

**LIST OF NEWSPAPERS COVERED**

**ASIAN AGE**

**BUSINESS STANDARD**

**ECONOMIC TIMES**

**HINDU**

**HINDUSTAN TIMES**

**INDIAN EXPRESS**

**PIONEER**

**STATESMAN**

**TELEGRAPH**

**TIMES OF INDIA**

**TRIBUNE**

## CONTENTS

<b>CIVIL SERVICE</b>	<b>3-8</b>
<b>DEFENCE, NATIONAL</b>	<b>9-10</b>
<b>DISASTERS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>12-14</b>
<b>ELECTIONS</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>ENTERPRISES</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS</b>	<b>17-20</b>
<b>HEALTH SERVICES</b>	<b>21-22</b>
<b>LABOUR</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>LIBRARIES</b>	<b>24-26</b>
<b>PARLIAMENT</b>	<b>27-31</b>
<b>POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>32-35</b>
<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>36-38</b>
<b>POVERTY</b>	<b>39-42</b>
<b>TOURISM</b>	<b>43-44</b>

## CIVIL SERVICE

PIONEER, AUG 12, 2015

### **IAS PROBATIONERS TO BE GROOMED AT CENTRE FIRST**

Newly-appointed probationers of the Indian Administrative Services (IAS) will now have to first serve the Central Government for some time before they are sent to join their parent cadre. Sources in Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) said that the order means that an IAS officer will first serve in Union Ministries or departments and establishments as Assistant Secretaries instead of being posted as deputy collectors in a district of their parent cadre.

“The move to serve first at the Centre will give them a larger perspective and they will comprehend as to which way the nation is thinking and desires to move on. There has to be some changes towards progress,” said a DoPT official.

As per the service rules, IAS officers start their career in the State administration at the sub-divisional level. They are entrusted with the law and order task of the city along with general administration and development work of the areas under their charge. The Prime Minister Office (PMO) and the Union Ministers can, however, at any point of time appoint them as their Private Secretaries or Officers on Special Duty (OSDs) to Union Ministers.

The move to reserve the services of IAS probationers is also being done in view of the shortage of IAS officers at the Centre. Against the requirement of 1,350 IAS officers at the Centre on deputation scheme, States have sent only 650 officers. In a directive in November 2014, the Government had asked States to send more IAS officers to the Centre by 2015. The DoPT has written to all States asking them to address the Centre’s concern.

“The Centre cannot run with such a low number of bureaucrats when the Prime Minister has tasked all the Ministries and departments with rolling out new schemes and measures for holistic development of the country. The Centre has also sought adequate women IAS officers and also those from reserved categories to the Centre to meet the shortage,” added the DoPT official.

Sources in the Ministry said that the idea behind giving Central deputation to a young IAS officer is also to groom them for future challenges and broaden their perspective. “A fresh IAS officer will earn a great deal of administrative experience while serving at the Centre. This will come handy for him when he goes back to serve the State,” said a senior office.

However, former Election Commissioner SY Quraishi criticised the move. “If there is any such attempt, then there must be some logic within the Government to overrule the convention practiced for over 60 years. As probationers only new appointees get to know

the grassroots level job like who are tehsildar, patwari and what are their role. Directly starting from the Centre may be suicidal,” Quraishi, a retired IAS of 1971 said.

ECONOMIC TIMES, AUG 14, 2015

### **No proposal to increase IAS, IPS officers retirement age: Government**

NEW DELHI: There is no proposal to increase the retirement age of [IAS](#) and [IPS](#) officers, the government said today.

"There is no such proposal for enhancement of retirement age of IAS and IPS officer and to bring the same at par with the retirement age of Judges of Supreme Court and High Courts," Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions [Jitendra Singh](#) told Rajya Sabha in a written reply.

An officer of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) retires after attaining the age of 60 years.

HINDU, AUG 8, 2015

### **Nod for time-bound pay scales to DANICS officers**

The Delhi Cabinet on Friday approved the grant of time-bound pay scales to DANICS officers who have completed 13 years, 18 years and 21 years of service.

DANICS is a civil service whose officers are deputed to serve the middle and senior level administration of Government of NCT of Delhi and Union Territories like Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Daman & Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

However, they serve most part of their service in Delhi and are posted to the Union Territories once or twice before they are inducted into the Indian Administrative Services (IAS).

While DANICS officers are eligible for promotion to IAS after completing eight years of continuous service, it has actually been taking on an average 27-28 years for promotion to the IAS.

This had resulted in stagnation and consequently dissatisfaction among the members of the service.

The government of Delhi, it said in a statement, was of the view that officers dissatisfied with their service conditions can hardly be expected to perform well and, accordingly, had decided to grant time-bound pay scales to all DANICS officers as stipulated in service rules after completion of 13 years, 18 years and 21 years of service.

### **Decision welcomed**

Welcoming the Delhi Cabinet's decision, the Directorate of Information and Publicity (DIPRA) demanded justice to the ex-cadre information officers and officials of DIPRA by removing the anomaly of pay scales of these officials.

Due to what it called the "selective approach of the administration", the pay scales of DIPRA officers were left out and scales of information officers is now equivalent to a head clerk employed by the Delhi government.

ECONOMIC TIMES, AUG 11, 2015

### **A K Srivastava named new Sikkim Chief Secretary**

GANGTOK: [A K Shrivastava](#) was named the new [Chief Secretary](#) of [Sikkim](#) in place of R Ongmu.

Shrivastava became the Chief Secretary to the state government from August 1, this year.

BUSINESS STANDARD, AUG 12, 2015

### **Govt to train junior IAS, IFS officers to prepare irrigation plans**

Officers will be assigned one district, where they have to spend a month to understand irrigation needs

---

#### Sanjeeb Mukherjee

The Centre has decided to specially train officers in the three junior-most batches of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Forest Service (IFS) in preparation and execution of district [irrigation](#) plans. The training is to start from Monday.

Officials in the know said the proposal was discussed at a high-level meeting on the [Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana](#) under the chairmanship of Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) some time ago and has the full backing of PMO.

The junior officers will be assigned a district of their choice, where they will have to spend at least one month, interact with all stakeholders and prepare a district irrigation plan, which could be used at a primary source at a later stage.

#### **PLAN OF ACTION**

- Centre to train three junior-most batches of [IAS](#) and [IFS](#) officers on irrigation plans, under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana
- Officers would need to spend a month in a district and interact with all stakeholders for preparing these plans
- All the plans would then have to be integrated through a digital platform for vetting
- State governments have also been directed to release

administrative and forest officers under its cadre for the training

- Each batch would comprise 3-4 officers from each of the services and training would start from August 24

The draft plans so prepared will then be integrated at a common platform to see and understand whether the process adopted for preparing these plans is correct.

The Central government has also instructed the states to associate its civil services and forest services officers with this training.

The first batch of training is expected to start around August 24 at the National Water Academy in Pune. This will be for the junior officers from the western region comprising Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa.

Thereafter, junior officers posted in other states will also undergo this training. “The basic idea that junior officers should be well-versed with the preparation of a district irrigation plan which is vital component in the success of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Yojana,” a senior officer said.

He said an ideal district irrigation plan should map all the available water resources in the area, the quantum of rainfall it receives, the kind of crop grown and their water requirement, number of tube well, distance between the nearest big water resources and nearest field and all other details, which is considered relevant for ensuring all-weather irrigation to the area.

“In reality, such kind of approach has perhaps never been tried in India, so preparing a district irrigation plan seems to be a good idea, as water resources are mostly local, while the main source of irrigation which is ground water, is also highly localised. But, involvement of the local community is very essential in preparation of district irrigation and not just training of IAS and IFS officers,” Himanshu Thakkar, coordinator of South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People (SANDRP), an informal network of organisations and individuals working on issues related with the water sector told Business Standard.

He said the irrigation plans should not be restricted to the districts alone, but should instead go deep down right up to the village and block levels.

The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchae Yojana, launched last month with an allocation of Rs 50,000 crore spread over a period of five years, seeks to amalgamate three major ongoing irrigation programmes —the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme of the ministry of water resources, the Integrated Watershed Management Programme of the Ministry of Rural Development and the National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture of the Department of Agriculture.

The scheme would be implemented in a project mode, which means that the district administration draws up their own irrigation plan with the help of district forest officers, bank officers and other departments. The state irrigation plan will be an amalgamation of all the district plans.

In Budget 2015-16, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley allocated Rs 5,300 crore for the same. Out of this, Rs 1,500 crore would be spent by the rural development ministry to develop rainwater structures, small check dams and contour buildings under the watershed management programme, Rs 2,000 crore by the water resources ministry for ongoing projects under the accelerated irrigation benefit programme and also for construction of field canals and another Rs 1,800 crore will be spent by the agriculture department developing water harvesting structures, etc.

According to official data, till 2011-12, around 46.34 per cent of India's net sown area of around 140.80 million hectares was under irrigation.

PMKSY funds would be given to states, as 75 per cent grant by the central government and the remaining 25 per cent share is to be borne by the state government. For the north-eastern region and hilly states, the funding pattern would be 90:10.

INDIAN EXPRESS, AUG 11, 2015

### **IFS officer allowed to join IPS after a year**

Siddharth Kumar Ambedkar, a 2012-batch IFS officer, had appeared for the 2013 civil services (mains) exam and informed his course director at the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy in Dehradun.

### **Amitabh Sinha**

An Indian Forest Service (IFS) probationer was allowed to join the Indian Police Service (IPS) a full year after he qualified the civil services examination 2013, the results of which were declared last year.

Siddharth Kumar Ambedkar, a 2012-batch IFS officer, had appeared for the 2013 civil services (mains) exam and informed his course director at the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy in Dehradun. But his result was withheld by the UPSC following an anonymous complaint that he had violated the exam rules and IFS probation rules.

As the UPSC issued a showcause notice, higher authorities in the forest department agreed he had violated rules that state that “no probationer in the service shall, during the period of training at IGNFA, Dehradun, appear in either the civil services exam or any other exam for appointment to the central or state service by open competitive exam”.

Ambedkar argued he had informed his course director but did not get any reply. However, he was denied a no-objection certificate from the Environment Ministry. Ambedkar moved the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT), but the decision again went against him. Ambedkar then petitioned Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar, who reportedly asked the director general (forests) whether the rule could be changed. Javadekar directed that Ambedkar’s case be cleared even as the change of rule was examined. Accordingly, a no-objection certificate was sent to UPSC, and Ambedkar’s result was announced.

The case has opened the possibility of quashing the rule that bars IFS probationers from taking the exam.



## DEFENCE, NATIONAL

TIMES OF INDIA, AUG 12, 2015

**Armed forces losing an officer a day to early retirement**

[Yogesh Kumar](#)

DEHRADUN: For over three years now, one officer from India's defence forces has quit each day. The largest number of officers seeking early retirement from the armed forces belong to the Army.

There is, however, a silver lining. The numbers of officers seeking early retirement has shown a declining trend. These facts were shared by defence minister Manohar Parrikar in a written response to a query raised in Parliament by BJP MP from Haridwar, Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. Raising a question in Parliament, Nishank sought to know details of vacancies in the armed forces. In March this year, answering a query raised in the Rajya Sabha, Parrikar had said that the armed forces faced shortage of over 11,000 officers.

In his written response to Nishank, the defence minister said that in 2012, 564 officers opted to exit before their set date of retirement; in 2013, 448 officers sought early retirement, and in 2014 the number was 319. So far, in 2015, 97 officers have opted for premature retirement. That in effect is more than an officer retiring prematurely every day in the last three and half years.

The highest number of those seeking to quit were from the Army, at 664 between 2012 and 2015.

Retired Lt General KK Khanna, sharing his concern over the large number of early exits from the armed forces, said, "Dissatisfaction simmers when officers are overlooked for promotion. There are fewer vacancies in the higher ranks, and only those high in merit have assured career progression. This sometimes nudges officers to quit and pursue something else."

Khanna, a former commandant of the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, said this was compounded by the fact that there is these days no dearth of opportunities for officers wishing to pursue a career, for instance, in the aviation industry or merchant navy. "Dissatisfaction, however, is not confined to the mid-level, colonel-rank officers. It is present even among higher levels," Khanna said.

Besides the aviation sector and the merchant navy, officers with experience in the armed

forces also find attractive opportunities in the corporate sector and industry, fuelling premature retirement plans. Retired Brigadier AN Acharya said: "The glory and charm of service in the armed forces has taken a hit for many reasons. Even if one were to retire as general, there are many things one loses out on, in the end. Those who still have time in their favour, at the middle of their careers, might opt for a corporate job or pursue education to re-skill themselves for entry into the service sector or business."

The defence minister, in his response to the status of vacancies in the armed forces, said the Army has 9,642 vacant officer positions and 23,909 vacancies among other ranks. Navy has 1,179 officer vacancies and 11,653 vacant slots for sailors; the Air Force has 6,664 airmen slots vacant. The minister's response showed that over 68,331 recruits were under training for the Army; there are 2,247 trainees set to enter the Navy, and 6,152 the Air Force.

### **Times View**

Such a huge number of officers quitting the armed forces on a regular basis should ring alarm bells. When they leave, a lot of time, effort and money spent on training them goes at least partly waste. The forces need to figure out a way of lowering the attrition rate. The problem must be thoroughly studied and ways found to incentivise people to stay. After all, what is at stake is no less than the defence of the nation.

## **DISASTERS**

HINDUSTAN TIMES, AUG 8, 2015

### **Centre for disaster research to come up at JNU**

Jawaharlal Nehru University has inked an MoU with the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) for setting up a Centre for Excellence in Disaster Research and Resilience Building at the university.

"The memorandum of understanding was signed yesterday between Santosh Kumar, Executive Director, NIDM and SK Sopory, JNU Vice Chancellor in the presence of Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju," an official statement said.

The minister said that the collaboration of both the institutions will provide opening to the students into a new emerging research area and positions in administration from district to higher levels and will have the potential of generating a new breed of disaster management professionals.

According to the MoU, NIDM will be providing financial assistance amounting to Rs 4.14 crore to JNU over a three-year period from 2015-16 to 2017-18 to start MPhil and PhD programmes in disaster management for the first time in India.

"The objective of this MoU is to initiate research, teaching, capacity and manpower development within a trans-disciplinary framework which brings science to communities in a manner that it is made usable and understandable to communities in fragile ecosystems," the statement said.

The activities under this MoU would be to build community resilience through better preparedness, legal and governance reforms, enhanced capacity for early detection and warning systems, absorption of indigenous wisdom in administrative systems, resonating vulnerabilities of various kinds, remote sensing and GIS (Geographical Information System)-based mitigation efforts and environmental capacity enhancement of local governance.

"Academically the collaborative nature of this programme would bring focus down to local communities and resource conservation at the grassroot levels. NIDM will move a step forward towards its goal of becoming a deemed university with this collaboration," it added.

## EDUCATION

INDIAN EXPRESS, AUG 8, 2015

### **A new task for the President: 'Teaching' govt school students**

The Delhi government is also in talks with several prominent persons, including CEOs and celebrities, to involve them in similar initiatives in government schools.

For students of Dr Rajendra Prasad Sarvodaya Vidyalaya at the President's Estate, Teachers' Day this year will be a memorable one, as they will get an opportunity to interact with the President himself on that day.

At the behest of Delhi Chief Minister [Arvind Kejriwal](#) and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, President Pranab Mukherjee is all set to take on a brand new role, that of a teacher at the vidyalaya, on the eve of September 5 this year.

“For the first time in the history of India, as a great honour to the teachers of the country, the President of India will be interacting, as a teacher, with the students of Delhi government schools on the eve of Teachers' Day 2015. Education is the single-most important priority for the new government of NCT of Delhi,” said Sisodia.

The Delhi government is also in talks with several prominent persons, including CEOs and celebrities, to involve them in similar initiatives in government schools, he said.

The President and other “renowned personalities” would interact with students in government schools as part of 'Be a Teacher', an initiative of the Delhi government to “boost the morale of the teachers and students”, said Sisodia.

“The Delhi government has already got the consent of many such personalities,” said the deputy chief minister.

The deputy CM also spoke about the ‘CM super talented scheme’, launched by the government, for science students in class 11 and 12. These students will receive government scholarships — to pay for their coaching classes — to prepare for entrance tests to the IITs and medical colleges.

“We will select a total of 400 students this year, 150 from class 12 and 250 from class 11, through a test. We have tied up with coaching institutes like FITJEE, Akaash and others. We have a budgetary allocation for this. Next year, we will have the same scholarships for other streams also,” elaborated Sisodia.

HINDU, AUG 10, 2015

**Recognised colleges need not seek MCI nod to increase seats**

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

**Apex court settles legal question worrying many institutions**

Once a medical qualification granted by an institution has been recognised by the Union government, there is no need to seek fresh recognition from the Medical Council of India every time the admission capacity for the course is increased, the Supreme Court has held.

Settling a legal question worrying colleges in the medical education field, a Bench of Justices Anil R. Dave and Kurian Joseph held that to increase the admission capacity of a medical course already recognised under the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956, permission from the Union government alone was required.

“Once a medical college is recognised under Section 11 of the Act along with medical qualification, thereafter, for increase in the admission capacity in any course of study or training that is recognised under Section 11 of the Act, only permission from the Central government as per the scheme under Section 10A of the Act is required,” the judgment authored by Justice Kurian observed.

“No person shall establish a medical college and no medical college shall open a new or higher course of study or training for the award of any recognised medical qualification and no person shall increase the admission capacity in any course of study or training, except with the prior permission of the Central government obtained in accordance with the scheme provided in the Section (10A),” the court held.

The judgment came on a writ petition filed by the Chennai-based Sree Balaji Medical College and Hospital. It directed the government to process the institution's request to increase seats for its MBBS course from 150 to 250 for the academic session of 2015-2016 and pass orders within two weeks.

The court referred to the case of two other medical institutions, S.P. Medical College, Rajasthan, and Maulana Azad Medical College, Delhi, which were permitted to increase their seats.

## ELECTIONS

BUSINESS STANDARD, AUG 14, 2015

### **Sh. Om Prakash Rawat Takes Over as New Election Commissioner of India**

Sh. Om Prakash Rawat has assumed charge as the new Election Commissioner (EC) of India today. Born on December 02, 1953, Sh. Rawat (62), a former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the 1977 batch retired from active service in December, 2013. He served at various posts in Madhya Pradesh and at Centre including the post of Secretary, Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, Department of Public Enterprises from 3rd April, 2012 to 31st December, 2013.

Under his tenure at Election Commission, there would be general election to State legislative assemblies of Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Puducherry, Assam, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur, Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh. Besides this Presidential as well as Vice-Presidential elections would also be held under his tenure.

## ENTERPRISES

ASIAN AGE, AUG 8, 2015

### **Will integrate services into e-business: Centre**

The commerce and industry ministry will integrate all the central and state government services to the e-biz platform in a bid to make the country an easy place to do business, a top official said. The e-biz portal provides one-stop clearance platform for investment proposals.

“We have created an e-biz platform where we are integrating (central and state services). 14 services of Government of India have been integrated. But over the period of time, we will integrate all the state and central government services so that there is one paper and one point of payment to make India an easy and simple place to do business,” Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) secretary Amitabh Kant said here at the the 10th National Quality Conclave.



## FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

HINDU, AUG 10, 2015

**New financial code: a faulty road map**

T. C. A. SHARAD RAGHAVAN

While countries in the West are giving their central banks more authority and regulatory powers, India is proposing a system to reduce the RBI to a shadow of itself.

Amid all the talk about a New Financial Code (NFC) and the hullabaloo about the government's apparent attempt to curtail the powers of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), some deeper questions seem to have been missed: what is the exact aim of the proposed [Indian Financial Code](#) (IFC)? What is it trying to fix? Is a need for a fix at all?

Much of the discussion has revolved around the proposed creation of a [Monetary Policy](#) Committee (MPC), which is to be responsible for all matters relating to monetary policy. The argument in favour of an MPC is that: it is standard practice worldwide to have a committee in charge of monetary policy. So far, India has given that responsibility to the RBI and, in particular, to its Board of Directors.

And, though there is no specific provision for this in the RBI Act, the Board has, by and large, entrusted the RBI Governor with that responsibility. So, to the media and to the lay public, the fact that the RBI has cut or raised interest rates is synonymous with the Governor himself doing it.

## RBI'S AUTHORITY TO GET DILUTED

The new code will render the RBI — so far a kind of first among equals among regulators — as just one of the financial agencies

### RBI IS CURRENTLY IN CHARGE OF:

- **Monetary policy**
- Financial stability
- Banking Regulation
- Regulation of Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)
- Foreign exchange management
- Deposit insurance and credit guarantee
- **Payment and Settlement Systems**

*\* Those marked in bold are the only areas RBI will handle under the new code*



*The new Monetary Policy Committee will be dominated by government nominees. RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan and Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.*

— PHOTO: RAMESH SHARMA

### Conflict of interest

The proposed MPC, composed of seven members, the majority of whom are to be nominated by the government, will take over from the RBI all aspects of monetary policy, including the setting of interest rates. This has riled up a large section of economists, bankers and central bankers. The government, they say, should not be in charge of monetary policy.

The potential for conflict of interest is vast. So far, the government has been interested in securing high growth rates, not only as an electoral plank but also as a means to finance various expenditure schemes proposed in each Budget. The RBI, on the other hand, is tasked with controlling inflation, which often accompanies high growth rates. Raising interest rates is the best tool to achieve this, but it also puts a dampener on growth.

Instituting a committee stacked with government nominees, thus, creates a conflict of interest. Should the committee try to achieve growth regardless of rising inflation, or should inflation be targeted despite slowing growth?

Much has been written on this even though it is just one of many issues. To realise the other implications, it is important to understand what exactly the RBI does. Hint: it's not just about interest rates of which the policy rate is just one.

The RBI's primary responsibility includes monetary policy. However, it is also responsible for maintaining financial stability; regulation and supervision of banks as well as of the Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs). It also accumulates and maintains India's foreign exchange reserves and works in the forex, government securities and derivatives markets. And, last but not least, it has the responsibility of handling India's public debt and currency rates, as well as heading the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC), which basically insures all bank deposits. In addition, the RBI is the highest authority when it comes to payment and settlement systems in the country.

Now, let's see what the Indian Financial Code (IFC) proposes. According to the Code, the RBI will continue to be in charge of monetary policy (via the MPC); the supervision and regulation of scheduled banks; currency management; and payments and settlements systems. There is no clarity yet on its role regarding foreign exchange reserves, but lacking any mention in the Code, the assumption is that it will retain control over them.

The Code goes on to say that the regulation and supervision of NBFCs, and activities in the forex, derivatives and government securities markets will be under a proposed 'financial authority'. This authority is to "regulate all financial services other than banking and payment systems", and will have a mix of nominated members from both the government and the RBI.

### **Regulation of NBFCs**

Incidentally, there is already some ground for conflict between the RBI and this financial authority — namely, the regulation of Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs). The IFC defines a bank as a "financial services provider" in the business of accepting deposits from the public. Under this definition, all deposit-taking NBFCs would then become banks. Who, then, would regulate them: the RBI or the financial authority?

The IFC also envisages the creation of a Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC), "a statutory agency for fostering the stability and resilience of the financial system". Other bodies being created include a Public Debt Management Agency and a Resolution Corporation, which will take over the role of the DICGC.

The Indian financial sector is governed by a host of different laws that were enacted as and when needed to form various regulatory bodies like the RBI; the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and the Insurance Regulatory and Development

Authority (IRDA). Each of these bodies has taken a while to settle down and start working efficiently. SEBI, for example, has taken about 20-25 years to be effective.

The IFC is looking to amalgamate all these agencies into the proposed financial authority that will deem the RBI — so far a kind of first among equals — as just one of the many financial agencies, with the Governor and Deputy-Governors being designated as Chairman and members.

So, while developed countries in the West are busy giving their central banks more authority and regulatory powers following the [financial crisis](#) in the late 2000s, India is proposing a system whereby the RBI is rendered a shadow of its former self. In the U.K., the Financial Services Authority (FSA) has been brought back under the Bank of England. Banking supervision in the European Union (EU) is coming under the European Central Bank (ECB), and similar moves are being made in the U.S. with regard to the Federal Reserve.

Separating banking regulation from that of other, non-bank credit institutions will create many possibilities of regulatory arbitrage, and could lead to financial instability.

Overall, the key question to be asked is: what is broken that the IFC is trying to fix? The latest Financial System Stability Assessment Update by the IMF, released back in 2013, found that “the regulatory and supervisory regime for banks, insurance, and securities markets [in India] is well developed and largely in compliance with international standards.”

Why then this need to destabilise a well-functioning system — in the process sidelining an institution that has held its own over 80 years — by repealing 19 laws and creating five new institutions?

Given the wide-ranging and cascading effect of such a policy decision, a far fuller discussion of all the issues and not just those relating to monetary policy, is needed — it cannot be driven by the hobby horses of a few.

## HEALTH SERVICES

INDIAN EXPRESS, AUG 10, 2015

### **Govt announces end of NORI certificate to docs, makes working abroad difficult**

Now, while medical students or MBBS graduates can study abroad, the no NORI certificate will force them to return and serve patients in India.

#### **Tabassum Barnagarwala**

If the government proceeds to implement the recent decision by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) to stop issuing No Obligation to Return to India (NORI) certificate to doctors, several medical students and medical practitioners' aspirations to work and settle abroad may be stemmed.

Health Minister J P Nadda, in a reply to the Rajya Sabha, stated that the NORI certificate "will not be issued in any circumstance, except for those who are above 65 years of age". The decision, the ministry said, was taken to prevent 'brain drain' from India.

A doctor wishing to live abroad for work or higher education has to compulsorily apply for NORI certificate from the MoHFW which allows them to settle abroad and continue working there. Now, while medical students or MBBS graduates can study abroad, the no NORI certificate will force them to return and serve patients in India.

"It is a good move only if it is extended to other professionals like engineers, accountants, etc. Why are IITians not forced to work under bond service? We will write a letter to the Prime Minister and Health Minister voicing our opposition," said Dr Sagar Mundada, president, Medical Association of Resident Doctors (MARD), Maharashtra.

According to Dr Jayesh Lele, President elect of Maharashtra-branch of Indian Medical Association (IMA), the low salary and poor working conditions of doctors in public sector are major reasons for their wish to work abroad where a better pay is assured.

“These are educated people who will be forced to work in India against their will. It is like bonded labour,” Lele claimed.

According to MoHFW, from 2010 to 2014 a total of 3,947 Statement of Need (SON) certificates and Exceptional Need Certificates (ENC) were issued to Indian doctors to permit them to pursue higher education in the United States of America. The count is expected to dwindle down with the latest decision.

Terming it as an “impractical solution”, Maharashtra Medical Council’s executive member Dr Shivkumar Utture said the government needs to sanction more government medical colleges and improve its management to ensure students study in the country itself. “If the medical education management is not proper, students will look for alternative solutions. Private colleges, with high fees structure, are booming,” he said.

Doctors claimed the government needs to improve the salary and posting structure to attract service in public health. In his response to the Rajya Sabha, Nadda stated that a number of steps have been taken to improve doctors’ working conditions. Some include increase in retirement age among teaching staff to 70 and enhancement of certain allowances such as non-practicing, conveyance and learning resource allowance.

## LABOUR

HINDU, AUG 13, 2015

### **Haryana pays highest wage under job scheme**

Unskilled workers in Haryana get the highest wage, under MGNREGA, in the country while those from Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are the least paid.

“Haryana is the only state to give the highest wage rate of Rs 251 per day to unskilled manual workers under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005,” a spokesman of the government said here on Wednesday.

A notification to this effect has been issued by the Union Ministry of Rural Development, according to which, unskilled workers in Nicobar are the second highest paid labourers among the states and union territories (UT) where they get Rs 241 per day, while in Chandigarh they get Rs 239 per day.

The other states and UTs where a labourer was getting more than Rs 200 per day are Kerala (Rs 229 per day), Andaman (Rs 228), Punjab and Lakshdweep (Rs 210), Goa (Rs 208), Karnataka (Rs 204) and Scheduled Areas of Himachal Pradesh (Rs 203).

Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh were among the states that were paying least to an unskilled labourer. They pay Rs 159 per day while Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh were paying Rs 161.

Unskilled workers in Bihar, Jharkhand and unscheduled areas of Himachal Pradesh were getting Rs 162 per day, in Meghalaya they were getting Rs 163 per day.

The wage rate of other states and UTs were Rs 164 per day in Jammu and Kashmir; Rs 167 in Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh; Rs 173 in Rajasthan; Rs 174 in Odisha and West Bengal; Rs 178 in Gujarat; Rs 179 in Assam; Rs 180 in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana; Rs 181 in Maharashtra and Daman and Diu; Rs 183 in Mizoram, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry; Rs 190 in Manipur; and Rs 196 in Dadra and Nagar Haveli, the spokesperson said. -- PTI

## LIBRARIES

INDIAN EXPRESS, AUG 13, 2015

### **Part 1- The Facility of Library: Not sufficient space, not requisite number of books and magazines**

A small room containing a few books locked in almirahs, six to seven chairs and a blackboard is called the 'library' in most of the city government schools, especially on the periphery.

Unlike private schools which offer an air-conditioned well-stocked library with books, magazines, newspapers and audio-visual content of important textbooks and CD ROMs as well, city government schools do not even have adequate space to provide children with books and newspapers.

A small room containing a few books locked in almirahs, six to seven chairs and a blackboard is called the 'library' in most of the city government schools, especially on the periphery. In some schools where library facilities exist, the picture is not that bright because none of them complies with the guidelines and instructions of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

At the Government School at Khuda Jassu, the computer room is being used as a library with only a few books kept in the corner. At Khuda Lahora, the library comprises six almirahs and 15 chairs; there are no newspapers or student-related magazines in the room. At Government High School, Colony no. 4, the room is too small to accommodate more than four students.

Similarly, at the schools in Hallomajra, Dhanas, Sector 38 (W), Behlana, Raipur Khurd, Karsan, Mauli Colony, Mauli Complex, Kajheri, Kaimbwala and Palsora Colony, the condition of the libraries is below standards.



These schools do not even have librarians. As a result, the school teachers are given charge of the libraries. At the schools which are run in two shifts, the students of evening shift do not get to visit the library. They also cannot get a book issued during that time since the incharge teacher leaves the school at 2 pm.

With lack of sufficient space, requisite number of books and magazines, latest editions of classifications, infrastructure, computer-assisted facilities, audio-visual material and librarians, the government school 'libraries' present a picture of official apathy. Officials of the UT Education Department say that they do not have enough funds to provide proper libraries to the government schools.

Going by the CBSE guidelines, the minimum size of the library should be 14m x 8m, spacious and fully equipped with reading room facility. It should have at least five books (other than textbooks) per student in its stock, subject to a minimum of 1,500 at the beginning. It shall not stock notes, examination guides or keys of any kind. The CBSE guidelines say that the schools should have a library period once in a week but because of the lack of adequate space and a librarian, library period is not in the time table.

Also, the guidelines say the school should subscribe to a sufficient number of newspapers and magazines, and at least 15 magazines suitable for students and professional needs of teachers should be subscribed to.

However, the number of books in government school libraries does not exceed more than 700-800 respectively, against the total strength of 1,500-3,000 students per school.

Asha Rani, principal of a Government High School, Khuda Lahora, admits that their library lacks basic facilities.

“These days, when children are not even ready to study their own syllabus books, how can we expect them to read other books? Very few students come forward to get a book issued from the library,” she says.

She adds, “We get an annual grant of Rs 30,000 for our library, out of which we spend Rs 8,000 on books and the rest on the infrastructure.”

The other school heads believe that lack of proper library facilities is a major reason for the poor reading culture in the government schools. As per the findings of NCERT survey 2014, a majority of students of class V studying in government schools in the city failed to read simple text of class III-level books.

Director Public Instructions (Schools) Kamlesh Kumar says, “I am against the fact that we should keep building up the infrastructure even when there are no users. The important issue is that teachers should come forward to encourage students to read books on a regular basis, only then can a reading culture be developed in government schools. They should conduct more book-reading competitions and sessions in schools.”

## PARLIAMENT

STATESMAN, AUG 14, 2015

### **Parliament 'guttled'**

Forget concerns over Parliament House needing major renovation - the innards of the institution have been putrefied. To dub the monsoon session a wash-out would be gross understatement. The pique-propelled confrontation that erupted in infamy during the adjournment motion in the Lok Sabha (does the House still need a formal motion for it to be adjourned?) has shattered the "system" so viciously that any future rapprochement will be mere patchwork. The key figures in the fracas - including the one that opted to stay away - might take vicarious pleasure in the nastiness exuded. That MPs in the Rajya Sabha could not stomach the online appeal from India Inc not to derail the process of governance only reconfirms the shamelessness of those who thrive off the "temple of democracy". A vast number of thinking Indians are increasingly looking beyond the political machinery for national re-vitalisation - a message that goes "above" most politicians.

There were only losers this session, it would be difficult to assess who lost more. The Congress' backing-off from its childlike "resign first, debate later" points to it having realised it was inviting isolation. At the end of the day Sushma Swaraj remained in office, the adjournment motion fell flat, and the government succeeded in projecting the Congress as stalling critical tax-reform effort only because its vice-president prefers "vice" to "presiding" over the party whose mantle he is destined to inherit. The government will have to devise unique methods to "push" the reform process - it is paying the price for parliamentary mismanagement that was exhibited even before the monsoon logjam. Not to mention a string of empty promises, its distinct communal colour, and sheer arrogance. The functioning of the Speaker was not exemplary - nor was the insulting conduct of Congress members. Jawaharlal Nehru set the standards of parliamentary propriety, Feroze Gandhi battled for unfettered speech - Rahul Gandhi ensured both legacies were denigrated.

To attempt to identify the start of a still-endless assault on "parliament" would be pointless, so too to recall some specifics of Wednesday. Not for over 30 years - not even during "Bofors" - has the Lok Sabha been reduced to such horrific personal cross-fire that took in spouses, siblings and muck-raked history. All decency was abandoned in an exercise from which few - Arun Jaitley a possible exception - emerged untainted. The Prime Minister's absence not only indicated contempt for the legislature, but left many wondering if he was making Sushma "pay" for resisting his rise to the top of the BJP tree.

Probably the only “tradition” upheld (accidentally?) was the session ending in time for members to return to their constituencies for Independence Day: contemporary society might wish for “liberation” from their non-performing netas.

TIMES OF INDIA, AUG 12, 2015

**Over 15k people, top industrialists in online drive to prod MPs to legislate**

Sidhartha & Surojit Gupta,

NEW DELHI: In probably a first-of-its-kind initiative, over 15,000 people, including the country's top industrialists have launched a signature campaign, urging lawmakers to allow Parliament to function, debate and legislate.

Since its launch on Saturday, the petition on change.org has been signed by leading industry captains such as Rahul Bajaj, Infosys founder Kris Gopalakrishnan, Pawan Munjal of Hero MotoCorp, Adi Godrej, Kiran Majumdar-Shaw, GVK's GV Sanjaya Reddy, GE India head Banmali Agrawala, and "14,000 more".

Those such as Anu Aga of Thermax, a lawmaker herself and a known critic of Narendra Modi in the post-2002 riots, have also come on the platform urging Parliament to end the logjam. The list also includes several prominent citizens such as doctors (Naresh Trehan and Ashok Seth), academicians (IIT Madras' Ashok Jhunjhunwala and IIM Ahmedabad's Piyush Kumar Sinha) and diplomats.

"Parliamentary protest are not unknown. Parliamentary stalemates can never be permanent. Parliamentary paralysis can lead to weakening of India's democracy. There is a spread of political power between the opposition and the government in Indian Parliament. Both have an important role to play. Both have responsibility to discuss and resolve political issues. Political consensus represents the best practice in Indian democracy," said the petition.

India Inc has been restless for the past few years and was hoping that the election of the Modi government would help revive the faltering economy. But the series of disruptions since last year, and the latest stalemate in Parliament prompted the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to launch the campaign. "Industry feels that you must let Parliament do its business because the impact goes beyond business and affects the people," said CII director general Chandrajit Banerjee.

The lockdown of Parliament led by the Congress party has already raised doubts over the passage of the crucial Bill to amend the Constitution and enable the Centre and the states

to roll out goods and services tax from April. The implementation has been in the pipeline for nearly a decade but political wrangling has prevented the unveiling of the most ambitious tax reform since independence. There are only two days to go for the three-week monsoon session to end and Parliament stares at the prospect of wasting crores of taxpayer money without transacting any business, other than clearing additional government spending.

"Recent events have been disheartening. They have the potential of eroding popular faith in Parliament. Perpetual disruption can never be the rule. Street demonstrations against the Chair of the Lower House are of unprecedented scale. The Lower house is without some opposition members. The upper house is perpetually adjourned. The importance of uninterrupted legislative function of the Parliament can hardly be over emphasized," the petition said.

It then went on to underline the importance of GST and its link to the country's growth. "GST has taken a long time in coming and has taken years of consensus building, and CII has time and again reiterated that this could significantly contribute to India's and States' growth. India has to grow in order to alleviate poverty and create jobs. Parliament did not get an opportunity to discuss important issues, like floods, security issues, other economic priorities, etc. It is only a debate which brings out the facts to enable people to form a fair and objective opinion on important matters."

TELEGRAPH, AUG 14, 2015

### **Playing with fire: A 21st-century version of the non-cooperation movement**

Swapn Dasgupta

The word, 'crisis', is used too casually and as a synonym for 'problem'. Since the conclusion of World War I till the abrupt collapse of the Soviet Union, the Communist parties were habituated to beginning their proclamations with the assertion that capitalism was in 'crisis', even its 'final crisis'. But the problem wasn't limited to the champions of the proletariat. In a legendary put-down of a man he disliked, a former British prime minister, Arthur Balfour, is said to have told friends, "I hear that Winston [Churchill] has written a book about himself and called it *The World Crisis*." Yet, since polemics depends in good measure on exaggeration, the overuse of 'crisis', though a shade common, is understandable.

Taking needless liberties with the language of understatement is, needless to say, a part of the Indian tradition - an extension, some would say, of the hyperbolic underpinnings of vernacular discourse. In political conversations, 'crisis' easily overshadows two other, much overused, terms of wilful exaggeration: 'fascism' and 'Emergency'. Whether this refuge in familiarity stems from intellectual laziness or a disdain for the specific is

worthy of discussion on a lazy afternoon. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that casual over-usage of loaded terms may well have contributed to a corresponding measure of non-seriousness among listeners or readers: the political equivalent of crying 'wolf' for a lark.

Given its dodgy colloquial record, I am a little wary of suggesting that India is at present confronted with a full-blown political-cum-Constitutional crisis - or, at least, a potential crisis - stemming from the non-functioning of Parliament during the entire monsoon session. The declaration of total war on the Narendra Modi government by the Congress may, hopefully, be put on hold by the time the winter session begins. In that case, the only enduring casualty of the sustained disruption of proceedings for nearly a month may well be the delay by one financial year in making the proposed goods and services tax operational - this is presuming the bill is approved by the Rajya Sabha in a normal vote and endorsed by the requisite number of state legislatures. If that happens, the political turbulence will be episodic and stop well short of becoming a systemic crisis.

However, the portents are not very encouraging. In the course of the monsoon session, an inflexible Congress clearly demonstrated that it is possible for a small, determined minority to prevent the functioning of Parliament for a sustained period and prevent legislation. The Congress has, in effect, been seen to obliterate the all-important distinction between parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition. The term, 'taking to the streets' (or, in some cases, 'mounting the barricades'), was hitherto the shorthand for trying to pressure a regime using the power of mass mobilization. Today, by 'entering the well' of the House, a determined minority has shown that it can paralyse the normal legislative business of a legitimate government.

The possibility of this extreme opposition to a regime having a multiplier effect and spreading to the states and becoming a routine feature of Indian democracy is enough to fill all citizens with dread. In 1923, the Swaraj Party led by Chittaranjan Das promised to destroy the legislatures "from within". However, its subversion of the Government of India Act of 1919 was entirely constitutional: the Swarajist legislators voted down budgets and minister's salaries in councils where it commanded a majority. Forcibly disrupting legislative proceedings using lung-power never entered its calculations.

The Swarajists played by the rules of the game - once it chose to play the game in the first place -but today the Congress has flaunted its unwillingness to accept the ground rules of parliamentary conduct. Without going into the merits of the demand for the immediate resignation of the external affairs minister, Sushma Swaraj - the associated demand for the simultaneous resignation of the chief ministers of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh is beyond the jurisdiction of the Union government - it can be said that the extreme position taken by the Congress leaves it with no honourable exit route. If Swaraj remains a minister when the next session is convened, will it persist with its disruption?

What has compounded the problem is the uselessness of present rules to deal with an abnormal situation. When the Speaker suspended 25 Congress MPs for their misbehaviour, there was a shrill charge of "murder of democracy" and an enlargement of

the protest to cover a larger Opposition bloc. The larger political message that emerged was that no action must be taken by the presiding officer to ensure that the House functions. India, it was deemed, must wait for the Gandhi family's nod of approval before Parliament returns to normal functioning.

The return of good sense may not happen in a hurry. The Congress appears to have seized upon a small opening provided by Lalit Modi to craft a maximalist strategy. In essence, it is premised on the belief that prolonged disruption of Parliament will put a question mark on the systemic stability of India, impair the economic recovery and trigger voter dissatisfaction against a prime minister who promised *achche din*. In the short-term, the Congress hopes that a climate of confrontation resulting from the washout of the monsoon session will be followed by a BJP defeat in Bihar, which, in turn, will further galvanize the Opposition into making life more miserable for the Modi government. It is an audacious putschist strategy to transform the Bharatiya Janata Party government into a lame-duck regime and, at the same time, restore the primacy of the Congress and the Gandhi family in the political milieu.

In the coming months, the prime minister's ability to regain the political momentum will be tested. The Bihar assembly elections due in October-November this year is, no doubt, important in this context. However, far more significant will be the effect on the political system of the total war approach of the Congress. So far, unlike other periods when the government and Opposition were at loggerheads, the disruption has been confined to inside Parliament. The Congress has failed to galvanize street protests against Modi.

Equally, there is nothing to suggest that Parliament as a whole is a passive rubber stamp of the executive. The successful pressure put on the Modi government to modify the terms of the land acquisition bill and even the GST by regional parties and even a section of the BJP indicates that the role of Parliament has been diminished. Had the disruption by the Congress followed a prolonged spell of parliamentary atrophy, it may have struck a responsive chord. Indeed, paralysing Parliament on the demand for Swaraj's resignation for procedural impropriety may strike many as a gross over-reaction.

A larger point to consider is the evidence of popular disgust at what has taken place in Parliament. So far, the anger is focussed on the whole political class - the memories of the BJP's disruption during United Progressive Alliance rule are still fresh. The danger is that if this pattern persists, it could have the unintended consequence of eroding the bi-partisan faith in the larger democratic process. The space for subliminal authoritarian impulses is likely to grow if the Congress chooses to confront the government with its own 21st-century version of the non-cooperation movement. In the Centre and the states, politics is becoming increasingly presidential and focussed on a strong leader - be it Modi, Jayalalithaa, Mamata Banerjee, Arvind Kejriwal or Naveen Patnaik. If legislatures are perceived to be an obstruction to governance, the demand for enhancing executive powers is certain to grow. In preferring adventurism to patience, the Congress is playing with fire. India may well be on the cusp of a real crisis.

## **POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT**

STATESMAN, AUG 13, 2015

### **Bengal's powder-keg**

The stand-off between Congress and Trinamul has overshadowed one of the worst manifestations of campus violence in West Bengal. A college student was lynched in Sabong in West Midnapore; soon thereafter a Class 12 student was dragged out of her house in Burdwan district and shot dead. The fact that her body was sent to Bolpur in neighbouring Birbhum for post mortem has deepened the mystery. Both incidents had an echo in Kolkata's Garden Reach last Saturday when protesting SFI activists were beaten up by Trinamul students.

While the Chief Minister has not said much on the two tragedies, the administration seemingly lacks the nerve to unravel the truth. The ruling political class is not merely insensitive; it has consistently accused the Congress without a shred of evidence. In the net, the twin tragedies have ignited a political slugfest, and the victims have been relegated to the footnotes. And in this exercise in passing the buck, the government has been suitably assisted by West Midnapore's Superintendent of Police. Far from a mature administrative response, several versions of the lynching have been circulated over the past 48 hours.

The Chief Minister's perception is strained - "the lynching at the Sabong college was the outcome of inter-union infighting", studiously skirting the general suspicion that the Trinamul Congress Chhatra Parishad had beaten Krishna Prasad Jana to death. Confusion has been made worse confounded with the SP taking a bow in the direction of the political masters. The camera doesn't lie; and yet the officer has denied that CCTV footage shows six of the accused. The other denial is that they were carrying lathis to attack Jana. In the net, the SP has given the suspects/accused the clean chit even before they were produced in court. Indeed, the lynching has been politicised by the Chief Minister and her administration even before the arrests were effected.

The politicisation of the lynching and shooting is reinforced with the Congress' call for a Bangla bandh on 18 August, advanced from the 20th - Rajiv Gandhi's birth anniversary. Whether or not it will be effective in view of the issue involved need not detain us here. The almost extended holiday weekend - beginning Independence Day - has its inherent attractions for middle Bengal. The beleaguered party is intent on reviving an antediluvian agitprop that long ago reached its sell-by date. It is a feeble protest against an ugly truth. Yet one could argue that an earnest follow-through by the administrations in West



Midnapore and Burdwan might not have thrown the state out of joint next week. Verily is education on a powder-keg.

TELEGRAPH, AUG 8, 2015

**Unworthy challenger: - An Opposition to despair of  
Politics and play - Ramachandra Guha**

I spent the last week of July in New Delhi, my first extended trip to that city since the general elections of 2014. It was a year and two months since the Modi government had come to power, and signs of disenchantment had set in. Scholars, executives, restaurant waiters, and security personnel all made sarcastic remarks about the prime minister and his government. Some flagged Modi's love of foreign travel, others spoke of the gap between promises made and delivery on the ground. Even long-time supporters of the Bharatiya Janata Party were critical of some of the prime minister's cabinet colleagues, for their lack of effective stewardship of the ministries under their charge

All this was not entirely unexpected. Many years ago, the sociologist, Ashis Nandy, coined what he called "The Iron Law of Indian Politics". It took, by Professor Nandy's reckoning, about a year-and-a-half for a government elected by a popular mandate to begin losing its sheen. This is what had happened with Rajiv Gandhi in 1986 (with the Shah Bano case), with V.P. Singh in 1990 (with the adoption of the Mandal Commission Report), and with P.V. Narasimha Rao in 1992 (after the demolition of the Babri Masjid). So, perhaps this Iron Law was now working itself out with the government led by Gujarat's new Iron Man as well, this time not because of one spectacularly misjudged act, but because of accumulated mistakes in several spheres.

Readers of this column might think that this growing disenchantment would instil a sense of vindication. For I have been a critic of Narendra Modi, of his socially insensitive policies as chief minister of Gujarat, and of his megalomaniac tendencies both as chief minister and as prime minister. However, any sense of vindication I may have felt was quickly stilled. For, to my surprise, I found that several friends I talked to thought that the delegitimation of the National Democratic Alliance regime had opened up a space for the renewal of the Congress under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi.

On my recent trip to Delhi, a lawyer and a scholar separately told me that Rahul Gandhi was a new man, that his long vacation had energized and motivated him, that he seemed ready, willing and able to lead the Congress out of obscurity into the warm glow of victory in 2019 (and beyond). How they arrived at these beliefs was not clear. Was it the victory of Hope over Experience, the result of living in Delhi (where reality is always distorted), or the habit of unconsciously equating all Opposition to the BJP with the Congress and then of equating the Congress with its First Family?

I am told that the senior Congress leadership takes succour in trends from the past. Indira Gandhi bounced back from defeat in 1977 to return to power three years later. Rajiv Gandhi lost in 1989, but was making a strong comeback when he was assassinated during the campaign for the 1991 elections. So, the thinking goes in and around 10 Janpath, this

time too, Rahul Gandhi will lead the Congress back to power after the current government has exhausted its goodwill.

This hope that history shall once more repeat itself wilfully ignores the facts on the ground. The organization of the Congress is in a shambles; which is why it has been losing power in state after state. Rahul Gandhi is not as charismatic as Indira or Rajiv. In any case, India has moved on from the charms and seductions of dynastic politics. Voters ask of a national leader what she or he has done, not whose child or grandchild she or he is.

God knows Indian democracy needs a credible Opposition, and a credible man or woman to lead it. For Narendra Modi is without question the most powerful prime minister since the death of Indira Gandhi. Indeed, in the extent of his command of his party and government, only Indira Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru match Modi. But whereas Nehru and Indira had to contend with outstanding leaders in Opposition, Modi does not - at least, not so far.

Some illustrations may bear out this point. Between 1947 and 1950, Nehru had to reckon with an alternative power centre within his party and government - namely, that led and represented by Vallabhbhai Patel. On critical matters (such as the choice of Congress president as well as of the president of the republic itself), Nehru had to defer to Patel's wishes. After the Sardar died in December, 1950, Nehru was unchallenged within the party and government. But not so in Parliament, where his policies were often strongly and effectively criticized - by, among others, Syama Prasad Mukherjee from the Right, and Hiren Mukherjee and A.K. Gopalan from the Left.

During the 1950s, the Jana Sangh and the Communist Party of India had charismatic and capable leaders. But in some ways the most effective political opponents of Nehru were erstwhile Congressmen. They included the populist J.B. Kripalani, the socialist Ram Manohar Lohia, and the founder of the free-market Swatantra Party, C. Rajagopalachari. Nehru took these three leaders very seriously indeed. For their patriotic credentials were as solid as his. Kripalani had joined Gandhi during his first struggle on Indian soil, in Champaran in 1917. Rajaji was known as "Gandhi's Southern Commander"; indeed, the Mahatma had gone so far as to call him "the keeper of my conscience". Lohia was a great hero of the Quit India movement. These three Opposition leaders were brilliant, articulate, and utterly incorruptible. And their criticisms of Nehru were often telling, helping tame the prime minister's ambitions and contain his arrogance.

Between 1969 and 1975, Indira Gandhi was easily as powerful in her party as Nehru had been in his pomp. Yet, she did not govern unchallenged. The Jana Sangh's Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the CPI(M)'s P. Ramamurthi and Jyotirmoy Basu were as effective in Parliament as Syama Prasad and Gopalan had once been. In the country as a whole, Morarji Desai and K. Kamaraj were widely respected for their integrity and capability, and for their fidelity to the ideals of the old, undivided Congress. Above all, there was Jayaprakash Narayan, the conscience-keeper of the nation, the man who could have succeeded Nehru as prime minister but chose to work selflessly in the conflict-ridden

borderlands of Kashmir and Nagaland and in the criminal badlands of central India instead.

It was, of course, Jayaprakash Narayan who led the countrywide opposition to Indira Gandhi in 1974-5. The prime minister jailed him, alongside all her other critics. In doing so, Indira Gandhi deeply damaged her credibility. When elections were finally called in 1977, her Congress was handed a resounding defeat.

Narendra Modi is akin to Jawaharlal Nehru in his elevated sense of self. And he is akin to Indira Gandhi in his contempt for the autonomy of public institutions. Both are dangerous tendencies in a popularly elected leader. To check and contain them, however, one needs a credible Opposition. Nehru had to match wits with the likes of Kripalani and Rajaji. Indira Gandhi was confronted and challenged by Jayaprakash Narayan. But who is there to effectively oppose Modi?

One may justly criticize the NDA government for making tall claims it cannot meet, for placing incompetent individuals in charge of crucial ministries, for allowing, even encouraging, the bigotry and sectarianism of BJP MPs and ministers, for rewarding loyalty rather than competence in administrative appointments. These are worrisome trends. Far more worrisome, however, is the state of the Opposition. The regional parties have become more and more corrupt. The growth of the once promising Aam Aadmi Party has been stalled by the vanity of its Supreme Leader. And the Congress continues to decline.

Economists say that Narendra Modi has been lucky in having the oil prices fall so fast in his first year as prime minister. But he may be luckier still in having Rahul Gandhi held up as his main challenger in politics.

## POPULATION

STATESMAN, AUG 12, 2015

### **Ballooning numbers**

**Parthasarathi Chakraborty**

India faces a formidable challenge on three counts - to stabilize the population, to generate employment opportunities, and to alleviate poverty. Policies adopted thus far have been ineffective. According to the UN, the growth of population in India has assumed an alarming proportion and, if the present trend persists, it will almost double in the next 20 years - reaching around 2.56 billion. At present the number of children per woman is 2.55. Malthus had once predicted that increasing population can impede environmental protection and development. The debate on Malthus' thesis continues to this day, and it is difficult to correlate the population increase with degradation of the environment on a national scale.

The total population of India, as in March 2015, is 1,282,741,906 (1.28 billion). The female-male ratio is 943/1000 with 51 births a minute. The country accounts for 17.31 per cent of the world's population i.e. one out of six persons in this planet lives in India. More dismal is the scenario in Pakistan, where the number of children per woman is 5.6. The situation in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and China is far from satisfactory.

The present population of China is 1.36 billion. According to the UN Commission on Population and Development, India, Pakistan and China are among the five countries that account for half the annual growth of the world's population. Indonesia and Nigeria are the other two countries. China has, however, been able to control population growth through an effective family planning programme... unlike India and several other developing countries. Obviously the population of this country will surpass that of China's within the first quarter of this millennium, if not controlled.

How does a country with burgeoning millions address such basics as food, employment, education, health and social security? What would be the significance of human rights in 2020 or even after that? The USA, Germany, Russia, the UK, France and Japan will face a population growth rate ranging from 0.2 to 1 per cent. Thailand has 1.5 per cent. In the more developed regions, the population growth will be stable at 1.2 billion, while the bloc of developing poor countries are likely to grow from 4.8 to 7.8 billion. On the other hand, the population figure of Australia is added every year to the atlas of India. Illegal migration from Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, etc. has further aggravated the problem.

India's population was 363 million in 1951-52, with an estimated food production of 52 million tons. Individual calorie consumption per day was about 1580 calories. During 1985-86, the number was 725 million. Accordingly, food production should have increased to 165 million tons to provide for an individual consumption of 2500 calories. The estimated enhanced food production as envisaged was not achieved. In fact the Green Revolution has been unable to feed the world's most populous country because of top soil erosion and certain other factors. Food surplus is an illusion in the face of population growth. For the first time since the Green Revolution, the foodgrain output has lost the race against population increase.

The developing countries are fighting a losing battle against poverty, population explosion and environmental degradation. If the population is not controlled and pragmatic action not taken immediately, how will India manage its public health programme, water resources, universal primary education, and development programmes?

To ensure rapid industrial growth, the developing countries must address three issues. First, the population will have to be stabilised if the death rate is high. Second, the death rate may be low given the improvement in public health and medical science. Correspondingly, the birth rate can increase rapidly. Third, both the birth and death rates can decline and the country will be able to stabilize its population and ensure social security and economic freedom. Unfortunately, many developing countries, including India, are not in a position to bring about a conducive environment for attaining the third step. India has remained static in the second step and this is impeding our development programmes.

According to the recent UN report (April 2015) India has the world's largest youth population - 356 million. China is second with 269 million followed by Indonesia 67 million, Pakistan 59 million, Nigeria 57 million and Bangladesh 48 million. It is, therefore, imperative for our government to harness the youth potential. The future rests on the younger generation. In order to maximize the dividend, India needs a sustainable, long and short-term plan for the youth.

There is a strong link between health, nutrition, and family planning. The smaller the size of the house, the better the overall health. Poor nutrition is at the root of health problems. The urban poor, particularly in the slum areas, have larger families with its attendant problems of economic insecurity, limited access to education, family planning, health and

other social services. Education is a powerful weapon to combat increase in fertility rate, poverty and unemployment.

The control of population depends on people's participation in the family planning programme and the ability to spread basic education meaningfully. In Kerala, where the literacy rate is exceptionally high, there has been a marked decline in the population-growth rate.

Regretfully, India's political parties are yet to address the issue seriously. In a sense, this is the poverty of politics. Amartya Sen has repeatedly emphasized the need for functional literacy among women.

The unprecedented population urgently needs to be controlled in order to strengthen the existing human resources and improve the quality of life generally.

## POVERTY

STATESMAN, AUG 8, 2015

**'Garibi Hatao' re-defined**

**Debaki Nandan Mandal**

Indira Gandhi guided the Congress to win 342 seats in a House of 518 in 1971 on the strength of the garibi hatao slogan. A 20-point programme was put in place to give it concrete shape. Official statistics revealed that it helped 15 million families to acquire productive assets for raising their incomes. The National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Generation Programme (RLEGP) generated 2030 million mandays of employment. Clean drinking water could be supplied to 2.07 lakh villages. Rural electrification was given a boost with 1,21,005 villages being provided with electricity. An estimated 1.7 million pump-sets were energized. Socialism thrived during her garibi hatao phase (1969-77) when several industries were nationalised and income-tax collection rose to 97.75 per cent. However, the GDP growth remained stuck at 3.5 per annum.

In the 1980s, during the tenure of Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister, economic liberalisation, the government's spending spree, and conspicuous consumption by the upper, middle, and affluent classes led to a 5.5 per cent rise in GDP growth. But the spending spree was based on unsustainable foreign borrowings. This had an adverse impact on the balance of payments position.

Narasimha Rao, though not a free-market ideologue like Ronald Reagan or Margaret Thatcher, always spoke in terms of the middle path. He sought to execute his vision through his finance minister, Manmohan Singh. The government was focused on the economic reforms that were launched in 1991. The economy was exposed to the world and a deregulatory regime followed. The policy yielded dividend, registering 7.5 per cent GDP growth during the mid-1990s.

Indira Gandhi's garibi hatao programme was restructured during the term of UPA-I, headed by Manmohan Singh with special emphasis on SCs, STs and OBCs. It envisaged food security, housing for all, clean drinking water, education and health for all, women, child and youth welfare, and e-commerce. One of the major initiatives was the MGNREGA which the World Development Report of 2014 described as 'a stellar example of rural development'. It provided the rural poor with a safety-net during drought, floods or a failed harvest. It was structured as a legal right and not just a one-time scheme.

GDP grew at the rate of 8 per cent on an average from 2006-07 to 2011-12. Meanwhile, skeptics raised the question whether economic reforms are at all consistent with poverty eradication. Pro-reformists argued that economic reforms and garibi hatao are compatible provided the poor are empowered in letter and spirit through better education and improved health services. The poor can become stakeholders in the benefits of the reforms process provided the government plays the role of an 'enabler' and not that of 'a provider' for the poor. Lakdawala Expert Group Methodology indicates that rural poverty declined to 2.07 per cent from 39.28 per cent in 1987-88 to 37.21 per cent in 1993-94; it further declined to 26 per cent in 1999-2000. There was a sharp fall of 11.21 per cent between 1993-94 and 1999-2000.

The Tendulkar committee estimated that poverty level fell from 37.2 per cent (in 2004-05) to 21.9 per cent (in 2011-12). As doubts were raised about these figures, the committee headed by C.Rangarajan, chairman, PM's Economic Advisory Council, pegged the number of poor at 29.5 per cent of the population (and not 21.9%) in 2011-12. Arvind Subramanian, Chief Economic Advisor to the government, admitted on 26 May that 'the rate of poverty reduction during the period from 2005-06 to 2011-12 was the fastest in the history of the country'. One major reason was the rapid growth in GDP during the UPA dispensation.

The BJP hardliners, who were against economic reforms when in the Opposition, are now reconciled to second generation reforms. Poverty alleviation and social welfare/security measures have been accorded priority. Higher budgetary allocation on MNREGA - Rs.34,699 crore during the current fiscal against Rs.31,000 crore in the revised budget of the last fiscal - is one indicator.

The NDA government is all set to revamp and rename the 20-point programme - the cornerstone of Indira Gandhi's garibi hatao. After restructuring several of the UPA government's schemes, the government is considering five options for the programme, which will be renamed as Raja Rammohan Roy Jan Kalyan Prativedan Lakshya. The options include Deen Dayal Upadhyaya social development goals, Veer Savarkar Samajik Vikas Lakshya, Dr BR Ambedkar Samajik Uthan Lakshya, and Sardar Patel National Statistical Mechanism. An inter-ministerial group has been constituted for identification and development of social indicators for the states. It is scheduled to report by 30 September. The distinctive feature of the revised programme is the thrust against subsidies. The noted economist, Milton Friedman, once mooted the possibility of rolling all subsidies into a single lump-sum cash transfer to households as the instrument of an efficient and equitable welfare policy. Mexico and Brazil are the pioneers of transferring



cash to poor families on condition that their kids attend school and are vaccinated. It has proved to be an effective way to reduce poverty and improve health and well-being. The government subsidises a wide range of products and services - rice, wheat, pulses, sugar, kerosene, cooking gas, naphtha, water, electricity, fertilizer, railways etc - to make them affordable for the poor. The cost of these subsidies is about 4.2 per cent of GDP. Regretfully, subsidies are plagued by leakages; as often as not, they reach people who do not need them.

A Social Welfare Policy with the acronym JAM - JanDhan, Aadhar, Mobile - is on the anvil to alleviate poverty. JanDhan is designed to give the poor access to financial services, including bank accounts, credit and insurance. Aadhar will equip all Indians with biometric identification cards. Together with “mobile money platforms”, cash will be transferred to those in need.

As of now, nearly 118 million bank accounts have been opened through JanDhan. About 1 billion citizens have been provided with the Aadhar card. And half the population use mobile phones. JAM will, therefore, play a crucial role in reducing poverty if all subsidies are lumped into a single cash transfer to households making it an effective welfare initiative. There are twin challenges, however. The first relates to identification of eligible beneficiaries and linking their subsidies to their bank accounts. This will need extensive coordination among different state departments and between states and the national government. The latter can provide incentives to states on the basis of performance.

Secondly, India has only 40,000 rural bank branches to serve 6,00,000 villages. Even if beneficiaries have bank accounts, they may live far away from banks making it impossible to collect benefits. So, unless banks facilitate payments through mobile networks, financial inclusion will not reach the remotest areas and the poorest will be deprived of the cash transfer benefit.

The 44-year history of garibi hatao has been replete with political populism and fiscal profligacy. The programme could hardly rise above the half-hearted effort of dole-distribution masquerading as poverty-alleviation. The fallout was manifest in the ridiculous definition of the poverty line - at Rs.32.5 per day per person in urban areas and Rs.29.3 in rural areas. This was stated by the Planning Commission in an affidavit before the Supreme Court.

The proposed experiment to reinvent the programme in the manner of Brazil and Mexico appears to be integral to the second generation reforms and social welfare measures - aimed at addressing the challenges of hunger, malnutrition and poor public health services. The nation looks forward to the report card in 2019.

(The writer is a former Joint Secretary to the Government of West Bengal)

## TOURISM

TRIBUNE, AUG 10, 2015

**Acquire old properties to boost heritage tourism: Govt  
M Aamir Khan**

With around 800 heritage structures up for grabs in the state, the government today urged local private stakeholders to acquire these properties so that they can be developed into heritage hotels or craft centres.

Education Minister Naeem Akhtar said it was not possible for the ‘cash-strapped’ government to develop all heritage sites of the state while urging private tourism players to take a cue from places like Rajasthan.

“All heritage properties have to be conserved and utilised...just like we have witnessed in Rajasthan. A whole lot of them are lying unutilised in areas like downtown Srinagar as well as in the Jammu region. If people associated with tourism take over these properties and convert them into craft centres, cafes or hotels...government will renovate streets in the areas and provide amenities like water and power supply,” Akhtar said during a conference titled ‘Restoration, Preservation, Conservation and Promotion of Built and Cultural Heritage through Tourism’ held here today.

He said around 800 properties in the state had been listed as heritage sites. The J&K Chapter of Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) convener Mohammad Saleem Beg said 60 properties existed on the riverbanks.

The government had recently called for integrating heritage sites into tourism circuit and the government in May had started a cruise service on the Jhelum river that takes tourists to heritage destinations like LD Memorial, Khanqah-e-Moula, Maharaj Gung and the shrine of Hazrat Bul Bul Shah.

Meanwhile, several tourism players exchanged views over boosting heritage tourism at the event organised by the Indian Heritage Hotels Association (IHHA) and the Tourism Department, Kashmir.

IHHA president Maharaja Gaj Singh said while Rajasthan was ‘showing the way’, other states especially J&K, had the potential heritage assets that needed to be developed.

J&K Tourism Development Corporation (JKTDC) Managing Director and Director Tourism Farooq Shah said the government was developing a strategy to fully exploit the heritage tourism potential of the state.

Ramesh Mathur, who convened the event, said the IHHA, based on the interactions at the event, would present a white paper to the state government for the development of heritage tourism.

A host of suggestions also came up from those who attended the event that included developing Martand Sun Temple into a major heritage/ pilgrim site, boosting 'Orchard Tourism' as Valley was known for its apples and other fruits, setting up folk museums and vacating heritage structures that were presently serving as government offices.