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CIVIL SERVICE

ECONOMIC TIMES, SEP 6, 2014

Recommend names in order of merit: Govt to selection panels

NEW DELHI: All selection or search-cum- selection committees mandated to recommend candidates for various posts should send names for these in order of merit, the government said today.

The [Appointments Committee of Cabinet](#) (ACC) has observed that in some of the cases submitted by the various ministries or departments, the selection committees or search-cum- selection committees were found to have not recommended the panel in order of merit or preference.

"ACC has reiterated that unless statutorily required not to arrange the names in the panel in the order of preference, the selection committee or search-cum-selection committee must invariably indicate the order of preference," the [Department of Personnel and Training](#) said in an order issued to all government departments.

ACC, led by [Prime Minister Narendra Modi](#), approves senior appointments at the level of [Joint Secretary](#) and above and board-level appointments in public sector undertakings, among others

ECONOMIC TIMES, SEP 4, 2014

Govt mulls scrapping police verification for govt jobs

[Bharti Jain](#)

NEW DELHI: Having enabled citizens to self—attest documents for services in all public utilities and agencies, the Narendra Modi regime is now weighing the option of eliminating verification of character and antecedents by police before appointment in the government or for issuance of passports.

According to the concept paper prepared by the department of personnel and training (DoPT) for reforming public service delivery systems, the mandatory police/IB character verification in case of new appointments and issuance of passports is essentially an extension of the "colonial non—faith citizen—government exchange". "It needs to be considered if this can be eliminated as (i) the police check is only about any criminal cases for which the persons concerned do provide necessary declarations and remain liable for false declaration; (ii) the police report is perfunctory as it covers the last place of residence only; and (iii) in any case, neighbours' affirmation appears to have little meaning," states the paper.

READ ALSO: [Major relief to citizens, govt to accept self-attested documents](#)

Sources in the government told TOI that the DoPT has decided to set up an internal committee to brainstorm the option of doing away with character and antecedents enquiry by the local police station for both new appointments and passports. The panel will examine if a simple self—declaration of antecedents by the applicant would suffice, as it would still be governed by IPC provisions dealing with furnishing of false information/declaration.

The DoPT is expected to review the average time taken for police verification and the hardships faced by those awaiting appointment, on account of delays on part of the police station concerned to either complete the verification or forward its report to the appointing authority.

While it should normally take a month for police to process character verification forms filled up by the applicant and forwarded by the appointing authority, delays are not unusual either on account of police apathy or due to preoccupation with their primary law & order/investigation duties.

The DoPT panel is likely to examine whether doing away with police verification of any criminal antecedents or moral turpitude on part of the candidate could pose an immediate risk or legal problem. This will be weighed against the existing IPC provisions like Sections 177, 193, 197, 198, 199 and 200, that specifically deal with the implications of any false information/evidence/disclosure/declaration made by the deponents. These may include imposition of penalties, fines, registration of criminal cases and even imprisonment.

BUSINESS LINE, SEP 5, 2014

I-T officers not too happy with new promotion rules

SHISHIR SINHA

Move to facilitate filling up extra posts was approved by Cabinet last year

New Delhi, September 4:

Better days are ahead for income tax officials, as the Government will soon notify amendments in the recruitment rules. This will facilitate promotions and direct recruitment, as approved under the cadre restructuring plan.

However, the Gazetted Officers Association of the Income Tax Department is not happy, as it wants the new posts of assistant commissioners to be filled in one go, through promotions.

“The Department of Personnel and Training is expected to issue amendments in the recruitment rules very soon,” a senior Revenue Department official told *BusinessLine* .

On May 23, the Cabinet approved the proposal for creation of 20,751 additional posts in the Tax Department. This includes 1,349 posts in the Indian Revenue Service (IRS) cadre and 19,402 posts in the non-IRS cadre.

Due to some procedural issues, the Department is facing vacancies at various levels. When the Cabinet approved the creation of additional posts, it permitted, as a one-time measure, filling up these posts through promotions, without amendments in the recruitment rules.

Accordingly, among others, 26 officials were promoted to the newly created grade of 'principal chief commissioners of income tax'.

Now, 17 out of these 26 officials have retired. To top it, there are already four vacancies for members at the board level (sanctioned strength of seven, including Chairman). These vacancies are affecting decision making in the Department. As on August 1, posts vacant at the level of the chief commissioners stood at 30, principal commissioners at 330, commissioner at 208 and additional/joint commissioners over 700.

But, the real issue is at the level of assistant commissioner of income tax (ACIT), the entry level for Group 'A' service. Two sets of people are appointed at this level – those in the IRS and income tax officers. The cadre restructuring exercise decided to create 166 additional regular posts and 620 additional reserve posts at this. Along with 563 vacancies arising out of promotions at a higher grade, a total of 1,349 additional posts were created.

While all other newly created posts are to be filled in one go, for the assistant commissioner level, the condition is that additional posts are to be filled over five years. Every year, half of the posts are to be filled by direct recruitment and the remaining through promotions.

“This will leave most of the newly created posts at assistant commissioner level vacant for the first four years,” said Ajay Goyal, President of the Income Tax Gazetted Officers Association.

He said nearly 600 officers were awaiting promotions since the past 14 years, and will now have to wait longer. In the last cadre restructuring in 2001, around 1,000 additional posts of assistant commissioner were filled through promotions, he added.

As on August 1, posts vacant at the level of the chief commissioners stood at 30, principal commissioners at 330, commissioner at 208 and additional/joint commissioners over 700.

TRIBUNE, SEP 5, 2014

Cabinet nod to 7% hike in DA

The Cabinet today approved a hike in dearness allowance (DA) to 107 per cent from the existing 100 per cent, benefiting nearly 30 lakh Central Government employees and 50 lakh pensioners, including dependents.

An official statement said the Cabinet chaired by PM Narendra Modi today approved the release of an additional installment of DA to the Central Government employees and Dearness Relief (DR) to pensioners with effect from July 1, 2014.

This is an increase of seven per cent over the existing rate of 100 per cent of the basic pay or pension to compensate for price rise.

The increase is in accordance with the accepted formula, which is based on the recommendations of the 6th Central Pay Commission.

HINDU, SEP 3, 2014

Address needs of poor, Ansari tells future IAS officers

KAVITA UPADHYAY

The Vice-President Hamid Ansari asked probationers of the Indian Administrative Service to address the needs of the poor. Only then will the country “truly emerge as an important player” in the global scenario he said in his address at the 89th Foundation Course at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration in Mussoorie, on Tuesday.

“While much has been achieved by us, the fruits of development have reached the public unevenly,” Mr Ansari said.

Starvation deaths

“We still have starvation deaths, which exist with high levels of malnutrition and under-nutrition. Widespread poverty and unemployment are a reality,” he said.

Mr Ansari said that though multiple schemes were launched by the government “to address the maladies that afflict the economy and society,” poor implementation of the schemes was the reason behind “underachievement in the development agenda.”

Modern technologies

He advised the probationers to implement modern technologies in their work, to specialise and train themselves to meet the challenges that the country was facing and simultaneously “remain sensitive to the welfare of ordinary Indians”.

STATESMAN, SEP 1, 2014

A reformed bureaucracy?

DEBAKI NANDAN MANDAL

The heart of administration is the management of programmes designed to serve the general welfare.

~ Paul H Appleby

In 1968, the Royal Committee on Civil Service, generally referred to as the Fulton Committee, had observed: “The civil service works under political direction and under the obligation of political accountability. This is the setting in which the daily work of many civil servants is carried out. Throughout it has to remember that it exists to serve the whole community.”

The observation seems to be more relevant today when a civil servant is required to canvass support for a policy decision of the government. He is no longer a mere executor of orders from above. He has to take the initiative to “sell” government policies, evoke popular support, and be responsive to the needs and demands of the people.

However, the confidence and morale of the Indian bureaucracy has reached its nadir in the backdrop of various scams, CBI probes and court cases during the UPA’s second tenure. Policy paralysis has done considerable harm. A revival of the spirit of the bureaucracy is imperative.

In course of his election campaign, Narendra Modi had vigorously campaigned for what he calls “minimum government but maximum governance”. During his first 100 days as Prime Minister, he has accorded uppermost priority to restore the confidence of the bureaucracy. One of his first actions was to appoint the National Security Adviser (NSA) and the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. A strong, unified and integrated PMO, led by a versatile and visionary officer, can effectively discharge its responsibilities as the nerve-centre of the government.

The former TRAI chairman Nripendra Mishra, a 1967-batch IAS officer of the UP cadre, was hand-picked as Principal Secretary through an ordinance. He is widely known for his impeccable administrative skills and his ability to finish a piece of work in record time. He can deliver with absolute perfection.

Mr Modi’s next critical initiative was the amendment of the All-India Service (Conduct) Rules, 1968. By a gazette notification dated 6 August, the 46-year Service Rules were amended to include a 19-point guideline for officers of All-India Services, with due emphasis on honesty, integrity and high ethical standards. It stipulates that bureaucrats must maintain political neutrality, take decisions and make recommendations on the basis of merit alone and only in public interest.

The Prime Minister is anxious to showcase his government’s commitment towards providing good governance. He has tightened his grip on the bureaucracy and has decided

to personally take a call on such issues as disciplinary action against All-India Service officers, matters relating to the Lokpal, CVC, anti-corruption legislation and so on.

At a meeting with Secretaries to the Government of India on 4 June, he had emphasized the need for team-spirit and urged the officials present to be leaders of their teams. All ministries and departments have been asked to motivate their 'industrious employees' by instituting 'Employee of the Month' awards as is done by corporates. They have been asked to instal 'Idea Boxes', so-called, in the corridors of their offices. The assumption is that 'out of box solutions', suggested by employees, will create 'a conducive work culture'.

The multiplicity of GOMs (Group of Ministers) under the previous dispensation has been dissolved to boost the morale of the bureaucracy. The officials have been asked to play a more active role in advising their political masters. The Prime Minister will henceforth be 'accessible to all officers' and they can approach him with inputs and ideas.

The measures outlined are suggestive of the seriousness with which Mr Modi has started his innings. As Chief Minister of Gujarat, he had earned the distinction of being a hard task-master. But Delhi may not be Gujarat, a fact that Mr Modi might soon realise because he is not sufficiently familiar with the capital's bureaucracy and its heterogenous character. There is an unmistakable similarity in Mr Modi's proposed handling of the bureaucracy in the manner of a headmaster and Rajiv Gandhi's style of functioning as Prime Minister. Rajiv, it bears recall, started his innings by meeting as many as 600 district collectors. But his slogan 'PM to DM' was not enduring.

The Prime Minister has made it clear to the top bureaucrats that if a good proposal is blocked by their minister, they can refer it to him through a power-point presentation. This level-jumping may undermine the cabinet system of shared ministerial authority, but it will almost certainly satisfy the ambitious bureaucrats not least because of the opportunity to interact with the Prime Minister. Furthermore, the plan to centrally control the appointments, transfers, and postings of senior bureaucrats to the exclusion of the consultation process with the Home ministry and the Department of Personnel will tend to breed a coterie raj leading to a vertical split in the structure of public administration.

Criticism of civil servants on the floor of the legislature is not uncommon. The Administrative Reforms Commission's report on the Machinery of Government states: "There appears to be among Members of Parliament a general distrust of civil servants, and a feeling that the government machinery is invariably inefficient. Such an attitude tends to demoralize civil servants." The people expect more and when their hopes are not fulfilled, they criticise the administration and often to the extent of exerting pressure. Mr Modi's agenda on reforming the bureaucracy is well-intentioned and timely. Yet it would be pertinent to recall what Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India, had once remarked ~ "The Indian administration would be a great deal more popular, if it were a

little less efficient, and trifle more elastic. Our danger is the creation of a pure bureaucracy, competent, honourable, faithful, industrious, but rather mechanical, rather lifeless, perhaps rather soulless.”

Before Margaret Thatcher took over as Britain’s Prime Minister, Ramsay Muir, in his book *How Britain is Governed*, had examined the dangers of bureaucracy ~ “Under the cloak of democracy, it has thrived and grown until, like Frankenstein’s monster, it sometimes seems likely to devour its creator.”

The fact that the bureaucracy is an essential element of governance is beyond dispute although we are gradually shifting to a regulation-free economy. It is necessary to guard against its inherent defects and to put in place a system of effective control. The bureaucrat is invaluable as a public servant, but the bureaucratic system can be counter-productive when it becomes the master. The Prime Minister is on test, and will come under scrutiny in due course of time.

The writer is a former Joint Secretary, Govt of West Bengal

HINDU, SEP 1, 2014

Bureaucratic tactics to avoid things that don’t suit them

“It takes four days to get photocopies!” a shocked BJP Delhi unit chief Satish Upadhyay remarked during the South Delhi Municipal Corporation’s Standing Committee meeting last week.

An important policy document wasn’t handed out to members when the committee’s meeting started.

An official waddled in with the documents half-an-hour into the meeting. The Commissioner claimed the policy was completed four days prior, but the photocopies weren’t ready.

While committee members chuckled at the incompetence, Mr. Upadhyay made the officer apologise to all present.

This wasn’t a one-off in the municipal corporations. Councillors often raise the issue of late replies to queries and the agenda of meetings being sent to them at short notice.

SDMC Leader of Opposition Farhad Suri had asked for some information from the Engineering Department regarding work on park benches. When he said at the meeting that the information wasn’t provided, Engineer-in-Chief Ravi Das confidently said: “The reply has gone to those it was supposed to reach.”

Since Mr. Suri, the person who asked for the data, did not get the replies even after the meeting finished, it begs the question as to what happened to the file.

Councillors, both BJP and Congress, say the bureaucracy employ such tactics to avoid things that don't suit them.

On numerous visits to the DDA office at Vikas Bhawan here, officials and members complain about not being informed in advance about the agenda for the meeting with the Lieutenant-Governor.

Jitender Kochar, the non-official member of the DDA, rues that he is supplied the agenda less than 24 hours before the meeting with the L-G.

“The L-G had himself said the agenda should be supplied well in advance to all members. But we get it late so that we cannot gather information about various items on the agenda. What will I discuss in the meeting when I do not have enough time to even go through the items,” he says.

Some say the agenda is given late as certain items are put on by vested interests who want it cleared in the meeting without any opposition.

Similar is the case in many other government departments. Makes one wonder if there really is some hidden agenda behind the delay.

Recognising the need for greater national effort to promote energy efficiency and energy conservation, all judicial officers at the Dwarka court complex have been asked to promote optimal utilisation of electricity.

Vide a circular issued by the District & Sessions Judge (South West District), Dwarka Courts, all judicial officers have been asked to ensure that lights and air conditioners in their chambers are switched off when they are not in their chambers and those in the courtroom are also switched off immediately after the court hours.

So that only such number of lights are used as are necessary, they have been asked to ensure natural ventilation and while passing through the corridors or using staircases, they would now see that no lights are on at places getting sufficient natural light.

The judges or branch in-charges have also been asked to direct their staff to unplug everything that is not in use.

Besides, the caretaker of the court complex has been directed to see that all electronic equipments in the judges' chambers, courtrooms and other rooms are switched off after 5 p.m.

Damini Nath, Akanksha Jain and Mohammad Iqbal

HINDU, SEP 1, 2014

Dead persons too get promotions now!

K. SRINIVAS REDDY

A faux pas in a Government order can be condoned, but when it starts giving promotions to persons who breathed their last a decade ago, what does one say?

Serving and retired police officers are dismayed over some Government Orders issued last month which have several bloopers. They had not only given notional promotions to the dead and gone, but also to those who resigned and to an officer who left the country after he was convicted for taking a bribe!

Court cases soon?

The hurry for issuing these orders conferring notional seniority to different levels of police officers was a Supreme Court order on a contempt petition filed against the Government. With the direction to complete the promotion process, the Andhra Pradesh government went ahead and issued notional seniorities to different levels of officers, but inexplicably, names of several officers who were no more were also found in different orders issued.

The conferring of notional seniorities has raised the spectre of several more cases being filed in courts, with those promoted but now retired contemplating moving the courts for retirement benefits. For example, an officer who retired as a DSP some ten years ago has now been given notional seniority as an Additional SP. Hence he would now be eligible for revision of his pension and if the government does not pay him more, there is no option but to move the court, says a retired officer.

The Government Orders (No 116, 120, 123, 124 and 125) issued in July, 2014 by the Home Department also have several bloopers, say many police officers. First, the notional promotions accorded to officers as DSPs, Additional SPs and non-cadre SPs are invalid as they have not been ratified by the Public Service Commissions and the Departmental Promotion Committees (DPCs), argue some officers.

Gaffes galore

Second, the list of officers who were given notional promotions includes those who died. For example, T. Sathiah, who was an ACP of Chatrinaka, was shot dead by a constable in December 1990 when communal riots rocked Hyderabad. Sathiah is now notionally promoted as an Additional SP from 1994 and as a non-cadre SP from 2000. Similarly, an inspector of police trapped by the ACB while working in a police station in the South Zone, convicted and dismissed from service, was given notional promotion in one of the orders.

Some retired officers recalled that those were dead but now promoted include R. Seshadri Reddy (killed in a road accident in 1982) who has been made Additional SP from 1988 and non-cadre SP from 1995; Mohammed Zahooruiddin (died in 1990) promoted as non-cadre SP from 1993; B. Malla Reddy (killed in road accident in 1989), now promoted as

Additional SP from 1997; G. Venkataramudu (died in 1983) promoted as Additional SP from 1985; Hussain (resigned as inspector in 1996), but now promoted as DSP from 1999; Badiullah (died) promoted in 2000 as DSP; Sudhaman Rao (died in 1998) promoted as Addl. SP from 2005; Homi Ardesh (dead in 1996) as Addl. SP from 2000; P. Chokka Rao (killed in accident in 1991) promoted as Addl. SP from 1998.

Strange silence

Interestingly, the GOs also do not mention anything about some direct recruit DSPs. These DSP direct recruits have retired and they should have also been considered for notional seniorities and those living could get some financial benefits. “I fail to fathom how the government issued orders with such bloopers,” says a retired police officer who plans to move the court on the fresh orders.

Serving and retired police officials dismayed over some GOs issued by government recently

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

TELEGRAPH, SEP 2, 2014

A REPUBLIC OF EXPERTS

How the Planning Commission could be transformed

Ashok V. Desai

I have recently been giving talks on economics to intelligent non-economists. It revealed to me a difference between economics and the natural sciences. A non-scientist who goes to a talk on science is unlikely to claim any knowledge about the subject. But non-scientists often come with well-formed, even if incorrect, economic preconceptions. They will firmly believe that the oil crisis was orchestrated by the American government, or that the industrialization policy was a personal invention of Jawaharlal Nehru. The preconceptions generally are only tangentially related to facts; they are closer to conspiracy theories, which are typical of paranoia. They are so strongly held that they would seem to be a part of their holders' religion or psychosis.

Thomas Piketty puts this point somewhat differently in the introduction to his famous book, *Capital in the 21st Century*. He points out the strong convictions of many people about trends in distribution: some believe incomes have become more equal, whilst others believe just the opposite, and both engage in a dialogue of the deaf. "Social scientific research is and always will be tentative and imperfect. It does not claim to transform economics, sociology and history into exact sciences. But by patiently searching for facts and patterns and calmly analyzing the economic, social and political mechanisms that might explain them, it can inform democratic debate and focus attention on the right questions. It can help to redefine the terms of the debate, unmask certain preconceived or fraudulent notions, and subject all positions to constant critical scrutiny. In my view, this is the role that intellectuals, including social scientists, should play, as citizens like any other but with the good fortune to have more time than others to devote themselves to study (and even to be paid for it — a signal privilege)." In other words, intellectuals are common people just like the opinionators in my audiences, but are trained to judge the solidity of evidence, and eliminate wrong or poorly grounded positions.

I thought that Piketty's point was relevant to the debate that currently rages about the future of the Planning Commission. Intellectuals have been writing feverishly in the press; almost to a man, they are shocked by the prime minister's decision to disband the Planning Commission. I do not have to go into their arguments in its defence; but it can be confidently said that none of them makes Piketty's point. The reason is obvious: whatever its original conception, the Planning Commission never publicly played an intellectual role. In the beginning, it was the product of a religion called socialism. Later it was used as an implement to steer the economy in directions favoured by the rulers, which changed marginally from time to time.

That was not so always. I had informal entry into the Planning Commission in the 1960s because my brother Mahendra was its information adviser. At lunchtime, the bright young economists assembled by Pitambar Pant in the planning unit of the Indian Statistical Institute would gather together in Mahendra's room and vigorously debate economic issues. But that debate was confined to Yojana Bhavan; people outside got no inkling of it. Indian governments have hosted limited economic debates from time to time, but always within the confines of ministries. And in recent decades, they have never involved anyone who differed with official positions in a meaningful way. So I would not have shed tears on the demise of the Planning Commission. But then, the prime minister has gone back on his promise to demolish it. He may not have changed his mind about its uselessness or malignity as the case may be. Perhaps he was overwhelmed by the barrage of criticism that followed his announcement; maybe he felt that he had overreacted. Anyway, he asked the public to give him ideas about what to replace it with; and Yashwant Sinha has been collecting the views of selected prominences for him.

This is where Piketty's point comes in. I understood its relevance when, some two decades ago, I spent two years advising the then finance minister, Manmohan Singh. I realized the naïveté of the views of my political masters: not just theirs, but also of their bureaucrat advisors and implementers. I tried to improve their judgment. But my views were confined to file notings and interventions in the meetings of senior bureaucrats the minister called in his room. They did not even extend to larger meetings, with other ministers and their bureaucrats; no one spoke there except on the finance minister's invitation, and he never asked anyone except Montek Singh Ahluwalia.

So the prime minister has two problems to solve: whom to plant in the Planning Commission, and how to bring their wisdom to bear on his ministers — for they too are common people, and even more impervious to wisdom because they tend to attribute their political success to their own wisdom. I shall give a brief answer since I have only 400 words left.

The prime minister should recruit 139 bright young economists — let me call them gophers — chosen not just for their knowledge but also for their communicative ability, and plant them in rooms on the ground floor of the new thought commission. Any moderately important person (MIP) — which would include any minister, bureaucrat down to joint secretary, or member of parliament — should be entitled to approach any gopher with a question, personally, on phone or by email. The gopher would give an immediate answer, or tell the MIP by when he would send an answer.

The gophers should have a library within the building at their disposal; it would comprise any book, article or document they may ask for. The librarian may get them from one of Delhi's many libraries, official and unofficial, or abroad, but once received, they must be digitized: the library must aim to become India's most comprehensive digital library, and give free universal web access to all its holdings, except those under copyright.

Why 139? That is the number of best Indian economists listed by RePec in its Ideas list. These are the Indian economists who have published work that meets international

standards. Each of them should have one of the 139 gophers attached to him or her; the gopher should consult his or her mentor in case of doubt. The 139 economists should have free access to the new library, and be able to use their gophers as research assistants. They should get a fellowship to come and live comfortably in Delhi whenever they want to work in the thought commission. They should be invited to give at least one talk a year, attended by a minister, on topics of interest to ministers. They should hold at least one conference a year on policy matters, open to MIPs. The MIPs and gophers should be free to take their advice on a consultancy basis.

In brief, the Planning Commission should be converted into a market for ideas; the MIPs should be the buyers without having to pay. India's best economists should be the sellers, but not profit maximizers. The product should be good economics, which should go into policy. The output of the thought commission should be exposed to the critical view of the entire world.

BUSINESS STANDARD, SEP 1, 2014

Economy expands, but little room to grow

Further government action needed to sustain growth

The numbers for the gross domestic product (GDP) of the [Indian economy](#) during the first quarter of 2014-15 were declared last Friday. The first quarter pertained to a politically significant period - starting from April 1, six weeks before the [election results](#) were declared, to June 30, a little over a month after the new government took office. In line with many predictions, they showed that year-on-year growth was 5.7 per cent, a relatively good number compared to the past few quarters. One year ago, growth had come in at 4.7 per cent and the mood was one of utter despondency. Last week, the number was better - but not by as much as sentiment, which tended to see in that unmistakable signs of a strong recovery.

There are indeed some signs in the numbers that a robust recovery may indeed be under way. Four sectors explain much of the improvement over last year. [Manufacturing](#) grew by 3.5 per cent during the quarter, a sharp improvement over the 1.2 per cent decline in the corresponding quarter of 2013-14. Electricity grew by over 10 per cent, in contrast to the less than four per cent growth a year ago. And the omnibus service-sector category of trade, transport, hotels and communication, which itself accounts for about 22 per cent of GDP, accelerated from a sluggish growth rate of 1.6 per cent to a much better 2.8 per cent. Construction also accelerated from a 1.1 per cent growth rate last year to almost five per cent this year. All these are indications of a relatively broad-based pick-up in economic activity. In contrast, the negative forces appeared to be relatively small. The other two service sectors - financial, real estate and business services, and community, social and personal services - saw somewhat mild deceleration in growth compared with last year. It is worth noting, however, that the second quarter of last financial year saw a

slight pick-up in growth, so observers should be wary of a base effect. Two quarters of data at least are needed to argue a sustainable recovery.

Still, after having found a firm bottom in the 4.5-5 per cent range, the economy is demonstrating some capacity to rise up from there. But two important questions arise in this regard. First, having risen from the floor, how far away is the ceiling? Second, what factors are at work in determining that ceiling? On the first, a realistic assessment would be that there isn't a lot of headroom for further acceleration. There are just too many constraints and bottlenecks - persistently high [food inflation](#) and the significant slowdown in infrastructure investment, to name but two - to allow the economy to return to the glory days of 2003-08. So as much cheer as the first-quarter numbers may have evoked, in the business-as-usual scenario, it must be acknowledged that there is now a relatively narrow range between the floor and the ceiling.

This brings up the second question. As reassuring as the prospects of a recovery may be, the government must realise that the limited headroom for acceleration is something only it can deal with. There are certainly some positive signs with respect to efforts to get to grips with these two and other factors that have played a role in shrinking the potential upside. But it's still very early days for the government, and it will discover that there's many a slip between the cup and the lip. In such situations, there is no substitute for effective strategising and diligent implementation. The ceiling on growth will only rise when the right combination of policies is put in place. These numbers should not be seen by the government as a reward, or as the consequence of its actions. Concerted reformist endeavours are necessary to sustain growth. The greatest risk posed by Friday's numbers is complacency.

EDUCATION

HINDUSTAN TIMES, SEP 2, 2014

UGC distance learning policy violated, admits HRD minister

Jeevan Prakash Sharma

After HT Education highlighted the plight of thousands of students who spent good money on distance learning programmes not approved by education regulator University Grants Commission, the matter came up for hearing in the upper house of Parliament, when it was in session.

On August 11, 2014, BK Hariprasad, member of parliament representing Karnataka; questioned Smriti Irani, the union minister for human resource development, about the number of state and private universities violating UGC norms by offering distance learning courses through institutes outside their territorial jurisdiction. In her written response, Smriti Irani acknowledged the violations, saying, "The University Grants Commission (UGC) has informed that a university established or incorporated by or under a state act shall operate and function only within the territorial jurisdiction defined under its act and in no case beyond the territory of its location."

"Contrary to this provision, a few state universities and private universities set up under state act have violated this policy of the UGC. The Commission has asked these universities to close down such centres and to comply with the UGC's instructions in the matter," responded Irani.

Despite the HRD minister's statement in Parliament, however, no concrete moves have been evident in curbing this malpractice. For instance, Karnataka State Open University in Karnataka (KSOU) and Mewar University in Rajasthan are still openly offering affiliations in distance learning mode to institutes outside state boundaries.

When questioned, the registrar of KSOU, PS Naik, had said, "We can offer courses beyond our territorial jurisdiction as our state act allows us to do so. We don't need to follow UGC." Even an assistant director of Mewar University had admitted to giving affiliation to institutes for training. "Thousands of students who have enrolled in reputed institutes in Delhi for degree courses through distance learning offered by other states' universities do not hold valid degrees. However, nobody is talking about taking action against these institutes and universities," says a senior UGC official.

In addition to this, violation of territorial jurisdiction is not the only worry for students and parents. Replying to another question related to unapproved courses run by some universities, the HRD minister said that the UGC had never approved courses such as MSc in fashion communication, MBA in interior designing, BSc in operation theatre technology and MBA in fire safety etc.

This means that the state and private universities cannot offer these courses through distance learning programmes even in their own states because they don't have UGC approvals.

“The minister says that the UGC will consider approving such courses. Thousands of students have passed out or are at present enrolled in these courses. What happens to their future as such courses are not approved now?” asks Hariprasad, when contacted by HT Education.

“The minister’s response raises many serious issues. If the UGC hasn’t approved some programmes, how are these being offered to the students. All these degrees are fake. The HRD minister also says that the UGC has published advertisements to inform and educate students, but the UGC’s responsibility does not end here. It should take strict action against these universities. I am not satisfied with the minister’s response. We will pursue this issue,” he adds.

Crucial Questions

Instead of issuing public notices to sensitise students and parents, why is UGC, the regulator for distance education programmes, not taking any action against erring private, state and deemed universities which are openly violating its order?

Is UGC unable to stop private and state universities from offering hundreds of unapproved degree courses such as MSc in fashion communication, MBA in interior - designing, BSc in operation theatre technology etc?

Many private and state universities have hired national collaborators (private companies) who work as agents between universities and private institutes. Who is - regulating these companies?

A few state universities and private universities set up under state act have violated this policy of the UGC. The Commission has asked these universities to close down such centres... Smriti Irani, the union minister for human resource and development

ECONOMIC TIMES, SEP 6, 2014

Narendra Modi's Teacher's Day address: PM hands out lessons on life, character & nation-building

NEW DELHI: The question was from a child in Leh. Was young Narendra a mischievous boy? Yes, he could be. He and his friends would gatecrash weddings and surreptitiously staple the clothes of guests. "You can imagine what would've happened when they left the venue," said PM [Narendra Modi](#), and then he laughed.

There was another story about the boys dangling imli (tamarind) before shehnai players who would salivate, making them play the wrong notes. Nobody quite knew what to

expect when the government built up Modi's address on Teachers' Day into such a big deal that it began to be seen as a political event.

Modi Addressed 1,000 Students

And what sort of tone would Modi adopt? This was a man who powered his way into 7, Race Course Road with a campaign style that relentlessly hectored and harangued the previous government.

That stern, unsmiling image was softened on Friday in a two hour-plus engagement—with children rather than their teachers—that was pedantic at times but saw Modi actually seeming to relax and enjoy himself. Then again, there were no uncomfortable questions posed. Modi turned teacher for a day as he dispensed lessons on [life](#), [lifestyle](#), [character](#) and nationbuilding.

Speaking to more than 1,000 [students](#) drawn from government schools across the Capital—and others logged into the event from elsewhere across the country—Modi donned the role of margdarshak, offering his blessings to students, answering their questions and urging his young audience to restore the lost respect for teachers in the country. Modi answered close to 20 questions in the interaction during which he also advised youngsters on the importance of leading a disciplined life, embracing cleanliness, reading biographies and being physically fit. Social scientist Shiv Visvanathan said the event was carefully stage-managed.

"The event was perfectly orchestrated and designed. It was more like a rocket launch than a speech. There was an attempt to create a benign, folklore Modi, like a leader talking to children. It was artificial and frightening to a large extent," he said.

Lamenting the huge shortage of teachers in the country, Modi said, "We need to discuss and introspect on why an ordinary student today does not want to become a teacher when he or she grows up. We need to find an answer to this question."

About 100 government school students from six cities participated in the discussion via satellite. The interaction was aired and viewed by thousands of students across the country simultaneously on TV, radio and the Internet. Modi said the task of motivating children should be a collective endeavour, urging professionals to teach at least one period a week in a school in their neighbourhood. "Nation-building should become a national movement," he said. The highlight of the interaction, however, was technology. Modi kept going back to his vision for Digital India and elaborated on his plan to democratise education further with the help of advances in technology. "Just like how I am taking questions from so many [students](#) across the country, many good teachers will also be able to take classes like this," he said, while answering a question on girls' education.

Asked whether his [life](#) has changed after becoming PM, Modi said he hadn't found time to see Delhi as his responsibilities have increased and he is working even harder than

before. "But my experience as a chief minister has helped me immensely in adapting to my new role as the prime minister. My life hasn't changed much in that respect," he said.

Modi gave all his answers in Hindi, including replies to students who asked questions in English from south India.

The day had its share of political drama with Congress taking potshots at Modi for making himself the centre of attraction. "Teachers' Day is a day meant to show the nation's appreciation and respect for teachers for their noble services to our young generation who will be shouldering the responsibility of the nation in the future. It is fine that the prime minister has felt the need to address students across the nation. But apart from highlighting himself, we had hoped the prime minister and his government had also come out with something more substantial in the form of presenting a constructive agenda and vision for the betterment of our students and the education department," Congress spokesperson Salman Khurshid said at a press conference.

The West Bengal government imposed a boycott of the speech by schools by not making any arrangements for screening the event. Mamata Banerjee's government had made it clear last Monday that it would not install TV sets or arrange for Internet access in schools to enable the students to listen to the prime minister. She, instead, addressed a gathering of students and teachers at the Netaji Indoor Stadium and awarded the Siksha Ratna to 100 teachers for their contribution.

Bihar cited poor infrastructure as the reason for not being able to arrange screenings in many government schools. But Uttar Pradesh, interestingly, exhibited a rare enthusiasm with even some madrasas coming forward to telecast Modi's address.

TIMES OF INDIA, SEP 1, 2014
Nalanda University reopens

PATNA: The revived Nalanda University, an ancient international centre for learning in Bihar which has attracted over 1,000 applications from around the world, will begin its first academic session from September 1 with 15 students, including five women, and 10 faculty members, its vice-chancellor said.

"We are ready to start the academic session of Nalanda University Monday," vice-chancellor Gopa Sabhrawal told IANS.

Sabhrawal said a three-day student orientation programme for the School of Historical Sciences and the School of Environment and Ecology for the first session 2014-15 commenced on Friday in the makeshift campus at the Buddhist pilgrim town of Rajgir, about 100 km from Patna. The university will come up in Rajgir, 12 km from where the ancient Nalanda University stood till the 12th century, when it was razed by an invading Turkish army.

The formal inauguration is expected in mid-September, Sabharwal said. The fully-residential university, to be completed by 2020, will eventually have seven schools, all for post-graduate and doctoral students, offering courses in science, philosophy and spirituality and social sciences.

Ruins of the University of Nalanda (Getty Images)

"Over 1,000 students from 40 countries have sought admission in Nalanda University. But only 15 students have been selected, including one each from Japan and Bhutan and others from India," Sabharwal said.

More students will be enrolled in September as the selection process is still under way, she added.

It was initially decided to enrol 40 students — 20 each in the two schools — but after scrutiny and interview only the best students have been selected, Sabharwal said.

Applications have been received from the US, Russia, England, Spain, Germany, Japan, Myanmar, Austria and Sri Lanka, among others, as also from West Asian and Southeast Asian countries.

Those 15 selected students will be housed in Hotel Tathagat, owned by the Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation (BSTDC) in Rajgir.

The classes will be held in the nearby convention hall of the state government.

Rajgir attracts thousands of tourists from all over the world every year. It is the second most visited tourist place in the Buddhist circuit in Bihar after Bodh Gaya, considered as the birthplace of Buddhism, where Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment over 2,500 years ago. Rajgir (then Rajagriha) was the first capital of the Magadha kingdom and one of the favourite places of the Buddha.

The university is an initiative of the Indian government and the 18 East Asia Summit (EAS) countries.

During his trip to Brunei in October 2013, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had inked agreements with seven EAS countries — Australia, Cambodia, Singapore, Brunei, New Zealand, Laos and Myanmar — that have pledged their commitment to the project.

China has committed \$1 million for the project and a MOU on this was signed during Manmohan Singh's visit to Beijing in November 2013. Singapore has pledged \$5-6 million and Australia about \$1 million Australian dollars.

In May 2013, the Nalanda board had approved the architectural plan of the university, proposing a massive lake at the centre of the campus. A library, a huge dome-shaped structure, would come up in the middle of the lake and be half submerged.

The central government has sanctioned Rs.2,700 crore (\$445 million) cost for the university, to be spent over 10 years.

Established in the fifth century during the Gupta dynasty, the ancient Nalanda University was once flocked by thousands of scholars and thinkers from across the world. It was destroyed by the invading Turkish army of Bakhtiyar Khilji, a general of Qutbuddin Aibak and the blaze in the huge library is believed to have raged for several days.

ELECTRICITY

HINDU, SEP 4, 2014

Power subsidy for consumers comes into effect from August 11

VISHAL KANT

Those consuming less than 400 units per month would pay less

POWER SUBSIDY COMES INTO EFFECT AGAIN

Power subsidy to become effective from August 11	Households consuming power up to 400 units to be benefited
Rs 1.20 per unit subsidy up to 200 units against the tariff of Rs. 4 per unit	Rs. 0.80 per unit subsidy for 201-400 units against the tariff of Rs. 5.95 unit

Subsidy to be in effect till March 31, 2015

Domestic power consumers using less than 400 units per month would have to pay lesser electricity bills from next month as the power subsidy announced in the Delhi budget for the current financial year would come into effect from August 11.

Lieutenant-Governor Najeeb Jung on Wednesday approved the targeted subsidy in the two slabs (0-200 and 201-400 units) that was proposed in the Delhi Appropriation Bill, passed by the Parliament on August 11.

The Delhi Government had proposed a subsidy of Rs. 1.20 per unit to all domestic consumers consuming up to 200 units only and Rs. 0.80 per unit to all domestic consumers consuming between 201-400 units per month. However, if the consumer crosses the 400 units limit, the household would have to pay the total bill.

“The date of implementation of the subsidy provision will be August 11, 2014, the date of conveying of approval of Delhi Appropriation Bill by the Government of India. The total estimated budget provision for the targeted subsidy is approximately Rs. 260 crore up to March 31, 2015,” said Principal Secretary (Power) Arun Goel.

Officials said Delhi Government conveyed the approval to the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) on Tuesday. Power discoms have also been directed to implement the same with immediate effect.

“More than 84 per cent of domestic consumers are likely to benefit from the targeted subsidy,” Mr. Goel said.

GOVERNORS

TRIBUNE, SEP 2, 2014

An indecent proposal

Former Chief Justice of India offered job of Governor

THE reported proposal to appoint P. Sathasivam as the Governor of Kerala has raised justifiable concerns in various quarters. It is for the first time that a former Chief Justice of India, who retired in April this year, is being made a Governor. This is a clear case of political patronage being extended to a former head of the judiciary and, if it goes through, would set a bad precedent. By attempting to win over a former CJI with a post-retirement job and denying judgeship to Gopal Subramaniam, the message the Modi government is sending to the judiciary is clear.

Sathasivam's reported defence is that he is accepting only a constitutional post. He points out that there are ex-CJIs doing consultancy and commercial work. One former CJI is a member of the Rajya Sabha. Some former high court Chief Justices have worked as law ministers. In terms of protocol the Chief Justice of India occupies the fourth slot after the President, Vice-President and Prime Minister. One expects the occupant of this august office to maintain that dignity and status post-retirement also. The legal fraternity needs to set a code of conduct and exercise moral pressure against deviations, when and if any.

Justice Sathasivam may not like to believe in hierarchy after retirement. But how would he stop people from drawing conclusions about the order issued by a Bench headed by him providing relief to Amit Shah, BJP president, in an encounter case and the offer of a gubernatorial post from the BJP government in which Shah is a key player? If Sathasivam accepts this proposal, he would not only end up hurting his own image but also of the judiciary at large. As for the Modi government, the ignominy is no less. It is already seen in a tearing hurry to have a greater say of the executive in judicial appointments. By making such overtures to former judges it would set an example for politicians at the state level to follow. This is a new challenge to the independence of the judiciary, which requires a wider debate.

HOUSING

HINDUSTAN TIMES, SEP 1, 2014

DDA launches new housing scheme, 25,034 flats on offer

Sidhartha Roy

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) rolled out its biggest ever housing scheme on Monday. The DDA 2014 housing scheme, which has 25,034 flats on offer, has been officially launched by DDA vice chairman Balvinder Kumar. Sale of forms have started.

The last day of submitting forms is on October 9. "The brochure will also be available for download on our website," Kumar said.

Unlike its previous schemes, forms will not be available at Vikas Sadan this time and will neither be accepted at the DDA headquarter.

Video: DDA launches new housing scheme, forms available till October 9

"We didn't want people to come and queue up at Vikas Sadan and that is why forms will be sold and can be submitted at selected branches of the empanelled banks," said a senior DDA official.

Though the printing of brochures started a bit late, DDA officials believe it should not pose a problem. "Very few people buy and submit forms in the initial few days and we don't expect any shortage of brochures.

Also, since the scheme would be open for nearly 40 days, most people don't prefer to block the one lakh of registration fee for a longer duration," he said. The largest chunk of the flats — 22,627 out of total 25,034 — are one bedroom units with a drawing room, kitchen and bathroom and located mostly in Dwarka, Rohini and Narela. The price ranges between Rs. 14-22 lakh for the one bedroom flats, Rs. 41-69 lakh for two bedroom flats and Rs. 69 lakh to Rs. 1.2 crore for three bedroom flats. There are also 700 flats for the Economically Weaker Sections that are priced at Rs.5.87 lakh to Rs. 9.9 lakh. While the largest chunk of flats are located in Rohini, Narela and Dwarka, many flats are also located in Jasola, Vasant Kunj, Mukherjee Nagar, Kalyan Vihar and Motia Khan. The scheme will be open till October 9. Any Indian citizen, who doesn't own a property in Delhi individually or jointly, is allowed to apply for a flat. The draw of lots for the scheme is expected to be held between 25 and 31 October and DDA promises to hand over all flats by March 2015. The draw will be held by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), which had held the draw for DDA's 2010 housing scheme too.

The application form has been kept simple this time and applicants don't need to provide any documents along with it. However, it is mandatory for applicants to provide their PAN details.

HOUSING BONANZA

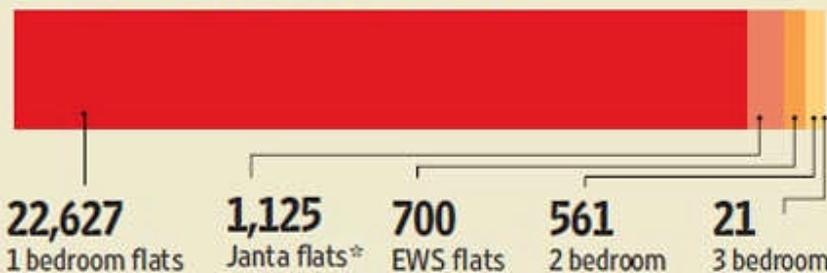
Any Indian citizen, who does not own a property in Delhi, individually or jointly, is allowed to apply for a flat. The draw of lots for the scheme is expected to be held between Oct 25 and 31.



- Unlike previous schemes, forms will not be available at Vikas Sadan this time.

HT PHOTO

NUMBER GAME: FLATS ON OFFER



₹5.4 lakh: Janta flat in Raghubir Nagar, cheapest flat in the scheme

₹1.2 crore: HIG flat in Motia Khan, costliest flat in the scheme

5 years: The lock in period during which a flat cannot be sold

PRICE RANGE, AREA AND LOCATION OF FLATS

**₹37.50 lakh-
₹1.20 crore**

3 bedroom flats

Area: 84.82-156.61 sqm

Rohini	14
Jasola	4
Mukherjee Nagar	1
Shalimar Bagh	1
Motia Khan	1

**₹42 lakh-
₹69.60 lakh**

2 bedroom flats

Area: 33.29-126.17 sqm

Narela	396
Mukherjee Nagar	112
Rohini	19
Kalyan Vihar	16
Jahangirpuri	8

**₹14.34 lakh-
₹27.85 lakh**

1 bedroom flats

Area: 31.34-73.99 sqm

Rohini	11,046
Narela	9,472
Dwarka	2,362

₹5.87-₹9.95 lakh

EWS flats price

Area: 18.85-40 sqm

25,034

Total number of flats

₹1 lakh registration fee for applying

₹150 cost of the scheme brochure

15 lakh brochures to be printed initially

WHO CAN APPLY

- Any citizen of India who is at least 18 years old at the time of filing application.
- Applicant must not own any residential flat or plot in Delhi, in their own name or in the name of their spouse or children.
- One person can submit only one application
- Both husband and wife can apply but if both are successful, only one can retain a flat.

HOW TO APPLY

- Buy a brochure (₹150) from selected branches of any of the 13 banks empanelled by DDA.
- Brochure can also be downloaded from DDA website but ₹150 would have to be paid separately while submitting application.
- Brochures would not be available at DDA headquarter Vikas Sadan.
- The application form has been kept simple this time and it is a single page form.
- No documents have to be attached at the time of submitting the application.
- It is mandatory to provide the Permanent Account Number (PAN) in the application forms.

INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIETIES

PIONEER, SEP 2, 2014

AIFACS FACES EVICTION FROM RAFI MARG

The All-India Fine Arts and Crafts Society (AIFACS), which once enjoyed the patronage of the President of India and eminent personalities of the art world, is now caught in a legal wrangle.

The Land and Development Offices (L&DO) under the Union Urban Development Ministry has slapped a notice on the Society asking it to vacate its office at 1, Rafi Marg. The L&DO has accused the Society of gross mismanagement, malpractices and carrying out unauthorised construction at its premises in violation of the agreement.

In a notice issued on June 13, 2014, the L&DO has pointed out various irregularities in the functioning of the AIFACS. "The society has grossly misused their building by way of subletting to various organisations without prior permission of the lessor (L&DO) and unauthorised constructions. The society has also not realised any share of rent to the lessor for sub-letting to their tenant organization," the notice said.

As per the agreement of 1955, the land was provided to the Society at a concessional rate of `5,000 per acre with a purpose of construction of art gallery and holding exhibitions periodically on non-commercial basis.

"But the purpose has not been met as has been found by the L&DO during its various inspections and several reminders to the Society," says the notice.

"In view of the numerous opportunities granted to the Society, the breaches of unauthorised constructions and misuse by way of sub-letting in the premises constitute violations of Clauses III, IX and XII of the agreement of lease respectively.... the lessor has decided to re-enter upon the said premises..

"Gopal Rastogi, building officer of this office, has been directed to take over possession of the premises from you on 1 July 2014," said the notice signed by Sumit Gakhar, Deputy L&DO, asking the management to hand over the premises to the official.

The Society has now challenged the order in the High Court seeking quashing of the eviction notice. Staying the eviction, the court has kept the next date of hearing in the matter on September 4th.

Ram Sutar, a sculpturist and present president of the Society, admitted that there have been lapses in the management but said, "We are ready to rectify them."

However, it's not only violation of the lease agreement that the Society is being accused of. Some members of the Society have taken exception to the way the current management has 'unconstitutionally' amended the Memorandum of Association of the AIFACS in 1975. The original memorandum was signed in 1938.

Artist VS Rahi, life member and ex-treasurer of the Society, said, “Vested interests are ruining the society. I’m so dismayed at the Society’s functioning, that I have stopped attending its meetings.”

He also questioned the whereabouts of valuable paintings and sculptures by renowned artists such as Sharda Ukil, Sailoz Mukherjee, KK Haber, MF Hussain, K S Kulkarni, Bishwanath Mukherjee, Barda Ukil (founder-member who had decorated India House at London) Ashis Kumar Halder, B C Sanyal and Sudhir Ranjan Khastigir.

When contacted, Paramjeet Singh, chairman of the Society, flatly denied the allegations. He said that the Society had intimated the Registrar of Societies about the changes in the amendment undertaken in 1975.

H N Sharma, member of the AIFCAS, refused to buy Singh’s claim. “The court is being misled. Without the consent of the Registrar of Societies and the L&DO no changes can be made in the Memorandum of Agreement between the two parties,” Sharma said.

The Society was founded by the then prominent personalities such as K N Haksar, Prime Minister, Bikaner (Rajputana), Sardar Bahadur Mohan Singh, rais and landlord, member of India Council, London, Nawab Sir Mohammad Mehr Shah, rais and landlord MLA. Central, Sardar Bahadur Sobha Singh, rais, landlord and contractor, Major Sardar KM Pannikar, foreign minister, Patiala State, artists and brothers Sarada Ukil, Ranada Ukil and Barada Ukil, among others.

LABOUR

HINDU, SEP 4, 2014

Towards a skilled workforce

With his twin focus on jobs and growth, Prime Minister Narendra Modi seems intent on placing renewed emphasis on skill development in the services and manufacturing sectors. In his Independence Day speech, the Prime Minister spoke of his 'skilled India' mission to promote holistic development. There is no doubt that India needs to equip its youth with greater work skills. At present, the country churns out a mostly semi-literate workforce without the requisite marketable skills in a globalised world. According to a report by the Adviser to the Prime Minister on the National Council on Skill Development, among those in the 15 to 29 years age group, only 2 per cent have received formal vocational training, and 8 per cent non-formal vocational training. Against 128 lakh new entrants to the workforce, there were only 31 lakh seats for vocational skill training. As Mr. Modi stressed in his speech, with 65 per cent of the population under 35 years of age, India will have to think of reaping the demographic dividend. However, India ought to set its sights higher than what Mr. Modi envisaged when he lamented the shortage of drivers, plumbers and cooks. The real challenge is not to find low-paying jobs for the unemployed, but to equip those entering the workforce with the necessary skills in a competitive environment.

By promising to enhance the skill development of India's youth at a rapid pace, Mr. Modi spoke of forming a pool of young people who are able to create jobs. More importantly, he also talked of a workforce that will be in a position to "face their counterparts in any corner of the world" by virtue of hard work and dexterity of hands. Capacity-building was spoken of in the global context as the ability of India's youth to "win the hearts of people around the world" through their skills. The importance of promoting the manufacturing sector was highlighted both in the context of creating employment opportunities and developing a balance between imports and exports. The exhortation to multinationals to sell in any country but manufacture in India, also came in the context of putting to use the education and capability of India's youth. For employment-led growth, for the "Come, make in India" slogan that Mr. Modi delivered on Independence Day to have any meaning, the government must invest heavily in education and training, in research and development. Otherwise, cheap labour will remain the only attraction for foreign investment in India. Skill and talent are the results of education and training, and India must lay greater stress on its educational infrastructure before it can attain higher levels of growth. The skill set of India's youth have to necessarily match that of the world's best.

LANGUAGES

BUSINESS STANDARD, SEP 5, 2014

SC approves Urdu as second official language of UP

The [Supreme Court](#) on Thursday put its stamp of approval over decision to declare [Urdu](#) as second [official language](#) in Uttar Pradesh, saying language laws of the country are not rigid but accommodative to secure the object of linguistic secularism. A five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice R M Lodha ruled that nothing in constitution bars a state government to declare one or more of languages used in the State, in addition to Hindi, as the second official language.

It upheld [Uttar Pradesh](#) Official Language (Amendment) Act, 1989, by which Urdu was adopted as second official language of the state. "Nothing in Article 345 (Official language or languages of a State), in our view, bars declaring one or more of the languages in use in the State, in addition to Hindi, as the second official language," the bench comprising Chief Justice R M Lodha, Justices Dipak Misra, Madan B Lokur, Kurian Joseph and S A Bobde, said.

"It is said law and language are both organic in their mode of development. In India, these are evolving through the process of accepting legitimate aspirations of the speakers of different languages. Indian language laws are not rigid but accommodative - the object being to secure linguistic secularism," the bench said.

It said "the plain language of Article 345, which empowers the State Legislature to make law for adoption of one or more of the languages in use in the State leaves no manner of doubt that such power may be exercised by the State Legislature from time to time."

The apex court said there are many State Legislatures which have adopted other officially recognized language(s) in addition to Hindi such as in Bihar, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Delhi which would not have been possible but for the constitutional permissibility.

Delhi has adopted Punjabi and Urdu as other officially recognized languages in addition to Hindi.

"Merely because Hindi is mentioned explicitly or separately and it is adopted as official language by the State, we do not think that the Constitution forecloses the State Legislature's option to adopt any other language in use in the State as official language," it said.

LIBRARIES

HINDU, SEP 2, 2014

Tent library a hit among mahouts' children

H.S. NARASIMHA KUMAR

: Mahouts' children were in for a treat at the tent library set up by the Mysore Librabrians and Information Scientists Association (MyLISA) in association with the Mysore District Administration at the Mysore Palace Grounds adjacent to the tent school. Soon after the inauguration of the library here on Monday, the children took their pick of books and were seen discussing among themselves. They also exchanged books. Books seemed to have become their companions and, according to the teachers, they did not move away from the books till they were called out for the midday meal. The Education Department had set up a tent school for mahouts' children to ensure that they would not be deprived of education. The MyLISA had set up a library to arouse the children's interest in books.

Apart from setting up the library, the MyLISA has organised lectures for the entire month. Vanishree, librarian at the Pramathi Hill View Academy, spoke to the children about storytelling. N.S. Harinarayan, Assistant Professor, Library and Information Science, Mysore University, spoke to the children about books. V. Karikalan, Deputy Conservator of Forests, inaugurated the library. Dr. Harinarayan, in his welcome speech, said the MyLISA would set up the tent library every year during Dasara as they were inspired by the children's enthusiasm. He further said the library would function till the children leave Mysore and the lecture programme for October would be chalked out soon.

HINDU, SEP 2, 2014

Part-time library opened

A part-time library, attached to the Government library, was thrown open at Vellanaipatti near Kalapatti in the district on Monday.

It will remain open for three hours every day.

J. Karthikeyan, District Library Officer (in-charge), said that the part-time library will have around 300 books got on loan from the Kalapatti Government library.

The books will be rotated everyday.

The library will also have newspapers and magazines.

Around 70 students from the Government Elementary School at Kalapatti have obtained membership. There are a total of 48 part-time libraries in Coimbatore district.

OMBUDSMAN

ASIAN AGE, SEP 4, 2014

Government widens criteria for Lokpal chief, members

Search committee no longer restricted to names that are proposed by Department of Personnel and Training

Relaxing the rules for the new Lokpal search committee, the government has issued a notification, that allows it to recommend names for chairperson and members of the anti-corruption body outside the list provided by the department of personnel and training.

The UPA government had earlier framed rules mandating the search committee to restrict itself in preparing a panel of persons to be considered by the Prime Minister-led selection committee for appointment as chairperson and members of the Lokpal, from among the list of persons given by the DoPT.

The Modi government has omitted the restrictions for the search committee to recommend names for the Lokpal through the list provided by DoPT. “The committee may, for the purpose of shortlisting of persons, adopt such shortlisting norms as it may consider appropriate,” said the new rules notified by DoPT.

“The words ‘from amongst the list of persons provided by the Central government in the Department of Personnel and Training’ shall be omitted,” the new rules added.

The government has also reduced the composition of the search committee to seven members from eight.

PARLIAMENT

TRIBUNE, SEP 1, 2014

All 24 House panels rejigged

Aditi Tandon

All 24 standing committees of both the Houses of Parliament were reconstituted tonight with the BJP wresting the chairmanship of 11 and the Congress getting just five. Committee chairmanships are decided on the basis of the number of MPs parties command in the Houses.

Out of the 16 LS committees, the chairmanship of nine has gone to the BJP with its allies Shiv Sena and TDP getting one each and AIADMK and TMC also getting one each.

The Congress gets to head External Affairs and Finance Committees in the LS and has named former MoS Shashi Tharoor and former minister Veerappa Moily as respective heads of these panels. The opposition Congress is better placed in the RS where out of eight panels it has got the chairmanship of three – Environment, Forests, Science and Technology Committee; Law and Justice Committee and the Home Affairs Committee.

Sending a major political signal, Congress president Sonia Gandhi has handpicked former Law Minister and MoS Science and Technology Ashwani Kumar to chair one of the most important committees on Environment and Forests and Science and Technology. Kumar was today named chairman from among a list of powerful wannabes Digvijay Singh, Ambika Soni, Jairam Ramesh and Oscar Fernandes. The committee is critical with the BJP government reportedly interested in tweaking environmental laws to accommodate industry. It will also handle the vital Law of Liability for Civil Nuclear Energy.

For the other two department-related standing committees of the RS —Home and Law — the Congress has picked Pradeep Bhattacharya from West Bengal and EMS Natchiappan as respective chairpersons.

Though the Congress was keen on the HRD Committee in the RS, the BJP has retained it with JP Nadda set to chair the same. The RS Commerce Committee will be chaired by Chandan Mitra of the BJP; Health by BSP's SC Mishra; Industry by NCP's KC Tyagi; and Transport and Tourism by KD Singh of the TMC.

In the LS, former Railway Minister Dinesh Trivedi of the TMC has been named the chairman of the Railways Committee, which Left Parties have often got to head in the past. The Left, reduced in numbers, heads no panel in the current reconstitution. The chairpersons of the nine committees which the BJP got in the LS are – Anurag Thakur (IT); HD Narayan Singh (Agriculture); Hansraj Ahir (Coal); Hukum Singh (Water Resources); Rajeev Pratap Rudy (Energy); BC Khanduri (Defence); Virendra Kumar (Labour); Prahlad Joshi (Petroleum); and Ramesh Bais (Social Justice).

The Shiv Sena will head Chemicals and Fertilisers Panel with Anandrao Adsul named chairperson; TDP's JC Divakar Reddy will head Food and Public Distribution Panel; BJD's Pinaki Mishra is the chairman of the Urban Development Committee and AIADMK's P Venugopal has been named the head of the department-related Standing Committee for Rural Development in the LS.

Cong to head 2 panels

- Congress gets to head External Affairs and Finance Committees in Lok Sabha, names former MoS Shashi Tharoor and former minister Veerappa Moily as respective heads of these panels
- No panel chairmanship for Akali Dal and Left

DECCAN HERALD, SEP 3, 2014

Manmohan Singh named member of Parliamentary panel on Finance

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who is hailed as the architect of economic reforms in the country, is a member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, it was announced today.

Incidentally, M Veerappa Moily, who was a minister in the Manmohan Singh government, is heading the Committee on Finance, which also has Congress leaders Digvijay Singh and Jyotiraditya Scindia as its members.

BJP's Jayant Sinha, the Harvard-educated investor and son of former Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha, is also a member of the Committee so are S S Ahluwalia and Kirit Somaiah of the ruling party.

In 1991, Manmohan Singh, as Finance Minister in the P V Narasimha Rao government, had ushered in economic reforms that changed the face of the country.

Rahul Gandhi is a member of the Committee on External Affairs, while Congress President Sonia Gandhi does not figure in any of the panels announced. In the last Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi had been a member of the Committee on HRD and Sports.

Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge is a member of the Committee on Home Affairs headed by party colleague P Bhattacharya.

There has been a host of senior leaders in the Committee on Defence including BJP veteran Murli Manohar Joshi, former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda and Deputy leader of Congress in the Lok Sabha Amarinder Singh.

The committee also includes Olympic silver medalist in shooting and Rajyavardhan Rathore of BJP and IYC chief Rajeev Satav. Former General B C Khanduri, who missed the ministerial bus due to age factor will now head the Committee on Defence,

NCP supremo Sharad Pawar is a member of the Committee on HRD while his party colleague Praful Patel is on the Committee for Industry headed by JD-U leader K C Tyagi.

Former Defence Minister and Congress leader A K Antony is now a member of the Committee on Railways along with party veteran Motilal Vora. BJP veteran L K Advani is a member of the Committee on Information and Technology headed by young Anurag Thakur (BJP). He is also a member of the Committee on Public Undertakings headed by senior BJP leader Shanta Kumar. Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Ashok Chavan is a member of the Committee on Urban Development while former Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyer is a member of the Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas. Ahmed Patel, Political Secretary to the Congress President, is also a member of the committee.

Trinamool Congress member Sugata Bose, who teaches History at Harvard, is a member of the Committee on External Affairs which is headed by former Union minister Shashi Tharoor of Congress. Supriya Sule of the NCP and Kanimozhi of the DMK are members of the Committee.

BJP's Satyapal Singh, who quit as Mumbai Police Commissioner to join politics and defeated RLD supremo Ajit Singh in his home turf of Baghpat in Western Uttar Pradesh, is a member of the Committee on Agriculture.

Former Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yeddyurappa of the BJP and Congress General Secretary Janardan Dwivedi, are also members of the committee headed by former Union minister Hukm Dev Narayan Yadav.

Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav is a member of the Committee on Labour while Amar Singh, who was his close associate sometime ago, is on the Committee on Food, Public Distribution and Consumer Affairs.

Sachin Tendulkar is a member of the Committee on Information Technology so is Advani. Varun Gandhi, who failed to find a place in Team BJP when Amit Shah took over is also in the Committee along with party members Hema Malini and Paresh Rawal. Young BJP member Anurag Thakur heads the Committee.

Rekha, a nominated member, is a member of the Committee on Food, Public distribution and consumer affairs.

Non-NDA parties which have got chairmanship include Trinamool Congress member K D Singh (Transport) former Railway Minister Dinesh Trivedi--also Trinamool--(Railways), BJD member Pinaki Mishra (Urban Development), AIADMK's P Venugopal (Rural Development), Satish Chandra Misra of BSP (Health) and K C Tyagi of JD-U (Commerce and Industry).

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

TRIBUNE, SEP 5, 2014

Diminished Sharif

Democracy takes a blow in Pakistan

THE crowds have thinned out in Islamabad, the threat of violence is receding, and there are indications of a compromise between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the two protest leaders — Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's Imran Khan and Pakistan Awami Tehreek's Tahirul Qadri. It was a time for confrontation. Pakistani parliamentarians stood firm in face of the threat by the two protesting camps, even as Khan and Qadri refused to budge from their positions. The row has weakened Sharif in spite of his solid majority in parliament.

The civilian government has been corralled by the protesters and by its own army, which did not stop the mobs from entering government buildings, even though the demonstrators had shown that they would respect its commands. It 'advised' the government to use peaceful means, rather than carry out the government's order to protect various installations. Sharif has made major concessions to the army by giving the generals oversight over the country's security and strategic foreign policy. It is unlikely that the army wants to further escalate the situation by assuming direct control and risking the billions of dollars of American aid.

Sharif will not only have to face the perception of diminished authority, he is also expected to handle the fundamental issues that Pakistan faces — a faltering economy that has been hurt by the recent disruptions, a major energy crisis and the continuing battles with militants. The Islamabad protests are by no means over. The government has yet to come up with a proposal that will meet the protesters' approval. On their part, the protesters themselves have different objectives: Khan wants the Prime Minister to resign, Qadri envisions the overthrowing of the entire system. To arrive at any solution, the leaders will have to find a compromise that they can live with by accommodating each other's viewpoints. From the way they have been behaving, it seems that they have forgotten that this is what politics is all about.

HINDU, SEP 6, 2014

Pakistan's perennial crisis

HUSAIN HAQQANI

Pakistan's current political turmoil should be seen as the symptom of a deeper malaise. Although most political parties represented in Parliament have rallied to the side of preserving the country's fragile democratic system, there are still powerful forces that oppose democracy. And the unwillingness of Pakistan's powerful military to disengage from politics even when it is not ready to assume power in a coup will continue to be a disruptive factor for some time to come.

In any other democracy, protests against the alleged rigging of polls 15 months after the counting of votes would have been pooh-poohed. But Imran Khan was still able to turn his star power into a crowd of a few thousand protesters, arguing that the Parliament to which he was elected did not have an honest mandate. The Canada-based cleric, Tahir-ul-Qadri was also able to return from his exile for a second time in two years to demand the resignation of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif along with a call for a people's revolution.

Elsewhere, protesters would make their point and go home while their leaders built up support to challenge the government at the next election. But here they camped outside Parliament for several days while the leaders garnered live television coverage from air-conditioned shipping containers. When the leaders incited violence, the Army offered to protect state buildings but neither soldiers nor the police were willing to forcibly end the sit-in.

The Punjab police, which takes orders from Mr. Sharif's brother, Shehbaz, who is Chief Minister of the province, had botched an earlier attempt to deal with Qadri's cult-like followers in Lahore; 19 people were killed in that incident. This time, the government wanted to keep the body count down.

A few dozen deaths during anti-election rigging protests in 1977 had been used by General Zia-ul-Haq as justification for the imposition of martial law. Gen. Zia had subsequently executed the Prime Minister he deposed and went on to rule for 11 years. Mr. Sharif clearly wanted to avoid that fate by allowing Mr. Khan and Qadri to paralyse life in Islamabad without using force and creating martyrs. Mr. Khan and Qadri are hoping to bypass the waiting time until the next elections even as they tap into disenchantment in Punjab's urban middle class. In doing so, they are emulating Nawaz Sharif himself, who became Prime Minister by not allowing Benazir Bhutto to complete her first term after the 1988 elections. Then, the Pakistani constitution — as amended by Gen. Zia — allowed the President to dissolve Parliament and dismiss the Prime Minister on grounds of corruption or incompetence. Now, the Constitution has been restored to its original form and has no such provision.

History of military intervention

Given that Mr. Sharif was elected only 15 months ago and still has three-and-a-half years left in his term, how did Mr. Khan and Qadri expect to oust him with protests involving only a few thousand hardcore supporters? Using a cricket metaphor, Imran Khan hinted that he expected Mr. Sharif to be forced out by "the third umpire" — a clear reference to the military.

Pakistan has a long history of direct and indirect military intervention in politics, usually after a round of street violence or a political stalemate. In 1969, General Yahya Khan replaced Pakistan's first coup-maker, Field Marshal Ayub Khan after five months of protests. At the time, veteran commentator Herbert Feldman summed up the Pakistan military doctrine in relation to domestic politics: "Whenever it was felt in General

Headquarters that things were not going according to the taste and opinion of senior officer, the armed forces (in effect the army alone) would move in or contrive to do so.”

The Army overthrew civilian governments in 1977 and 1999 after disturbances. Between 1988 and 1999, generals, with support from politicians, were able to successively oust civilian governments by presidential fiat. That then is Pakistan’s deeper malaise, the belief that the road to power in Islamabad runs through or should run through Army headquarters.

Admittedly, some things have changed in Pakistan. The major political parties are no longer willing to align with the military to topple their rivals and the country’s boisterous media does not allow the kind of secret manoeuvres that were the hallmark of palace coups and military takeovers of the past. Moreover, the Army now insists that it has no political agenda. But the generals continue to cast a long shadow.

Imran Khan’s close associate and president of his party, Javed Hashmi, has now gone public with accusations that Mr. Khan told his colleagues that he was being backed by senior Army officers.

Some suspect that the recent protests were timed to coincide with the pending retirement of five top generals, including the head of the ubiquitous Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Lt. General Zahir-ul-Islam.

Previous civilian governments, too, have faced engineered crises just as they were about to replace chiefs of the ISI. But there can never be anything other than circumstantial evidence of a link between street protests led by politicians and the desire of certain men in uniform for longer service tenures.

National discourse

The result of the recent destabilisation is that Mr. Sharif’s proclaimed agenda of economic reform and peace with India appears wounded, if not dead. The optimism about civilian ascendancy, generated by the first transfer of power in Pakistan’s history from one civilian government to another, last year, is also dissipating.

But Pakistan cannot forever remain in crisis mode if it is to make progress as a modern nation. The military’s policy tripod that includes emphasis on Islam as a national unifier, hostility towards India as the principal foreign policy objective and an alliance with the United States that helps defray the costs of Pakistan’s massive military expenditures cannot endure with its debilitating effects.

Pakistan’s disproportionate focus on ideology, military capability and external alliances continues to weaken Pakistan internally. Pakistan’s GDP stands at \$222 billion in absolute terms and \$547 billion in purchasing price parity — the smallest economy of any country that has so far tested nuclear weapons. Disruptions, such as the recent stand-off, are unlikely to enable consistent economic growth.

But macroeconomic issues and problems such as Pakistan's low literacy and poor quality of education barely get any mention in Pakistan's national discourse. The oversimplified Pakistani middle class narrative focusses on Kashmir and India and on opposing the corruption of elected civilian leaders. The world sees Pakistan as an incubator for terrorism but Pakistanis are lost in debates unrelated to this existential threat.

Mr. Sharif's latest troubles, too, are linked to his attempt to change the focus of Pakistan by taking over foreign and national security policies from the military. He spoke of normal trade relations with India, without insisting on resolving the Kashmir dispute first, and argued that Pakistan's interests are better served by staying out of Afghanistan's internal matters.

His governance is poor and his tendency to fly solo diminishes his ability to fulfil his grand promises. He needs to recognise that winning an election does not mean that elected leaders can govern arbitrarily and only with the aid of family members. Mr. Sharif's weaknesses, however, do not justify abuse for being pro-American and pro-Indian heaped on him by Imran Khan and his over-exuberant supporters in the Pakistani media. If he is ousted by an orchestrated crowd, a similar fate will await his elected successors.

The Pakistani military does not realise that its overt or covert meddling makes Pakistan more unstable, not less, as does its insistence on a narrow definition of Pakistan's national interest, which civilians are not allowed to alter. That, and the inability of the country's politicians to be patient with one another, keep the country in its permanent state of crisis.

(Husain Haqqani, director for South and Central Asia at the Hudson Institute, was Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States from 2008 to 2011. His most recent book was *Magnificent Delusions: Pakistan, the United States and an Epic History of Misunderstanding*.)

The deeper malaise is the belief that the road to power in Islamabad runs through or should run through Army headquarters.

The Pakistani military does not realise that its meddling makes Pakistan more unstable, not less, as does its insistence on a narrow definition of the national interest, which civilians are not allowed to alter

ECONOMIC TIMES, SEP 3, 2014

Cabinet Secretariat asks ministries to post updates of their performance online

By [Aman Sharma](#)

NEW DELHI: The [Cabinet Secretariat](#) has asked all central ministries and departments to post updates of their performance against annual targets on an online portal, so that their achievements can be effectively monitored and evaluated.

In a letter to all ministries on August 28, the Cabinet Secretariat pointed out that a majority of the departments were not posting their Result Framework Document (RFD), or annual targets, on Results Framework Management System (RFMS), the online portal of the Cabinet Secretariat.

This means that most departments are still submitting physical copy of their [RFDs](#) to the Cabinet Secretariat, making its task cumbersome and time consuming. "Presently, RFDs are being prepared by around 800 Responsibility Centres under the control of 80 ministries/departments," the letter said.

"It has been observed that only about 150 RCs have submitted their RFDs in RFMS...All RFDs are required to be submitted by the RCs in RFMS software." "The only reason for non-submission of RFDs in RFMS appears to be lack of training and understanding in feeding the data into the RFMS," the letter said, adding that the Secretariat has organised special training sessions starting this month to train officials on how to use the portal.

Earlier, the government had asked all ministers and ministries to join the social media bandwagon and [open](#) accounts on [Twitter](#), Facebook and You Tube. The [National Informatics Centre](#) runs the RFMS portal.

Every ministry and department has been given user ID and password to access it. According to the Cabinet Secretariat, RFMS is a "system to both evaluate and monitor, take a comprehensive view of departmental performance, focus on managerial performance and provide a unified and single view of performance."

POVERTY

BUSINESS LINE, SEP 5, 2014

Too many hungry stomachs

JOSÉ FELICIANO DA SILVA

India's experience will help it lead the charge on hunger and food security worldwide. Can India defeat hunger and malnutrition? It's a question that's been asked many times and at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), we are confident that the answer is not only "yes it can", but that India, a founding member of FAO, can play a leading role in eradicating hunger worldwide.

Following Independence in 1947, India resolved to tackle the scourge of famine that had repeatedly blighted its human and social landscape for hundreds of years. In a matter of decades, with political fortitude and technical ingenuity, the spectre of famine was finally laid to rest. Ever since, India has continued to develop the expertise, knowledge and capacity to win the war against hunger. It has already proved its ability for innovation in the Green Revolution that saved millions from hunger. It has established state-of-the-art science and technology institutes and its agricultural research facilities attract researchers from across the Asia-Pacific region.

India also has one of the most impressive economic growth rates of recent years. As one of the Brics countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), it was at the vanguard of the initiative to establish a Brics development bank.

Collectively, these efforts and developments help move India and the world forward to the ultimate goal of eradicating hunger and ensuring food security. Indeed, around the world gains have been made in our common objective to reduce by half the proportion of hungry people by 2015 — a key Millennium Development Goal. India has 20 million fewer hungry people than it had in 1990 while the percentage of undernourished fell by 35 per cent during the same period.

Monumental tasks ahead

But we must be under no illusion about the monumental task still before us. There are still more than 800 million hungry people on this planet — and nearly one in four of them live in India. We must aim for zero hunger — it is not just a moral imperative, it is also a path to social justice and a preventive measure against civil unrest.

The challenge of ending hunger at home for India and the will to play a more significant role on the international scene are mutually supportive goals. In this respect, we are seeing the growing importance of South-South Cooperation where the exchange of ideas and development solutions is inspiring and helping others to find their own answers to overcoming poverty and hunger.

In India and across the Asia-Pacific region there is increasing awareness of the role that family farmers and smallholders play in eradicating hunger and conserving natural resources -- the central elements of the sustainable future we want. Fittingly, the United Nations named 2014 the International Year of Family Farming.

Many of India's family farmers are subsistence producers who may struggle to grow to meet their own families' needs.

At the same time, experiences in many countries show that family farmers respond well with increased sustainable production if the appropriate policy environment is effectively put in place. We need to transform family and smallholder farming to make it more productive, more profitable to the family farmer — and sustainable — as part of the solution to eradicating hunger.

The fight for nutrition

We must also recognise that while fighting hunger remains our biggest challenge, malnutrition manifests itself in many ways. How to ensure adequate nutrition and firmly place the right to healthy diets near the top of the global development agenda will be centre-stage at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), being jointly organised by FAO and the World Health Organisation, and to be held in Rome on November 19-21.

The world has a lot to learn from India. Its unbroken narrative from ancient agriculture based civilisations of the Indus valley to the modern, largest democracy in the world today, has been a source of ideas and inspiration worldwide. FAO and India have a deep-rooted history of cooperation. At FAO, we are committed to continue that work with India to promote food security and sustainable development.

The writer is the director-general of the FAO

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated September 5, 2014)

PRISONS

STATESMAN, SEP 6, 2014

Free undertrials who have completed half of maximum sentence, orders SC

In a bid to rescue thousands of undertrials languishing in jails, the Supreme Court today directed judicial officers to release all such prisoners who have spent half the maximum sentence for the offences they are charged with.

The Chief Justice of India, Mr Justice R M Lodha, said prisons across the country must comply with the law that says prisoners awaiting trial must be released once they have served half the maximum sentence they would receive if found guilty, but it is rarely implemented. The CJI ordered local judges and magistrates to oversee the process. The apex court said all lower judicial officers should visit jails within their jurisdiction once in a week for two months to find out the condition of undertrials. According to the court, judicial officers must start visiting jails from 1 October and file a report after two months on prisoners released by them.

More than two-thirds of the four lakh prisoners across the country, or 2.5 lakh prisoners, have spent years in jail because of prolonged trials and an ever-growing pile of pending cases in India's notoriously slow justice system.

The top court passed the order while hearing a petition on foreign prisoners still in Indian jails far beyond their maximum punishment.

The Supreme Court directed the Centre to place before it a road map for fast tracking the criminal justice delivery system.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, SEP 1, 2014

Column: Good governance 101

Vikram S Mehta

The Prime Minister has hoisted his administration's flag on the masthead of good governance. This is a welcome and timely objective. The question is, what does the Prime Minister mean by "good"? He campaigned on the slogan of "minimum government, maximum governance". This would suggest that he equates "good" with "small". There is merit in this equation. Our government is bloated, inefficient and wasteful. It needs to be slimmed down. But I am sure this does not capture the totality of the Prime Minister's intent. He knows that governance is not about big versus small, maximum or minimum. The financial crisis that roiled the Western world in 2008-09 was at least in part the result of slackened government supervision over the financial community. The crony capitalism that led to the 2G scam and "coalgate" was also partly due to the institutional and power vacuum created by delicensing.

"Good" governance 101 for the 21st century is not about size, scope or ideology. It is about getting things done. It is about narrowing the distance between the governor and the governed. It requires strong institutions, rule of law, technology, information and talent. The executive must be empowered; the judiciary unencumbered and capable of providing timely justice; and Parliament functional for debates and legislation. It requires entrepreneurial decision-making and a systemic receptivity to new ideas and innovative solutions. It requires a government that encourages lateral entry of talent and the forging of partnerships and collaborations with business, academics and civic society. It is a government that is "smart" and biased towards action. These are different requirements from those when the world was not so connected, competitive and challenged by problems like global warming that do not respect national boundaries.

The question is, do the Prime Minister's political and party colleagues understand the nature of these requirements? Do they recognise that good governance can only be built on the above pillars? I ask these questions because I am perplexed by the logic of decisions that are reportedly under consideration, or have been taken. I do not understand why, for instance, the government would wish to compel the resignation of the independent directors on the boards of large public sector entities simply because they were appointed by the previous government, or why it would wish to circumscribe the

autonomy of the IITs by bringing them under the umbrella of the University Grants Commission (UGC). The only explanation I can think of is that some members of the government have not fully appreciated the need to adapt to these new requirements and are stuck in the groove of siloed and self-serving politics.

I know that several ministers have reshuffled their senior civil servants simply because they did not want to deal with appointees of the previous government. I can understand this decision, although I do not support it. I understand it because ministers have the prerogative to choose their own teams. I do not support it because civil servants should be insulated from political exigency. Else they cannot proffer unbiased and professional advice. What I cannot understand or support is the decision to remove the independent directors from the boards of economically significant PSUs like ONGC and Indian Oil. The reason I do not understand or support the decision is because the government gains little but loses, potentially, a lot. After all, it is not as if these directors have substantive influence. They are not involved in management and are outvoted by the government representative. On the other hand, they provide a strategic sounding board, act as a check against corporate malfeasance and inject gravitas. Most directors are individuals of eminence and integrity. By removing them, the government is signalling its disdain for corporate governance, due process and institutional integrity. In a similar vein, I do not understand the logic of subserving the operational and academic integrity of world-class institutions like IITs to a bureaucratic and procedure-bound organisation like the UGC. In and of themselves, these two examples are trivial, but when seen through the lens of “good” governance, they show that the narrative of governance is not contemporaneous with the demands and complexity of a digitised, global and competitive world.

The Prime Minister could take a major step towards “good” governance by removing the deadweight of the prevention of corruption act that is presently on the shoulders of civil servants. As I have written before, this act exposes officials to the charge of corruption if they take a decision that is deemed to have benefited a private entity. There is no statute of limitation and so a person can be hauled up by the CBI long after she has retired. It is no wonder, therefore, that civil servants have preferred to sit on files or simply pass them on to the next desk rather than put signatures to paper. The “act of omission” has been a safer bet than the “act of commission”. The Prime Minister has already lightened somewhat the weight by meeting the 70-odd secretaries to the government of India and by assuring them of his safeguard. But if he wants to galvanise his bureaucracy into an action and problem-solving mode, he should remove the weight totally by amending the act through an ordinance.

The Prime Minister is also looking to redefine the Planning Commission. If he does decide to reincarnate it as a government-financed think tank, he should task the new

entity to find answers to questions such as: What must be done to modernise governance? What changes must be made to improve the delivery and quality of service? What needs to be done to inject a spirit of entrepreneurialism and innovation into decision-making? What, in short, must be done to create a government that is contemporaneous and “works”, to borrow from US President Barack Obama? These are not easy questions, but the new body could be the forum where big data on the subject of governance is collated, organised and disseminated, new ideas are generated through crowdsourcing, public-private collaborations are forged, relevant e-governance technologies are leveraged and lateral talent is located. It could be a strategic planning tool for incentivising productivity, efficiency and innovation. It could be the body that puts flesh around the word “good” and in the process, aligns everyone around the promise that the prime minister made from the ramparts of Red Fort on August 15.

The author is chairman, Brookings India, and senior fellow, Brookings Institution

PUBLIC SECTOR

BUSINESS LINE, SEP 1, 2014

Govt cracks the whip on ONGC

RICHA MISHRA

Initiates inquiry into delay in developing East Coast finds

Public sector oil major ONGC is facing tough questions from the Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry over the delay in developing its East Coast discoveries.

An internal inquiry is being initiated, a Ministry official said, adding that the question was why should ONGC lag when discoveries by other players, including private sector explorers, around the same time have been commercialised.

Development plan

ONGC had wanted to adopt a cluster approach for its East Coast discoveries (estimated at 11) and had submitted a development plan to the Directorate-General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) in 2012. But with the drop in Reliance Industries' D6 block output, the public sector operator was asked to come up with a more detailed development plan.

In 2013, ONGC submitted a revised development plan to the DGH. It divided its East Coast development into Northern and Southern Discovery Areas.

ONGC's East Coast finds also comprise an ultra-deepwater discovery (UD-1). According to early reports, ONGC had made a conservative estimate to produce 6-9 millions standard cubic metre of gas from its East Coast finds by the middle of 2017.

But the development of the field remains way behind schedule.

Row with Reliance

Besides throwing light on this delay, the inquiry may also lead to answers for ONGC's allegations that Reliance Industries was drawing gas from its (ONGC's) adjacent block off the Andhra Pradesh coast. In May, ONGC had moved the Delhi High Court against RIL on the issue, and had also made the Ministry and the DGH respondents on grounds that the two had not done enough to protect the public sector entity's rights.

A miffed Ministry felt that if this was the case (RIL drawing gas from ONGC's finds), then ONGC should have raised it earlier. Gas production in the RIL-operated Krishna Godavari Basin D6 block started in April 2009, but ONGC has never complained, said another official.

In fact, in its counter affidavit, the Ministry termed ONGC's allegations against the Government as 'frivolous' and said that it had never raised any issue on connectivity of

reservoirs/channels since April 2009. ONGC woke up only in 2013. The Ministry, in its submissions to the court, had sought rejection of ONGC's application.

The case, which was posted for hearing on August 29, has been adjourned. It is now expected to be taken up in January.

Consultant roped in

Meanwhile, ONGC and RIL have asked Texas-based DeGolyer and MacNaughton (D&M), an international petroleum consultant, to assess ONGC's claims.

Ideally, the two majors should have resolved the issue across the table, as these are natural geological concurrences and not manmade boundaries, but much has happened since.

In the KG Basin, ONGC has Godavari block (G-4) and one NELP-I (KG-DWN-98/2 KG-D5) block adjacent to RIL-operated NELP-I block (KG-D6). While RIL is producing gas from the D-1 and D-3 fields in the D6 block since 2009, ONGC is yet to start developing the discoveries in its blocks.

BEHIND SCHEDULE

- In 2012, ONGC submitted a development plan based on cluster approach
- But with the drop in Reliance Ind's D6 block output, ONGC was told to come up with a more detailed plan
- ONGC had estimated production at 6-9 million standard cubic metres of gas by mid-2017

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated September 1, 2014)

TRAINING

TIMES OF INDIA, SEP 3, 2014

288 babus in-the-making get a taste of military life

PUNE: A total of 288 probationary officers, including 70 women, of the Maharashtra State Civil Services are undergoing a fortnight's military training with various Army establishments in Pune, Ahmednagar and Nashik districts as part of their two-year curriculum for training at the Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (Yashada). The military training commenced on Monday.

"The training is aimed at instilling the right attitudes and values like self-discipline, propriety and integrity, comradeship and esprit de corps among the probationers besides establishing greater understanding for Army-civil cooperation in the handling of projects and crises situations," a release issued by the defence public relations officer here stated on Tuesday.

The 288 probationers include class I and II officers. The government has decided to extend training to all its civil service probationers on the lines of the training that is given to the Indian Administrative Services officers at the Mussoorie-based Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration. As such, the class-I probationers are undergoing their two-year training at Yashada and the class-II probationers are trained by the Vasantnao Naik State Agricultural Extension Management Training Institute in Nagpur.

"Attachment to Army units and Army training forms an important component of training curriculum for these probationers," the release stated. The military training is being coordinated by the authorities at the Headquarters, Southern Command. Exposure to the functioning and ethos of Army will enable the trainees to understand the functioning of the Indian Army. It will also enhance their abilities, especially in crisis situations and where involvement with Army in the field may be required.

The training schedule including physical strengthening, drill, map reading, field craft, vehicle maintenance, weapon training and weapon firing. All the 218 men and 70 women probationers are living in army units during their training period and will be exposed to various lectures on the ethos and functioning of the army. Various areas of common interest and assistance, which both services can render to each other will also be discussed.