or higher would solve both these problems at the same time. All suitable IAS officers would be eligible to apply for such positions, with the best candidate selected by a high-powered selection committee just as is done for hiring senior executives in big corporations.

Reforming the IAS is not easy. Attempts to make fundamental changes have turned out to be futile so far. Only Narendra Modi, with his commitment to decentralisation, is in a position to effect real changes in this archaic system.

The writer is former Dean and Emeritus Professor of Applied Mathematics, University of Twente, The Netherlands

## COMMUNALISM

ECONOMIC TIMES, NOV 25, 2014

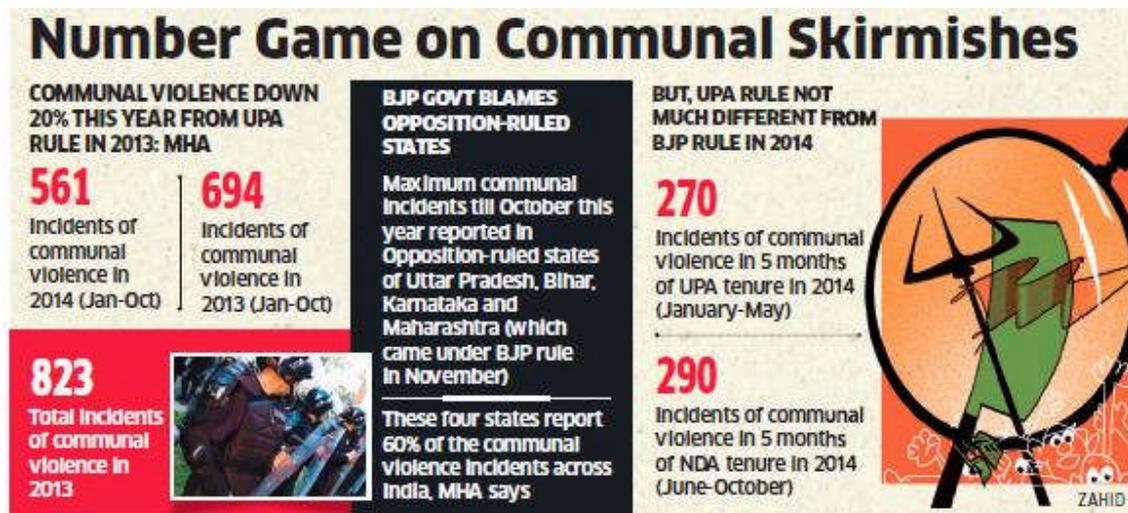
### Communal clashes decrease by 20% under Narendra Modi government: Ministry of Home Affairs

By Aman Sharma

NEW DELHI: Keen to shake off the perception that BJP was instigating communal violence, a Home Ministry report has said that incidents of communal tensions have decreased by nearly 20% after the new government assumed power at the Centre. Home Minister Rajnath Singh too said at an event on Saturday that incidents of communal violence had decreased this year.

A senior government official told ET that the latest figures compiled in a note for the minister said that incidents of communal violence this year have come down by almost 20% from the corresponding period last year.

There have been 561 communal skirmishes in the country till the end of October, while there were 694 incidents of communal violence in the same period last year, the official said. The whole of 2013 under UPA rule saw as many as 823 incidents of communal violence across India, a sharp rise from 668 such incidents in 2012, the top official said.



A close reading of the figures, however, reveals there is not much change in the communal violence scenario this year since the BJP government came to power. While there were around 270 incidents of communal violence in the first five months of 2014 when the country was under UPA rule, the first five months of the Narendra Modi government have also saw nearly 290 incidents. "It's the opposition ruled states - Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka and Maharashtra (under Congress rule till October) - - that are unable to control communal tensions. These four states are biggest contributors, nearly 60% in all, to these figures," a Home Ministry official said.

The Samajwadi Party and the Janata Dal (United) in UP and Bihar, respectively, have blamed BJP leaders for instigating communal flare-ups. A senior Uttar Pradesh government official pointed out that the high figures of communal incidents in 2013 - which the Centre was now citing as a reference point to exhibit its 'performance' this year - was primarily due to the Muzzafarnagar riots that broke out in the district in 2013. "A number of BJP leaders, including their MLAs like Sangeet Som stand accused in the Muzzafarnagar riot cases," the UP government official said.

## COMMUNICATIONS

STATESMAN, NOV 24, 2014

### **MTNL given 6 mths to improve services**

Public Sector telecom firm MTNL has been given a stern warning to improve its quality of services within six months, failing which heads may roll at the company. The warning came at a review meeting that telecom minister Ravi Shankar Prasad held earlier this month where he reportedly pulled up officials for poor network quality and slow pace of network roll-out.

"The minister has given six months time to MTNL to improve its services and told them clearly that he will take serious action against responsible officials on failing to meet deadline," ministry sources said.

According to these sources, the minister shared his displeasure with senior officials over delay in installation of mobile towers.

"The minister may get efficient people in place of officials found responsible for delay," the sources said.

Nokia Networks was shortlisted in December 2013 as the lowest bidder for installing 3,526 mobile sites, which included both 2G and 3G equipment, for enhancing coverage in Delhi and Mumbai. Alcatel Lucent, Huawei Technologies and ZTE also qualified in technical rounds for the project which is estimated to cost about Rs 400 crore. MTNL, however, has not even placed advance purchase order or letter of intent to selected firms.

## CORRUPTION

HINDU, NOV 28, 2014

### **Bad enactment, no enforcement**

R. SUDARSHAN

India's approach in tackling the age-old problem of corruption has been Janus-faced. On the one hand, being responsive to public clamour for the eradication of corruption of all kinds, grand or petty, India's Parliament has been steadily engaged in passing legislation, commencing with the extension of powers granted to the wartime Special Staff in 1942 till the enactment, in 2014, of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act. On the other hand, lawmakers, public servants and law enforcement agencies, who can count among their lot the vast majority of perpetrators of corruption, have been seeking loopholes in the law and avenues to avoid punishment. Political and administrative expediency, not principles of good governance and the rule of law, rule the roost, regardless of which set of political parties is in power.

### **CBI's colonial antecedents**

Even though the Indian Penal Code, which came into operation on January 1, 1862, defined the 'public servant' and identified offences that can be classified as 'corruption', the British Raj did not demonstrate any great anxiety about prosecuting its officials for abusing their authority and robbing the public. The onset of World War II forced the Government of India, the chief supporter of Britain's war effort, to draw urgent attention to the different forms of corruption prevalent in the War Department. The War Resources Committee created, in April 1941, an outfit (called Special Staff) to investigate and check 'bribery and corruption' in various supplying departments.

When the war ended, emergency laws enacted during its duration lapsed. The Special Police Establishment (SPE) became the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) by an ordinance, followed by the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, XXV of 1946, which still governs the operations of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The scope of the DSPE was expanded through a new Act of 1952 to cope with the new situation when new institutions and financial concerns arose and developmental activities expanded. The DPSE was empowered to investigate corruption in statutory corporations and entities administered directly or indirectly by the Union government.

In 1962, in the aftermath of a high profile corruption scandal (the Mundhra scandal) which led to the resignation of the then Finance Minister, T.T. Krishnamachari, in 1958, the Government appointed a committee under the chairmanship of K. Santhanam. In the first of its two reports, submitted in 1963, the Santhanam Committee recommended the creation of a Central Vigilance Commission headed by a Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC) with considerable autonomy and status so as to consolidate the fragmented anti-corruption work that was being performed by the various ministries of the Union government. In April 1963, the government set up the CBI to investigate not only cases of bribery and corruption, but also violations of Central fiscal laws and serious

crimes committed by organised gangs and thugs, besides collecting supporting intelligence, statistics of crime and conducting research to inform policy-making. The CBI drew its power of investigation from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946. It has been reported that the DSPE Act will be again amended to enable selection of the CBI Director by a body which includes the leader of the largest Opposition party in the Lok Sabha (as there is no Leader of the Opposition now) and also to specifically state that vacancies on the selection panel should not vitiate the selection.

### **Offences by public servants**

The CVC was accorded statutory status in 2003 only after a directive in the judgment of the Supreme Court in *Vineet Narain v. Union of India*. In September 2010, the CVC released the Draft National Anti-Corruption Strategy, a good document that deserves more attention than it has received. It contains a thoughtful critique of shortcomings in India's legislative framework. The CVC Act 2003 gives the CVC powers to inquire into alleged offences committed by officials under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. The CVC does not have direct powers to investigate and must depend on the CBI for that. The requirement of obtaining prior sanction of an appropriate authority before any court takes cognisance of an offence by a public servant is a serious limitation. There have been long delays before sanction is accorded. The provision serves to protect public servants though a wrong has been committed because the sanctioning authority is normally a senior officer of the "accused" officer. A sanction after having been accorded can be challenged at the trial stage and cases have been discharged on the basis that the sanctioning authority had not applied its mind while according sanction. This provision goes beyond the protection offered under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (which only protects actions in discharge of official duty).

It is desirable to remove prior sanction requirement in cases where a public servant officer is caught red-handed. A time limit should be prescribed for decisions sanctioning prosecution. However, the power of public servants in India is vast and strong. Instead of easing prior sanction requirements, an amendment Bill was tabled in Parliament in August 2013 which increases the protection of public servants from prosecution.

The Supreme Court had earlier struck down the "single directive" that had provided immunity to senior civil servants from suo motu action of the CBI. The government has restored this provision through statute and entrusted the authority of pre-inquiry scrutiny to the secretary of the administrative department. This has diluted the powers of superintendence of the CVC and the CBI. There is a system of dual control over the CBI — one exercised by the CVC in respect of corruption cases only, and the other by the Central government in respect of all its other work.

Administrative control of the CBI by the Central government makes it vulnerable to the criticism that the agency often compromises its corruption investigations of government officials. During the last decade, at least four former Directors of the agency have been given high-level government positions such as appointments as State Governors. There is criticism of the CBI's highhandedness and a lack of sensitivity to a loss of reputation of

senior members of the bureaucracy against whom it announced inquiries. There have also been selective leaks to the media of material gathered by the CBI in the course of investigation.

### **Lokpal and Lokayuktha**

The Santhanam Committee, in effect, recommended that the CVC should also function as an ombudsman in India, taking cognisance of cases of maladministration as well as corruption. The Government of India ruled out accepting this recommendation claiming that the importance and urgency of providing machinery to look into the grievances of citizens against the administration and to ensure the just and fair exercise of administrative power would require a separate agency. But no such agency was created. It took a Gandhian-style movement led by Anna Hazare to put this matter back on the policy agenda of Parliament in 2011. During 2012, little was done with the Lokpal Bill except for the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha committee. The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, led by the Congress Party, meanwhile lost Assembly elections in Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, forcing it to yield ground on the Lokpal Bill, accept all amendments adopted by the Upper House, and pass the Bill on December 17, 2013. The Lokpal law came into force on January 16, 2014.

In brief, the Lokpal is empowered to investigate complaints against the Prime Minister, other ministers, current and former legislators, government employees, employees of firms funded or controlled by the Centre, societies and trusts that collect public money, receive funds from foreign sources, and have an income level above a certain threshold. Bodies creating endowments for or performing religious or charitable functions have been excluded from the Lokpal's purview. Inquiries are to be completed within 60 days and investigation to be completed within six months. The Lokpal shall order a probe only after hearing the public servant. Inquiry against the Prime Minister has to be held in-camera and approved by two-thirds of a full bench of the Lokpal. The Lokpal will exercise superintendence over the CBI in relation to the cases referred by it. CBI officers investigating cases referred by the Lokpal can be transferred without its approval. The Lokpal can initiate prosecution through its prosecution wing before the special court. Lokpal-initiated trials are to be completed within two years. States are expected to set up Lokayuktas by law within 365 days and have the freedom to determine the powers and the functions of the Lokayukta.

In its twilight hour, when its days were ended, when according to Hegel, the owl of Minerva spreads her wings and wisdom dawns, the UPA government managed to enact legislation to partially protect whistle-blowers, but none of the other complementary laws, which India is obligated to pass after becoming party to the U.N. Convention Against Corruption, has been enacted. The present government does not seem to be in a hurry to constitute the Lokpal and enact those complementary anti-corruption laws, including the Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill, 2010, the Citizen's Charter and Grievance Redressal Bill 2011, the Public Procurement Bill, 2012, the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill of 2013, and the Prevention of Bribery of Foreign Public Officials and Officials of Public International Organizations Bill, 2011. Maybe Prime

Minister Narendra Modi is a modern-day Tacitus who claimed: “The more corrupt the state, the more laws.” Sadly, our lot seems to be both the non-enactment of essential legislation and the non-enforcement of laws we already have.

(R. Sudarshan, a Rhodes Scholar, is Dean and Professor, Jindal School of Government and Public Policy, Sonipat.)

Political and administrative expediency, not principles of good governance and the rule of law, rule the roost, regardless of which set of political parties is in power.

In response to public clamour against corruption, Parliament has been passing anti-graft legislation. But lawmakers, public servants and enforcement agencies, who have among their lot a vast majority of the corrupt, have been seeking loopholes in the law

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

TELEGRAPH, NOV 27, 2014

### NEWS FROM LATIN AMERICA

What India could allow itself to learn from Brazil's fight against poverty **First Person Singular** - A.M.

-  
Some hypotheses die hard. One such is the near-romantic notion concerning neo-liberalism: opening up the economy to the global fortress is supposed to ensure a broadening of the mind and greater awareness on the part of the people of what is happening in the different corners of the world. At least, in our case, the reverse is certainly true.

At the dawn of independence and during the first one and a half decades that followed, those at the helm of the nation's affairs initiated a phase of intense interaction with their counterparts in many parts of the world. This had a great deal to do with the fact that the leadership of the Indian National Congress had kept track of trends in global politics, if only to measure their impact on the mood of our colonial masters. Jawaharlal Nehru was author of the best-selling *Glimpses of World History*. Subhas Chandra Bose, too, kept abreast of contemporary political developments in Europe. The Congress Party had, right from the early 1930s, a regular cell in its central office exclusively for the study of external affairs, for instance of both F.D. Roosevelt's New Deal and the experiments in the Soviet Union with five year plans. When Japan invaded and ravaged China, a wrathful Congress organized a special medical mission to visit China and offer succour to its distressed people. Immediately on assumption of office, Nehru as the nation's first prime minister as well as minister for external affairs, took a set of measures to put together a front of solidarity with the Afro-Asian countries just emerging from the shackles of centuries of colonial subjugation. These moves — along with his keenness to befriend China — aroused the suspicion of the United States administration, then in bondage to the McCarthy frenzy. Meanwhile, within the country, a fledgling Planning Commission was at work to figure out how to bring the nation out of the mire of abysmal poverty and acute social and economic inequalities. The statistician, P.C. Mahalanobis, advised the prime minister to take the cue from the strategy of economic self-reliance the Soviet Union had pursued for a while in the early years. Nehru went along with the suggestion, further adding to American annoyance.

At another level, the Left, particularly the Communist Party, on their own manner, were striving to make their acolytes and fellow-travellers aware of both the exciting developments taking place in Europe in post-World-War-II years. They were equally enthusiastic about drawing attention to the exploitation and deprivation Western capitalism was responsible for all over the world. There would also be stress on the significance of the people's liberation movements elsewhere in the Far East even as the revolution was an accomplished fact in China.

None of these developments hampers, though, the spreading influence of the English language and the deepening of the Anglo-Saxon ethos amongst Indian upper income

groups. The rationale of neither non-alignment nor Afro-Asian solidarity stood in the way of bewitchment at the scale of prosperity the United States had attained and the desire to beg or borrow a slice of it.

This intense phase of globalization was rudely brought to an end by the border incidents involving China. Despite Nehru continuing as prime minister till his death one-and-a-half years later, his influence over the government and the Congress Party waned considerably. The country began drifting towards the direction of exclusive dependence on the world's most powerful nation, the US, to thwart China. A parallel development is the transition from pursuing the goal of economic self-sufficiency to a full-fledgedly open system. Alongside this has been the ongoing process of most of the rest of the world ceasing to matter, or to be gradually equated with the United States and only the United States. The collapse of the Soviet Union and its hegemony over Eastern Europe, made it easier for Indian statecraft to complete this total shift in the country's global outlook.

Residual influences of the adjuncts to the policy of self-reliant growth were formally got rid of *via* the formal capitulation to economic liberalization's acceptance of the concept of an open economy in 1991. In practice, it meant an accentuation of the country's faith in American foreign, and particularly economic, policies. Whatever progress the Indian economy has been able to achieve in recent years was mostly on the basis of exports to the US and other countries in the West. Things have been somewhat bleak since the deep depression that set in in the American economy half a dozen years ago. The abdication of the goal of self-reliant growth has translated into a purposive neglect of State investment in both agriculture and industries producing goods for mass-consumption. Banks and insurance companies, many of which were nationalized during the first quarter following Independence, are being sold back to private entities, including foreign ones. Units set up in the public domain in the earlier phase specializing in producing heavy machinery and sophisticated industrial goods, or for extraction and processing oil and other minerals, are being disposed of on the plea of restoring fiscal balance, which supposedly will encourage private investors. All this has been accompanied by the large-scale displacement of workers by induction of sophisticated labour-saving equipment. This entire package of so-called reforms is in accordance with the rigid orthodoxy of economic neo-liberalism. Such copycat economics is unlikely to click in our milieu. It has shrunk employment, prevented the creation of a sound and growing domestic market to goods and services. Instead, what has happened is to make the country totally dependent on exports. The Western countries have already attained a level of economic growth and maturity where opportunities of income and employment accretion from outlays on physical production are unlikely to succeed much. Their emphasis has therefore been to organize artificial stimulus through speculative activities apart from investment in real estate, which irreversible urban growth renders scarcer and scarcer. Such artificial stimulus sometimes works, sometimes does not, in the West. Even if it does not, the Western countries have enough resources to take care of their unemployed. In our case, speculation in stocks and real estate merely diverts precious capital away from growth in agriculture, infrastructure and consumer goods for the masses. Unemployment and distress aggravate, exports fall, and the State does not have — or

pleads it does not have — enough resources to take care of the suffering millions in town and country.

Since, knowledge regarding what is happening in the rest of the world apart from the West is bordering on zero, both people in general as well as policy-makers over here are altogether innocent of alternative processes that could ensure development. Latin America, for instance, is as good as a non-existent geographical entity for most of us. Little news percolates on the economic and political developments taking place in recent years over the entire stretch of the South American continent. A quarter of a century ago, the US used to exercise complete sway over the activities of the Organization of American States, that loose consultative body of the two American continents and the Caribbean islands. Today it is totally isolated in that organization, about the only South American country still abiding by the wishes of Washington DC is Colombia, otherwise almost each and every South American country has liberated itself from the tentacles of regimes presided over by military dictators who took their orders from the Pentagon. US corporate finance, in spite of losing its clout over the South American regimes, is still trying to maintain its hold on the economies of these countries. It is fighting a losing battle. Not just Cuba, quite a few Latin countries like Venezuela and Bolivia have announced overtly socialist programmes to transform their economies. Others have discovered that dependence on exports is not the only way to economic sustenance and growth. Till very recently, the fiscal policy of most South American governments was to use the government budget to extract money from the poor and the middle classes, and transfer it to the richer classes on the assumption — or pretence — that they will encourage investment and industrial growth for exports. In a global climate where exports are uncertain, the old hypothesis no longer holds water. On the contrary, the radical set of new Latin regimes is discovering that reversing the budgetary process is really the answer to their prayer. With fiscal transfers, which took away money from the comfortably placed at the top of the social strata, and distributing the proceeds in some manner or other among those at the bottom of the social scale, the latter will be better nourished and better educated and will be able to produce more, earn more, come to the market with their new earnings to buy goods and services, thereby stimulating growth in the system. This is precisely what the left-of-centre coalition that has ruled Brazil, the largest nation in South America, has been following since 2003 with extraordinary success. Heading the coalition, the Workers' Party elected the president of the country in 2002. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, coming from a working class background and with a long record of imprisonment and suffering in the hands of previous regimes, had a charismatic hold over Brazil's masses and won his first term with a huge majority. The policies he pursued with such striking success during the first term, ensured his re-election four years later with almost no decline in his level of support. When he retired at the end of his second term, his cabinet chief, Dilma Rousseff, a former fiery radical, but with upper-class roots, was picked by the Workers' Party as his successor. Corporate finance, foreign as well as domestic, and the media at their command, did their best to prevent her victory. To no avail. Anti-poverty fiscal programmes had widened substantially support for the Workers' Party in the country's north and northeast, which are the most poverty-stricken. In the south, the party had an impressive base amongst the middle classes in both Rio Grande and Rio de Janeiro regions. Constituents of the left-of-

centre coalition, not as radical as the Workers' Party, are often infiltrated by opportunist elements. Mostly because of their doings, Lula's second term was vitiated by one or two financial scandals and was grist for vigorous opposition propaganda. But, over all, this could do little harm and Rousseff won by securing around 55 per cent of the total votes cast.

Dilma took over as president in January, 2011, and a frustrated Opposition would give her no peace. Corporate capital well realized that the further success of the anti-poverty programme would doom it for ever. The forces in the Opposition prepared themselves for a last-ditch battle. They had enough pretexts to fill their campaign against the Workers' Party. A key component of Dilma's fiscal projects was construction of a number of dams across the upper-reaches of the great Amazon, thereby diverting water to different parts of northern Brazil. The objective was the expansion of cultivation, providing opportunities for poor farmers, raising their productivity and enlarging the scope of employment. Corporate finance launched a propaganda barrage alleging that this programme was like sowing wild oats, the dam projects were ill planned, badly located and would cause severe environment problems while very few farmers would move to the regions where the water was proposed to be supplied. This time, corporate finance found as their comrades-in-arms elements from the Far Left who styled themselves as environmentalists. Their real grouse was that the Workers' Party was not bold enough to take more adventurous strides towards the direction of radical pro-people reforms, as for instance, Evo Morales was doing in Bolivia. They tended to ignore the reality that finance capital was far more deeply entrenched in Brazil than in Bolivia, the social structure was more complex, and the middle and working classes are much more heterogeneous in their political and social outlook. The somewhat wild Left apart, other forces also kept harassing the Dilma administration by organizing strikes in public transport systems demanding unreasonably high wages, which could be conceded only by cutting down anti-poverty projects. But by far the worst predicament Dilma had to face was Brazil's stunning defeat in this year's World Cup soccer semi-final at the hands of Germany, which scored, unbelievably, seven goals against the proud Latin country team. Football is life and soul of average Brazilians. The shock defeat in the semi-final, and by such a wide margin, was considered a national humiliation. Immediately, accusations against the government in power began to rend the air. The Dilma regime had supposedly neglected to offer adequate support to the national team; such neglect was responsible for this inglorious defeat.

This October was, once more, time for electing a new president in Brazil. Despite controversies surrounding her, the Workers' Party decided that Dilma Rousseff would once more be its candidate. When the final round of votes was counted, the world of corporate finance was enveloped in a pall of gloom. All efforts have failed. Dilma's aggregate support has dipped by almost 4 per cent in the face of the sustained biting campaign on the part of the Opposition against her. This drop in popular support is, in a sense, a remarkable achievement on the part of the Workers' Party. There has been some erosion of votes in the southern parts of the country, but the anti-poverty programmes have helped to increase markedly the party's support in the northern and northeastern regions, even as these have also sustained the country's overall economic growth at a

time when exports have taken a downward plunge because of global economic depression. The fight against poverty has therefore not only been a boost for egalitarianism, it has also been a major weapon for promoting all-round development.

This is where the sadness emerges. One was anxious for regular news about how the poll campaign was shaping in Brazil, what was the impact on mass opinion of the Opposition's allegations, and how the Workers' Party was coping with them. But to our media, the Brazilian election was a non-event. Even when the final result was out and there was a cryptic reference to it in some of our newspapers, very few details were available on how the votes were cast in the different parts of the country where Dilma had a set-back or where she had gained. That the Indian media condescended to take note of the final outcome of the Brazilian poll again had a basis in self-interest: Dilma's re-election, the Indian nation was informed, would remove the uncertainties shrouding the proposed establishment of BRICS Development Bank— the international financial institution formed as counterpoise to the World Bank and the IMF, and proposed to be spearheaded by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Although the banking institution would be headquartered in Shanghai, an Indian citizen would be its first chief executive. Dilma had promised a hefty sum as contribution to its initial capital stock. India is therefore relieved that she has won re-election.

Otherwise, we will sink or sing with the US and its allies. We refuse to learn lessons from elsewhere. Is not our India *mahan*? Our dream of export-dependent growth is turning sour. Brazil's recent experience perhaps has lessons which, if followed fully or in part, could have suggested to us alternative avenues of growth. Our pride stands in the way.

## EDUCATION

PIONEERR, NOV 29, 2014

### LG GETS JOLT, SCHOOLS GET ADMISSION AUTONOMY

Ending a year of confusion over nursery admissions, the Delhi High Court on Friday quashed Lieutenant-Governor Najeeb Jung's point system stating that private-unaided schools can set their own criteria for nursery admissions. The court said that the Government's decision last year was "neither procedurally proper nor rational".

Justice Manmohan said that the private-unaided schools have the fundamental right to "maximum autonomy in day-to-day administration, including right to admit students".

Additionally, the court also negated the importance of the neighbourhood quota. It said that the "neighbourhood concept was better taken care of by private-unaided schools both in terms of guidelines laid down in the Ganguly Committee report as well as under the earlier admission order of 2007".

Meanwhile, sources inform that the Directorate of Education would soon appeal to the court against the decision.

As per the L-G's point system, maximum weightage was given to students who stayed in the neighbourhood. However, Justice Manmohan in his 69-page judgement said, "Children should have the option to go to a neighbourhood school, but their choice cannot be restricted to a school in their locality. This court is unable to appreciate that a student's educational fate can be relegated to his position on a map."

In the L-G's point system, 70 points were reserved for those living in the neighbourhood in a radius of eight-kms, 20 points for siblings studying in the same school, five points for students whose parents were alumnus of the school and another five points for inter-State transfer quota. When these guidelines had been implemented, some of the major changes that were brought in were that there was a shift from the flexible point system to a common point system, there was no room for management quota and five per cent reservation made for girls in co-education schools.

This order was opposed by one and all and for a year several cases were taken up in the court delaying the admission procedure till May-end. However, now the admissions would be held as per the Ganguly Committee recommendations.

As per the recommendations, the school can develop and adopt criteria for admission which is "clear, well-defined, equitable, non-discriminatory, unambiguous and in the best interests of children". According to that the schools can set criterion on neighbourhood, background of child, sibling, transfer case, single parent and management quota. However, schools need not include all the criterions in their guidelines.

While this news has come as a huge relief for private schools, the same can't be said for all parents. With the ball now in the school's court, parents feel that there may be a rise in back-door entries and unfair admissions. Principals on the other hand are completely elated with the decision and said that they have finally got back their "fundamental right

of complete autonomy”. Principal of Springdales School Ameeta Mulla Wattal said, “Everything was going smooth until last year when the L-G’s guidelines came out. There was utter chaos. There needs to be trust instilled in the private schools of Delhi especially when Government schools don’t have nursery.”

**TIMES OF INDIA, NOV 28, 2014**

**Delhi University changes nomenclature of 12 degrees**

NEW DELHI: Delhi University has changed the nomenclature of at-least 12 degrees offered by it, following instructions from the University Grants Commission (UGC) to abide by the names notified in its gazette.

"In order to comply with the list of approved degrees under Section 22 of UGC Act, 1956 nomenclature of few degrees have been changed by the Delhi University," an official notification said.

The Master of Comparative Law has now been amended to LLM (Comparative Law), Master of Human Resource and Organisational Development (MHROD) to Master of Business Administration (Human Resource Development) - MBA(HRD) and Master of International Business (MIB) to Master of Business Administration (International Business).

B.Tech/B.S Innovation with Mathematics and IT has been replaced with B.Tech Information Technology and Mathematical Innovations.

The four-year B.Tech Humanities course has been modified to three-year B.A Hons.(Humanities and Social Sciences).

"The change in nomenclature of the B.Tech degree shall also be applicable to students who were admitted in academic sessions 2011-2015 , 2012-2016, 2013-2017," the notification said.

The Master of Mathematics Education has been replaced with M.Sc (Mathematics Education).

"The change in nomenclature of the Meta University concept degree from Master of Mathematics Education to M.Sc Mathematics Education shall also be placed before all competent authorities of Jamia Milia Islamia for necessary approval at the earliest.

"The students enrolled under the Meta University concept will be awarded a joint degree carrying logos of both the universities," it said.

Few undergraduate degrees whose nomenclature have been changed include: Bachelor of

Business Economics (BBE) to B.A (Honours) Business Economics, Bachelor of Finance and Investment Analysis (BFIA) to Bachelor of Business Administration (Financial Investment Analysis), Bachelor of Mass Media and Mass Communication (B.M.M.M.C) to B.A (Multimedia & Mass Communication) (M.M.M.C) and B.A. Honours Journalism and Mass Communication to B.A (Honours) Journalism.

Similarly, The B.A Honours in Music would be known as B.A (Honours) Music (Hindustani), B.A (Honours) Music (Karnatak) and B.A (Honours) Music (Percussion).

The Masters of Business Economics (MBE) has been replaced with M.A (Business Economics).

The amendments to the ordinances and appendices of the university have been made after they were given a nod by the varsity's Executive Council (EC) in a meeting held in July this year.

Besides the nomenclature, the scheme of examination and course content have also been modified for certain degree courses.

"A notification describing the modifications in this regard has been sent to all the colleges offering these courses," a senior DU official said.

Delhi University had modified names of few degrees after it introduced the controversial Four Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) last year.

As the FYUP was rolled back earlier this year following pressure from UGC, DU had to modify the nomenclature of those degrees.

UGC had also directed other universities to abide by its norms for awarding degrees and refrain from using any such 'unconventional' name which has not been notified in the commission's gazette.

TRIBUNE, NOV 28, 2014

**Pvt players to make ITI students industry-ready  
19 school buildings, mostly in Dwarka and Rohini, being constructed**

In accordance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's emphasis on skill development, the Delhi government has roped in some companies under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode to upgrade the infrastructure of nine Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) and make students industry-ready.

"Keeping in mind that skill development is the need of the hour the government has signed MoAs (Memorandum of Agreements) with few private automobile and electronics companies like Samsung who will impart the necessary training to the students apart

from upgrading the facilities of the ITIs," Principal Secretary (Education) Anindo Majumdar said.

The state education department has instituted management committees, comprised of representatives from the government, private body and the concerned ITIs, who will also be given loan, to bring systematic improvement to the facilities.

The government also announced that it has undertaken the construction of 19 school buildings, mostly in Dwarka and Rohini, during the last three months.

"The government is constructing 19 school buildings at the total cost of Rs 345 crore apart from adding 500 new classrooms to ease off congestion," Majumdar said at a press conference here today.

He also announced that the second campus of the IP University is coming up at Surajmal Vihar in East Delhi.

Claiming that almost all schools in Delhi have separate toilets for girls and boys, the secretary said that in tune with the 'Swachh Bharat Mission', the government has also sanctioned the construction of toilet blocks in 224 schools lacking adequate infrastructure. — PTI

TIMES OF INDIA, NOV 27, 2014

### **Lok Sabha gives IIITs national importance status**

NEW DELHI: The Lok Sabha Wednesday passed the Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIIT) Bill, 2014 which will declare some IT institutions to be of national importance and provide manpower of global standards.

The bill seeks to provide the four existing IIITs an independent statutory status and proposes to declare them as institutes of national importance to enable them to grant degrees to their students.

Human resource development minister Smriti Irani said: "We are trying to improve the quality of education in the institutions we have. We want to bring in a process through which advertisements would be put out for faculty members."

Replying to criticism that the bill was trying to alter the governance structures of the IIITs, Irani said the IIIT governance structure was like that of the IITs and the NIITs which were formed by acts of parliament.

"So to question it is to question an act of parliament," she said.

ASIAN AGE, NOV 26, 2014

### **Order to detain ex-Delhi University V-C stayed by High Court**

Former Delhi University vice-chancellor Deepak Pental was on Tuesday ordered to be taken into custody in a complaint of plagiarism, cheating and forgery, but was later directed to be released by the Delhi high court.

Additional chief metropolitan magistrate Vinod Kumar Gautam ordered Prof. Pental's arrest on a complaint by Prof. P. Pardha Saradhi, who had accused him and his student of plagiarising his paper on biotechnology and publishing it as their own.

Sixty-three-year-old Pental has been accused of cheating and also misappropriating some genetic material from the university's science lab.

While Prof. Pental was taken into custody around 12:45 pm, his advocate moved the high court immediately after which his arrest was stayed. The matter came up for hearing before Justice S. Muralidhar of the Delhi high court, who stayed the magisterial court's arrest warrant, saying till pendency of the petition before him, the trial court order is "suspended."

Meanwhile, the court directed the officials concerned to produce the trial court's order before December 15. The high court also said, "This order will remain in force till pending of the petition."

It directed the registrar-general of the high court to communicate the order immediately through fax and telephone to Tihar Jail authorities concerned.

It also said that on next date of hearing the file related to the case be produced before it. The high court's direction came on a plea moved by senior advocate Arvind Nigam, representing Prof. Pental, alleging that the trial court passed a wrong order and he was illegally taken into custody and sent to Tihar. Advocate Nigam said his client's bail plea was pending before the trial court since July and without hearing it the accused was taken into custody. He also informed the court that the matter is listed in February for presence of the main accused, who is overseas. The high court also issued notice to complainant Prof. Saradhi seeking his response.

Advocate Praveen Kumar Singh, who appeared for the complainant, said the private complaint was filed in the court of the additional chief metropolitan magistrate in 2009 alleging that Prof. Pental had allured post-doctoral research student K.V.S.K. Prasad and they plagiarised Prof. Saradhi's paper and published it as their own between 2000-2002.

ASIAN AGE, NOV 25, 2014

### **Delhi University to launch skill-based courses**

These new courses will be available in colleges affiliated with the DU as add-on short-term, compulsory, and long-term courses

To improve employment potential of its students, the Delhi University is launching skill-based courses with the help of the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).

These new skilled-based courses will be available in colleges affiliated with the DU as add-on short-term, compulsory, and long-term courses for undergraduate students.

Skill-based training will be integrated with the graduation curriculum and will start from January in many DU colleges. The training will be provided in sectors such as banking, financial services and insurance, IT and IT-enabled services, healthcare, media and entertainment, tourism and hospitality and the automotive industry.

“Seventy per cent of all students under this programme shall be assured of receiving a placement through the NSDC for jobs or for becoming entrepreneurs in the above sectors,” according to DU media coordinator Malay Neerav.

DU vice-chancellor Dinesh Singh and Dilip Chenoy, NSDC managing director and CEO, signed an MoU on Monday in this regard. “The NSDC and DU have recognised the need of the hour. A large number of DU students would benefit from this by coming to terms with the real world by attaining the skills and professional knowledge which would be give them jobs or make them job-giving entrepreneurs,” said Prof. Singh.

The objective of the MoU is to improve the employment potential of the students with systematic training, certificates of competency, and placement assistance.

“The partnership will help students acquire special skills for jobs and entrepreneurship related to the knowledge that they will obtain in their regular courses,” said Mr Neerav. According to the MoU, the DU will identify and provide the NSDC with a list of colleges/institutions where to consider the introduction of skill-based training. Colleges desirous of introducing the scheme will be responsible for providing the required infrastructure.

#### **INDIAN EXPRESS, NOV 27, 2014**

#### **Smriti Irani interfering, assertive, says UGC member M M Ansari**

The ministry has been simply imposing decisions. Any decision of the UGC should emerge from an exercise within the UGC, said Ansari.

[Ruhi Tewari](#)

University Grants Commission (UGC) member M M Ansari has slammed HRD Minister Smriti Irani for her “excessive interference” in the functioning of the commission and for taking “arbitrary and abrupt” decisions, while depending entirely on a “well-planted bureaucracy” and the RSS for running the ministry.

The first such attack on the minister by a serving UGC member comes at a time when she is in the eye of a storm for her ministry’s decision to scrap German as a third language in Kendriya Vidyalayas.

“There is excessive interference from the minister in the UGC. One saw it in the FYUP issue, or in the way the ministry first decided on the Swacch Bharat implementation in the education sector and then informed us and asked us to send a circular to universities, or in how she announced the Swami Vivekanand scholarship programme for a single girl child without consulting us. The ministry has been simply imposing decisions. Any decision of the UGC should emerge from an exercise within the UGC,” Ansari told The Indian Express.

The former CIC termed Irani’s decisions as being “very arbitrary” and “abrupt” and claimed she was “too assertive”. Ansari, who has been a UGC member since 2012, also questioned Irani’s capabilities to lead the crucial education sector.

“The minister has no exposure of the education system. She has to depend on notes from bureaucrats, who have been well-planted by the government in the ministry, and think tanks comprising those from RSS and BJP. So how will she interact with academicians if she does not know the issues? It is demoralising for us,” he said, adding “all appointments were being made bypassing procedures”.

He also criticised the ministry’s move to scrap German as a third language in KVs mid-session and said in a globalised world, it was important to give children the choice to pick what language they want to study.

Ansari also slammed the appointment of Ram Shankar Katheria as Minister of State for HRD. Katheria has been in the midst of controversy over allegations that his graduation marksheet was forged.

“There have been several questions about Katheria’s marksheets. We don’t know the truth but there can be no smoke without fire. such ministers, there will be a bad impact on children, an adverse impact on the youth. HRD Ministry talks of youth empowerment and then we have such ministers to lead the education system,” he said.

Ansari’s term with the UGC expires in August next year.

## HOUSING

PIONEER, NOV 27, 2014

### **URBAN MINISTRY ACCEDES TO FAR CRY FOR ENHANCEMENT**

In a major relief to big plot holders and builders in the national Capital, the Ministry of Urban Development on Wednesday approved the enhancement of ground coverage and floor area ratio (FAR).

As per the amendment in the Master Plan for Delhi-2021, FAR has been increased from 150 to 200 per cent for 750 to 1,000 sq metre plots while the same has been increased from 120 to 200 per cent for plots of 1,000 sq metres and above.

This means that people can add one more floor to the building but they will have to restrict the height of the building to 15 metres as there has been no change in the rule pertaining to the height of the building. The decision will most likely help big plot holders, builders and farmhouse owners owning land up to 750 sq metres and above.

The amendment comes as a major plus point for the BJP to woo voters in the upcoming Assembly polls.

The previous Government (Congress) had earlier increased the FAR from 100 per cent to 150 per cent in 2009. Insiders say that this would help to resolve housing problem to some extent in the national Capital but there would be greater stress on the services being provided by the various agencies. Some say that only big plot holders will be benefitted.

FAR essentially means the limit imposed on the amount of construction in a certain plot of land or location. In other words, it helps control the building volume. FAR parameters vary from State to State and are governed by the respective city development authorities.

“The Authority had passed a proposal that the maximum ground coverage in respect to plots of 750 sqm and above be increased from 40 per cent to 50 per cent and the FAR be increased from 120 to 200. This will, however, not change the number of dwelling units proposed to be allowed after increase in FAR. The issue of dwelling units will have to be taken up in court, which had restricted addition of more units. Permission will be sought for allowing additional dwelling units in view of increase in FAR,” a DDA official said.

This issue had been notified under the Master Plan and about 109 objections and suggestions were received. The objections and suggestions were deliberated over by the Board of Enquiry and the decision was taken based on the recommendations of the Board.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

HINDU, NOV 25, 2014

### **A case for SAARC reforms**

SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY

The organisation of eight South Asian nations, namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, with observer nations, Myanmar, China, Iran, the European Union (EU) and the United States, to name a few, is known as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). It was established at the first summit in Dhaka on December 7-8, 1985. The last summit, the 17th, was held in Addu, in the Maldives, in November 2011. After a gap of three years, the 18th Summit Meeting is to be held in Nepal on November 26-27, 2014.

These eight nations of South Asia constitute 3 per cent of the world's area, but house 21 per cent of the global population. India, significantly, constitutes 70 per cent or more of SAARC's area and population.

Seven of them have common borders with India but not each other. All have a shared culture, ethnicity and experienced long interactive historical events including British imperialism and its consequences.

South Asian nations together also make an integrated "condominium" of common rivers, a mountain system, an ocean and a conjoint ecological system. The region's endowment for economic production is also more or less the same.

### **Limitations**

Since India constitutes 70 per cent or more of SAARC's area and population, and has political conflicts with all its neighbours, India has to redefine its role, from seeking reciprocity in bilateral relations, to being prepared to go the extra mile in meeting the aspirations of all other SAARC nations.

SAARC, regrettably, has yet to develop into a conflict-mediating or conflict-resolving institution both on multilateral and bilateral issues. It has succeeded however in evolving as a forum and a framework but which does not have the capacity to devise instruments and techniques for consultations on bilateral and multilateral political and security problems.

This is because the SAARC Charter mandates that decisions, at all levels in SAARC, are only of multilateral issues, and only those issues are for inclusion in the agenda in a SAARC summit meeting on the basis of unanimity. Article X(2) of the Charter, thus excludes "bilateral and contentious issues" from the ambit of SAARC deliberations.

A shortcoming in the current situation is that unlike Europe, SAARC is not an association of nearly equally sized countries. India, as stated earlier, is about 70 per cent of the size

of South Asia, and the other SAARC member-nations have a common border bilaterally only with India, and not with each other. The economic and quality of life disparities among South Asian nations are also quite wide.

### **Sri Lankan policy**

During the period of 10 years since May 2004, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) was pathetically hamstrung by the sectarian, former secessionist and pro-LTTE parties such as the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) for its survival in Parliament and majority.

Hence, India's policy towards Sri Lanka was driven both bilaterally and in U.N. organisations by the hyperbole of the parties of the Dravidian Movement, in speech and dramatics, and which was bolstered by the threat of these parties to withdraw support to the Manmohan Singh government. These sectarian parties thus exercised a veto over the UPA government's Sri Lanka policy.

As a consequence, China, which is not a member of SAARC, gained a strategic advantage in Sri Lanka by moving into the policy space vacated by India. Hambantota port is an example of how China filled the vacuum when India decided, based on the DMK's threat, to decline Sri Lanka's offer first to India to assist building the port.

SAARC thereby underwent rigor mortis and the summit failed to take place after 2011 for three years. Time is at hand now at the Kathmandu summit to rectify this.

Furthermore, with India having declined to help Sri Lanka build the Hambantota port (later built with China's assistance), it is unproductive for SAARC's effectiveness to unilaterally protest periodic visits by Chinese submarines to Hambantota port, which is on the shores of the international waters of the Indian Ocean.

### **Issues before SAARC**

The destiny of South Asian nations today is to either swim together or risk sinking separately in the battle against poverty and unemployment as well as in meeting the challenges of the environment, national security, and globalisation.

Today, there are five crucial issues on SAARC:

First, SAARC is off and on in a limbo. Thus the first issue is this: how to grapple with SAARC's uncertain future and how to put it back on the rails again, and not permit in the future, international political changes affecting the functioning of SAARC.

Second, SAARC has to resolve whether essential economic cooperation in an increasingly globalised world economy can be achieved despite continuing political conflicts.

The issue is whether political differences — beyond vital national interests issues — can be set aside by each member country while a more harmonious environment is created through healthy economic cooperation.

Third, is SAARC so fragile that it cannot survive if bilateral controversial political questions are raised in its deliberations without undermining its utility?

Fourth, given that India is 70 per cent of SAARC, geographically and economically, and that the other SAARC nations have borders only with India and not with each other, unlike in the EU, does India have the special responsibility to go the extra mile to make SAARC work?

Fifth, given the way World Trade Organization (WTO) disciplines are to be enforced, does SAARC need a “level playing field” regional agreement, modelled on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), with cross-retaliatory powers and a Regional Trade Organization (RTO) to enforce it?

### **A road map for reforms**

To address these five issues and overcome the current impasse in SAARC and to make it work, two preconditions have to be obtained:

(1) India has to go the extra mile to make SAARC work because India is 70 per cent of South Asia, and has common borders with seven SAARC nations.

(2) South Asian countries have to work on the common values and shared historical perceptions of the peoples of the region, consciously addressing essential political differences.

Transparency in action in bilateral dealings is key to achieving these two preconditions. No country of the region should either act the big brother or be a dog in the manger.

Hence, mindful of the uphill task of promoting South Asian regional integration, I suggest the following reforms:

(a) No SAARC nation should internationalise any bilateral issue beyond the SAARC forum.

(b) SAARC will do all it can to facilitate the creation of the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) immediately, if possible by the end of 2014. Thereafter, SAARC resolves to make Sri Lanka’s coast the gateway to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) by developing the hard infrastructure and freight movement facilitation.

(c) SAARC should strive to enhance investment activity between its member states, and not merely trade. South Asian joint venture promotion schemes should also be promoted on a priority.

(d) The energy sector should be linked together through a unified South Asian electric power grid system and countries could pool their technical and financial resources in collaborative projects.

(e) In only the fields of science and technology, universities in SAARC countries should pool their faculties and teach across borders or engage in online education using the Internet.

(f) Broader popular support at the grass-root level must be vastly improved by encouraging freer legal movement of people for economic and cultural tourism reasons by minimising immigration procedures.

(g) Effective steps must be undertaken to jointly deter cross-border, illegal migration, terror attacks and block the narcotics trade and drug trafficking.

It should be remembered that the EU was made possible only due to the conclusion drawn by the people of Europe, after the experience of two terrible world wars, that a third world war would destroy Europe totally. Hence, despite a violent history of warfare, European nations sank their differences and formed the EU. Furthermore, there were a few leaders like Adenauer, de Gaulle, Schuman and de Gasperi who had a vision of a peaceful development of the continent and dared to embark towards this goal.

But as the popular saying goes, it takes two to tango. With two of the eight SAARC nations in possession of deliverable nuclear weapons, it is imperative for the peaceful existence of SAARC nations that they effectively bind together and develop harmoniously.

(Dr. Subramanian Swamy is chairman of the Bharatiya Janata Party's Strategic Affairs Committee. The article forms the text of his speech at the Lalith Atulathmudali Memorial Lecture in Colombo on November 26.)

With two of the eight SAARC nations in possession of deliverable nuclear weapons, it is imperative for the peaceful existence of SAARC nations that they effectively bind together and develop harmoniously.

SAARC, regrettably, has yet to develop into

a conflict-mediating or resolving institution on multilateral and bilateral issues. While it has succeeded in evolving as a forum, it does not have the capacity to devise instruments for consultations on bilateral and multilateral political and security problems

## LABOUR

STATESMAN, NOV 24, 2014

### **Online PF claim settlement from December**

New Delhi, 23 November: Retirement fund body EPFO will launch the online facility for submitting provident fund withdrawal claims in December, which would quicken such settlements and benefit its over five crore subscribers.

At present, the subscribers of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation have to file PF settlement claims manually after they leave job or retire. The online application of such claims would enable EPFO to eventually settle those within three days.

“EPFO has decided to provide the facility of online application for PF withdrawal claims. It will be launched by mid-December,” a source said. All those subscribers whose PF and bank accounts are linked with Aadhaar number would be able to avail this facility, the source said.

Elaborating further he said that since Aadhaar number provides anywhere anytime authentication of identity on the basis of captured biometric details of a person, there would be remote chances of fraud or cheating.

A senior official said that sometimes EPFO takes more than mandated 30 days for settling provident fund withdrawals claims due to various reasons, including errors while filling the manual form. He said: “EPFO would eventually settle all type of claims, including PF withdrawal and transfer, within three days of filing those applications.”

The body has planned to settle 20-30 per cent of PF claims online by the end of this financial year. During the last fiscal, it had settled a total of 1.21 crore claims, including over a million PF transfer cases.

It has recently issued over four crore Universal PF Account Numbers (UAN) which are being seeded with Aadhaar number and bank accounts. This portable PF account would enable subscribers to have only one account while working with various employers throughout his/her life. pti

BUSINESS STANDARD, NOV 24, 2014

### **Govt initiates inter-ministerial discussion on four labour laws**

**No new labour law amendments to be introduced in the winter session of the Parliament**

**Somesh Jha**

The Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance government is not ready to bring immediate changes to more [labour laws](#) in the [Parliament](#) session that begins on Monday.

The Union [labour ministry](#) has set up four inter-ministerial groups to recommend changes in the Contract Labour Act, Small Factories Act, Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act and Minimum Wages Act. However, sources said it is not possible to bring these amendments in the winter session.

“Once these laws are reviewed by the inter-ministerial groups, they will be sent for approval to the Cabinet and then introduced in Parliament,” said Arun Kumar Sinha, additional secretary at the Union labour ministry, who heads the committees. Apart from the labour ministry, the committees have officials from other ministries, including commerce and textiles, and the department of industrial policy and promotion.

Changes in the Contract Labour Act seek to bring parity in wages, social security benefits, holidays, and hours of work among contract workers and permanent employees. Also the contract between the worker and the principal employer will mention these aspects.

A senior government official said it was unlikely the definition of workers covered by the Act, as suggested by the Rajasthan government, would be looked into. According to the revised Rajasthan law, the Contract Labour Act will apply to firms hiring 50 or more people, against 20 now. This was intended to allow industries to hire more temporary workers without passing on to them the benefits contract workers are entitled to.

The official, who did not wish to be named, also ruled out setting up of an inter-ministerial group to review the Industrial Dispute Act to ease retrenchment norms.

An inter-ministerial group will look into the draft Bill of the Small Factories Act, which has combined 14 existing labour laws into a single one. Any establishment employing less than 40 workers will be covered by this law. The Bill is aimed for easy compliance by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). “These changes are aimed at boosting growth in the MSME sector as laws for small factories should be different and simplified,” said a ministry official. The draft of the Bill was circulated for public opinion till November 10. The committee will look into the suggestions received and make further recommendations.

Changes to the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act seek to make the law “gender neutral” and offer social security to migrant workers. “The committee will look into suggestions

made by the parliamentary standing committee on this law,” said the official.

The United Progressive Alliance government had introduced the Bill in the Rajya Sabha in August 2011 and it was later referred to the standing committee. The committee had sought a review of “substantial issues” like registration, passbook, payment of minimum and equal wages, journey and displacement allowance, free medical facilities, and suitable residential accommodation for migrant workers.

The Union labour ministry had made public the proposed changes to the Minimum Wages Act in June and had sought suggestions. The committee has been asked to look into the responses received. The proposed changes seek to set a statutory national floor on minimum wage for all states. This will be linked to retail inflation and reviewed every five years.

## LIBRARIES

**TIMES OF INDIA, NOV 26, 2014**

**AMU gives girl students access to main library**

Rajesh Kumar Pandey,

ALLAHABAD: Women students of Aligarh Muslim University will no longer be excluded from the central library of the 94-year-old institution. On Tuesday, AMU vice chancellor Lt Gen (retd) Zameeruddin Shah submitted in writing before the Allahabad high court that all students, including girls, have been allowed access to the Maulana Azad Library from the current session itself. He also clarified that undergraduate girl students of the university's Abdullah Women's College can also become members of the library.

Recording Shah's assurances placed before the court, a division bench of chief justice Dr Dhananjaya Yeshwant Chandrachud and justice Pradeep Kumar Singh Baghel disposed of a PIL that alleged the VC had adopted a discriminatory attitude by denying girl students access to the Maulana Azad Library. The PIL was filed by Allahabad University law student Deeksha Dwivedi and three other students.

"If the male students are not barred in the main library, excluding of women students raises a serious question of propriety because a regulatory measure cannot target students on gender basis on the ground that the facility is overstretched," the court said. "Any attempt to discriminate against women students would raise [the] serious risk of being frowned upon in society."

With regard to Shah saying there might be a safety problem for the women since their campus was 3km from the main library, the court directed in case he sought assistance, the DM and the SSP of Aligarh would provide all cooperation to the university administration.

According to the PIL, the VC had said that "four times more boys" would start flocking to the library if girls were given access to it. Shah had also said the presence of girl students in the library would breed indiscipline and disturb boys' concentration, the PIL had alleged.

On November 14 the high court had issued a notice to the AMU VC and registrar, and said any effort to regulate the problem of overcrowding on the campus must be on a gender-neutral basis since its breach would go against the right to equality as provided in the Constitution. The court had said it expected the VC and registrar would deal with the matter as responsible statutory authorities and resolve the unseemly controversy having due regard to the letter and spirit of constitutional provisions.

TRIBUNE, NOV 25, 2014

**Library closure triggers protest**

Bharat Jagao Andolan workers today held a dharna outside the District Library at Mahilpur Adda in Hoshiarpur, demanding that the library be reopened. It was shut down due to shortage of staff. Members of the library, led by president Jai Gopal Dhiman, also joined the strike.

The district administration had shut the library as most of the staff members had retired. Members demanded that required staff be appointed and the library be reopened.

Dhiman said, “The government that should set up libraries at the block level is shutting these down.” He threatened to intensify the protest if the library wasn’t reopened by December 1.

## OMBUDSMAN

BUSINESS LINE, NOV 24, 2014

### **An ombudsman for investor grievances**

PRADEEP S MEHTA

Other countries — the Philippines, South Korea, Kazakhstan, Greece — have it. We too need an independent adjudicator

Let's take two recent instances: A factory owned by Nokia in Chennai has shut down due to wrangles with the I-T department.

At a conference in New Delhi in September, Vodafone's head said it had sought the Government's approval to bring in funds from its parent company to buy spectrum in December 2013, but the clearance was still awaited; and the dealing officer is soon going to retire. "Yes, it is difficult to do business in India, that's the general perception of foreign companies, and not just in telecom," he pointed out.

Yet, we want companies to 'Make in India'.

These are just two of the many examples of post-investment blues. Some of them relate to micro or operational issues; many are related to macro or policy issues. Some are also related to judicial interventions, including public interest litigation.

However, they are not directly related to the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business in India rankings where our rank in 2014 slipped from 140 to 142; this ranking is mainly around the issue of entry and establishment of business.

Many issues land up in courts in India or abroad under our international investment treaty obligations, especially when a company wishes to exit. Can we find an easier way for such issues to be resolved so that business can devote its attention to production?

### **Redressal mechanisms**

The Government is focused on improving the business sentiment. It has also established an eight-member committee under Invest India (a joint venture of the Centre, FICCI and State governments) to help business navigate the maze of clearances.

While that is much needed, the Central and State governments should establish non-judicial grievance redressal mechanisms to deal with running a business smoothly. That will boost investor confidence hugely and ensure that the 'Make in India' programme runs faster.

Early this month, the Japanese state minister in their PMO, Yasutoshi Nishimura, speaking at the India Global Forum in New Delhi, said that unless we improved our

business environment, which included red tape, the promised \$35 billion investment would not flow in.

Given this unfavourable image of not being a business friendly nation with its varied regulations, challenging procedures and widespread corruption, an ombudsman, both at the Centre and in the States, would go a long way in overcoming some of these glitches.

There is an ombudsman in the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) in the form of the additional secretary with a joint secretary as grievance officer, but one is ignorant about their existence or track record. There are no reports on DIPP's website and informal enquiries with foreign investors reveal ignorance of or perhaps their lack of faith in this arrangement.

The issue of grievance redressal has been addressed by various other nations which have a dedicated body to handle investor complaints, but the body is situated outside of the ministry and is headed by a credible person.

### **The practice abroad**

South Korea has had an office of a foreign investment ombudsman (OFIO) since October 1999. The ombudsman works autonomously with his/her own team of 'home doctors', who are specialists in various fields.

One case resolved by the OFIO involved a complaint from a foreign company which was liable to receive a registration tax cut for its capital accretion for reinvestment purposes. The company was, however, charged 120 million Korean won (approximately \$0.1 million) as registration tax imposed by the local government. The OFIO was successful in getting the amount refunded to the company through consultations and assistance in filing a civil complaint.

Greece also has a dedicated ombudsman to handle investor grievances. It helped resolve an issue involving one of the leading broadband internet providers. The company decided to create another data centre and acquired land for the purpose. The government, however, included that plot in a group of residential zones, thus halting work on the project which could proceed only after a 'special application act' was passed.

Other countries following this strategy are the Philippines and Kazakhstan. The investment ombudsman team (IOT) in the Philippines is already planning to increase its mandate to include policy mediation and dialogue between government and the private sector.

The IOT was established in June 2014 and has received 14 complaints within three months, many of which were against local government units refusing to issue business permits, accreditation, official receipts among others.

### **Independence and authority**

One of the primary attributes of such an ombudsman is the requisite authority and independence provided to them to tackle grievances. More often than not these grievances are be raised against government departments. Therefore, a body created outside government is likely to be less biased and more successful.

This will also create a favourable perception of transparency and impartiality and go a long way in boosting investor confidence in the process. Such an institution would be an alternative dispute resolution mechanism as well. It would need to ensure that the resolutions create a win-win situation for both, investor and government, which would instil confidence in the process.

Overall, Narendra Modi's government has been successful to an extent in altering perceptions about the business climate in India. It started from a very low base, when policy paralysis ruled the environment. But it is yet to succeed in changing the mindset of the bureaucracy.

The dream of a business-friendly India will become a reality only when businesses and investors have an impartial avenue to get their grouses settled swiftly. Ombudsmen at all levels will be pivotal in achieving this.

The writer is the secretary-general of CUTS International. Tunisha Kapoor of CUTS provided research assistance

## PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

TIMES OF INDIA, NOV 27, 2014

### **Gujarat tops with 100cr e-governance transactions**

[Piyush Mishra](#)

AHMEDABAD: Prime Minister Narendra Modi had given a call on Independence Day this year for turning the country into 'digital India' where governance would not be opaque to people. In less than two years, Gujarat on Wednesday set a standard for other states when it crossed 100 crore e-transactions for public services — a first for the country insofar as use of technology for registration of births and deaths, land, and other such activities are concerned.

According to 'eTaal' — electronic transaction aggregation and analysis layer — a Central government portal that disseminates e-transaction statistics, Gujarat accounts for 27% of the total 373 crore e-transactions recorded in the services provided by all state government services in the past two years. The portal, set up by the IT department, receives transaction statistics from web-based applications on near real-time basis.

Gujarat has recorded 100.3 crore e-transactions between January 1, 2013 and November 26, 2014 in standard services provided under state government projects. In this year alone, over 58 crore e-transactions have been recorded in the state. Gujarat has set a standard for other states after it crossed 100 crore e-transactions for public services - a first for the country insofar as use of technology for registration of births and deaths, land, and other such activities are concerned.

From land record registration to registering a new birth to getting an affidavit for income, Gujaratis do it all the e-way. According to eTaal, public distribution system, land revenue and utility and bill payments are the top three services which record the maximum use, comprising of more than 63% of e-transactions in Gujarat.

In the case of PDS, introduction of biometric system has led to a record 40 crore e-transactions and over 7 crore election related e-transactions during the Lok Sabha elections helped push the numbers further this year. Gujarat is next to only the Central government in terms of use of e-services for governance — Central government projects recorded 185 crore e-transactions since January 2013. Agriculture (92 crore), common service centres (17 crore), judiciary (13 crore) and health (10 crore) contribute the maximum to central government e-transactions.

"Over 500 services are available through e-governance in the state. The government has also begun implementing 'mobile governance' across the state as an extended arm of e-governance," said S J Haider, secretary, department of science and technology, Gujarat.

## RAILWAYS

BUSINESS LINE, NOV 24, 2014

### Rebooting the Railways

It's time to radically reform the Railways if it is to become a world class service

As a former banker, Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu will realise better than anyone else the true cost to the economy of inefficiency and delay in the creation of public infrastructure. According to Planning Commission data, as many as 274 of the 289 Railway projects under implementation, or 95 per cent of all live projects, are delayed, some by as much as a decade or more. Many of the projects were planned much earlier but never got off the ground given the chronic shortage of funds for investment, thanks to rampant misallocation and misuse of resources for populist projects by a succession of Railway ministers. Almost anything planned such a long time ago is bound to be hopelessly inadequate, given the speed with which the country's economic landscape and connectivity requirements are changing. Add the delays, and it's a near certainty that when these projects eventually do get completed, they will not be able to meet the demands placed on them, or worse, become irrelevant.

That kind of stress is already threatening to unravel India's colonial era network. According to a recent PwC estimate, a quarter of Railway infrastructure is already being sweated beyond its maximum overload capacity. Worryingly, another 50 per cent of capacity is almost at that limit. Such stress has caused a rising number of accidents, earning the Indian Railways the sobriquet of the world's most dangerous railway network. The need to repair, strengthen and modernise its infrastructure has reached alarming proportions. More than a fourth of the 1,30,000-odd railway bridges in the country, for instance, are more than a century old. Passenger amenities are basic, with a vast majority of train toilets nothing more than a hole in the floor. The scale of work required to tackle these challenges is daunting. The Kakodkar Committee on Railway Safety had recommended investments of over Rs. 1 lakh crore to upgrade safety measures and eliminate unmanned crossings. The Sam Pitroda Committee on Railway Modernisation had estimated investments of over Rs. 5 lakh crore. The Railways' own Vision 2020 document, released by then Railway Minister Mamata Banerjee, estimates an annual investment of Rs. 1.4 lakh crore over a decade to meet its goal of upgrading the network.

These kind of investments are simply not possible given the parlous state of Railway finances. Its operating ratio is around 92.5, which means that the Railways is spending over 92 paise of every rupee it earns just to keep operating. There has been much talk of opening up to foreign investment, but most proposed foreign investments have foundered, thanks to an entrenched bureaucracy wary of losing control. 'Social' arguments have been used to defeat attempts to run the Railways on more commercial lines. As global experience has shown, privatisation has led to better services and lower costs for users, while there are enough options available for targeted subsidy delivery to the needy poor. It is time for bold reform.

TIMES OF INDIA, NOV 24, 2014

## **Railways to fit dustbins in non-AC coaches after Modi's anecdote**

Mahendra Singh

NEW DELHI: Cleanliness in trains will no longer be a class issue as railways has decided to make provision of dustbin in all types of passenger coaches. As of now, dustbins are fitted only in AC coaches.

Railway officials took cue from a small incident narrated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his 'Man ki Baat' programme. In his radio talk, Modi mentioned the Swachh Bharat Mission and quoted a man who wrote to him saying that when he was travelling by train, he saw people collecting their garbage in a polythene bag instead of throwing it around.

A senior official in the railway board secretariat said, "While the PM's narration was not an indictment of railways, the transporter decided to introduce dustbins in all types of passenger coaches to help travelers keep the compartment clean."

In some coaches, there is a trash bin under the sink, which is disproportionately small for the size of the coach and its occupants.

Modi's Clean India campaign seems to have enthused the state-run transporter which is flooded with complaints of poor hygiene and cleanliness.

Railways is working on a plan in which senior officers may adopt railway stations to ensure proper cleanliness after a suggestion from new minister Suresh Prabhu who has said that "in railways, cleaning is nobody's baby".

Prabhu has advocated banning of cooking and shifting out of commercial stalls, including eateries, from platforms to keep railway stations clean and safe.

As per plan, about 700 stations, out of the 7,500 stations across the country, are being identified to be taken up by individual officers for cleaning from next month.

The minister seems to have noticed departmental rivalry in railways which is not only derailing mega plans of modernization and technological upgrade but also issues like cleanliness and catering.

"There is a constant tussle between medical, commercial and engineering branches on not owning the cleaning job," Prabhu said.

The cleanliness drive was taken up by railways on October 2 on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti in which officials in railway board had to lead the campaign at different stations

across the country, but officials made mockery of it by choosing to go to their hometowns or tourist destinations.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, NOV 27, 2014

**Delhi Metro incurred losses of over Rs 90 crore in past 10 years**

Delhi Metro Rail Corporation has earned a total revenue of Rs 9,905.62 crore from 2004-05 to 2013-14...

Delhi Metro Rail Corporation has earned a total revenue of Rs 9,905.62 crore from 2004-05 to 2013-14, but incurred a loss of over Rs 90 crore in the same ten year-period.

Minister of State for Urban Development Babul Supriyo today informed the Lok Sabha that the total revenue, collected from fares, rental income tax and other sources, exceeded DMRC's Budget target of Rs 9,616.21 crore.

The Minister further informed that DMRC's Profit Before Tax (PBT) after charging interest on Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) loan and depreciation during the said ten year period was minus Rs 90.56 crore and after considering the wealth tax, deferred taxes, the Profit After Tax (PAT) was minus Rs 1,129.71 crore.

## SOCIAL PROBLEMS

TIMES OF INDIA, NOV 26, 2014

### **Govt may ban sale of loose cigarettes, allow only those over 25 to buy tobacco**

Sushmi Dey

NEW DELHI: There may soon be a ban on sale of loose cigarettes in India. The government has accepted a new tougher framework for tobacco sale as part of recommendations of an expert panel which prompted it to also consider raising the minimum age of those who can be sold tobacco products to 25 years from the current 18.

Another proposal under consideration is increasing the fine for smoking in public and violation of other provisions of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003.

Health minister J P Nadda told the Rajya Sabha that the ministry had accepted the suggestions made by the expert committee on "prohibition on sale of loose or single stick of cigarette, increasing the minimum legal age for sale of tobacco products, increasing the fine or penalty amounts for violation of certain provisions of the Act as well as making such offences cognizable".

The ministry has circulated a draft note on the new norms, seeking comments from other ministries.

The panel was formed by the health ministry to review Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003 (COTPA).

The World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control states that countries "shall endeavor" to prohibit sale of loose cigarettes because it makes them more affordable for minors. India is a signatory to the convention.

Soon after assuming office, the BJP-led government had raised excise on cigarettes and called for a countrywide ban on sale of tobacco products. Centre is now also considering a ban on branding on cigarette packets.

The expert panel had also recommended increased penalties for smoking in public. Six years ago, India had banned smoking in public places. However, implementation of the law has been weak, experts say.

Once the inter-ministerial consultation is over, the draft proposal by the health ministry is likely to be taken up by the Cabinet.

Following Nadda's statement in Parliament, shares of ITC, India's largest cigarette-

manufacturer, fell as much as 5% while Nifty was down 1.1 per cent. Shares of the company touched a low of Rs 348.60 during the day to end at Rs 355.70.

Shares of another major tobacco manufacturer Godfrey Phillips India also ended 9% down at Rs 2965.95 on Bombay Stock Exchange.

## TRANSPORT

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, NOV 27, 2014

### **More than 15-year-old vehicles not permitted to ply in Delhi: NGT**

All vehicles which were more than 15 years old would not be permitted to ply on Delhi

National Green Tribunal on Wednesday held that all vehicles which were more than 15 years old would not be permitted to ply on the city roads. (Reuters)

Dismayed at increasing air pollution in the national capital, the National Green Tribunal on Wednesday held that all vehicles which were more than 15 years old would not be permitted to ply on the city roads.

A bench, headed by NGT chairperson Justice Swatanter Kumar, also directed that wherever such vehicles of this age are noticed, the concerned authorities shall take appropriate steps in accordance with law including seizure of the vehicles.

“It is undisputed and in fact unquestionable that the air pollution of NCT, Delhi, is getting worse with each passing day. It not only projects the very dismayed state of affairs existing with clear indication that worst is likely to follow...

“All vehicles, diesel or petrol, which are more than 15 years old shall not be permitted to ply on the roads...This direction would be applicable to all vehicles without exception i.e. two wheelers, three wheelers, four wheelers, light vehicles and heavy vehicles irrespective of whether commercial or otherwise,” the bench said.

It further said that no person shall be permitted to burn plastic or any other material in the open.

If any person is found to be burning plastic or any other material including tree leaves in the open, he would be liable to be proceeded against in accordance with law,” it said.

The Tribunal also held that in all the markets in Delhi, “it shall be ensured tarred roads for regular traffic are not permitted to be used for parking thus causing avoidable congestion of traffic”.

## WATER SUPPLY

STATESMAN, NOV 27, 2014

### **90 pc household to get safe drinking water in 8 yrs: Govt**

New Delhi, 27 November: Ninety per cent homes in the country will get piped drinking water in next eight years, Lok Sabha was informed today. Minister for Drinking Water and Sanitation Birender Singh said that the NDA government was very clear about providing safe drinking water to every household in the country.

The Minister said that the government through the National Rural Drinking Water Programme has adopted the goal to provide every person in rural areas with adequate safe water for drinking, cooking and other domestic basic needs on sustainable basis. "Our goal is very clear. We want to provide every rural household enough drinking water. In next eight years, 90 per cent of the household will be covered and provided with safe drinking water," he said during Question Hour.

Singh said that water is a state subject and state governments have been vested with powers to plan, approve and implement the water supply schemes. "We have no plans to bring water under the concurrent list of the Constitution," he said.

## WOMEN

BUSINESS STANDARD, NOV 24, 2014

**Noah Smith: Economics is a dismal science for women**

**Forget anecdotes, there is quantitative evidence showing that economics is uniquely biased against women**

Noah Smith

British physicist Matt Taylor, who was involved with the Rosetta comet landing, recently found himself in the middle of a controversy about [sexism](#) and bad taste, after he was interviewed wearing a tacky shirt featuring pin-up girls toting guns. In true internet fashion, the incident was labelled ShirtStorm, and it sparked a debate about sexism in the sciences. Taylor has since apologised, issued a series of *mea culpas*, and showed as much contrition as one person could for a sartorial offense. Some of his female colleagues even came to his defence.

But all this raises a question: why is it that the sciences look like a feminist nirvana compared with the economics profession, which seems to have a built-in bias that prevents women from advancing?

Consider this 2011 blog post by George Mason University economist Robin Hanson. Hanson writes that "gentle, silent rape" of a [woman](#) by a man causes less harm than a wife cuckolding her husband: I [am puzzled] over why our law punishes rape far more than cuckoldry... [M]ost men would rather be raped than cuckolded... Imagine a woman was drugged into unconsciousness and then gently raped, so that she suffered no noticeable physical harm nor any memory of the event, and the rapist tried to keep the event secret... Now compare the two cases, cuckoldry and [gentle](#) silent rape.

There was no outcry whatsoever over these remarks, nor any retraction that I could find.

Or consider this similar post from 2013 by University of Rochester economist Steve Landsburg: Let's suppose that you, or I, or someone we love, or someone we care about from afar, is raped while unconscious in a way that causes no direct physical harm - no injury, no pregnancy, no disease transmission... Ought the law discourage such acts of rape? Should they be illegal?

The blog post sparked protests at Landsburg's university, but silence from the economics profession itself. Landsburg later apologised, stating that some readers "got the impression that I was endorsing rape, while my intent was to say exactly the opposite."

Although it's good that he apologised, Landsburg has made other sexist remarks on his blog. In 2012, he seemed to call pro-contraception activist Sandra Fluke a "prostitute," and defended Rush Limbaugh's demand that Fluke post a sex tape for the world to view.

In physics, a shirt depicting scantily clad women is a big deal, but in economics, everyone just sort of expects these things.

These aren't just anecdotes. There is quantitative evidence showing that economics is uniquely biased against women. According to a new paper by economists [Donna Ginther](#) and [Shulamit Kahn](#) and psychologists [Stephen Ceci](#) and Wendy Williams, sexism in econ is much more severe than in the sciences.

The authors investigate many kinds of gender bias. One thing they do is compare academic productivity (publications) to outcomes (promotion and tenure), and examine whether gender makes a difference. They find that once you control for productivity, men and women have the same outcomes in most academic fields - other than economics.

Does that mean that there is no sexism in those fields? Of course, not! Gender may decide who gets published in the first place. In fact, there is some evidence for this.

But the analysis allows the researchers to compare relative sexism in promotion and tenure across different fields. And what they find is that economics is much more sexist. They write: Economics is an outlier, with a persistent sex gap in promotion that cannot be readily explained by productivity differences.

In fact, a number of other studies by Ginther and Kahn have found similar results. What this means is that the average female economist - unlike the average female physicist or mathematician - is likely to have a better publication record than her male peers.

Now, maybe the sexism in the econ profession simply happens at a different stage - maybe economics journals are more willing than physics or math journals to publish female-authored papers, but then less willing to give female researchers credit for those publications. But that seems highly unlikely, especially given the corroborating evidence. The authors also find evidence of [gender bias](#) in economists' salaries - the only field in which the gap was statistically significant after controlling for productivity.

So the quantitative evidence is solid.

If you don't believe my anecdotes or the research papers, just go ask economists themselves. Basically, everyone knows this is real. According to Harvard economist Claudia Goldin, "It's something systemic to the field."

Or just observe the pattern of unabashed sexism by economists in the public sphere. It was Larry Summers - an economist, not a biologist - who got up in front of the Harvard faculty in 2005 and suggested that women's scientific abilities might be genetically inferior to men's at the high end of the distribution (an argument that Ginther and Kahn's paper actually addresses).

Many, many male economists are, of course, not sexist. But sexist ideas and prejudices find a refuge in econ that they don't find elsewhere in academia.

Why? Frankly, I don't know the reason. It could be because of economics' historical identification with conservative politics. Some economists still explicitly believe that when it comes to economics, the "facts have a well-known conservative bias" - as my old macroeconomics teacher once wrote on his blog. This widespread notion has attracted many smart young conservatives to the profession, and they may have brought their social conservatism with them. That general attitude of social conservatism may have acted as a kind of barrier, which no longer exists in other parts of academia, limiting opportunities for women in economics.

Alternatively, it could be because econ has always prided itself on bravely accepting truths that an emotional public doesn't want to believe. One of the first stories you usually hear in an introductory economics course is how rent control - a policy designed to help the poor - actually hurts the people it was intended to aid. One public image of economists has always been of Milton Friedman telling some hippie kid why communism just doesn't work. Economists with outdated sexist ideas may simply tell themselves that sexism is another one of those cases - that only bold, rational, hard-nosed economists are willing to embrace the hard "truth" that women just don't make very good professors.

Of course, as the research by Ginther *et al* shows, the data say otherwise. Female economists are out-publishing their more numerous male peers, and not getting the credit they deserve. But to a certain type of economist, data has never carried as much weight as theory. And in this case, "theory" may simply be a euphemism for outmoded sexist prejudice.

In any case, whatever the reason, it's time for economics to acknowledge that it has a sexism problem and to fix it.