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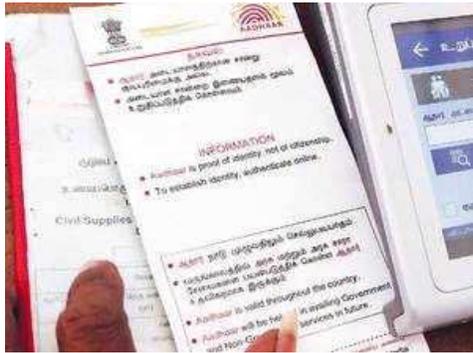
TAXATION

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AADHAR

Aadhaar-based authentications lowest in June

Economic Times, Jul 02, 2018



The low was reached barely three months after the Supreme Court extended the deadline for linking Aadhaar with various services and facilities, including verification of bank and mobile phone customers, until it delivers the final judgment on its validity and usage.

The usage of Aadhaar dropped to the lowest level in a year in June, declining over 40% from a record 1.48 billion authentications done using the unique identity number last September.

Aadhaar was used 859 million times for authentication purposes in June, according to the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), the agency that administers the programme.

The low was reached barely three months after the Supreme Court extended the deadline for linking Aadhaar with various services and facilities, including verification of bank and mobile phone customers, until it delivers the final judgment on its validity and usage. The court, which resumes after the summer break on Monday, is expected to rule on the matter soon.

After the court reserved its verdict on May 10, the government extended the deadline to link permanent account numbers (PAN) with Aadhaar to March 31 next year, while the time limit to link Aadhaar to get subsidised rations has been pushed by three months to September 30.

Aadhaar-based authentications have declined every month since September, except in March,

when they rose to 1.125 billion from 996 million in February, according to the UIDAI website.

After touching a peak of 1.48 billion in September, Aadhaar authentications fell to 1.46 billion in October. Last July, 966 million Aadhaar authentications were done and the figure crossed 1 billion last August.

An authentication is recorded when a citizen uses Aadhaar to avail of a service or links it to an existing service by providing the identity number, submitting biometrics (fingerprints, eye scan) or using the one-time password (OTP) verification. More than 1.2 billion Aadhaar numbers have been generated so far.

COURT CLARIFICATION

Demographic authentication — use of the Aadhaar number for verification — dropped to 170 m in June from 741.6 million last September. UIDAI chief operating officer AB Pandey did not comment on the declining trend of authentication.

A senior government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, conceded that the non-mandatory requirement of Aadhaar for some services “was one of the factors” for the drop in authentications. “But one must also consider that there was a huge spike last September and October as the government was going full steam ahead with linking mobile phones and bank accounts with Aadhaar,” the official told ET.

Almost 900 million bank accounts and 900 million mobile phones have been linked with Aadhaar after the government first set a deadline of March 31, 2018. “Saturation levels have been reached on Aadhaar linking and now the authentications are mainly regarding transactions being carried out by people to avail of welfare schemes and services,” the senior functionary said. “There is no reason to worry over the present authentication numbers... UIDAI will be raising its capacity to be able to carry out 3,000 million authentications every month.”

Since January, the SC has been hearing the case related to the constitutional validity of Aadhaar and whether it can be made mandatory for PAN, mobile phone connections, passports,

subsidised rations and bank accounts. In March, the apex court indefinitely extended the deadline for linking Aadhaar with various services and facilities. The court clarified in April that it had never directed the linking of mobile phones with Aadhaar and said the government had misinterpreted its 2017 order. A major issue before the SC is whether Aadhaar violates the right to privacy, which the court determined as fundamental in 2017

I-T dept launches 'instant' Aadhaar-based online PAN allotment system

Hindu July 03,2018

The Income Tax department has launched an 'instant' Aadhaar-based PAN allotment service for individuals seeking to obtain the unique identity for the first time. "This facility is free of cost and instant allotment of e-PAN is available only for a limited period on first-come-first-serve basis for valid Aadhaar holders," the department said in a recent advisory.

A senior official said the new facility has been introduced in view of an increasing number of people applying to obtain the Permanent Account Number (PAN) for their financial and tax matters. A fresh PAN will be allotted on the basis of a one time password (OTP) sent over the "active mobile number" linked with the valid Aadhaar number of a person, the advisory said.

The new PAN, obtained by this mechanism, will have the same name, date of birth, gender, mobile number and address that is present in the individual's Aadhaar, it said.

"The e-PAN facility is only for resident individuals and not for Hindu Undivided Family (HUF), firms, trusts and companies etc," it said.

Once the PAN is allotted to an applicant through his electronic Aadhaar-based verification system in a few seconds, the applicant will be sent the PAN card by post in sometime, the official said.

"This is one more initiative that leverages the Aadhaar database to quickly disburse/allot a government service," he said. The process can be done at the official portal of the department -- <https://www.incometaxindiaefiling.gov.in>.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), that makes policy for the Income Tax department, had yesterday extended the deadline for the PAN-Aadhaar linking to March 31 next year.

This is the fifth time it has extended the deadline for individuals to link their PAN to their biometric ID (Aadhaar).

COMPUTERS

HINDUSTAN TIMES 04 , 2018

Google allowing thirdparty developers to scan Gmail: report

WASHINGTON: Despite assuring users to “remain confident that Google will keep privacy and security paramount”, the search giant is still reportedly allowing third-party app developers scan through Gmail accounts, the Wall Street Journal has claimed.



Google’s own employees read emails only ‘in very specific cases where you ask us to and give consent’, the report said

Google “continues to let hundreds of outside software developers scan the inboxes of millions of Gmail users who signed up for emailbased services offering shopping price comparisons, automated travel-itinerary planners or other tools,” the report said late on Monday.

Google was yet to comment on the report.

Gmail has nearly 1.4 billion users globally—more users than the next 25 largest email providers combined.

“Google does little to police those developers, who train their computers—and, in some cases, employees—to read their users’ emails,” the report further stated.

According to Google, it provides data only to outside developers it has vetted and to whom users have explicitly granted permission to access email.

According to the report, Google's own employees read emails only "in very specific cases where you ask us to and give consent, or where we need to for security purposes, such as investigating a bug or abuse".

"Email data collectors use software to scan millions of messages a day, looking for clues about consumers that they can sell to marketers, hedge funds and other businesses," the report added, saying data miners generally have access to other email services besides Gmail.

In 2017, Google said its computers will soon stop reading the emails of its Gmail users to personalise their ads.

The Internet giant recently rolled out new features for Android users to make it easier for them to navigate their Gmail accounts and review security and privacy options.

As part of the new updates, Google introduced a new search functionality that enables users to find settings and other info they might be looking for in their account, like how to change the password.

CORRUPTION

HINDU JUL 07 , 2018

Nawaz Sharif sentenced to 10 years in jail



Daughter Maryam and son-in-law Safdar also sentenced to seven years and one year in jail respectively.

An anti-corruption court in Islamabad on July 6 sentenced former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to 10 years in **prison**. His daughter Maryam Nawaz was sentenced to seven years in jail and and son-in-law captain (retired) Safdar awarded one-year jail term.

The court also imposed a fine of £8 million on Mr. Sharif and £2 million on Ms. Maryam.

The Sharifs' lawyers said they would challenge the ruling in High Court.

Accountability Court judge Mohammed Bashir also rejected an application from the Sharifs to postpone the announcement of the verdict as Mr. Sharif is currently with his wife Kulsoom Nawaz in London who is on ventilator for the past three weeks.

“In the interest of justice, the announcement of order in the titled reference may be postponed for a minimum of seven days period,” the applications by the Sharifs stated.

Mr. Sharif had vowed to return to the country once his wife’s health improves.

Mr. Sharif was disqualified as Prime Minister in July 2017 by the Supreme Court following a challenge to his office by Opposition leader Imran Khan on the basis of publication of the Panama Papers, which alleged that the Sharif family stashed away assets in London through offshore companies Nescoll and Nelson. The companies are owned by Mr. Sharif’s son Hussain Nawaz. Assets in question are four expensive flats in London worth over £200 million.

Mr. Hussain Nawaz admitted ownership of the flats but denied that they were purchased through corruption money. He never appeared before the accountability court despite several notices. He has been declared a proclaimed offender.

Sharif, referring to the imprisonment handed to him, said that he has been punished because he tried to turn the course of Pakistan’s 70-year history. “I promise that I will continue this struggle until Pakistanis are not free of the chains that they are kept in for saying the truth,” Press Trust of India news agency quoted a defiant Sharif as telling reporters in London. “I will continue my struggle till the people of **Pakistan** are not freed of the slavery imposed on them by some generals and judges.”

Mr. Nawaz Sharif, a three-time Prime Minister, was removed as head of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) by the Election Commission following his disqualification by the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court disqualified him as not being truthful in his tax returns by not showing a salary as board of chairman of a Dubai-based company. But it instructed

the Accountability Court to complete the probe on his assets in six months. The Accountability Court judge sought three extensions from the apex court before completing the probe last week after more than nine months.

The PML-N has termed the trial political victimisation.

Pakistan is going to the polls on July 25. The convictions are a huge setback to the ruling PML-N, which has accused the country's powerful military establishment of conspiring against the party by forcing its candidates to switch sides and join the Opposition or contest elections as independents.

The PML-N held a meeting in Lahore to discuss the court ruling and reaction to it. The party is now headed by Mr. Nawaz Sharif's brother Shahbaz Sharif.

Mr. Shahbaz Sharif termed the accountability court ruling a black judgment. "People will always remember this judgment as black and controversial. We will fight in higher courts to reverse this judgment. The timing of the judgment is an attempt to influence the upcoming elections," he said at a press conference in Lahore. He said Mr. Nawaz Sharif had served the country three times as Prime Minister and what he got in return was a black judgment.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief Imran Khan welcomed the court ruling and termed it a historic judgment, which would serve as a deterrent to corruption in the country. "Sharif brothers [indulged in] corruption for decades and destroyed the institutions. For the first time, a powerful person has been sentenced, which is unprecedented," he said at a rally in Swat.

CRIMES

INDIAN EXPRESS, JULY 4, 2018

Union Cabinet nods bill to expand use of DNA-based forensic technology

The Cabinet approved the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2018, which provides for mandatory accreditation and regulation of DNA laboratories.



NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a bill that seeks to expand use of DNA-based forensic technology to support and strengthen the justice delivery system of the country, said an official. The Cabinet approved the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2018, which provides for mandatory accreditation and regulation of DNA laboratories. An official release said the utility of DNA-based technologies in solving crimes and identify missing persons is well recognised across the world.

"By providing for the mandatory accreditation and regulation of DNA laboratories, the Bill seeks to ensure that there is assurance that the DNA test results are reliable and the data is protected from misuse or abuse in terms of the privacy rights," the release said.

It said that the bill has provisions to enable cross-matching between persons who have been reported missing and unidentified dead bodies found in various parts of the country and for establishing the identity of victims in mass disasters.

Forensic DNA profiling is of proven value in solving offences related to human body such as murder, rape, human trafficking, or grievous hurt, besides theft, burglary and dacoity.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Report 2016, aggregate incidence of such crimes in the country is in excess of three lakh per year. The release said that currently, only a very small proportion of these crimes are subjected to DNA testing. "It is expected that the expanded use of this technology in these categories of cases would result not only in speedier justice delivery but also in increased conviction rates, which at present is only around 30 per cent," it added.

CYBER SECURITY

HINDUSTAN TIMES 04 , 2018

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EDUCATION

HINDU, JUL 03 , 2018

'No decision on shifting UGC's powers'

The Centre on Monday said that no decision had been taken yet to shift the University Grants Commission's grant-giving powers to the Ministry of Human Resource Development. It, however, agreed that many committees had suggested the separation of regulation and grants, and added that the proposed new system would be purely merit-based, online and objective.

This comes days after the Ministry put a draft Bill, to create a Higher Education Commission of India and repeal the UGC, in the public domain for suggestions. "The Ministry of HRD has clarified that no such final decision has yet been taken to shift the grant function to the Ministry, even though the recommendation about separating the Regulator and grant-giving entity has been made by many an expert committee in the past..." said a release. "The Government is keen to ensure that the grant-giving process shall be purely merit-based, online, objective system that assures both transparency and efficiency with least human interface."

It added: "Such IT systems are already operating in managing much bigger funding schemes like IMPRINT and RUSA flawlessly, and therefore can be put in place to manage the UGC schemes easily. This is to assure that if there is a successor system to the current grant-giving system of UGC, the same will be operated in the most unbiased and impartial manner."

HINDU JULY 03 , 2018

Reforming higher education

Many questions need to be answered in designing the successor regime to the UGC

The draft Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) Bill is now in the public domain. The HECI will replace the main regulatory authority, the University Grants Commission (UGC), to “provide for more autonomy and facilitate holistic growth” of this sector and offer “greater opportunities to Indian students at more affordable cost”. The new commission will cover all fields of education except medical and, presumably, agriculture, and institutions set up under the Central and State Acts, excluding those of national importance.

The main point of departure in the proposed Bill is a clear separation between academic functions and grant-giving ones, the former to be discharged by the HECI and the latter by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) directly. The academic functions include promoting the quality of instruction and maintenance of academic standards, as also fostering the autonomy of higher education institutions for, *inter alia*, comprehensive and holistic growth of education and research in a competitive global environment in an inclusive manner. In other words, the HECI will be bestowed with comprehensive and overriding powers, including ordering the closure of institutions, in all academic and related matters while the purse strings will be controlled by the MHRD.

The need for a single regulatory body arose largely in the context of multiple bodies set up over the years trying to cope with the ever increasing complexity of the sector, both in terms of rapidly expanding number of institutions to meet the demands of surging student enrolment, and the uneven and perhaps deteriorating standards in the quality of student output against the requirements of the job market. As Professor Furqan Qamar and others have shown, for almost a century after the first three universities were set up in 1857 till the UGC Act became operational in 1956, universities worked reasonably well without any outside regulator.

The regime of multiple regulators started in the mid-1980s and various professional bodies also started asserting themselves as regulators from around the early 1990s

when the country embraced the new challenges of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. This was also the period that marked a galloping growth of the sector with the setting up of many private universities. The response of the government, arguably, was to meet the emerging challenges.

It can be observed that the heavy hands of multiple regulators (like the UGC and All India Council for Technical Education), together with the empowerment of professional bodies (like the Bar Council of India and Council of Architecture) have not yielded the desired dividends. Mushrooming of institutions and a steady decline of standards in most of them have not done much good to the image of the government and the architecture of regulation. While the proposed Bill seeks to empower the HECI with all academic functions, its role *vis-à-vis* professional bodies is unclear, and whether depriving the HECI completely of funding functions will affect its efficacy and stature in discharging its onerous responsibility remains a major question.

As of today, the MHRD has been directly funding more than a hundred institutions of national importance, including the Indian Institutes of Technology, National Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research. Funding 47 Central universities should not pose a problem for the ministry. The funding scheme of State universities, which account for more than 50% of the student enrolment, requires to be clearly worked out. If it is sought to be done through the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan, or RUSA, a clear and transparent mechanism should be spelt out. How effective the role of the HECI would be to regulate state institutions with less than inadequate Central funding merits serious attention.

The proposed Bill has to be situated in the context of certain new initiatives like granting near complete autonomy to the Indian Institutes of Management, providing graded autonomy to other institutions to free them from the clutches of regulations to enable them to develop into institutions of excellence.

On the one hand, the HECI is being conceived as an overarching regulator (albeit without the teeth of funding function), and on the other it is sought to develop mechanisms so that more institutions are encouraged to move out of its regulatory ambit.

Of the many functions of the HECI, specifying norms and standards for grant of autonomy and of graded autonomy is an important one. Linked with the issue are the recent initiatives to encourage public institutions to raise user charges so that they become self-sustaining as also to allow such institutions to take loan from the Higher Education Funding Agency to meet developmental costs. These are bold initiatives with major consequences, inducing institutions to abandon courses that have hardly any job prospects and starting ones that are market-friendly. Besides, the high fees to be paid by students for such courses might compel them to take concessional student loans. The first militates against the idea of higher education and the concept of the university and the second may result in the student loan crisis reaching alarming proportions on account of delay in payment and default. How the HECI would advise the government to surmount these problems remains to be seen.

As regards the structure of the HECI, there will be a chairperson, vice-chairperson and 12 members of whom which the first two shall be whole-time salaried individuals. The chairperson will be of the rank of Secretary to the Government of India. The secretary of the HECI will be an officer of the rank of joint secretary and above or a reputed academic and will serve as its member-secretary. Will she have voting rights as a member, as she will be appointed by the HECI? Besides, the secretary, higher education is envisaged to don many hats, serving as a member of the search-cum-selection committee of the chairperson and vice-chairperson, then processing their appointment as a key functionary of the government, and finally acting as a member of the HECI. Such multiplicity of roles may create difficulties and conflict of interest. Also, the power of the government to remove the chairperson and members is rather overwhelming and should be constrained.

Despite some apparent infirmities, the proposed Bill shows the resolve of the government to move forward in reforming the sector. While many questions remain unanswered, the proposal appears to be a plausible one, if the public expenditure in the sector continues to hover around the present level of over 1% of GDP, against the minimum requirement of 2%. Major issues like making the universities the hub of scientific and technological research, restoring the value of education in social sciences and the humanities, ensuring that poor and meritorious students can afford to be educated in subjects of their choice, improving the quality of instruction to enhance the employability of the students, addressing the concerns of faculty shortage, etc. require a quantum jump in allocation of public resources to this sector. Tightening the screws of regulation in the absence of rapidly expanding public expenditure has obvious limitations.

Amitabha Bhattacharya retired from the IAS as Principal Adviser, Education and Culture, Planning Commission, Government of India. The views expressed are personal

GAYS

HINDUSTAN TIMES JUL 07 ,2018

Reconstituted Supreme Court bench to hear Section 377 case

The new members on the bench are Justice Nariman and Justice Indu Malhotra, who was recently elevated to the Supreme Court, replacing Justice AK Sikri and Justice Ashok Bhushan.

Updated: Jul 06, 2018 23:19 IST

HT Correspondent

Hindustan Times, New Delhi

Days ahead of the crucial hearing on a clutch of petitions challenging the validity of section 377 of the IPC that criminalises consensual gay sex, the Chief justice of India Dipak Misra has reconstituted the 5 judge constitution bench to hear the case.

According to the cause list released by the Supreme Court registry, the hearing in the matter will commence from July 10, and the new bench will comprise – Chief Justice of India, Dipak Misra, Justice RF Nariman , Justice A M Khanwilkar, Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice Indu Malhotra.

The new members on the bench are Justice Nariman and Justice Indu Malhotra, who was recently elevated to the Supreme Court, replacing Justice AK Sikri and Justice Ashok Bhushan.

This change comes almost 6 months after the chief justice of India set up a bench of 5 judges comprising himself, Justice AK Sikri, Justice Ashok Bhushan, Justice AM Khanwilkar and Justice DY Chandrachud to hear among other constitutional matters, the controversial section 377 case.

In January, the Chief Justice of India had set up this bench to hear cases like Aadhaar, the validity of Section 377 of Indian Penal Code, validity of adultery law under the IPC, entry of women into Kerala's Sabarimala temple and others.

These petitions filed by -- Bharatnatyam dancer Navtej Johar, culture expert Aman Nath, restaurateurs Ritu Dalmia and Ayesha Kapur and mediaperson Sunil Mehra -- challenge a 2013 judgment of the top court that criminalised consensual sex between adults.

The petitioners, who are also members of LGBT community, argue that section 377 has the potential to destroy an individual's choice and sexual orientation and is not a reasonable restriction under law.

The court had last year admitted these petitions and referred it to a constitutional bench.

Legal experts believe that there is nothing unusual in the development. "It is always normal thing. The CJI is the Master of the Roster and it is his prerogative to decide on the bench. It is an absolutely correct thing to do and there is nothing unusual in this. Also as you know that the judgment on Master of Roster has come, so it is completely normal" said former solicitor general of India Ranjit Kumar.

Supreme Court advocate Aishwariya Bhati said, "Constitution benches keep changing on the availability of judges, their benches and matters."

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

INDIAN EXPRESS, JUL 05,2018

Marking the boundaries

Delhi LG and bureaucracy can continue to influence a host of policy matters in Delhi.

The judgment of the constitutional bench has been greeted with general approval by all political parties and with great euphoria by the Aam Admi Party (AAP). What emanates from three separate judgments delivered by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and his two brother judges is, first, a veritable history of the administration of Delhi. The labyrinthine route that was traversed over several decades of administering the Capital has been captured in copious detail. It is hoped that it would bring some sobriety into the grandstanding by a host of actors.

The Supreme Court's Wednesday verdict has made three very important deviations from the Delhi High Court judgment of August 2016. It has dispelled the idea that the elected government has to wait to implement its decisions until the lieutenant governor (LG) acquiesces. More specifically, the advice given by the council of ministers is binding on the LG. But only as long as the LG does not exercise his constitutional power to differ and refer the matter to the President for a decision. Although it has been emphasised that this power is not to be exercised mechanically, anything that has sensitivity or can cast a financial burden which is beyond the government's capacity or cause political problems with the Centre or other states will fall in this area. This actually covers a lot of area.

What does all this mean for Delhi's citizens? First, as long as every decision has been taken within the ambit of the Transaction of Business Rules 1993, which mandates informing the LG of decisions taken by the council of ministers or even by an individual minister, implementation of decisions can start without awaiting approvals. But the Rules also have two important sub-chapters which refer to examination and concurrence by the finance and the law departments. This means a host of proposals can be called to question. Just a note of dissent given by the departmental secretary will give a handle to the LG to differ and withhold further action.

That there ought to be discussion, dialogue and a genuine effort to solve problems is inbuilt in the rules, and has been reiterated strongly by the three judgments. For example, embargoes on vehicles converging on Delhi's roads or placing restrictions on hospitals or educational institutions by the council of ministers would have implications for the governance of the Capital — it belongs to the whole country. So, restrictions cannot be imposed without the LG having had an opportunity to discuss the pros and cons and return the matter for reconsideration. In Delhi's case, the LG can differ, ask for reconsideration and make a reference to the Centre. Till a decision comes, the LG's orders would prevail. So, it is not all plain sailing.

Under the Transaction of Business Rules, consultation with the finance and law departments is mandatory and the chief secretary — the secretary of the cabinet — has to ensure that the cabinet note has followed the process very elaborately spelt out in the 1993 rules. These have been alluded to by the apex court at numerous places in the judgments. In other words, getting advisers and consultants to prepare cabinet notes and clearing them with a simple nod will not work. Haranguing officers and imputing motives to them will not result in either compliance or implementation. At the end of the day, the proof of the pudding will be in the delivery of promised services — not in a display of strongman tactics to impress constituencies.

On the face of it, it may seem as though the Delhi government will now have the authority to make laws on all subjects, excluding those which fall directly under the LG's authority. But that is actually not so. For instance, the Jan Lokpal Bill and the mohalla committee strategy. Both have been points of confrontation, resulting even in the resignation of the chief minister in his first term. Nothing has changed with all the judgments of the Supreme Court. The apex court has reiterated that any law which is repugnant to a law made by Parliament cannot be passed by the legislative assembly. And indeed these bills or concepts would even now run into repugnancy issues and will be negated as Parliament's laws do not envisage such deviations being made to the existing central acts.

If the spirit of the judgments is to be read, all postings and transfers of officers should return to as it was in the Sheila Dikshit era, with only the postings of principal secretaries needing the acquiescence of the LG because that makes for better management with the Centre which controls the cadre. However the selection and posting of the chief secretary, the home

secretary and secretary lands needs the specific approval of the LG as per the Transaction of Business Rules, which have now been accorded a new sanctity.

The judges have explained that the administrator as per rules has to be apprised of each decision taken by a minister or council of ministers and difference of opinion must meet the standards of constitutional trust and morality, the principle of collaborative federalism and constitutional balance. “The element of trust is an imperative between constitutional functionaries” so that their governments “can work in accordance with constitutional norms”.

Last but not least it is curtains for the idea of statehood. As long as Delhi is the national capital, it is everyone’s capital and the voice of non-Delhi citizens have to be heard through the central government acting on the decisions of Parliament. AAP’s hopes were misplaced and should not be resurrected afresh.

The writer is former chief secretary, Delhi

HINDUSTAN TIMES JULY 04,2018

Who rules Delhi: SC to decide on AAP vs L-G tussle today

NEWDELHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday will give its verdict on the power struggle between the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Delhi government and the Centre through the lieutenant-governor. The two had faced off on several issues such as appointment of officers, getting approvals for the state government projects and control over the state anti-corruption branch.

A day ahead of the judgment, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, who has contested the Delhi high court order declaring the L-G as Delhi’s ‘administrative head’ in the Supreme Court in August 2016, wrote to Union home minister Rajnath Singh, urging that CM’s consent be taken in appointing officers at the CM’s office.

“It has been always a convention and decorum that personal officers of a chief minister are posted along with him/her, as per his/her choice and selection. It has always been a prerogative of the elected chief minister to choose his own staff. However, in the case of Delhi, this principle has, unfortunately and shockingly, been regularly flouted,” Kejriwal wrote.

The chief minister said there have been instances where the officers of his choice have not been considered to be posted in his office. "...while at the same time some other officers who have been diligently working with me, have often been transferred out of Delhi without my consent or knowledge," he said, adding that there has to be continuity in officers' tenures so that they get ample time to formulate strategies and follow them up for effective execution.

Kejriwal cited examples of officers such as Sanjeev Chaturvedi, former deputy secretary at AIIMS, who he had sought to bring to the Delhi government, but was never transferred by the Centre. Chaturvedi was the whistleblower in an alleged corruption case in AIIMS.

The chief minister also cited the case of officer Geetika Sharma, who was Kejriwal's additional secretary, but was transferred within two years.

"Subsequently, PK Panda, special secretary in my office, too, was transferred to Puducherry after a brief stint of eight months. Both the officers were transferred without my consent or knowledge. Now, my present special secretary CR Garg, IAS, too, has been transferred to Goa in a recent order of the MHA, within a short span of 11 months," Kejriwal said.

The chief minister's letter to the Union home minister is only one of the many letters from Kejriwal and other ministers of the Delhi government to the Centre and its representative, the L-G, seeking control over various aspects of governance.

Both the Centre, with the L-G at the helm, and the Delhi government have been locked in a bitter power tussle ever since the AAP swept to power in Delhi in 2015.

The conflicts stems out of the status of Delhi, which is a Union Territory and not a full state. As a result, the Delhi government does not have control over land, appointment of senior officers and the police force. These three are controlled by the L-G.

The AAP has accused the L-G's office of obstructing projects taken up by the AAP government. Some projects affected due to L-G's alleged "interference", according to the party, include mohalla sabhas, mohalla clinics, bus aggregator scheme, and filling vacancies in hospitals .

GST

BUSINESS STANDARD JUL06,2018

CBIC launches GST 'Verify App'

Press Trust of India | New Delhi July 05, 2018 Last Updated at 17:35 IST

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has developed a mobile app 'GST Verify' to protect interest of consumers.

It is an android app to verify if the person collecting GST from the consumer is eligible to collect it or not, an official statement said today. It also provides the details of the person/ company collecting GST, it said. "Every time you shop/eat/buy check the bill if there is any GST amount mentioned, if yes verify through this app if she/he is genuinely registered person or not, thereby you save the amount shown as tax from the fraudster if he is cheating you," the statement said. It further said that a Composition Tax Payer should not collect the tax from his consumer. This app, developed by B Raghu Kiran joint commissioner GST Hyderabad, can be used all across the country, it added.

INTER STATE WATER DISPUTES

THE HINDU JUL 03 , 2018

Cauvery authority directs Karnataka to release water



S

At first meet, no discussion on the State's decision to move SC against CWMA

The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA), at its first meeting here on Monday, directed Karnataka to release water to Tamil Nadu and other States but did not discuss Karnataka's decision to challenge the constitution of the CWMA in the Supreme Court.

"There is no need and no point in discussing Karnataka's challenge...The Authority has nothing to do with it," Masood Hussain, Interim-Chairman, CWMA, told The Hindu .

Appeal in SC

The Karnataka government on Saturday decided to file an appeal in the Supreme Court against the setting up of the CWMA and the Cauvery Water Regulation

Committee (CWRC) on the grounds that the move should have been discussed in Parliament.

Mr. Hussain said the CWMA had directed Karnataka to release 34 tmcft (thousand million cubic feet) of water from the Biligundulu site. This would be over and above the water released in June, he clarified.

The CWMA, which is yet to appoint full-time members, is scheduled to meet every 10 days during the monsoon months. Based on the storage of water in various reservoirs — Hemavathy, Harangi, Krishnarajasagar, Kabini, Mettur, Bhavanisagar, Amaravathy and Banasurasagar — it will recommend how much water ought to be released in keeping with the Supreme Court's recent verdict in these blocks of 10 days.

The apex court's February verdict had said Karnataka will get 284.75 tmcft, Tamil Nadu 404.25 tmcft and Kerala and Puducherry 30 and 7 tmcft respectively.

The CWMA includes Tinku Biswal, S.K. Prabhakar, A. Anbarasu and Rakesh Singh, secretaries of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karnataka looking after the departments of water resources, besides representatives of the Central Water Commission and Union Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources. The CWMA will be headed by the Chairman, a senior and eminent engineer or a Secretary/Additional Secretary-level executive with experience in handling inter-State water disputes. The Authority will have two whole-time members and six part-time members, including one each nominated from the riparian States. There will be a Secretary from the Central Water Engineering Services cadre, but without voting rights.



JUDICIARY

HINDUSTAN TIMES JUL 07 ,2018

CJI 'master of the roster', reiterates Supreme Court

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The Chief Justice of India (CJI) is the “master of the roster,” the Supreme Court reaffirmed on Friday, declining to accept former law minister Shanti Bhushan’s suggestion that the CJI consult his collegium colleagues — the top four judges after him in seniority –in allocating cases to various benches.

Describing the CJI as “first among equals,” a bench of justices AK Sikri and Ashok Bhushan said although the constitution was silent on the CJI’S role as the master of the roster, his power was based on a healthy practice and “convention aimed at maintaining discipline and decorum.” The judges wrote separate but concurring verdicts.

The bench also lamented the “erosion of credibility of judiciary,” calling it the “greatest threat” to the institution. “What is required of judges is changing. Judges walk the tight rope of independence,” read the order.

Friday’s judgment reiterates the legal position on the controversial issue that hit the headlines in November after a bench led by justice J Chelameswar ordered listing of a PIL related to a medical admission scam before a bench of the top five judges. **See page 10**

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PARLIAMENT

HINDUSTAN TIMES JUL 01 , 2018

Rajya Sabha rules panel rejigged

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NEWDELHI: When senior Congress MP Jairam Ramesh paid a courtesy call on Rajya Sabha chairman M Venkaiah Naidu last week, he had a suggestion to make: extend the duration of the Question Hour and the Zero Hour.

Question Hour is the slot in which members of Parliament seek replies from the government on subjects related to various ministries. Zero Hour is when members bring substantive issues to the attention of the House.

Naidu did not rule out Ramesh's out-of-the-box idea of adding half-an-hour to each of the two slots in the Rajya Sabha, where disruption of proceedings by combative opposition members over disputes with the Treasury benches is common.

"But Naidu said categorically that the House should function properly first. Then we can think of these ideas," said a close aide to Naidu.

Ramesh's timing was right. Naidu has just rejigged a panel to review the rules governing the House amid talk of a new provision for automatic suspension of unruly members.

"Naidu said starting the session from 10 am instead of the current 11 am schedule can always be discussed among members. He also said that he alone can't take a call as relevant committees are there to think about these possibilities," said Ramesh.

POLICE

Indian express Jul 05 ,2018

The player and his part

the role of society is to encourage human endeavour in all its pursuits. Sports edify this spirit, and the state steps in to help the development of sports. Merely rewarding success does not promote a sporting culture, much like awarding a Nobel Prize does not create an Einstein or a Tagore. We must focus on nurturing sporting temperament over a system of rewards. Infrastructure development, training facilities, dietary improvements are all core aspects that help create an environment for people to better train themselves. This has been the biggest challenge in Indian sports, where governments are keener to offer cash-prizes to Olympic medalists than cultivate Olympians.

In modest societies, lack of economic privilege acts as a direct impediment for sportspersons. Lack of resources compels youthful exuberance to be frittered away in gathering bare sustenance, and the sporting potential is lost. The state's primary responsibility is to create equality of opportunity where potential can be honed. That is the reason why public employment is promised to performing talent, enabling sportspersons to focus on sports and not the money.

Under the service rules, all employees of the state are barred from undertaking any other occupation or business. Therefore, if an employee wishes to pursue another commercial engagement, then they must forgo the public employment. Conversely, the state has the claim over all proceeds that its employees make during public employment. This provision poses constraints for sportspersons. Ideally, if the service rules are applied, a sportsperson cannot pursue sports during the subsistence of the employment, as it would come at a cost to the office they hold. The state, therefore, makes an exception for them.

It is because the pursuit of sports brings laurels to society and a feeling of national pride that the state treats sportspersons as being on duty while training and taking part in competitions.

But, such a relaxation cannot extend to a sportsperson focusing solely on commercial gains. Therefore, as long as the pursuit of sports is national (amateur or non-commercial) it is allowed; but not commercial (professional).

Since sportspersons have a short career expectancy, it was felt that opening up the professional arena would encourage more people to take up sports as a career. Heeding the welfare of sportspersons and the development of sports, the Haryana government decided to allow players to pursue professional competitions, something which was previously disallowed. Because the pursuit of professional competition came at the time and cost to the public office, it was felt that the state should not allow it unfettered.

Therefore, the state as the employer decided to retain a fraction of the profits that the players made while pursuing commercial enterprises as long as they did it as public employees. This wasn't a "tax" or "penalty" for performing players, but a fair deduction for pursuing commercial gains at the time of the employer. Otherwise, it would be unfair to the employer to have their employees making a profit while not doing their work, and still retaining the benefits. It is in this context that the April 30 notification of the Haryana government must be seen.

The notification allows a sportsperson to keep their public employment and pursue professional sports and commercial endorsements. The sportsperson would be given extraordinary leave (without pay) during the said period and only one-third of the income earned needed to be deposited with the state. Such money would solely be used by the State Sports Council for the development of sports.

The notification was attacked by professional players who saw it as a "tax" on their labour. However, this is far from the truth. Players are free to pursue amateur sports and can hold all incomes from it. But when they pursue commercial work, then they do so not just for the competition, they are lured by the money. Because they earned that money at the benefit of public employment, they have a responsibility to society. They must share their winnings for the development of sports in India. And that is what the notification sought to bring about.

It is not a draconian provision of a state mafia, rather it is an enabling provision that works both to the benefit of the sportsperson and society. The sportsperson can enjoy the security of public employment, and also pursue any commercial enterprise related to sports. The society in turn gets to share their success through a feeling of national pride and contributions from that income. The money that the professional players of today contribute will only go on to help the successive generations of Olympians. The role of the state is of a facilitator, acting in the best interest of everybody.

The writer is principal secretary, sport and youth affairs, Government of Haryana. Views are personal.

POPULATION

HINDU JUL 03 , 2018

2021 census data to be stored electronically

NEW DELHI, JULY 02, 2018 23:20 IST



Headcount will begin from February 2021 onwards

Any tampering with info will be punished under IT Act

The data collected during the 2021 Census will be stored electronically, the first time since the decennial exercise was conducted in 1951 in Independent India.

According to an amended rule notified by the Registrar General of India (RGI) on June 19, "The schedules and other connected papers shall be disposed of totally or in part by the Director of Census Operations, after creating an electronic record of such documents."

A Home Ministry spokesperson said till now the "schedules" (a tabular form containing details of individuals), carried by enumerators to households, were being stored in a physical form at the government's storehouse in Delhi. It is based on

these schedules that the relevant statistical information on population, language, and occupation are sorted and published.

“The records running into crores of pages were occupying space in government office and it has now been decided that they will be stored in an electronic format. Any tampering with the data will invite punishment under the Information Technology Act, 2000,” said the spokesperson.

The RGI issued the notification as the process for the 2021 Census kicks in.

The spokesperson said enumerators will start “house listing” in 2020 and the headcount will begin from February 2021 onwards. “An individual’s household data is not published by the RGI. They are published in the form of tables on the Census website. The data is preserved for 10 years and then it is destroyed. From now on it can be stored forever in electronic format,” he said.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

HINDUSTAN TIMES JULY 04,2018s

Cabinet clears doorstep delivery of 30 more key govt service

Cabinet, on Tuesday, gave its approval for going ahead with the successful bidder for doorstep delivery of services. While the scheme will be launched with 70 services, another set of 30 services would be added within a period of one month after the launch. This would take the number of services under the scheme to 100," Sisodia said.

He said the selected agency would be given six weeks to develop a software interface to link the websites of the concerned departments.

Some of the services that would be delivered include income certificates, vehicle registration certificates, pensions, higher education and skill development guarantee scheme, availing of government scholarships and approval of factory building plans.

Through the facility, Delhi residents would be able to make a phone call to a government helpline number (which is yet to be announced) and fix an appointment according to his/ her convenience.

The private agency, which has been awarded the tender, will hire 'Mobile Sahyaks' (facilitators), who will pick documents, take photos, and biometric details, and process applications, apart from delivering certificates at the doorstep of residents.

FRESH STUDY ON AIR POLLUTION

The cabinet on Tuesday also approved environment department's proposal for a "real time source apportionment study" for air pollution in Delhi.

The study will be conducted over a period of one year by University of Washington's department of energy, environmental and chemical engineering at a cost of about ₹1.20 crore.

"The only study on Delhi's air pollution was done by IIT about four years ago. The findings of that study was based on data reading of just 15 days. This will be a fresh, comprehensive, reliable and round the year study. It will enable Delhi government to plan its actions and install a real-time pollutant source identification model in the city," Sisodia said.

The project is to be completed within a period of 18 months from the date of award of the study. "The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) will make the payment from the air ambience fund. They will also be setting up a cloud- based platform where data can be shared and viewed by approved groups during the course of the project," he said.

POLYCLINICS

A proposal of the health department on remodelling 94 government dispensaries into polyclinics was approved by the Delhi cabinet.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

HUNDU JUL 07, 2018

Govt. deploys 800 central government officers for village outreach

Teams fan out to 117 districts to ensure delivery of Central welfare schemes

A battalion of Central government officers has been drafted to ensure on the ground implementation as the Centre races to saturate 117 “aspirational districts” with seven flagship social welfare schemes by Independence Day.

Prime Minister Modi is scheduled to meet 2.5 lakh beneficiaries of these schemes in Jaipur on Saturday, and has pointed to this campaign as a model for future implementation of welfare delivery.

Questions raised

However, questions are being raised about Centre-State relations under this model, in an election year.

At least 800 Deputy Secretaries, Under-Secretaries and Director-level officers, drawn from Ministries as diverse as Defence and Urban Affairs, have been assigned about 75 villages to visit, as part of the Extended Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (EGSA) from June 1 to August 15. In total, 49,178 villages — most with a majority SC/ST population — are being targeted.

The Hindu spoke to officers from the on-ground teams, as well as with senior officials from the Ministries of Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, and the Department of Personnel and Training, which are jointly coordinating the drive.

“Mostly, we are sent out in teams of two to four people,” explained a deputy secretary, who did not want to be named.

Over the two-and-a-half month period, these Central officials are being absorbed into EGSA duty for at least 15 working days.

In each village, the Central team convenes a meeting of villagers and beneficiaries along with a State government or district official, a lead bank representative and local officials from the agencies responsible for enrolling people into the schemes.

“We monitor the scheme, get feedback...If there are any hurdles, we can sort it out on the spot,” said a director-level IAS officer, who disclosed that central officers could direct the local representatives to give immediate sanction for gas cylinders, bank accounts or electricity connections.

The teams can also directly input the day’s progress into a data system. “You can track it live on the EGSA dashboard,” said a senior official of the Rural Development Ministry, pointing to egsa.nic.in.

Senior Ministry officials also make direct daily calls to a section of District Collectors to monitor progress, while third-party observers for each district — mostly from NGOs or academia — have been drafted in to do random checks of villages and report back to the Ministry.

One IAS officer said while most State officials were cooperative, some are not happy with the direct involvement of central officials. Two officers said their work load back in Delhi had been put on hold while they were on the field.

“These are central schemes although the implementation is being done by States. Government of India wants to see total saturation. To ensure this happens, it’s better to depute our own officers,” an IAS officer said, explaining the rationale of the exercise.

The rate of enrolment during the duration of the scheme has been the most impressive in the Saubhagya scheme, which offers power connections to each

household, and in the Indra Dhanush Missions to vaccinate children and pregnant women, but the RD Ministry is confident of meeting its targets.

“By August 15, we would have reached 65,000 villages [including a target from a similar drive in May]. That is 15% of the rural population,” said a senior Ministry official. “A lot of such initiatives have to be done in campaign mode. Saturation targets create pressure.”

Addressing the NITI Aayog Governing Council earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan has emerged as a new model for implementation of schemes.

However, the large-scale involvement of Central officers raises questions about the viability of such drives, and about roles in a federal democracy.

“This is a deeply problematic way of going about welfare delivery...Constitutionally, while the Centre has higher powers of taxation, the bulk of the expenditure on welfare is to be done by the States,” said Yamini Aiyar, president of the Centre for Policy Research, pointing out that as Chief Minister,

Mr. Modi had himself vehemently opposed central intervention in matters that were constitutionally the domain of the States.

Ms. Aiyar added that while the centralising trend in flagship welfare scheme — which allows the ruling party at the Centre to draw political mileage and build vote banks — has been seen for some time, this NDA government has further entrenched it, to the detriment of the federal architecture. Direct connections to the district administration tend to bypass State administrations, while sending out large Central teams to do the work of local officials fails to empower local human resources, she said.

“The new approach is not just centralised, but also personalised, converging his [Mr Modi’s] political style with administrative functioning,” she pointed out. “It may

create a veneer of efficiency and a high quality publicity campaign, but it undermines the logic of federalism.”

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

TIMES JUL 07, 2018

Social Justice Ministry organises National Workshop on Skill Development for Persons with Disabilities

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment organised a 'National Workshop on Skill Development for Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)' in New Delhi on July 3, 2018.

The workshop was organised with a view to provide a platform to all stakeholders ranging from training partners to the policymakers as well as employers. It was inaugurated by Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot, while Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, was the Guest of Honour.

In his inaugural address, Thaawarchand Gehlot said that employment is the key to empowerment. The Right of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD), 2016 which came into force last year mandates the Government to frame schemes to promote Skill Development of Persons with Disabilities so as to enhance their scope of employability.



SOCIAL MEDIA

EXPRESS JUL 05 ,2018

To tackle fake news, WhatsApp to govt: New label, safety ads, police interface

Responding to a letter from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY), WhatsApp announced that it would “soon” launch a new feature which will highlight forwarded messages.

A day after the Centre wrote to WhatsApp seeking action against unverified information circulating on its platform, the company on Wednesday said it was working proactively to prevent misuse of its messaging platform and detailed its approach to tackle the “challenge”.

Responding to a letter from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY), WhatsApp announced that it would “soon” launch a new feature which will highlight forwarded messages.

The company also listed non-technological solutions that include collaborating with academics, police and fact-checking organisations, public safety ad campaigns, educational material on misinformation and other measures to meet the challenge.

“We have been testing a new label in India that highlights when a message has been forwarded versus composed by the sender. This could serve as an important signal for recipients to think twice before forwarding messages because it lets a user know if content they received was written by the person they know or a potential rumour from someone else,” WhatsApp told the government adding that they planned to “launch this new feature soon”.

Additionally, the company said it was “working to improve” its capability to “stop unwanted automated messages” and spam through its platform. “We do have the ability to prevent spam, which includes some of the misinformation that can create mistrust and potentially violence.

Because we cannot see the content of messages being sent over WhatsApp we block messages based on user reports and by the manner in which they are sent,” the company told the Centre. “We use machine learning to identify accounts sending a high volume of messages and we are constantly working to improve our ability to stop unwanted automated messages.”

Over the past year, at least two dozen people have been killed in mob violence linked to hate crimes and rumours on child-lifting — which circulated on social media — that have increased over the past few weeks.

“We believe that false news, misinformation and the spread of hoaxes are issues best tackled collectively: by government, civil society and technology companies working together,” WhatsApp said in its reply to the Centre.

IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Wednesday urged the company to realise its announcements soon. “While we welcome (Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp) completely, they are also making a commercial success of us. (They) must remain accountable, responsible, and vigilant,” he said.

According to WhatsApp, almost 25 per cent of its users in India were not in groups, the majority of groups in India have less than 10 people and nine in 10 messages are still sent from just one person to another.

WhatsApp has also said that messages on its platform are encrypted but the company does have access to metadata, which is information about the messages including contact lists and mobile phone numbers.

The company said that it blocks spam based on user reports and examines this metadata.

At the MEITY press conference on Wednesday, Prasad said that the circulation of rumours “designed to provoke and instigate ... can be handled by the application of technology.” Prasad said that WhatsApp must work closely with his ministry, the Home Ministry, and the state police apparatus.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, 07 ,2018

Supreme court alarmed by Centre's social media hub plan

Supreme court alarmed by Centre's social media hub plan The Supreme Court expressed its alarm over a government proposal to tap into the social media chatter of those creating a "buzz" on platforms such as Twitter and Instagram to create a 360-degree profile of influencers, make predictive analysis to "mould public opinion" and "inculcate nationalistic feelings," observing that this would make India a "surveillance state." The top court was dealing with a public interest litigation (PIL) challenging a notice inviting tenders by the information and broadcasting ministry from private parties to create a tool that will trawl through a person's public profiles and statements as well as private communications such as email to make accurate "predictive analysis" of such influencers. The intention is to "mould public perception", "inculcate nationalistic feelings in the masses, improve India's image and "neutralise" adverse social media planted by the country's "adversaries" and give a "positive" pro-India "slant" to social media content, the petition said. "We will become a surveillance state (if this is allowed)," was Justice DY Chandrachud's response when senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi drew the attention of the threejudge bench to the proposal. Chief justice Dipak Misra heads the bench. The PIL has been filed by Trinamool Congress MLA Mahua Moitra who has challenged the move as violative of a citizen's fundamental Supreme court alarmed by Centre's social media hub plan - The Economic Times <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/supreme-court-alarmed-by-centres-social-media-hub-plan/printarticle/64983156.cms> 2/6 Recommended By Colombia right to privacy. Singhvi argued that the government cannot implement such a surveillance mechanism in absence of a rigorous data protection regime following last year's judgement upholding the right to privacy. It wants to examine every aspect of an individual, which is against the Puttaswamy judgement, he said, referring to the right to privacy case

SOCIAL SECURITY

HINDUSTAN TIMES JULY 03,2018

In social security reign, govt may merge 15 laws for 'labour code'

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NEW DELHI: The Narendra Modi government is working to radically overhaul India's social security system for workers, from pensions to healthcare, by combining 15 current laws into a so-called single "labour code", in a move that seeks to help both employers and employees, although labour unions have already expressed scepticism about the plan.

According to the draft of the 'Labour Code on Social Security, 2018, version 2.1', a copy of which has been seen by Hindustan Times, a key feature of the social security code is that all provisions related to social security, such as the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act and the Employees' State Insurance Corporation Act, will be bundled into a single social security code and codified into law.

Legislations which will be replaced by the Act include the Maternity Benefit Act and the Unorganised Sector Social Security Act. Since labour is part of the Constitution's concurrent list, whereby states and the Centre have joint jurisdiction, the consent of states will be needed.

TAXATION

HINDUSTAN TIMES JUL 01, 2018

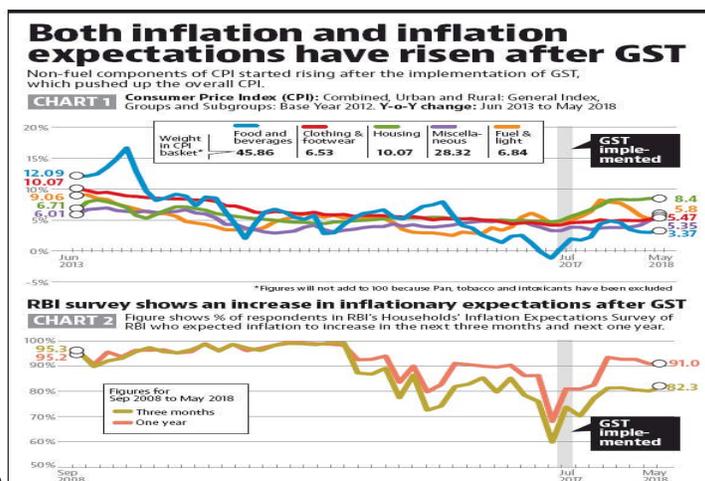
Has GST been inflationary for India?

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NEWDELHI: With the first anniversary of the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) coming up, it makes sense to ask the question. After all, the government went out of its way to make sure this wouldn't happen, even setting up a watchdog to ensure companies didn't use GST as an excuse to raise prices.

Supreme court alarmed by Centre's social media hub plan The Supreme Court expressed its alarm over a government proposal to tap into the social media chatter of those creating a "buzz" on platforms such as Twitter and Instagram to create a 360-degree profile of influencers, make predictive analysis to "mould public opinion" and "inculcate nationalistic feelings," observing that this would make India a "surveillance state." The top court was dealing with a public interest litigation (PIL) challenging a notice inviting tenders by the information and broadcasting ministry from private parties to create a tool that will trawl through a person's public profiles and statements as well as private communications such as email to make accurate "predictive analysis" of such influencers. The intention is to "mould public perception", "inculcate nationalistic feelings in the masses, improve India's image and "neutralise" adverse social media planted by the country's "adversaries" and give a "positive" pro-India "slant" to social media content, the petition said. "We will become a surveillance state (if this is allowed)," was Justice DY Chandrachud's response when senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi drew the attention of the threejudge bench to the proposal. Chief justice Dipak Misra heads the bench. supreme-court-alarmed-by-centres-social-media-hub-plan/printarticle/64983156.cms 2/6 Recommended By Colombia right to privacy. Singhvi argued that the government cannot implement such a surveillance mechanism in absence of a rigorous data protection regime following last year's judgement upholding the right to privacy. It wants to examine every aspect of an individual,

which is against the Puttaswamy judgment, he said, referring to the right to privacy



case

The short answer is that we still don't know for sure.

The long answer, however, is more interesting, because it highlights the pulls and pressures on the economy over the past year.

Annual growth in the 2012 series of Consumer Price Index (CPI), India's benchmark inflation measure, was the slowest (1.46%) in June 2017. India implemented GST in July 2017. The inflation cycle turned from July 2017 and annual growth in CPI reached a 17-month high of 5.21% in December 2017. It has continued to hover above the 4% mark in the subsequent period. Purely based on numbers, GST seems to have had an inflationary impact on India.

There are two ways in which GST could have caused a spike in inflation: by raising the rate of tax on goods and services, and bringing within its coverage business activities outside the tax net earlier. The latter would push up inflation as any tax incidence on such businesses is bound to be passed on to consumers in terms of higher prices. In a country like India, with a huge informal sector, successful implementation of GST may have brought a lot of non-tax paying firms and transactions under the tax net.

After the implementation of GST, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had ruled out any significant inflationary impact due to an increase in taxes due to two reasons: a large number of items in the CPI basket were exempted from GST, and the effect of a rise in the tax rate on some items was compensated for by a fall in the rate on other items.

GST'S inflationary impact due to expansion of the tax net is a more difficult thing to estimate, although, if the government knew beforehand who was evading how much in tax, it would have forced them to pay taxes anyway. Even after the implementation of GST, key commodities such as petroleum and alcoholic beverages are outside the GST net. Also, GST is not the only factor which is likely to be influencing inflation at any given point of time.

With these caveats in place, it is worth looking at the trends in inflation and inflationary expectations after the implementation of GST. Chart 1 shows annual growth in various sub-components of CPI. Except fuel and light, which had reversed its declining trend in 2016 itself, all other sub-components show a trend reversal in or immediately after July 2017, the month when GST was implemented. It is worth noting that other sub-components of CPI were not rising between August 2016 and June 2017, even though the fuel component of CPI had already started increasing. (Chart 1 here)

A similar pattern can be seen in inflation expectations also. RBI'S consumer confidence survey seeks responses about their expectations about inflation increasing in the next three months and one year. Between June 2017 and September 2017, the interval which corresponds to implementation of GST, the rise (between two consecutive surveys) in the number of respondents who thought inflation would increase in the next year was the second highest since December 2008. The highest figure is for the period between December 2016 and March 2017, which was probably due to the disruption caused by demonetisation. (Chart 2 here)

What is also interesting is that the difference between share of respondents who saw inflation rising in the next three months and next year was the highest since September 2008 in September 2017. One can assume that expectations of inflation rising in the next one year are driven more by structural factors (such as GST) than seasonal factors, which are more likely to influence expectations about inflation in the next quarter. The numbers also show that the gap between respondents who expect inflation to increase in the next year and next three months has continued to remain high in the post-gst period. The average value was 3.5 between September 2008 and June 2017, but it has increased to 11 between September 2017 and May 2018.

But this could be mere correlation, not causation.

Do these numbers offer conclusive proof that GST has had an inflationary impact on the Indian economy? Experts call for caution. Rise in petroleum prices and increase in house rent allowances under the 7th Pay Commission, both of which are not related to GST, might have contributed to the rise in CPI in the post-gst period, said Himanshu, an associate professor of economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Fuel prices have a cascading effect and could have resulted in higher prices of several products. While it is true that GST might have had a cost-push inflationary impact due to passing of taxes, its overall contribution to inflation growth might have been subdued due to erosion in demand because of small businesses coming under strain due to implementation of GST and rural distress in the economy. It is only when these factors dissipate that we will know the answer for sure, Himanshu added.