

LIST OF NEWSPAPERS COVERED

ASIAN AGE

BUSINESS LINE

BUSINESS STANDARD

DECCAN HERALD

ECONOMIC TIMES

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

HINDU

HINDUSTAN TIMES

PIONEER

STATESMAN

TELEGRAPH

TIMES OF INDIA

TRIBUNE

CONTENTS

CIVIL SERVICE	3-16
DEFENCE, NATIONAL	17
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	18-21
EDUCATION	22-25
ELECTIONS	26-29
EMPLOYMENT	30-31
HUMAN RIGHTS	32-35
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	36-38
LABOUR	39-40
LIBRARIES	41-43
MINORITY GROUPS	44
OLD AGE	45
PANCHAYAT	46-47
POLICE	48
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	49
PUBLIC SECTOR	50
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	51
SOCIAL SCIENCES	52-54
URBAN DEVELOPMENT	55-56
WATER SUPPLY	57-58
WOMEN	59-60

CIVIL SERVICE

PIONEER, SEP 8, 2015

HARYANA ALLOWS OFFICERS TO HAVE HOME PEONS

The Haryana Government has decided to provide home peon facility to the All India Service (IAS) Officers, Judicial Officers and Heads of Departments working for the state of Haryana.

Similarly, all Haryana Civil Services (HCS) Officers working for the State of Haryana, who exercise the magisterial powers by virtue of their posting would also be given this facility, a spokesperson of the State Government said.

These officers would be allowed to engage a home peon at their own level at the statutory minimum wages for unskilled labour as fixed by the State Government from time-to-time. They may inform their DDO regarding the engagement of home peon, including the name and address of the person so engaged, along with the bank account details of the person.

The reimbursement of the remuneration given to the home peon, to the extent of minimum wages for unskilled labour fixed by the Government from time to time, will be made to the eligible officers by the DDO on submission of a self-certificate in this behalf.

Once an officer avails the services of home peon, they would not be entitled to use the services of any other Class IV employee of the Government at their residence, added the spokesperson.

TRIBUNE, SEP 15, 2015

IAS officer takes the RTI route over sudden transfer

The case of Chawdhry couple

- Additional Chief Secretary (Health) has sought information under RTI after he was divested of the Urban Development Department portfolio.
- He had gone on one-month training at Harvard University last month.
- His wife, also ACS, has also proceeded on a 45-day leave.
- She was divested of the portfolio of the Department of Language, Art and Culture after her return from the US along with her husband.

Uneasy calm among bureaucrats

- Senior officers admit that postings and transfers are the prerogative of the government
- But 'shabby treatment' being meted out to some senior officers is not going down well with a majority of them
- Officers' requests to reduce workload not acceded
- There are many officers, who feel their services are under-utilised while there are others who say their hands are more than full

Frequent administrative reshuffles have led to an unease among state bureaucrats. Many are questioning the manner in which these repeated postings and change in portfolios are taking place.

Even though there were murmurs of resentment among some of the “babus”, Vineet Chawdhry, Additional Chief Secretary (Health), has sought information under Right to Information (RTI) about he being divested of the Urban Development Department after his return from one-month training at Harvard University last month.

Chawdhry has sought information under the RTI from the Department of Personnel about the Civil Service Board meeting in which the decision to give the Urban Development Department to Manisha Nanda, ACS, was taken. Incidentally Chawdhry’s wife, Upma also the ACS, has also been at the receiving end and has proceeded on a 45-day leave from tomorrow.

Upma Chawdhry, ACS, Agriculture, was divested of the portfolio of the Department of Language, Art and Culture after her return from the US after the month-long training she underwent along with her husband. The department has been given to Anuradha Thakur, Secretary, Social Justice and Empowerment.

Senior officers admit that even though the postings and transfers are solely the prerogative of the government but ‘shabby treatment’ being meted out to some senior officers is not going down well with a majority of them, especially when there is a shortage of IAS officers. Requests of some of the officers to reduce their workload by giving some of the portfolios held by them to others have also not been acceded. There are many officers like Deepak Sanan, Ajay Mittal and Sanjeev Gupta, all ACS, and Onkar Sharma, Secretary, whose services are under-utilised.

Sanjeev Gupta, on return from Central deputation, has been given charge of only Animal Husbandry which is basically a subsidiary department, normally given with agriculture or some main portfolio.

On the other hand, there are others like Tarun Sridhar, ACS who is looking after Forest, Revenue, Horticulture, Environment and Fisheries and Mohan Chauhan, Secretary, General Administration (GAD), Director Tourism and Managing Director, HP Tourism Development Corporation whose hands are more than full. “It is a common knowledge

that administrative reshuffle or change on portfolios is done any time without bothering to convene the meeting of the Civil Service Board, even though the Supreme Court has said this procedure must be adhered to so as to ensure a tenure,” said a bureaucrat.

He admitted that there was considerable resentment among officers over such abrupt administrative reshuffles which was affecting the smooth functioning of the departments and leading to frustration and demoralization among officers.

The Chawdhry couple had last year sought permission to proceed on a Central deputation but their plea is still pending with the Chief Minister. Virbhadra has cited shortage of bureaucracy for not giving nod for their Central deputation but in some cases the government has relented in the recent past.

With Sushil Negi, ACS (Power and Personnel), due to retire on September 30, chances of an administrative reshuffle are high. Chief Secretary P Mitra is due to retire in April next, and there is speculation about who would be his successor.

HINDU, SEP 15, 2015

Sign in Hindi, Rajnath tells govt. staff

President Pranab Mukherjee presenting the Rajbhasha Kirti Puraskar to Secretary, Parliamentary Affairs, Afzal Amanullah, in New Delhi on Monday. Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and MoS for Home Affairs, Haribhai Choudhary, are also seen.—
Photo: PTI

“Our efforts should be to increase the use of Hindi in science and technology so that the participation of all, including the rural population, can be ensured in the progress of the country.”

The President said that literature pertaining to technical knowledge should be made available in Hindi and other Indian languages.

Mr. Singh said he had nothing against any language. But Hindi was the language that connected every part of the country. “ Demand to make Hindi our official language came first from non-Hindi speaking leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak,” he said.

HINDU, SEP 14, 2015

Home Ministry officers were told not to send files directly to Goyal

VIJAITA SINGH

The differences between the former Home Secretary L.C. Goyal, who was asked to resign, and his junior, Anant Kumar Singh, who was also shifted out of the Ministry last month, had reached such a level that Mr. Singh had to issue a circular asking officers “to send files to him and not directly to the Home Secretary”.

On May 6, Mr. Singh, then Additional Secretary and to whom three Joint Secretaries (Police-I, Union Territory and Centre-State) were reporting, issued a circular, which said: “It is being noticed that certain files, which are required to be routed through the Additional Secretary (Centre-State) as per the Channel of Submission order, are not being put up to the undersigned. It has also been noticed that in some cases, the level of decision-making is not mentioned in the basic note; as a result, issues are being decided by the level which is not competent to take such decisions.”

Mr. Goyal did not respond to text messages and calls. Nor could Mr. Anant Kumar Singh be reached for his comments.

As differences with Home Secretary increased, Anant Kumar Singh issued a circular to officers

TIMES OF INDIA, SEP 14, 2015

15% IAS officers claim to own no land, house

[Himanshi Dhawan](#),

Highest number of officials who claimed to own no property were from Uttar Pradesh (57), followed by Madhya Pradesh (42), AGMUT (37), Maharashtra (33) and Tamil Nadu (31).

NEW DELHI: Of the around 3,600 Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers who have been filing immovable property returns (IPR) since 2010, 559 or 14.5% declared that they have no property, whether land, building or house, in their submission to the Centre for the financial year 2014.

Analysis of immovable property returns by factly.in, a website that aims to make public data more meaningful to citizens, shows that the highest number of officials who claimed to own no property were from Uttar Pradesh (57), followed by Madhya Pradesh (42), AGMUT (37), Maharashtra (33) and Tamil Nadu (31).

Former chief information commissioner and erstwhile bureaucrat Wajahat Habibullah said, "It is possible for 14.5% of the officers not to have any property but I won't think it is credible. It is a somewhat high number for officials or their spouses not to have any property."

He added that officers at the beginning of their career may not have property but by mid-career, most of them did.

ASSET STOCK	
Total IAS officers:	4,526
Officers who defaulted on filing returns at least once since 2010:	661 (14.6%)
Those who declared 'nil' assets in 2014:	559 (14.5%)
Cadre with maximum officers with 'nil' assets:	Uttar Pradesh (57)

Factly.in analyzed IPRs filed by IAS officers from 2010-2014 to find that 14.6% -- that is 661 of 3,865 -- had defaulted at least once in filing their returns. According to the department of personnel and training (DoPT), there are 4,526 IAS officials of which 3,865 filed their returns for all years since 2010.

The worst performing batch where most number of officials (83.7%) defaulted at least once in filing returns was the 2013 batch. The worst performing cadre was Tripura with only 38.2% compliance. Among the best performing batch was 1977 with 100% compliance while the cadre was Maharashtra with 96.3% compliance.

As per rules notified under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, every public servant has to file declaration, information and annual returns of his assets and liabilities as on March 31, every year, on or before July 31 of that year.

According to the Lokpal Act, a public servant needs to furnish to the competent authority information relating to the assets of which he, his spouse and his dependent children, jointly or severally, own. DoPT has also developed an online system named Property Related Information System (Prism) for IAS officers to file their revised property returns.

BUSINESS STANDARD, SEP 10, 2015
Centre clears 6% DA hike for employees, pensioners

The decision will benefit about 5 million government employees and 5.6 million pensioners

The Centre on Wednesday increased dearness allowance (DA) for its employees by six per cent of their basic pay with effect from July, a move that will hit the exchequer by Rs 4,436.76 crore in the remaining months of the current financial year and Rs 6,655.14 in a year.

The Cabinet decision to increase dearness allowance for central government to 119 per cent from 113 per cent is a move that will benefit five million employees and 5.6 million pensioners.

"Every six months, the government reviews dearness allowance. This time, we have decided to increase DA by six per cent over existing 113 per cent rate," Finance Minister Arun Jaitley told reporters after Union Cabinet meeting here.

The DA rate increase is based on an average of 12-month consumer price index-industrial workers (CPI-IW) from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015. This is in line with the 6th Pay Commission.

In April, the government had hiked DA by six per cent to 113 per cent of their basic pay with effect from January.

Jaitley said the 7th Pay Commission will shortly submit its report to the government and will consider this amount of DA in its recommendations. Recently, its term was extended till December 31.

The commission was constituted in February 2014 and was to submit its recommendations within 18 months.

DEARNESS RELIEF

- Allowance to central government employees and dearness relief to pensioners from July 1, 2015. This represents an increase of 6% over the existing rate of 113% of the basic pay/pension, to compensate for price rise
- The decision will benefit about 5 million government employees and 5.6 million pensioners
- The combined impact on the exchequer on account of both DA & DR will be Rs 6,655.14 cr per annum, and Rs 4,436.76 cr in the financial year 2015-16 (a period of eight months from July, 2015 to February, 2016)
- The DA rate increase is an average of 12-month consumer price index-industrial workers from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015

HINDU, SEP 10, 2015

One more Gujarat cadre IAS officer to join Team Modi

MAHESH LANGA

One more IAS officer of the Gujarat cadre is set to join the Narendra Modi government.

V. Thiruppugazh, an IAS officer of the 1991 batch, has been appointed Adviser (in the rank of Joint Secretary), to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). When Mr. Modi was Gujarat Chief Minister, Mr. Thiruppugazh served as his secretary during 2005-06.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), headed by the Prime Minister, took the decision, given Mr. Thiruppugazh's long stint in the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA), where he had worked closely with P.K. Mishra, now Additional Principal Secretary to Mr. Modi.

“Mr. Thiruppugazh's appointment to the NDMA was expected because he has expertise in disaster management,” said a senior official. “He is also liked by the Prime Minister since he worked as his secretary in Gujarat.”

In the 16 months of the Modi government, Gujarat has emerged as the preferred cadre for officials to fill top jobs in the various departments and ministries of the Central government. More than a dozen senior bureaucrats of the State have joined Mr. Modi's team thus far. They include Revenue Secretary Hasmukh Adhia, Commerce Secretary Rita Teotia, Power Secretary P.K. Pujari and Corporate Affairs Secretary Tapan Ray, besides those in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) such as Dr. Mishra, Joint Secretary Arvind Sharma and Private Secretary to the Prime Minister Rajiv Topno.

Also from Gujarat are several mid-level officials. They include Additional Secretary in the Expenditure Department G.C. Murmu, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce Guruprasad Mohapatra, who was Ahmedabad Municipal Commissioner, Joint Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs Raj Kumar, who was Principal Secretary, Agriculture, in Gujarat, and Joint Secretary in the Coal Ministry R.P. Gupta, who served as Principal Secretary, Food and Civil Supplies, Gujarat.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, SEP 9, 2015

Narendra Modi's shuffled bureaucrats get a big dose of reality

DK Singh

When the official announcement of Home Secretary LC Goyal's removal came on Monday afternoon, over a dozen bureaucrats were attending a farewell party for Additional Secretary Tuk Tuk Kumar at Transport Bhavan in the capital. There was a stunned silence when one of them broke the news of Goyal's ouster.

They were used to the whims and fancies of their political masters but seldom did the steel frame feel so shaken. None of the bureaucrats at the party had any inkling of the change in the North Block and soon the discussion turned to how, like never before, nobody's tenure was safe.

Welcome in earnest to the Narendra Modi regime. If the babudom felt bored by the 'chalta hai' attitude of the previous UPA dispensation, the NDA brought a whiff of fresh air. After a long time, the bureaucrats found their voice with the Prime Minister engaging them directly, sometimes even keeping the ministers at bay.

They could write directly to the PM, even if only in 300 characters. When Skill Development Minister Rajiv Pratap Rudy got a new secretary, Sunil Arora, in his ministry, he was not thrilled. The two were certainly not the best friends when Rudy was Civil Aviation minister in the Atal Behari Vajpayee government and Arora was CMD, Indian Airlines.

The message from the PMO was clear: let bygones be bygones and start afresh. Last year, Rajiv Mehrishi -- now home secretary -- was sprung from his job as Chief Secretary in Vasundhara Raje's government in Rajasthan by a senior Union Minister.

Few had any clues about his destination, the finance ministry, and eyebrows were also raised because Modi was poaching an official close to a CM he has been cool towards.

But, predictability has never defined the Modi sarkar. Nobody could anticipate the official announcement about Durga Prasad's removal as SPG chief when he was in Nepal with the PM looking after his security arrangements. Nor did Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh expect her sudden exit last year.

And former Home Secretary Anil Goswami certainly did not expect to be dropped when he made a phone call to the CBI Director to curry favour for an old politician buddy, Matang Sinh, behaviour that used to be considered normal for senior babus.

Devyani Khobragade, having stoked all those jingoistic passions about the United States humiliating an Indian woman diplomat, might have expected a big reward in the new regime; instead, she found herself out in the cold.

For all its pusillanimity over politically sensitive moves like the land acquisition ordinance, the NDA regime hasn't lost its authority when it comes to its own senior officials. This is the message that is now getting to the bureaucracy after a honeymoon that got them expecting unbridled power at the cost of their political masters, the ministers.

Goyal might have been unhappy about not being informed about Naga peace accord but going to his bosses to register his protest was not necessarily a wise move in this government. He also refused to give security clearance to Sun TV despite prods from the I&B ministry headed by no less than Arun Jaitley.

Since 1989, an entire generation of bureaucrats has been unused to the idea of a government without multiple power centres or a crippling dependence on allies and partners. Last year's Lok Sabha elections changed that conclusively, but perhaps the usually sharp bureaucracy has been the slowest to grasp the fact.

It's time that they organised a powerpoint session on the changed realities; there's no shortage of their former colleagues who could speak eloquently, if a little bitterly, on the subject.

ECONOMIC TIMES, SEP 8, 2015

Maharashtra government mum on action against 12 IAS officials in Adarsh Scam

RTI activist Anil Galgali had written to the state government seeking details of action taken against the 12 bureaucrats.

MUMBAI: The [Maharashtra](#) government has refused to reveal what action has been taken against 12 IAS officials against whom action was recommended for involvement in the Adarsh housing scam. [RTI](#) activist [Anil Galgali](#) had written to the state government seeking details of action taken against the 12 bureaucrats on the recommendation of a two-member inquiry commission appointed by the state government. The committee headed by Justice JA Patil had passed strictures against the 12 bureaucrats.

Galgali said he was told that the information could not be given to him as it was of a 'personal nature.' "The under secretary in the general administration department (GAD) wrote back to me that the government would not be able to give details as under Section 9 (10) (t) of the RTI Act, the information sought was of a personal nature. GAD pointed to a SC order in the Girish Deshpande Vs Central Information Commission, where the SC held if the information sought was personal in nature it could be denied."

The RTI activist told ET that the state government was 'deliberately' not releasing the

details of what action it had taken against the bureaucrats to 'shield' them. "First of all, I have not sought information that is personal in nature. I have just sought what action has been taken. They are government servants and we have a right to know. Secondly, the [Supreme Court](#) ruling that the state government has cited clearly says that the information can be revealed if it was in larger public interest. Adarsh was a huge scam that involved Army officers and bureaucrats and it is in public interest to know what action has been taken against the officials involved," said Galgali.

ECONOMIC TIMES, SEP 8, 2015

No salary deduction on bandh day for West Bengal government employees on paid leaves

A memorandum issued by the state finance department has said no salary would be deducted from such employees who had taken prior paid leaves.

KOLKATA: [West Bengal government employees](#) who were on child care leave, maternity leave, earned leave etc on September 2, the day when the central trade unions called a bandh, will not have to forgo their day's salary.

A memorandum issued by the state finance department has said no salary would be deducted from such employees who had taken prior [paid leaves](#).

"Now, to remove the confusion, it is clarified that absence will not be treated as 'dies non' and no salary will be deducted or treated to be inadmissible in case of leaves like child care leave, maternity leave, earned leave, etc sanctioned before the date of issuance of finance department's order," the memo said.

The government had made it mandatory for all its employees to be present on the strike day. An earlier directive had said absence of employees on that date would be treated as 'dies non' and no salary would be admissible.

TIMES OF INDIA, SEP 9, 2015

GHMC chief says IAS allotment arbitrary

HYDERABAD: Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) commissioner Somesh Kumar on Tuesday told the Central Administrative Tribunal that many IAS officers, including himself, were adversely affected due to poor handling of the cadre allotment process.

Echoing the voice of the GHMC chief, senior counsel D V Sitarama Murthy told the tribunal bench of B V Rao (member, judicial) and Ranjana Chowdary (member, administration) that IAS officers were of homogeneous class, and creating further groups among them was wrong. Somesh was allotted to AP in the recent cadre allotment despite his preference for Telangana.

The senior counsel said that authorities divided IAS officers as promoted IAS officers, direct recruits, natives of AP and Telangana despite knowing that such division of IAS cadre officers that too on discriminatory lines was unlawful and unconstitutional.

To a query from the bench as to what would happen if all the existing seniors opt for one state, Sitarama Murthy said that reasonable amount of classification could be allowed to ensure that each state get a fine blend of seniors, juniors and trainees etc.

But for arriving at it, the approach should be rational and balanced and definitely not unilateral, he said, citing scores of judgments delivered by Supreme Court. Responding to another query, the senior counsel agreed that a junior IAS officer cannot swap places with a chief secretary rank IAS officer, but quickly added that the guidelines prepared for swapping batch-wise, pay band-wise etc were not in tune with laws.

The bench posted the case to Wednesday for hearing the version of the central government.

TELEGRAPH, SEP 9, 2015

Govt cracks foreign whip on bureaucrats

Ananya Sengupta

New Delhi, Sept. 8: Bureaucrats who overstay on foreign assignments have been given a choice - return within a month to their parent cadre or lose their job.

New guidelines the department of personnel and training (DoPT) issued today say if central government officers remain absent after the sanctioned period of foreign deputation, leave or study leave, there would be a one-month waiting period.

After that, the state government concerned can showcase them.

If the officers are unable to explain their absence, the state concerned can initiate proceedings of "deemed resignation" and forward the proposal to the Centre for executing it. This has to be done within two months.

"If the state government fails to comply with these instructions and adhere to the aforesaid timeline, the central government shall initiate proceedings of deemed resignation... on its own," the guideline says.

Sources said the government decided to crack the whip after it was found that many officers had gone on leave without informing their cadres but continued to remain on the rolls.

The Centre permits IAS officers and officers of other services to apply to international organisations but they have to seek leave from their parent cadres before proceeding on leave or deputation, whichever may be the case.

The guidelines made it clear what it meant by the term "central government". It said the term meant the cadre-controlling authority concerned, that is "department of personnel and training for IAS officers, (the) ministry of home affairs for IPS officers and (the) ministry of environment, forest and climate change for IFS officers, respectively".

The DoPT order marks a deviation from the existing practice of letting such cases drag on even as the officers continued to enjoy the perks that came with their service.

Sources said one officer had been on unauthorised leave for over nine years before he was finally deemed to have resigned from the IAS with effect from June 1, 2006. The order came last month.

Shishir Priyadarshi, 57, a 1980-batch IAS officer from the Uttar Pradesh cadre, had served at the World Trade Organisation in Geneva from 1997 to 2000, worked with the UN Development Programme from 2001-02, before returning to the WTO for another stint between 2002 and 2007.

In April this year, another IAS officer, Prashant, posted with the ministry of petroleum and natural gas, was deemed to have resigned from service, five years after he failed to return from Washington where he had gone on a year's deputation as senior disaster risk management specialist at the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.

The others on the list - sources say the number of such officers could be between 10 and 18 - are yet to return from their foreign assignments even after their terms have ended.

They include Maharashtra-cadre IAS officer Sanjay Agarwal, who went to work as a consultant to the World Bank in Washington in 2006 for a six-year term. Agarwal did not report back to his ministry or his parent cadre after completing his term in 2012.

The Maharashtra government is still corresponding with him, asking him to repay his dues before his resignation is accepted.

"These guidelines are welcome. Officers should understand that when they go abroad on deputation they represent the government of India and they can seek extensions and continue only after taking due permission," said a senior bureaucrat.

"I can understand that they get better pay packets and perks, much of which is tax free. But they cannot enjoy government benefits at the same time," the bureaucrat added.

DECCAN HERALD, SEP 9, 2015

Civil servants to face action for leave sans permission

Government is planning to act strict against civil servants not rejoining duty after long leave or foreign assignment.

The Department of Personnel and Training has circulated a draft among states and other stakeholders in the central government, which talks about initiating the process of axing an officer who does not attend the office beyond a month after his leave ends or foreign assignment.

An officer belonging to IAS, IPS and IFS can avail a leave or study leave or foreign assignment up to five years. At present, an officer will be deemed to have resigned if he is absent without authorisation for a period exceeding one year from the date of expiry of sanctioned leave or continues on foreign assignment beyond the period approved by the Centre.

As per the new draft, the “Member of Service (MoS), if remains unauthorisedly absent after the sanctioned period of leave or study leave or tenure of foreign assignment, there shall be a one month waiting period after the end of leave period or tenure of foreign assignment etc.”

After that the state government concerned, under whose cadre the officer hails from, should issue a show cause notice to give the officer to explain his case.

“Thereafter, if the MoS does not return to duty, the state government concerned shall initiate proceedings of deemed resignation under rule 7(2) of AIS (Leave) Rules 1955 and forward a complete proposal to the Central government for effecting deemed resignation within next two months,” the proposed draft said.

ECONOMIC TIMES, SEP 9, 2015

18 senior IAS officers promoted to Secretary, Special Secretary level

18 senior IAS officers have been promoted to the level of Secretary, and some to Special Secretary, by temporarily upgrading the posts held by them.

NEW DELHI: Director General of Civil Aviation M Sathiyavathi and [Forward Markets Commission](#) Chairman Ramesh Abhishek are among 18 senior [IAS officers](#) who have been promoted to the level of Secretary, and some to Special Secretary, by temporarily upgrading the posts held by them.

Of these, five officers have been appointed to the level of Secretary and rest to that of Special Secretary.

Abhishek, a 1982-batch IAS officer of Bihar-cadre, has got Secretary rank as Chairman, Forward Markets Commission (FMC). His batchmate Sathiyavathi has also got rank and

pay of Secretary as DGCA, an order issued today by Department of Personnel and Training said.

Aruna Sundarajan, Neeraj Kumar Gupta and Leena Nair have been given Secretary rank. Sundarajan is Administrator, Universal Service Obligation Fund under Department of Telecommunications and Gupta is Secretary, Board for Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises under Department of Public Enterprises.

Nair is working as Chairperson of Marine Products Exports Development Authority under Commerce Ministry.

Gujarat-cadre IAS officer Amarjeet Singh has been given rank and pay of [Special Secretary](#) in Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.

Rashmi Verma and Avinash Kumar Srivastava, who are working in Finance and Agriculture ministries respectively, have got Special Secretary rank. Navin Verma and Jai Priye Prakash, both posted in Cabinet Secretariat, have been given Special Secretary designation.

Others who got Special Secretary rank and pay includes Jitendra Singh Mathur (Information and Broadcasting Ministry), Dinesh Singh (Statistics and Programme Implementation Ministry), G Gurucharan (Consumer Affairs), Ajay Narain Jha (Department of Expenditure) and Prabhas Kumar Jha (Department of Food and Public Distribution).

Krishan Kumar Jalan, Central Provident Fund Commissioner in Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, Hem Kumar Pande (Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change) and C B Venkataramana (Department of Atomic Energy) have become Special Secretary in their respective departments.

DEFENCE, NATIONAL

HINDU, SEP 8, 2015

OROP and after

Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar's announcement that the government has decided to implement the One Rank One Pension scheme came as a huge relief to the veterans of the armed forces and also to those now in the services. There remain some wrinkles that need to be ironed out and gaps in clarity that have to be filled. Most of the doubts are bound to be put to rest when the formal government order is issued. Credit must be given to the government for bringing a sense of closure to an issue that has been hanging fire for over 40 years. That the Prime Minister's Office finally had to step in after nearly three months of wrenching agitations by the veterans is a telling commentary on the complicated nature of the issue and the hardened, almost intransigent, positions that had to be addressed. Yet it must be said that the government could have handled this better. The same could be said about the timing of the announcement too. By dragging the issue to a point nearly coinciding with the run-up to the Bihar Assembly elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi risked pushing it squarely into the political arena, but he acted deftly. In the time it took for the government to take a decision, the Congress, the Aam Aadmi Party and sections of the Left were raring to move into the breach by beating a path to Jantar Mantar where the veterans were on a hunger strike in a determined attempt to goad the government into action. The veterans should not be allowed to become tools in the hands of politicians. Indeed, by fielding a former Defence Minister to mount a nit-picking attack after the announcement was made, the Congress showed a certain inability to grasp the reality. The fact is that the Congress did not come through when it could have; instead it cited administrative, technical and funding difficulties.

Now that most of the expectations on OROP have been met, a spirit of give-and-take should inform the rest of the engagement. Maximalist positions should be shunned. A pension review every year is desirable, but it should be asked if it would really be practical. The announcement of a single-member judicial committee to examine the interests of retirees may not be the ideal way forward. Given the complexities involved, the government should rather consider an appropriate advisory committee to expedite the process. It would be a pity if the opportunity is not utilised to close the perceived gap between the bureaucracy and the armed services in terms of the compensation package. The government must meanwhile remain determined to discourage any unrealistic expectations and demands that may now come up from other sectors following the OROP announcement.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

BUSINESS STANDARD, SEP 10, 2015

**Shankar Acharya: Economic reforms losing momentum?
There is a sense of drift in economic policy**

Four months ago I had commended the Modi government's [economic policy](#) initiatives in its first year in office ("[On balance, a good year](#)"). A third of a year later the picture looks much less promising. [Economic reforms](#) have clearly lost momentum and there is a sense of drift in economic policy. To better understand what is going on, it may be useful to break up the problem into four different (but related) parts: setbacks to major reform efforts; slowdown in other reforms; inaction or back-tracking in some areas; and a revival of fiscal populism.

Setbacks to major reforms

By the government's own statements, amendment of the UPA's legacy [land acquisition Act](#) (2013) and passage of the Constitution amending Bill for the Goods and Services Tax (GST) were the two most important items on the economic agenda for the monsoon session of Parliament which was prorogued on Wednesday. Neither has achieved success thanks, in part, to the highly disruptive and obstructionist parliamentary tactics adopted by the opposition parties, led by the Congress. In the case of the land acquisition Act, most of the key amendments proposed by the government (and incorporated in earlier ordinances), were opposed by the Joint Committee of Parliament, including members from the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Against a background of rising opposition from its own members and various farmer organisations, the government backed away from its year-long efforts to amend the Act, instead inviting the states to legislate their own statutes to make land acquisition laws workable and fair.

The [GST](#) Constitution amendment Bill had been cleared by the Lok Sabha in December 2014 and then referred to a Select Committee of the Rajya Sabha, which gave its recommendations last month. The Bill was duly amended and introduced in the Rajya Sabha in the second week of August. Its passage was blocked by continuing disruptions of Parliament.

Slowdown in other reform initiatives

There are quite a few in this category. For example:

- Hardly six months ago, at Budget time, the finance ministry had emphasised the opportunities for rationalising and reducing major central government subsidies (food, fuel and fertiliser) by shifting to [direct benefits transfer](#) (DBT) systems based on the trinity of Jan Dhan, [Aadhaar](#) and Mobiles ("JAM"). The [Jan Dhan programme](#) has greatly expanded the number of households with bank accounts, while the coverage levels of Aadhaar unique IDs and mobile ownership are now very high. But, after the success with transiting to [DBT](#) for the cooking gas cylinders, there seems to have been little progress with the much larger subsidies for foodgrain and fertilisers.
- After some initial success with modestly relaxing labour laws in a couple of states and promising the integration and rationalisation of several major central labour laws, forward movement seems to have become mired in inter-ministerial committees. The recent strike by trade union members may have also discouraged strong reform efforts in this area, which remains critical for nurturing rapid job growth.
- The serious governance and balance sheet weaknesses of public sector banks are well-known as is the growing problem of under-capitalisation. Although the government announced a few steps last month under its "Indradhanush" initiative, they fall far short of the recommendations of the Nayak Committee as well as what needs to be done if these banks (which still dominate Indian banking) are to be put on a sustainable path towards having healthy balance sheets and realising their potential as efficient, well-governed financial intermediaries, contributing majorly to India's economic development.

Inaction and back-tracking

Here, too, examples are not hard to find:

- The [Shanta Kumar Committee](#) submitted its report in January, with recommendations for restructuring the Food Corporation of India and undertaking major reforms of India's food economy. Not much seems to have happened in the eight months since.
- The Expenditure Commission was set up a year ago and has delivered numerous recommendations in several reports, which are yet to see light of day.
- The 2015 Union Budget had announced the resumption of strategic disinvestments (or privatisation) back in February and estimated receipts of Rs 28,500 crore. Not a single transaction has occurred since or is even known to be imminent. A K Bhattacharya ([A forgotten promise?](#)) wonders whether the programme has been abandoned.
- Similarly, the plans to privatise the airports in Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Chennai and Jaipur appear to have been shelved. The national carrier, Air India, continues to bleed losses and stagger under the weight of large debts, while government pumps in more equity. Coal India's public sector monopoly continues. None of this sits well with the government's election slogan of "maximum governance and minimum government".
- The electric power sector continues to be crippled by the massive losses and outstanding dues of state electricity boards. Little is known of the government's plans for tackling these critical issues.

Revival of fiscal populism

The surge in indirect tax revenues in the first third of the year and reduction in petroleum and fertiliser subsidies on account of slumping international commodity prices has bred a sense of comfort, even complacency, about our fiscal situation. This may be premature, especially if one looks ahead to 2016-17. That is when expenditures are likely to spike from recent decisions and predictable processes. These include: the massive pre-election "special package" announced for Bihar; the impact of the recent decision to boost the pension bill of the armed forces by agreeing to the "one rank, one pension" formula; the first full year effects of the forthcoming Seventh Pay Commission recommendations;

possible pre-election "special packages" for West Bengal, Assam, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, which are all due for polls by May 2016; obligatory increases in expenditures on food and rural employment entitlement programmes; and who knows what else. The ship of fiscal consolidation will certainly be buffeted, if not blown off course, with obvious, unhappy implications for fiscal deficits and interest rates.

In sum, economic reforms seem to be on a slow train, while good old [fiscal populism](#) is alive and flourishing. Against the background of a slowing world economy and slumping exports, this does not bode well for India's economic growth and job-creation.

The writer is honorary professor, ICRIER and former chief economic advisor to the Government of India.

ECONOMIC TIMES, SEP 9, 2015

Government names Prof Ramesh Chand as NITI Aayog full-time member

"The PM has approved the appointment of agriculture expert Prof Ramesh Chand as one of the full-time members in the NITI Aayog," NITI Aayog said in a press release.

NEW DELHI: Agriculture expert Prof Ramesh Chand has been appointed full-time member of [NITI Aayog](#) by the government.

"The Prime Minister has approved the appointment of agriculture expert Prof Ramesh Chand as one of the full-time members in the NITI Aayog," NITI Aayog said in a press release.

Chand has been a member of the task force on agriculture development under NITI Aayog, which is formulating strategies to give a boost to the agriculture sector.

He has also headed a government panel on minimum support price and has been working as the Director of National Institute of Agricultural Economics and Policy Research (NIAP) in New Delhi since 2010.

The National Institute of Transforming India -- NITI Aayog -- under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) has been set up succeeding the erstwhile Planning Commission.

It has noted economist Aravind Panagariya as its Vice-Chairman with economist Bibek Debroy and former [DRDO](#) chief V K Saraswat, along with agriculture expert Ramesh Chand now, as full-time members.

EDUCATION

STATESMAN, SEP 10, 2015

Hosannahs to CM

Institutional autonomy may be a consummation devoutly to be wished, but unwittingly or otherwise at least two Vice-Chancellors of premier universities (Presidency and Calcutta) denuded their functional autonomy when they virtually genuflected at the altar of the West Bengal chief minister on Teachers' Day. Their paeans in support of Mamata Banerjee chimed oddly as the fulsome praise coincided with the violence and firing at Raiganj University last week. Of course, both are known to be close to their political masters.

Furthermore, Swagato Sen, appointed as Pro-VC (academic) on Monday, has refused to give up his membership of the Trinamul teachers' association. In effect, both the VC and his 2-IC have expressly articulated their loyalty to the Chief Minister. Anuradha Lohia's proximity to the CM has ignited a controversy on the Presidency campus, to the point of persistent restiveness. At another remove, Sugato Marjit had made it explicit on the day he took over as CU's interim VC that he would be ever so willing to carry out the dictates of the Trinamul Congress government.

As it turned out, Teachers' Day was the occasion for both VCs to trumpet their loyalty to the political masters. Both were seemingly oblivious to the fact that Vice-Chancellors of state universities report to the Governor/Chancellor. The Marxists had their share of loyal academics, now the Trinamul has followed suit just as it has in terms of painting campuses in its own colours.

In the net, both VCs managed to reduce the occasion to a political forum on the Chief Minister's "contribution to education". Both were overly anxious to skirt the distressing reality. The canker of campus violence - grievously injurious when not mortal - has permeated the system over the past four years. From Garden Reach to Sabong, the situation has been exacerbated by the government's consistent tendency to airbrush reality, even to shield the culprits. This is the singularly distressing feature of education in West Bengal today.

It is of lesser moment whether "13 universities and many new colleges" have come up under the Trinamul dispensation, as Ms Lohia stressed. Of advancement of learning, there has been little; of campus discipline even less.

The reality makes a mockery of Prof Marjit's hosannah to Miss Banerjee - "No one before had realised the need to recognise good work." In the net, at least two VCs have surrendered their individual autonomy and/or neutrality.

DECCAN HERALD, SEP 8, 2015

CBSE directs schools to train girls in self defence

Prakash Kumar

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has directed all its schools to make immediate arrangements for self defence lesson to every girl student of Class I to X in view of the rising incidents of sexual assaults and safety concerns.

"At the beginning of both Term-I and Term-II, one week's training on self-defence may be given to all girl students of Classes I to X," CBSE said on Monday.

Further, schools have been told to earmark at least one period every week to keep girls updated about the knowledge, strategies and skills required to deal with any untoward situation. "Safety of children is of prime concern to all stakeholders. It is an unfortunate reality that in today's world, safety of our children is often at stake. Recent incidents have further accentuated the need to ensure safety of girls," CBSE's joint secretary D T Sudharsan Rao said, issuing the circular.

He also directed the school heads to appoint a trainer for teaching self-defence to girl students, stressing that teaching girls to defend themselves would be a useful means to empower them. The training will not only assist these students in becoming more aware of their surroundings but increase their self-confidence and sense of safety in difficult circumstances.

"Non-contact sports may be considered for training girls as they will cause less injury. Sports which do not involve any special infrastructure can be adopted for this initiative," he said. The CBSE official suggested the schools that they can also invite experts from neighbouring police station or use locally available resource persons for providing training to girls on self-defence.

Safety of schoolchildren, especially girls, has become one of the biggest concerns with many cases of sexual assault on schoolgirls being reported from different parts of the country. Only last week, an 18-year-old student was kidnapped, raped and then murdered in Ludhiana. The perpetrators of the heinous crime dumped her body in Sidhwan canal at Barewal area.

DECCAN HERALD, SEP 8, 2015

Don't politicise 'no detention policy'

The unanimous demand of all the state governments to revoke the “No Detention Policy” in elementary schools on the ground that it affected the learning processes in children is one more example of the politicisation of education in this country. School education may be a state subject. But, unless the Centre leaves it to academic bodies, it will continue to be one more avenue of sleaze and fraud in the unholy nexus of politician-private management, with the child caught in this web. The unanimous objection to NDP is not surprising. Private schools in many states are known to extract fresh admission fees for every class at the elementary stage. They can hold the Damocles sword of failure over the child’s head which will become impossible with this new strategy.

Another powerful lobby agitating against this policy is the teachers’ lobby which is again not surprising. Teachers in elementary schools tend to concentrate on brilliant pupils while neglecting the weak ones. The performance of the former brings laurels to the school and makes the teachers’ work easy. If pupils get automatically promoted to the next class according to the new policy, the second category will need more and more attention from teachers, especially in schools where they are first generation learners. Teaching levels must keep pace with the learning abilities of students if the NDP policy is implemented. All these factors highlight the one essential ingredient that is missing in our schools today – caring for the average and below average pupils. Actually, they are the ones who need the maximum attention and care.

According to the policy of no detention – one of the most controversial clauses of the Right to Education (RTE) Act that was passed in Parliament in 2009 – no student should be detained in the same class up to the end of primary education. It also mandated that the progress of the pupils should be constantly assessed (Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation) instead of making them face one gruelling annual examination. This would impose greater responsibility on teachers who would also miss the perks and payments of marathon exams. No wonder, states have now objected to the CCE as well. They would not like to topple the gargantuan machinery set in place to benefit every constituent of the education segment except the learner. The trauma of failure in exams has not bothered state administrators who have turned down the recommendations of academic bodies in one voice. Since elementary educational standards vary from state to state, it is essential that this gap be filled by prescribing a uniform curriculum of skills and knowledge at this stage. Their progress in these could be measured continuously against established goals of achievement. In this method, there is no question of success or failure. Every child aspires to reach that goal at his own pace.

TIMES OF INDIA, SEP 8, 2015

Himachal Pradesh Governor inaugurates IAS Academy at APG University

SHIMLA: Himachal Pradesh Governor Acharya Devvrat today formally inaugurated the IAS Academy, established in A P Goyal Shimla University, on the occasion of its third Foundation Day.

Addressing students and faculty members, the Governor commended the University for having a large strength of over 2,000 students, including 300 students from 17 countries.

He congratulated the APG University for becoming the first university to establish a coveted study centre which was also a recognition for the state.

Devvrat said that in old times Nalanda University in India used to be a great attraction of study for the foreigners.

India was also a place of academic excellence because of gurus like Acharya Chankya and expressed happiness that the A P Goyal University had taken the initiative in bringing together cultures of various countries and was promoting moral values and Indian culture.

He hoped that not only the teachers but the students also have the responsibility of teaching cultural values to the foreign students. PCL DB

ELECTIONS

ECONOMIC TIMES, SEP 8, 2015

Quota for OBC candidates in Goa civic polls raised to 27%

There will be a 27% reservation for candidates from Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in municipal polls in Goa scheduled on October 25, up from the earlier 19.5%.

PANAJI: There will be a 27 per cent [reservation](#) for candidates from Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in municipal polls in Goa scheduled on October 25, up from the earlier 19.5 per cent.

This was decided by Goa Government today, fulfilling an assurance given in the Assembly earlier.

The Cabinet approved a proposal to enhance reservation to 27 per cent from the earlier 19.5 per cent for OBC nominees in civic body polls, [Social Welfare](#) Minister Mahadev Naik told PTI.

The decision will help 19 castes listed under the OBC category. According to the Goa State [Commission for Backward Classes](#), the total population of OBCs stood at 3.84 lakh or 26.26 per cent.

In all, 11 municipalities will go to the polls next month.

Naik had earlier told the Assembly that quota for OBCs in civic polls will be enhanced to 27 per cent before the end of the current financial year.

HINDU, SEP 10, 2015

Five-phase Bihar polls from October 12

JAYANT SRIRAM

Bihar will go to the polls in five phases from October 12 to November 5, with counting scheduled for November 8, the Election Commission of India announced here on Wednesday.

Chief Election Commissioner Nasim Zaidi said election to the 243-seat Assembly will be held on October 12, 16, 28, November 1 and 5. The term of the present House expires on November 29. Polling will be held for 49 seats in the first phase, 32 in the second, 50 in the third, 55 in the fourth and 57 in the fifth and final phase. The model code of conduct comes into effect immediately.

Noting that a number of important festivals like Eid, Muharram and Dussehra will fall in the election period, Mr. Zaidi said the Election Commission will take steps and deploy forces to ensure communal harmony and peace.

The EC has ensured that Central armed police force personnel will be deployed in all 62,779 polling stations. Over 47 constituencies are affected by left-wing extremism. For the first time, Electronic Voting Machines will bear photos of candidates to prevent confusion over contenders with the same names.

The much-awaited poll will be a key test for the popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the difficult period the BJP has endured following a huge loss in the Delhi election earlier this year.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is seeking a third term for his JD(U), this time in alliance with the RJD and the Congress.

HINDU, SEP 11, 2015

High stakes in Bihar

The Bihar Assembly elections are to be held in five phases from October 12, to let the Election Commission cope with the challenging logistics involved in the exercise. But it will be an even more challenging test for the popularity not just of the “grand alliance” of the Janata Dal (United), the Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Congress led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, but also of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is heading the Bharatiya Janata Party-led combine’s campaign. With the BJP having decided not to project a chief ministerial candidate, Mr. Modi’s personal charisma and his 15-month-long record at the Centre will be under scrutiny. The BJP’s decision is dictated not just by the failure of Kiran Bedi, who it chose to challenge Arvind Kejriwal in the Delhi Assembly elections earlier this year, but also by the fact that in caste-dominated Bihar, focussing on any one individual could alienate those who do not belong to his or her community. Coming as it would less than a year after the BJP lost Delhi 67-3 to the Aam Aadmi Party, a victory for the grand alliance will give the opposition a shot in the arm. It will also give a fillip to the formation of similar alliances in the context of other State elections. A BJP victory here would bolster the belief that the party, and Mr. Modi, remain invincible.

With so much at stake, it is no wonder that both sides are pulling out all the stops. As caste still remains the determining factor, the grand alliance is looking to Yadavs, Muslims and Kurmis (which is Mr. Kumar’s own community), who together account for roughly 32 per cent, for core support while working to break into the BJP’s extremely backward classes (EBCs) votes by pitching the battle as one between backward and forward castes. The BJP-led combine hopes to secure the backing of the upper castes, the EBCs and Dalits, even as it leverages Mr. Modi’s life story with the youth and the aspirational class — who account for over half the votes — to shatter the hold of caste. Mr. Kumar and RJD supremo Lalu Prasad are friends-turned-rivals-turned-uneasy-partners who between them — along with Mr. Lalu Prasad’s wife Rabri Devi — have ruled Bihar for some 20 of the last 25 years. If Mr. Lalu Prasad has not abandoned his image of an old-style socialist if backward-caste leader, Mr. Kumar would like people to

describe him as a development-oriented, modern politician. The two have come together to stave off political irrelevance, and have so far succeeded in keeping their heads above the water. Mr. Kumar has even hired for his campaign a publicist-strategist who worked for Mr. Modi in the 2014 general elections. Now, it is left to Bihar's 66 million voters to determine the direction of politics not just in this populous and backward State, but perhaps in the country at large.

STATESMAN, SEP 11, 2015

Bihar - nominally

It is a pitiful reflection of a divided polity that there is only limited "assembly" to elections to state legislatures and the national political stand-off dominates the far from pretty scenario. Of course there is a locally specific ingredient, but it pertains less to issues of development of the state, and - in Bihar most disturbingly - is concentrated on how to best exploit caste and communal equations, convert them into votes. Even as the Election Commission brought the field under "starter's orders" it was apparent that there was much concentration on sustaining the Modi-Shah prestige-propelled "wave", and conversely, the "secular" forces striving to block its further advance. The personality clash that caused Nitish Kumar to break off his JD(U)-BJP alliance after Narendra Modi was elevated the latter's prime ministerial choice has injected a bitter personal edge. The political stakes are indeed high. Sadly "Bihar" - or at least the interests of its people - will be relegated to a secondary role.

Assessments, presently, cannot be in-depth and the rush of the pollsters to be first off the block might prove misleading. Most of the players are actually starting from negative positions. The NDA wave stumbled in Delhi, but since the caste factor happily does not dominate the Capital that rout does not automatically extend itself to Bihar. What does impact is the increasing realisation that the Prime Minister's promises have hardly been reflected on the ground, governance is not quite his forte. The perception that the RSS has wrested control is another reality. So also wearing thin is Mr Modi's line that people should vote for him, he would provide and steer a chief minister - the experience in Maharashtra has been unconvincing. Not that the mahagathbandhan has a head-start. The Samajwadi departure has created a gaping hole in the "defences" against Mr Modi, so too Jiten Ram Manjhi's switching sides. Lalu Prasad is fighting to regain political credibility and may not prove an asset beyond his showmanship, and the Congress has limited allure. With the Left parties staying aloof, multi-cornered contests are likely. That could help the NDA, but while the Modi-Shah duo have succeeded in communal polarisation their skills at caste-engineering remain untested - until now.

With Left-wing extremism afflicting parts of the state, and several religious festivals on the calendar, the task of the Election Commission is truly demanding. It has curtailed the campaign period, reduced by one the polling phases, but eight weeks of “election mode” is still too taxing. There is need for a drastic reduction in the political quotient in peoples’ lives. Vicious days are ahead, for in the coming poll there will be less for the victor to gain than the ignominy and political battering that awaits the loser.

EMPLOYMENT

STATESMAN, SEP 11, 2015

Deleterious disparity

Ever since its inception, there has been much to condemn and little to commend about the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Scheme, with a former Chief Economic Adviser once referring to the United Progressive Alliance government's welfare measure as a "gigantic public sector" failure. The latest controversy over the scheme, which guarantees unskilled work for up to 100 days a year to every rural household, centres around a fundamental parameter - the wage rate. The report of a committee of economists, appointed by the Union ministry of rural development, has prompted the finance ministry to engage in a re-think. Specifically, the panel has recommended that the "baseline" for the wages in the states cannot be lower than the existing minimum wage for unskilled agricultural workers in a particular state. True that this will entail an additional expenditure of Rs.10,000 crore a year for the Centre; equally there has to be a co-relation between the average wages of farm labourers and the MGNREGS rate.

In all or nearly most states, the disparity is almost ridiculous to the extent that it has hobbled the implementation of the scheme and in such segments as afforestation, desilting of water bodies, and construction of check dams and water harvesting structures. The disparity is reinforced by the data furnished by the Labour Bureau, a wing of the Union labour ministry. The MGNREGS wages are far lower than the prevailing rates in states. To that can be added a criminal irregularity - the siphoning of funds by political party activists and their rural henchmen. The Punjab Chief Minister, Parkash Singh Badal, has implicitly used the report of the economists' committee as a peg to craft his message to the rural development ministry. He echoes the suggestions of social activists when he urges the Centre to increase MGNREGS wages to at least Rs.300 a day.

Intrinsically, it boils down to a question of balance of payments, so to speak. A rectification of the wage structure is, therefore, urgently imperative. The disparity exists almost across the country, though in several states it is much too glaring. In West Bengal, for instance, MGNREGS offers a wage rate of Rs.174 a day, against Rs.298, which is the average wage of a farm worker. Glaring too is the difference in other eastern states, though markedly less in Mr Badal's Punjab - Rs.210 under the scheme against Rs.295 as the daily rate. As an employment option, however guaranteed, the rural household has little to gain and much to lose under the scheme floated in the name of Mahatma Gandhi.

Yet in keeping with the certitudes of the federal engagement, the additional expenditure - if and when it is hiked - must of necessity be partially borne by the states as well.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, SEP 15, 2015

Additional 50 days' work under MGNREGA in drought-hit areas

The government has decided to provide an additional 50 days of manual work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act...

The government has decided to provide an additional 50 days of manual work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in the current financial year in those regions where drought has been declared. The MGNREGA otherwise provides 100 days of assured work to each rural family.

“This will enable states to provide additional wage employment to rural poor in drought-affected areas. The poorest rural households will benefit from this, as it will help in immediate absorption of rural seasonal unemployment, and reduce rural distress,” an official release on Monday said.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) on Monday assured all possible help to drought-hit areas of Maharashtra and cope with severe water and fodder shortages in parts of Marathwada and Western Maharashtra.

A PTI report said the PM gave the assurance to NCP chief and former Union minister Sharad Pawar when he apprised him about the gravity of the scarcity situation in parts of the state.

Pawar, who has been spearheading the agitation for a better deal to people in the state facing the drought, later told reporters that the Prime Minister told him that all possible efforts will be made to provide succour. Pawar had recently also met chief minister Devendra Phadnavis on the issue.

HUMAN RIGHTS

HINDU, SEP 8, 2015

An odd pitch to curb free speech

MARKANDEY KATJU

The Maharashtra government circular, of September 4, 2015, while clarifying an earlier circular dated August 27, states that if words or signs or representations by someone cause hatred, enmity, contempt or disloyalty against the government and can also be an incitement to violence or are intended to cause public disorder, then charges of sedition under Section 124A IPC can be invoked against that person. However, it was clarified, comments expressing disapproval, with a view to bring about change in government by lawful means cannot by themselves be regarded as an act of treason.

[The background to this is as follows — this comes after a “submission” made by the Advocate-General in the Bombay High Court in a case involving political activist and cartoonist Aseem Trivedi that the Home Department would issue these guidelines in the form of a circular to all policemen. Later, the State government clarified that these guidelines were part of a general circular, and not a Government Resolution, and were strictly in accordance with the orders issued by the Bombay High Court.]

Unconstitutional move

In my opinion, the Maharashtra government circular, despite its clarification, is clearly unconstitutional as it is violative of the freedom of speech guaranteed by Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.

There are many things done by the Union and Maharashtra governments that do not strike a chord with many people and which causes them to express their contempt, enmity and disaffection openly. Some have even called for a revolution in view of the massive levels of poverty, unemployment, malnourishment, price rise, a lack of health care, farmers’ suicides, and discrimination against the minorities, women and Dalits to name some of the issues that are still prevalent in India. But is this a valid reason to send such people to jail? I believe it isn’t and they cannot.

For example, the recent agitation in Gujarat by the Patel community resulted in a lot of disorder. Similarly, the agitation by ex-servicemen on the ‘One Rank One Pension’ issue could have resulted in large-scale public disorder. The one day, nation-wide Bharat Bandh observed by 15 crore workers across India resulted in a lot of public disorder especially in West Bengal. In my opinion, in a democratic country, these are perfectly valid methods of expressing dissent and disenchantment with our governments, both Central and State.

Establish imminent threat

In *Whitney vs. California*, 274 US 357 (1927), Justice Brandeis of the U.S. Supreme Court observed: “Fear of serious injury cannot alone justify suppression of free speech and assembly. Men feared witches and burned women. It is the function of free speech to free men from the bondage of irrational fears. To justify suppression of free speech there must be reasonable ground to fear that serious evil will result if free speech is practiced and that the danger apprehended is *imminent* ... The wide difference between advocacy and incitement, between preparation and attempt, between assembling and conspiracy, must be borne in mind.”

He went on to observe: “Those who won our independence by revolution were not cowards. They did not fear political change. They did not exalt order at the cost of liberty. To courageous, self-reliant men, with confidence in the power of free and fearless reasoning, no danger flowing from speech can be deemed clear and present, unless the incidence of the evil apprehended is *imminent*. The remedy to evil counsel is more speech, not enforced silence.”

In *Yates vs. U.S.*, 354 US 298 (1957), Justice Harlan of the U.S. Supreme Court observed: “In failing to distinguish between advocacy of forcible overthrow as an abstract doctrine and advocacy of action to that end, the District Court appears to have been led astray by the holding in *Dennis* that advocacy of violent action to be taken at some future time was enough. The District Court apparently thought that *Dennis* obliterated the traditional dividing line between advocacy of abstract doctrine and advocacy of action.”

Freedom and state action

In *Brandenburg vs. Ohio*, 395 US 444 (1969), the U.S. Supreme Court reversed its earlier decision in *Whitney vs. California*, 274 US 357 (1927) and observed: “The Constitutional guarantees of free speech and free press do not permit a State to forbid or proscribe advocacy of the use of force or of law violation except where such advocacy is directed to inciting or producing *imminent* lawless action and is likely to incite or produce such action”.

In *Gitlow vs. New York*, 268 US 652 (1925), Justice Holmes of the U.S. Supreme Court observed: “Every idea is an incitement.”

In his dissenting judgment in that case (with which Justice Brandeis joined), Justice Holmes observed: “It is manifest that there was no present danger of an attempt to overthrow the government by force on the part of the defendants. It is said that this Manifesto was more than a theory, that it was an incitement. Every idea is an incitement... The only difference between the expression of an opinion and an incitement is the speaker’s enthusiasm. Eloquence may set fire to reason. But the Manifesto had no chance of starting a present conflagration. If, in the long run, the beliefs expressed in proletarian dictatorship are destined to be accepted by the dominant forces of the community, the only meaning of free speech is that they should be given their chance and have their way.

“If the publication of this document attempted to induce an uprising against government at once, and not at some indefinite time in the future, the object would have been one with which the law might deal, subject to whether it was not futile and too remote from possible consequences. But the indictment alleges the publication and nothing more.”

In *Noto vs. U.S.* 367 US 290 (297-298), Justice Harlan of the U.S. Supreme Court observed: “The mere teaching of Communist theory, including the teaching of the moral propriety or even moral necessity for a resort to force and violence, is not the same as preparing a group for violent action and steeling it to such action. There must be some substantial direct or circumstantial evidence of a call to violence now or in the immediate future.”

In Noto’s case (*supra*), Justice Hugo Black wrote: “In 1799, the English Parliament passed a law outlawing certain societies on the ground that they were engaged in ‘a traitorous Conspiracy... in conjunction with the persons from time to time exercising the powers of government in France...’.” One of the arguments made by those who opposed this law was by a member, Mr. Tierney, who said: “The remedy proposed goes to the putting an end to all these societies together. I say these attempts lead to consequences of the most horrible kind. I see that government is acting thus: “Those whom they cannot prove to be guilty, they will punish for their suspicion. To support this system, we must have a swarm of spies and informers.” The decision in this case, in my judgment, illustrates the continuing vitality of this observation. The Government has failed to produce evidence the Court believes sufficient to prove that the Communist Party presently advocates the overthrow of the Government by force.”

In *Communist Party vs. Subversive Activities Control Board*, 367 US 1 (1961), Justice Hugo Black observed: “The first banning of a political party or association because it advocates hated ideas marks a fateful moment in the history of a free country. That moment seems to have arrived for this country. This whole Act, outlaws groups that preach doctrines nearly all Americans detest. When the practice of outlawing parties and public groups begins, no one can say where it will end. In most countries, such a practice once begun ends with a one party government.”

In *Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee vs. McGrath*, 341 US 123, 174 (1951), Justice Douglas observed: “In days of great tension when feelings run high, it is a temptation to take short cuts by borrowing from the totalitarian techniques of our opponents. But when we do, we set in motion a subversive influence of our own design that destroys us from within.”

Part of Indian law

All these judgments of the U.S. Supreme Court were referred to with approval by the Indian Supreme Court in *Sri Indra Das vs. State of Assam*, 2011, and, therefore, are a part of the law of the land in India too.

In his historic decision in *New York Times vs. U.S. 1971* , Justice Hugo Black observed: “In the First Amendment, the Founding Fathers gave the free press the protection it must have to fulfill its essential role in our democracy. The press was to serve the governed, not the governors. The Government’s power to censor the press was abolished so that the press would remain forever free to censure the Government. The press was protected so that it could bare the secrets of government and inform the people. Only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government. And paramount among the responsibilities of a free press is the duty to prevent any part of the government from deceiving the people and sending them off to distant lands to die of foreign fevers and foreign shot and shell. In my view, far from deserving condemnation for their courageous reporting, *The New York Times* , *The Washington Post* and other newspapers should be commended for serving the purpose that the Founding Fathers saw so clearly. In revealing the workings of government that led to the Vietnam war, the newspapers nobly did precisely that which the Founders hoped and trusted they would do.”

(Justice Markandey Katju is a former judge of the Supreme Court and former Chairman, Press Council of India.)

There are things done by governments in India that do not strike a chord with many people and which cause them to express their contempt, enmity and disaffection openly... Is this a valid reason to send such people to jail?

The Maharashtra government circular, on free speech and sedition, is unconstitutional as it is violative of the freedom of speech guaranteed by the Constitution

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAPH, SEP 10, 2015

Holding firm: India took the right stand regarding the talks with Pakistan

Kanwal Sibal

Why we decided to re-engage Nawaz Sharif at Ufa remains a puzzle. If previous signals from Pakistan had been positive it would have made sense to do so, but not if they were consistently negative, as has been the case even with Nawaz Sharif's adversarial rhetoric. The Gurdaspur and Udhampur attacks showed Pakistan's continued reliance on a tried and tested strategy of using terrorism as a lever in the dialogue with India.

The collapse of national security advisor-level talks was therefore not surprising. Each side wanted the other to call them off in a battle of diplomatic wits that we, at least, could have avoided. After the attacks in Punjab and Jammu we could have done so on the ground that talks and terror cannot go together. But we kept the door open for more Pakistani provocations. The breaking point came when Pakistan insisted on discussing Kashmir and meeting the Hurriyat leaders. Because we rejected both demands, the Pakistanis have used specious arguments to blame us for scuttling the talks.

Many in India have wrongly criticized the government for the fiasco. The usual arguments have been made, to the effect that we must talk to Pakistan as there is no alternative, that we missed the opportunity to confront it with evidence in our possession about its involvement in terrorism, that having allowed meetings with the All Parties Hurriyat Conference in the past we should not have made an issue of it this time, and the like. Some basic facts are being ignored.

The Ufa press release clearly defined the scope of the NSA-level talks. They were mandated to discuss all issues connected to terrorism, but Pakistan wanted to expand the agenda to include Kashmir. If Kashmir was not specifically mentioned at Ufa, it was with Nawaz Sharif's concurrence. He, too, apparently shared the view that the immediate need was to seriously discuss terrorism and stabilize the Line of Control, leaving Kashmir for later. Pakistan, with its increasingly aggressive charges against us on terrorism, whether in Balochistan, Karachi, and even in the Peshawar school attack in league with the Taliban, obviously feels that this issue is not loaded entirely against it.

Kashmir, in any case, would have got injected into any discussion on terrorism at Delhi. Nawaz Sharif's problem was created by his own people who attacked him for failing to secure a specific mention of Kashmir at Ufa. For the diehards in Pakistan, Kashmir has to be discussed in the political context, not that of terrorism. India is opposed to discussing Kashmir politically at this juncture as it wants a proper atmosphere to be created first. The "preambular" part of the Ufa release implies this when it says that the two prime ministers "agreed that India and Pakistan have a collective responsibility to ensure peace and promote development" and "to do so they are prepared to discuss all outstanding issues". This means India's readiness to discuss Kashmir as part of a larger responsibility to promote peace and development, but one preceded in the immediate by specified

preparatory steps listed at Ufa: a meeting in New Delhi between the two NSAs to discuss all issues connected to terrorism; early meetings of director general of the Border Security Force and the DG Pakistan Rangers followed by that of DGs of military operations; a time bound decision to release fishermen in 15 days; facilitating religious tourism; and ways and means to expedite the Mumbai case trial, including additional information like providing voice samples.

The Pakistani side sought to modify the agenda approved at Ufa by the two prime ministers; India was right in insisting that we adhere to it. For Sartaj Aziz to say that the Ufa agreement was not binding is casuistry. Pakistan's record of dishonouring accords is known. We had no obligation to accommodate Pakistan's hard line demands and proceed with the dialogue on its terms. For critics to say that Sushma Swaraj painted the government into a corner by asserting that Kashmir could not be discussed is absurd, when we only thwarted Pakistan's effort to re-shape the agenda under pressure by political bigots at home.

The government's decision to prevent Sartaj Aziz from meeting the Hurriyat was also right. Pakistan has territorial claims on Kashmir and Nawaz Sharif himself has spoken repeatedly about self-determination there. The Hurriyat backs this demand. Both contest India's sovereignty over Jammu and Kashmir. The nexus between the two being so self-evident, why we permitted contacts earlier remains a puzzle, as this has amounted to legitimizing the separatist sentiment in Jammu and Kashmir, and that too conjointly with a country determined to destabilize Kashmir through violence.

Critics claim that the Hurriyat is a marginal force in Jammu and Kashmir and should be ignored, and that such meetings have not given Pakistan any notable ground advantage in Jammu and Kashmir. If so, what compels the Pakistanis to keep meeting the Hurriyat, even at the risk of wrecking the India-Pakistan dialogue? If Sartaj Aziz says that the people of Kashmir have to be consulted, then why doesn't he seek meetings with all political forces in Jammu and Kashmir? Who has given him the authority to determine that the Hurriyat alone represents the people of Kashmir? Why is the Speaker of the elected Jammu and Kashmir assembly *persona non grata* in Pakistan?

The Pakistanis claim, with support from some in India, that as they have been meeting the Hurriyat for 20 years, we have no reason not to allow the practice to continue. In other words, we must perpetuate a folly. Next they could well claim that as we have delinked terrorism from dialogue in the past, we cannot link the two again. Or that because they have committed terrorist attacks against us for the last 30 years with impunity, we must continue our forbearance and eschew any threatening noises against a nuclear Pakistan. Knowing that the Hurriyat issue caused the breakdown of the foreign secretary-level talks, Sartaj Aziz was nevertheless defiant in wanting to meet its leaders. We would have been politically humiliated if we had yielded, which indeed was Pakistan's intention. Our handling of the question was firm, not inept.

The view that by allowing the talks to be cancelled we lost an opportunity to confront Sartaj Aziz with evidence of Pakistan's involvement in terrorism and set back our anti-

terror agenda as a result is puerile. Pakistan's predictable response would have been total denial of any such involvement and the claim that it was a bigger victim of terrorism than India. It would have proposed either a joint mechanism or involvement of third parties to investigate matters, besides attacking us in return for fuelling terrorism in Pakistan. If it could deny Ajmal Kasab was Pakistani, allow Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi to obtain bail, protect Hafiz Saeed, and now deny that Naved is a Pakistani, we could have expected Sartaj Aziz to stonewall us at Delhi on terrorism. Pakistan knows how and why it uses the instrument of terror against us and will not be deterred by any evidence we produce. It is our willingness and capacity to strike back appropriately that will change its calculus.

We did not lose the plot in the latest bout of diplomatic confrontations with Pakistan. We just prevented Pakistan from writing it as it pleases.

The author is former foreign secretary of India

LABOUR

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, SEP 9, 2015

Labour min proposal to recruit contract workers only via staffing agencies

The proposals, still at a discussion stage, also include periodic wage revisions

By: [Surya Sarathi Ray](#)

Contract workers will get recruited only through staffing agencies, enjoy working conditions similar to the regular workers and benefit from periodic wage revisions if a set of amendments proposed by the labour ministry to the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 are approved by Parliament.

Stating that the proposals were still “at a discussion stage,” a labour ministry official told FE that the ministry would hold tripartite meetings involving trade unions and employers’ organisations after reaching a consensus among different government departments on the proposals.

Indian Staffing Federation (ISF), the apex body of the flex-staffing agencies in the country has 40 members catering mostly to the organised sector. There are hundreds of such staffing companies in the unorganised sector but a large sections of the contract workers are still not recruited through them. More than 17 lakh contract workers are currently employed in the organised sector while almost all of the 40 crore unorganised sector workers are contract workers.

A senior labour ministry official said that the idea is to encourage the engagement of contract workers primarily through placement agencies. The ministry’s objective is to protect the interests of contract workers by ensuring that they are not exploited in the hands of the employers. These workers would also be brought under the social security net.

However, the ministry is still undecided on whether to allow placement agencies to levy any enrollment fee from the contract workers or at what rate, if allowed. It would also

the fees placement agencies can charge on the employers for providing contract workers to an establishment.

ISF president Rituparna Chakraborty said the proposal to employ contract workers through staffing agencies would ensure that the dues of the workers are not misappropriated. However, CITU President A K Padmanabhan said the proposed move would only transform local placement agencies to become corporates without bringing in any good to the contract workers.

The working conditions for a contract worker should be at par with the regular worker, the official said, adding that they should also get the same facilities as safety and security of a workmen, be it regular or on contract-basis, should be of paramount interests and there should not be any compromise. However, salary-wise, the disparity would continue with the contract workers would not get the same as their regular counterparts would pocket.

Central trade unions are likely to oppose this proposal as they had been vociferously demanding “equal pay for equal work” for the contract workers. It was one of the 12-point charter of demands that they had put before the government seeking its response. Not satisfied with government’s assurance of making national floor level minimum wages mandatory for all workers across the country, they gave a nation-wide strike call on September 2, which yielded mixed response.

LIBRARIES

STATESMAN, SEP 10, 2015

Saffronising institutions

Kuldip Nayar

Understandably, there is a sense of horror over the Bharatiya Janata Party government's decision to 'modernise' the Jawaharlal Nehru Museum at Teen Murti in New Delhi. The BJP spokesman has explained that the present museum tells only the Nehru side of the national struggle for independence, not the entire story.

Ironically, the persons to put forward the demand are those who did not contribute even a bit to the national movement. Their role, if any, helped the British rulers.

What the BJP has in mind is to saffronise the institution. The party made a similar attempt when Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee was at the helm of affairs. But he firmly resisted every move to reinterpret history. He recognised the role Nehru had played to win freedom and gave him full credit. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a different kettle of fish. He openly seeks guidance from the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), which runs down the national struggle because it was never part of it.

Re-doing the Nehru museum under Modi rule means the induction of outdated ideas into history. Nehru moulded the nation after independence and gave it a scientific temperament. Nehru's biggest contribution was the concept of secularism. At the time of partition when Pakistan chose to be an Islamic state, he kept India secular. Probably, this is what the BJP does not like and wants to change the very character of the museum. Why does not BJP have a separate museum where it can present history in the way it wants to do?

Not long ago, I was at Pune and found to my dismay that the Agha Khan Palace, where the British rulers would detain the icons of our freedom struggle, like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, has been converted into an environment park. I have no grudge against parks. But the places consecrated by the nation's blood, should have been preserved in their original shape so that the coming generations would see them as they were. Decoration, however honest in intent, extinguishes the original spirit.

In contrast, the Jalianwala Bagh at Amritsar has been preserved as it was. It retains the air of martyrdom and still maintains the centrality of the well. When one sees it, one can

imagine how the people must have jumped into it to escape the relentless firing by the British-led soldiers. Why they were punished was because of the 'humiliation' of one British woman who heard a hissing sound while passing through a bazaar. Protesters at the Jalianwala Bagh were against the British rule. Theirs was a struggle for independence. Sadly, after killing hundreds of people, the remark made by one British soldier was that they wished they had more ammunition.

Indeed, places like Jalianwala Bagh are the real temples. They remind us of the pain and pangs of our national struggle and of those who sacrificed all in the fight against the British. The places are in no way less important than the scriptures which we revere and cherish.

Unfortunately, the places of worship-temples, mosques, churches and gurudwaras-are becoming more in number and vulgar in decoration. Followers mistakenly have come to believe that the use of marble or gold makes the place more endearing to worshipers.

Unfortunately, the buildings which did not contribute even a bit to the freedom struggle have come to occupy positions of importance. Still worse are the efforts to substitute the ethos of pluralism with the ideology of parochialism. It is unthinkable how any party or person can demand a memorial for Nathuram Godse, who killed Mahatma Gandhi.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), an outfit to spread the Hindutva feelings should understand and appreciate the emotion which was misleading the Muslims at that time. Even if it is assumed that the Muslims knowingly marshaled behind the demand for Pakistan, how are the Indian Muslims to blame for what happened 70 years ago?

When we are not blaming the generation which was supporting the British, why should we pick on the Muslims whose forefathers helped create Pakistan? An average Hindu has not forgiven the Muslims for the vivisection of India. At the time of tension with Pakistan, many Hindus still suspect the Muslims.

Even otherwise, the Hindus maintain distance from the Muslims. Social contact between the two communities is more or less absent. And both live in worlds of their own. It was different in my generation. We visited one another's house and ate together without feeling that we were doing anything extraordinary.

Today things have changed. A Muslim woman professor told me that one day a few Hindu girls stood up in the classroom and asked her why she was in India when she

should have gone to Pakistan. None in the classroom objected to the girls' remarks. I cannot blame the educational system, but I do blame the teachers who had created such an atmosphere where girls could ask such questions.

True, partition on the basis of religion has told upon India's ethos of secularism and lessened the importance of Muslims in the affairs of India. But this feeling goes against the letter and spirit of our constitution. We are not a Hindu rashtra but a secular, democratic republic as the preamble of our constitution says.

The BJP does not seem to realize that it does not have any Muslim icon in its ranks. I hope that things would change for the better. But how can they when the party wants to establish a Hindu rashtra and keep the Muslim community at a distance? Sadly, the party is trying to change the very ethos of our country. Even in the midst of our national struggle, we were conscious that the Pakistan sought to be constituted would be an Islamic state. Still, we declared that India, after the British left, would be a secular state and we adhered to that undertaking.

The writer is a noted journalist, columnist and commentator.

MINORITY GROUPS

STATESMAN, SEP 8, 2015

B'desh minorities can stay in India after Visa expiry

India on Monday decided, on humanitarian grounds, to exempt Bangladeshi and Pakistani nationals belonging to minority communities, who entered the country on or before December 31 last year, to stay in the country, even after expiry of their visas, an official statement said.

"The central government has decided, on humanitarian considerations, to exempt Bangladeshi and Pakistani nationals belonging to minority communities who have entered into India on or before December 31, 2014 from the relevant provisions of rules and order made under the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 and the Foreigners Act, 1946, in respect of their entry and stay in India without such documents or after the expiry of those documents, as the case may be," the home ministry statement said.

It said the the central government has accordingly issued two notifications in the official gazette on Monday under the two acts, adding that there were reports that a number of Bangladeshi and Pakistani nationals belonging to minority communities, such as Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Parsis and Buddhists, in those countries were compelled to seek shelter in India due to religious persecution or fear of religious persecution.

"They have entered into India either without any valid document including passport/other travel document or with valid documents but the validity of such document has expired. The issue of regularization of entry and stay of such Bangladeshi and Pakistani nationals in India has been under consideration of the central government," the release said.

OLD AGE

PIONEER, SEP 9, 2015

PUNJAB GOVT TO ENHANCE OLD AGE PENSION

The Punjab Government would soon enhance the old age pension.

Besides, a new health scheme would also be launched on November 1, under which smart cards to be issued to the beneficiaries enabling them to get treatments at any hospital with a cost up to Rs30,000.

The announcement was made by Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Badal after laying the foundation stone of 30-Bed Community Health Centre near Shimlapuri which would come up with a cost of Rs 4.25 crore.

He also inaugurated a 30-Bed Community Health Centre at Sector 32 A, Chandigarh Road, Ludhiana, which has come up at a cost of Rs 4.9 crore.

There are a total of 11 Community Health Centres under Urban Health Mission besides 60 Urban Primary Health Centres under repair and renovation in Punjab. Ludhiana has six, Jalandhar has three and Amritsar has two Community Health Centres (Urban), out of which first one is at Ludhiana was inaugurated by Sukhbir.

Sukhbir, addressing a function, announced a grant of Rs 120 crore for the repair and construction of the roads of the Ludhiana East constituency.

"An amount of Rs 1,000 crore would be spent on the maintenance of electricity cables in Ludhiana city so that the residents can get uninterrupted power supply," he said.

PANCHAYAT

TRIBUNE, SEP 8, 2015

NEW RULES FOR CONTESTING PANCHAYAT POLL IN JATLAND

Haryana makes education, toilet must for candidates

Landmark legislation

- The Bill fixed matriculation as essential qualification for general category candidates
- Minimum qualification for women (general) and SC candidates will be middle standard
- For the post of panch, the educational qualification for SC candidates would be fifth standard
- Defaulters of power bill, coop loans debarred from polls

Pradeep Sharma

The Haryana Assembly today passed a landmark legislation making educational qualifications and toilets at residence premises mandatory for the candidates of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) amid a walkout by the Opposition Congress.

With this, Haryana became the second state after Rajasthan to fix educational and other qualifications for the candidates contesting the PRI elections.

The passage of the Bill came after a marathon debate of nearly two hours in the absence of the Congress. The Bill fixed matriculation as qualification for general candidates contesting the panchayat elections and middle standard for women (general) and the Scheduled Caste (SC) candidates. For the post of panch, the educational qualification for SC candidates would be fifth standard.

The Bill, which also debarred the defaulters of the electricity bills and cooperative loans and charge-sheeted persons, for offence punishable with an imprisonment of not less than 10 years, was unanimously passed on the last day of the Haryana Vidhan Sabha Session today. The House rejected the amendments proposed by Congress MLA Karan Dalal, who wanted the provisions on educational qualification to go while battling for conditional incorporation of other conditions.

The ruling BJP had a field day today in the virtual absence of the Opposition when the Congress, except Dalal, walked out to protest the imposition of essential qualifications for panchayat elections and termed it “unjust”. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ram Bilas

Sharma took a dig at the Congress for 'abandoning' the House by staging a boycott. "See the conduct of honourable Congress friends. Their CLP leader (Kiran Choudhary) did not come to the House. Their (Congress') attitude towards their own MLA is not in good taste," Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ram Bilas Sharma said.

Earlier, introducing the Bill, Development Minister Om Prakash Dhankar said, "Prescribing minimum qualifications for elected representatives would not only help augmenting performance of the elected representatives but also reduce the chances of their being misled and ensure their accountability."

Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar gave a point-wise rebuttal of the points raised by the Opposition Congress and the INLD, whose leader Abhay Singh Chautala also wanted the essential educational qualifications to be dropped in the larger public interest.

Chautala said the qualification criteria was not there even for the post of the President and the Prime Minister. "Seventy-six per cent population in the villages is not even matric pass," he said, adding that the new criteria would prevent many from entering the fray.

Khattar while referring to some Opposition members' concern over qualification criteria in the Bill said the Constitution had empowered the legislatures to set criterias for the PRIs. He said today male literacy rate in rural Haryana was 81% and the state was moving towards achieving 100% literacy.

POLICE

HINDUSTAN TIMES, SEP 11, 2015

Govt working on plan to induct retired jawans into police forces

The government is working on a plan to generate employment for retired defence personnel below officer rank who hung up their boots in their 30s and still have a valuable contribution to make in other fields.

A day before veterans are planning to hold a maharally at New Delhi's Jantar Mantar on Saturday against what they call partial implementation of their one rank one pension (OROP) demand, South Block sources said the government has started examining issues related to induction of jawans into the police forces.

Sources said the veterans should not allow "petty political elements" to colour their vision adding that the rally could be an "impediment" to the finalisation of the declaration on OROP made by defence minister Manohar Parrikar on September 5.

The sources said it did not benefit disciplined veterans to hold the rally at this juncture as the government had accepted their 40-year-old demand.

Parrikar had last week said that the decision to implement the scheme reflected the government's commitment to the welfare of veterans, despite the fiscal burden — an annual payout in the range of Rs 8,000 crore to Rs 10,000 crore — to the exchequer. The scheme will be effective from July 1, 2014, with arrears amounting to anywhere between Rs 10,000 crore and Rs 12,000 crore.

The veterans are, however, not happy as they argue that their demand has been accepted only in a diluted form. Their main concerns centre around extending the benefits to premature retirees, annual revision of pensions as against the five-yearly review granted by the government and mode of re-calculation of pensions. Another sticking point is the government's decision to set up a single-member judicial committee to look into various aspects of OROP and submit its report in six months. The veterans have demanded that the panel have five members, including three ex-servicemen, with a one-month deadline for the submission of the report.

The implementation of the pension scheme is expected to benefit more than 30 lakh defence pensioners, including six lakh widows.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

ECONOMIC TIMES, SEP 8, 2015

Ministries to send advanced copy of cabinet notes to Cabinet Secretariat

As per existing instructions, the draft cabinet notes are being furnished to Prime Minister's Office at the stage of inter-ministerial consultation itself.

NEW DELHI: All ministries have been directed to send an [advanced copy](#) of draft cabinet [notes](#) to [Cabinet Secretariat](#) in order to avoid delay in getting their approval as well as to improvise on the quality of such notes.

As per existing instructions, the draft cabinet notes are being furnished to Prime Minister's Office at the stage of inter-ministerial consultation itself.

"In the same light, it has now been decided that the ministries and departments send an advanced copy of the draft cabinet note to the Cabinet Secretariat also at the time when it is circulated to other ministries or departments for comments," the Cabinet Secretariat said in a directive issued to all secretaries of central government departments seeking "strict compliance".

The move is aimed at checking delay in processing these notes for the approval of cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

It follows after the Cabinet Secretariat found that cabinet notes were "procedurally deficient" and lacked desired standard and quality.

In order to make the notes conceptually clear, lucid, well-organised and facilitate smooth decision making during cabinet deliberations, a set of instructions have been compiled.

However, the Cabinet Secretariat had mentioned in its earlier directive as well that some of the notes are not just procedurally deficient but also lack the desired standard and quality in the content.

All secretaries were then asked to give "personal attention" to preparation and finalisation of cabinet notes so that only defect-free notes are forwarded to Cabinet Secretariat and the Prime Minister's Office.

PUBLIC SECTOR

ASIAN AGE, SEP 8, 2015

ESOP as variable pay for PSU staff

State-owned companies may soon have to offer only Employee Stock Options (ESOPs) instead of cash as part of variable pay to staff if a proposal mooted by the finance ministry goes through. The Department of Disinvestment under the ministry has suggested to the Department of Public Enterprises that the Performance Related Pay (PRP) to PSU executives be in the form of ESOP so that employees can become part owners of the companies and have stake in their growth. PRP is a variable component of the remuneration paid to the executives of CPSEs.

“We have suggested to the DPE that PSUs may be asked to offer ESOPs to make up for the variable pay component of the staff,” a source said. Currently, the concept of giving ESOP as part of PRP is optional. A portion of the PRP can be paid in the form of ESOPs if employees opt for it. “We want more retail holding in PSUs. By giving ESOPs as variable pay package both the employee and the company benefit,” the source said.

Explaining the benefits of ESOPs, the source said that the employee would think he/she is part owner of the company and would want to work for the better profitability of the company. If employees get equity in the PSU, that would help increase retail holding in the company.

In June last year, market regulator Sebi had made it mandatory for PSUs to ensure at least 25 per cent public shareholding within three years. If the ESOP plan goes through, then meeting the 25 per cent public holding limit would get easier for the DoD as the present volatility in markets has somewhat dampened the disinvestment programme of the government.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

PIONEER, SEP 8, 2015

SPACE SCIENCE HAS IMPORTANT ROLE IN GOOD GOVERNANCE: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said space science has an important role in achieving good governance and younger generation should be involved in creating lot of ideas in science and technology. Modi was delivering a speech at a special session at the National Meet on Promoting Space Technology based Tools and Applications in Governance and Development.

“Let us involve the younger generation and take their ideas. The new generation is very techno-savvy and we will get lot of ideas. Our main challenge would be on how to make maximum use of technology and ensure it reaches the poorest of poor,” said Modi.

The Prime Minister was given a series of presentations over nearly two hours by senior officials on the outcomes of various theme sessions during the meet. In his remarks at the special session, the Prime Minister emphasised the need for new initiatives in all areas of governance, using space technology applications. He recalled his visit to ISRO in June 2014, when he had urged ISRO to work on this, and expressed satisfaction that the number of Government departments using space technology had gone up substantially since the time of that visit.

“The PM gave a number of illustrations on possible applications of space technology for the benefit of the common man: location of fish catches for fishermen, irrigation infrastructure for Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, tracking of illegal mining etc,” said the statement issued by the PIB.

The Prime Minister called upon all Ministries of the Union Government to identify at least one space application in their work within the calendar year 2015. Modi recalled the eminent space scientist Vikram Sarabhai’s words on the costs of India’s space programme, who had said that no effort should be spared in the objective of fulfilling the needs of India’s common man.

SOCIAL SCIENCES

STATESMAN, SEP 11, 2015

Democracy's Spring

Asoke Basu

In the month of August, free India renewed its commitment to the democratic form of government. The label, 'democracy', in theory, reflects a type of nation-state where all men and women have equal rights without hereditary or arbitrary difference in rank and privilege. Italy's famed patriot Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) defined the promise of democracy as 'progress of all through all, under the leadership of the best and wisest'.

The Utilitarian Jeremy Bentham thought of the function of government in economic behavioural terms. In *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), he observed that 'the business of government is to promote the happiness of the society by punishing or rewarding'. Seven decades later in 1861 in *Considerations on Representative Government*, John Stuart Mill cautioned that 'government is a problem to be worked like any other question of business'.

Liberal democracy is rule by the people, who freely choose to form a government, in which the sovereign power and authority reside collectively with the citizens. The Constitution enshrines the legal-rational power to the courts to enforce these rights. In the 'direct' form of democracy, citizens petition the state to redress a grievance. In a 'representative' democracy, voters choose to elect a candidate who best represents her or his interest.

In either case, unlike autocrats, monarchs, or theocrats, the destiny is in the minds of the free people of the land; they hold the supreme authority on the choice of which party and candidate should govern the nation. The term 'government' implies the action of exercising continuous and due exercise of authority over the action of subjects.

Democratic government has four key characteristics. The first attribute is the way power is distributed and negotiated by parliamentary or congressional bodies, which are independent of Presidents and Prime Ministers. The second distinctive trait is its regular free and fair election of representatives, where the adult population (as legally defined) has the right to vote. The third is the responsibility of other divisions of government to the Parliament or legislature. The fourth goal is to protect individual rights, security, and freedoms involving all citizens.

In the current frustration over the messy business of reaching consensus in a democratic form of government, we must remember that constitutional democracy arrived late in

history. Stable democracy is nurtured over time by the norms of society, where the culture of civility steadily cements the people to a common core of thought and consciousness. One of two gifts that democratic thinking offers us is freedom from the tyranny of homogeneity. The other is the firm belief that in reality, we need not fear human diversity because truth emerges from the many. International comparative studies suggest that the rise of civic norms and attitudes in terms of spiritual humanism, formal education, and the emergence of an indigenous business class, promote the habit of democracy.

Liberal democracies encourage, rather than scuttle, public discourse. The aim here is that by appealing to a higher authority, rival claims of truth are allowed to compete and accommodate each other. Humanity has always taken measures to resolve multiple and conflicting claims of truth, none of which can be decisively established. Pragmatic communities tolerate each other to a fault by appealing to ordinary people to judge their ethical and progressive conclusions.

The major objective of a sustainable democracy is to seek institutional justice. More precisely, the sovereign virtue of a nation-state is to guarantee and deliver the common good for all. Goodness is expressed through the core idea of humanity and is applied in policies to social institutions. Essentially, the aim of the state and society is to build trust, because diversity in terms of biological and institutional preferences obliges us all to admit that complexity and development are connected. Trust and obligation are to a society what a contract is to an economy.

Democratic space can be located by appealing to bonds that sustain the communitarian principles and practices. Often a value-driven approach has a tendency to become sedentary and abstract; it tends to hide our essential truths and needs. From this approach, justice is a process, an instrument that best serves when we judge people and deal with them as a whole. Moral ecology of good is integral to a sound communitarian argument.

Democracy is deemed good when it meets two objectives. First, it must be a practical and workable concept that meets human needs for food and shelter, as well as health care, education, and the alleviation of poverty. Second, justice must meet the needs and wants of a diverse community. State development includes both value and money. One of the consequences of this is the capacity of individuals and households to develop trust in the state.

Of late, identifying institutional conditions and policies that foster development and mobility is proving to be a tedious task. Attempts are being made to link parochial tensions and religious disturbances to past history. Some observers even go so far as to link the cause of the lack of institutional growth of economically poor nations to global tension and terrorism. They argue that the varying socio-cultural origins of civilizations and religions are curbing rights and obligations.

The sociology of building a just state cannot be seen from a monochromatic lens. In reality, ethnic groups and religions often construct a complex narrative. Far from being idyllic, the hybrid cultures and peoples can both compete and cooperate with one another. The birth of 'New' nations arrived at a different pace. The United States of America is the first (1776) to form a constitutional state. India established a Constitutional Republic in 1952.

India's prospect of social mobility and economic growth has become the yoga-mat for intellectual perambulation. The key question for India's prospect for a sustainable democracy is whether or not civil society and vernacular voices provide objective insights in fashioning tools and policies for democratization. Can the civil society which the early reformers studiously envisaged both as an ethical and a material force open up public space which could construct a stable political institution; grant legal rights to all citizens and finally; organize the political parties in a manner that all party organizers would shy away from 'permanent' campaigns'?

Today's India is inching towards an oligarchy where a small number of corporations, families and politicians control the nation's hidden wealth. Public money, mostly extracted by the Government from the middle-income households, is subsidizing private profit-making ventures. Crony culture can no longer be the patrimony of an elite class; India's promise of a liberal democratic society has a moral obligation to make institutions accessible to all through education and through promoting and supporting the arts, literature and other expressions. A fair distribution of resources can only begin when central, state and local bureaucrats do not misuse privilege and misappropriate money.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

STATESMAN, SEP 15, 2015

Electors, elected need to share responsibilities for progress: Prez

Both electors and elected representatives need to share responsibilities and do their jobs to move smoothly and unhindered the two wheels of the progress and development, President Pranab Mukherjee said here on Monday.

He was speaking at a function to mark 151st year of the Nagpur Mahanagarपालिका.

"One of the most complex problems of India's development today is the management of organisation and we have to solve the problem on this very challenging issue in a very short span of time," Mukherjee said.

He said if we look at the history of the urbanisation in other countries, it has taken place over the decades, sometimes over centuries.

"After 65 years of independence people have already started questioning how long we have to wait," the President said.

If the urbanisation takes place at the current rate and if we have to stabilise it at a reasonable level then this poses very serious challenges, which will have to be addressed collectively by the people and the representatives of the people, he said.

"One of the very basic principles of the self-governance, it means the responsibility of not only the elected representatives but sharing the responsibility between the elector and the elected. Both have the responsibility, both have to share and do their job. Then the two wheels of the progress and development will move smoothly and unhindered," Mukherjee said.

He said even in the modern India with the evolution, change of systems, attitude and approach, Nagpur city has been one of the catalyst agents of transformations in a peaceful manner.

Citing the city's cosmopolitan culture, Mukherjee said there is no room of intolerance, non-cooperation and hostility.

"We have to live together, we have to grow together, we have to develop together and we have to work together to achieve this objectives. That is the lesson of metropolitanism," the President said.

Nagpur Mahanagarpalika began as Nagpur Municipality on June 18, 1864 and the elections were held on September 24 the same year.

Nagpur has also been chosen as one of the smart cities by the Centre.

Maharashtra Governor C Vidyasagar Rao, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis (who hails from the city and had been Mayor of the Municipality here), Union Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Minister Nitin Gadkari and Nagpur Mayor Pravin Datke, among other dignitaries were present during the function.

WATER SUPPLY

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, SEP 15, 2015

Water connections to a single property increased to 10: Delhi Jal Board

In a move aimed at bringing more people in its network as well as reduce 'non-revenue water', Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has decided to increase from six to 10 the number of connections it will give to a single property.

In a move aimed at bringing more people in its network as well as reduce 'non-revenue water', Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has decided to increase from six to 10 the number of connections it will give to a single property.

A notification regarding this move was issued by the civic body on September 10, DJB said today.

Earlier any property having more than six dwelling units or flats were provided only a bulk water connection and the people there were required to have an underground tank with boosting arrangement to supply water to the upper floors, DJB said in a statement.

“This decision of Delhi Jal Board will bring a big relief to the people as well as help DJB to bring more consumers in its water network and reduce non-revenue water. As per the existing Delhi Water and Sewer (Tariff and Metering) Regulations, 2012 provisions, the Board sanctions only single bulk water connection to a single property which has more than six flats.

“Any such property requiring more than six individual water connections was to have an underground tank with boosting arrangement to supply water to the upper floors. Raising the limit of ten connections will benefit lakhs of people,” it said.

DJB also said that the decision was taken on account of the long-standing demand of consumers living in multi-storey flats numbering more than six and having no underground tank.

“A lot of properties in the city have been converted into multi story flats requiring more than six water connections and without any provision of an underground tank.

“These individual flat owners have installed water connections and their applications were pending with DJB for regularisation of water connections,” it said.

WOMEN

ECONOMIC TIMES, SEP 10, 2015

Widespread job restrictions on Indian women: World Bank report

In addition, there are no laws to protect women against sexual harassment in public places, protections which exist in 18 other economies around the world.

WASHINGTON: Indian women face widespread restrictions for jobs though things are changing which is reflected in some recent decisions like quota for women on corporate boards of publicly-listed companies, according to a new [World Bank](#) report on South Asia's largest economy.

In a report released today, the World bank said in India [job restrictions](#) remain widespread, with women not allowed to work in mining or in jobs that require lifting weights above a certain threshold or working with glass.

The law also prohibits women from jobs "involving danger to life, health or morals".

In addition, there are no laws to protect women against [sexual harassment](#) in public places, protections which exist in 18 other economies around the world, the bank said in the report 'Women, Business and the Law 2016'.

At the same time, the bank said in the last two years, India undertook one reform in the areas covered by the report.

By introducing a law mandating at least one female member on the board of publicly-listed companies, India became the only developing country and one of only nine in the world to mandate female inclusion on corporate boards, it said.

"I would say, on the question of where some of the job restrictions are coming from in India, actually, one of the main sources that we see is legacy legislation. And by that, I mean something like the Factories Act, which actually came from the British," said [Sarah Iqbal](#), the report's lead author.

"You see the same act in India, you see it in Pakistan, you see it in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and it basically restricts the type of work that women can do. And what's even more interesting is Jamaica has almost the same act, the Factories Act, which they just reformed in the last two years, and they removed the restrictions on women's work in certain jobs and factories," she said.

In India, while they're debating it at the state level in certain states, it still exists, the World Bank official said.

"But one thing that India has done in the past few years which we found very heartening

is India is the first developing economy that has a quota for women on corporate boards for publicly-listed companies," Iqbal said.

"The quota in India is at least one woman has to be a member of the corporate board. Every other economy that we see is actually a developed economy. So, India is the first developing economy to do this," she said.