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AGRICULTURE

HINDU, JUNE 6, 2014

Two institutes coming to boost research and development in agriculture, food and health sciences

The State government has announced funding to set up two international standard institutes to boost research and development in the field of agriculture, food and health sciences.

The proposed institutes will come up in Dharwad and Bangalore.

The International Centre for Agriculture Development would be set up in Dharwad and be administered by the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad.

The other institute — Karnataka Centre of Excellence in Foods for Health — would be set up in Bangalore and be administered by the University of Horticultural Sciences (UHS), Bagalkot, stated a release by Rajendra Poddar, Head, Project Planning & Monitoring Cell, UAS, Dharwad.

Both institutes will be set up in collaboration with the Texas A&M University's Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Centre's (VFIC) Foods for Health Initiative, and the Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture. An advisory board will be formed immediately under the co-chairmanship of D.P. Biradar and Bhimu Patil for the institute at Dharwad.

Another advisory board under the co-chairmanship of B. Raju, acting vice-chancellor, and Bhimu Patil will be formed for the institute in Bangalore.

CIVIL SERVICE

DECCAN HERALD, JUNE 2, 2014

Cabinet Secretary Ajit Seth gets six-month extension

The extension of Seth, 62, was approved by Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The government has approved extension of Seth as Cabinet Secretary for a period of six months with effect from June 14 or till further orders, whichever is earlier, an official notification said.

Seth, a 1974-batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre, had taken over as Cabinet Secretary on June 14, 2011 with a fixed tenure upto June 14, 2013. The UPA government had extended his tenure by a year.

Born on November 24, 1951, Seth is known to be a meticulous bureaucrat.

Seth, who is 30th Cabinet Secretary, has served in various key positions in Uttar Pradesh government and at the Centre.

Seth had been Secretary (Coordination) in the Cabinet Secretariat since January 2009.

He did his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Chemistry from Delhi's St. Stephen's College and also Master of Philosophy in Life Sciences from the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Seth subsequently also obtained a Master's degree in Development Finance from the University of Birmingham. For five years (1994-99), he was Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Textiles.

In the 1980s, Seth had served in the Ministry of Commerce and he was posted as First Secretary in the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations at Geneva, Switzerland, for three years--August 1, 1984 to December 1, 1987.

BUSINESS STANDARD, JUN 3, 2014

Decks cleared for Bharat Lal to join PMO as joint secy

The Indian Forest Service officer is seen close to Modi; top PMO jobs have usually gone to IAS officers

The Department of Personnel and Training ([DoPT](#)) on Monday paved the way for Indian Forest Service ([IFoS](#)) officer [Bharat Lal](#) to join the Prime Minister's Office ([PMO](#)) as a joint secretary.

The DoPT issued a circular to announce the empanelment of 29 officers of the IFoS batch

of 1988 for appointment to the posts of joint secretary or its equivalent. These officers include Bharat Lal, Gujarat's resident commissioner in the national capital for the past four years.

Lal is a Gujarat cadre officer and considered close to Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi. Bureaucratic sources said it was rare for an IFoS officer to serve in the PMO in the capacity of a joint secretary. Top PMO jobs have historically remained with Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers with one Indian Foreign Service officer to help with foreign affairs.

Apart from Lal, Modi's PMO is also likely to have Gujarat cadre IAS officer A K Sharma as a joint secretary. Sharma also belongs to the 1988 batch.

Others already appointed to the PMO are National Security Advisor [Ajit Kumar Doval](#), who has replaced [Shivshankar Menon](#). Last week, former Telecom Regulatory Authority of India chairman Nripendra Misra was appointed the principal secretary to the PM. S Jaishankar, India's former ambassador to Beijing, is likely to be the foreign policy advisor in the PMO.

BUSINESS STANDARD, JUN 3, 2014

Telangana govt appoints four ex-IAS officers among six advisors

The government of [Telangana](#) state appointed six retired government officials as its advisers on Monday, the first day in office. Of these, four are retired [IAS](#) officers.

All of them were associated with the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi ([TRS](#)) post retirement advising and assisting party president [K Chandrasekhara Rao](#) on issues centered around the separate statehood demand besides working on the party manifesto.

Among the retired IAS officers, KV Ramanachari was also in the polit bureau and was actively involved with the preparation of the manifesto. The other three are AK Goel, A R Ramalaxman, B V Paparao.

The remaining two advisers R Vidyasagar Rao, an expert in irrigation and river water issues, is a retired chief engineer while G R Reddy from the Indian Economic Services ([IES](#)) served as adviser to AP government at the fag-end of Kiran Kumar Reddy's government.

Vidyasagar Rao, who worked in the Central Water Commission, had played a key role in

shaping up the ideological positions of the TRS around the river water sharing issues. He had also advised the party leadership on new projects that could help bring Godavari water to irrigate the uplands in Telangana.

The orders issued by chief secretary Rajiv Sharma, who himself was appointed on Monday, said the tenure of these advisers would be initially for a period of one year. The government was yet to issue the terms and conditions of the appointment, including the subject for which they were chosen.

HINDU, JUN 4, 2014

Singhal, new U.P. Principal Secretary (Home)

Principal Secretary (Irrigation and Flood Control) Deepak Singhal will take over as the next Principal Secretary in the Uttar Pradesh Home Department. His appointment was cleared by Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday.

On Monday, Anil Kumar Gupta was removed from the post of Principal Secretary (Home).

In a minor administrative reshuffle involving key government departments, Principal Secretary (Finance) Anand Mishra was shunted out. He has been placed on the waiting list. Mr. Mishra's transfer came on a day when the State Cabinet gave its nod for holding the budget session of the Legislature from June 19.

EDUCATION

TIMES OF INDIA, JUNE 3, 2014

UGC recast soon to boost efficiency

Changes will be made in the powers and functions of the commission to ensure that its prime focus remains on the regulation of the higher educational institutions and setting their standards, instead of granting funds, sources said. "The aim is to transform it into a higher education commission. Details are being worked out," sources privy to the development said.

Amendments to the UGC Act will be proposed to achieve the objective of giving more regulatory powers to the body.

The move has been initiated by HRD Minister Smriti Zubin Irani. Restructuring of the commission was one of the pledges that the BJP made in its poll manifesto to bring reforms in the higher education sector. "The UGC will be restructured and it will be transformed into a higher education commission, rather than just a grant distributing agency," the BJP said in the manifesto.

The restructuring of the commission was imminent since the HRD Ministry launched an ambitious scheme — Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) — to overhaul the higher education sector during the fag end of the 10 years of UPA regime. The RUSA seeks to overhaul higher education system by providing strategic funding to the states to help them improve the standards and infrastructure of varsities and colleges functioning in their respective jurisdiction.

Since the Centre will allocate 65 per cent of the fund for infrastructure and capacity building of the state varsities and colleges under the scheme, suggestions were made to the ministry on subsuming some of the granting powers of the UGC into the RUSA Mission Authority, set up to implement the scheme.

BUSINESS STANDARD, JUN 3, 2014

Ajit Balakrishnan: Private, public, private, public...

Ajit Balakrishnan

My friends in Mumbai, where I live, constantly complain that India's government meddles too much in the affairs of the Indian nation. I would have been convinced about this except that when I travel to New York, my American friends equally constantly complain that the American government meddles too little in the affairs of the American nation.

As an example, many Indians believe that the problem with [school education](#) in India is

that most Indian schools are owned and run by the government and what needs to be done urgently is to privatise them. On the other hand, many Americans believe that the problem with school education in America is that the [privatisation](#) efforts of the past two decades through the Charter school movement need to be reversed. In fact, in the recent mayoral election in New York City, this was one of the planks of the winning candidate, the present mayor of New York, Bill de Blasio. The reality is this: at the elementary school level, according to [Pratham](#), about 30 per cent (and fast rising) of Indian children already go to [private schools](#). By contrast, a mere 10 per cent (and declining) of American children attend private schools.

Similarly, most Indians believe that India's higher education is hobbled by the dominating presence of government-owned colleges and that what we need to do is go the American way, privatise these colleges and make them run as for-profit institutions. The reality, however, is that practically all American colleges and universities are not-for-profit institutions. So far, the record of the newly established for-profit American universities is troubling: they account for a mere 10 per cent of all enrolments, but make up almost half of all student loan defaults. In other words, graduates of these for-profit universities are finding it tough to get jobs at salaries good enough to keep up with payments of their student loans.

When it comes to industry and innovation, both my American and Indian friends sing a chorus in unison - the secret behind the world-leading innovative companies in America (Google and Facebook of the current era and Pfizer, AT&T and Motorola of an earlier one), in their view, can be traced almost wholly to the work of dynamic entrepreneurs with venture capitalists cheering them on.

For instance, it is assumed that the Wright brothers' invention of the airplane is what led to world-dominating American companies in both the civilian and military aircraft fields. In reality, the Wright brothers' historic 1903 flight lasted a mere 12 seconds and covered only 120 feet; after that America lagged far behind Europe in aircraft manufacture. What really drove the American aircraft industry was that, when World War I erupted, the US government in a mere nine months between 1917 and 1918 placed orders with American manufacturers for 12,000 airplanes and 42,000 engines. When the war ended, so would have the American aircraft industry - but new military procurement Acts in the 1920s nurtured the emerging companies of that time, including a little-known manufacturer called Boeing.

The hidden hand of the US government has been noticed behind many other "entrepreneurial" breakthroughs: semiconductors (US Air Force procurement drove down

prices enough for semiconductors to find mass-market applications), computer science (grants from the US military's Advanced Research Projects Agency established the first university computer science programs at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford, Carnegie Mellon, for instance), the internet (again, defence contracts), to name a few.

[Rebecca Lowen](#) (*Creating the Cold War University: The Transformation of Stanford*) goes so far as to say that universities such as Stanford are merely the academic component of the military-industrial-academic complex. She traces the current travails of the American higher education system (difficulty balancing expenditure and income in spite of fees that students find unaffordable) to the end of the Cold War and the consequent pullback of the US government's defence funding of American university research.

Institutions originally designed as publicly owned to serve the public interest may not be able to discharge that function with the passage of time or with the evolution of technology. When voice telephone services were delivered through physical connections, a publicly owned telephone or heavily regulated monopoly was seen as best serving the public interest; with the arrival of wireless technology, we have discovered that multiple private players in a competitive market situation best served the public interest.

Merely because an institution is publicly owned does not mean it serves the public interest, as those of us who had to endure the constant delays and high prices and still fly Indian Airlines in the 1980s will testify. Today's privately owned domestic airlines serve the public interest of reasonably priced on-time service far better. Similarly, "privately" owned Jesuit schools in many Indian cities serve the public interest of reasonably priced high-quality education as well as any publicly owned school does. It is tempting to conclude that in order to truly unearth what is "private" and what is "public", one has to look behind the façade. What appears as an institution that is run in the public interest may well be the one that is actually run for private interests, and what appears to be a private institution could well be the one that serves the public interest the best.

DECCAN HERALD, JUNE 6, 2014

UGC panel to review DU 4-yr degree course

The Human Resource Development (HRD) ministry will refer the contentious programme to the panel, which will decide the future of the programme.

“The HRD ministry has not taken any decision so far. The matter will be placed before

the UGC standing committee for its suggestions, based on which a final decision will be taken,” Delhi University sources said.

The committee was set up by the UGC last year after the four-year undergraduate programme drew flak from the Delhi University Teachers Association (DUTA) and a section of students.

The task of the UGC panel was mainly to monitor the implementation of the programme, since it entailed a significant departure from the existing three-year degree programme. The committee was also mandated to advice on its curriculum and other issues.

The HRD ministry, however, remained tight lipped, amidst reports of its bid to scrap the controversial programme as it was a promise made by the Bharatiya Janata Party in its poll manifesto for Delhi.

Soon after HRD minister Smriti Zubin Irani assumed charge, a delegation of Delhi University teachers and students met her, demanding scrapping of the programme, introduced amidst strong opposition last year.

They demanded that provision should be made for the students of the four-year programme admitted in July last year to be awarded an Honours degree in three years. The delegation also demanded removal of DU Vice Chancellor Dinesh Singh, calling him “autocratic”.

TIMES OF INDIA, JUN 6, 2014

Four DD education channels go off air due to pending fees

NEW DELHI: At a time when 50 educational channels are being planned, four existing ones — Gyan Darshan I & II, GD-3 and GD-4 - reaching out to lakhs of children in the country, went blank on the evening of June 4 after an uninterrupted run for nearly 14 years.

A meeting to deal with the crisis was held in the HRD ministry. Sources said Doordarshan officials suggested that the four channels be made part of the proposed 50 education channels of HRD ministry. Already, there is an MoU between HRD ministry and Prasar Bharati which says all clearances for these channels will be taken by Doordarshan. On the HRD side, officials raised apprehension that if these channels get out of Doordarshan bouquet, as it has been till they went blank, will it still reach lakhs of children free.

Problem on this front has been brewing for a year now. On June 2, department of space sent a final notice to HRD ministry that transponder on INSAT-3C which serviced the four channels will be switched off immediately because of the mandatory requirements of strategic user. The strategic user in this case is Indian Navy that wanted eastern beam of GSAT-7 since one of its major war vessels will be going to Central Pacific Ocean for a multilateral exercise.

Department of space's ultimatum did not come in a vacuum. In June last year, ISRO informed Indira Gandhi National Open University that it has shifted Gyan Darshan channels from INSAT-3C to GSAT-10 satellite. However, IGNOU was expected to take clearance from National Operations Control Centre (NOCC). Since then, department of space has been repeatedly writing to IGNOU quickly avail the transfer. When IGNOU approached NOCC, it was told that under the new licensing regime institutions and ministries cannot be given permission to run channels.

IGNOU was advised to get approval from Doordarshan that it is part of their bouquet. On its part, IGNOU claimed that ever since these channels started in 2000 they were under the umbrella of Doordarshan and had to carry its logo on the left hand side of the screen. In 2007 also, Gyan Darshan channels were part of eight channels that all DTH service providers had to mandatorily carry without any payment. However, Prasar Bharati sources say new licensing regime has to be honoured and old agreement cannot be cited. Anyway, IGNOU approached Doordarshan for cooperation in obtaining NOCC clearance.

Even as IGNOU was engaged in this battle, Doordarshan increased the carriage fee from Rs 1.5 crore to Rs 4.5 crore. IGNOU had also defaulted on its previous payments. In March, Doordarshan asked IGNOU to clear the backlog since audit party had raised objections. IGNOU was told that if payment is not made by March 31 "it will not be possible for Prasar Bharti (Doordarshan) to recommend migration of Gyandarshan channels from INSAT-3C to GSAT-10 satellite.

TIMES OF INDIA, JUN 6, 2014

DUTA proposed FYUP alternative before rollback plan by MHRD

NEW DELHI: Even before news about probable rollback of Delhi University's four-year undergraduate programme came from the human resource development ministry, DU Teachers' Association had proposed an alternative for the current batch of FYUP. The proposal mentions how by doing away with the Foundation Courses (FCs) in second and third year the current batch of students can graduate in three years with honours. The National Democratic Teachers' Front (NDTF), which met HRD minister Smriti Irani earlier this week, also suggested a similar alternative for the current batch enrolled under FYUP.

While students also feel that FCs are a waste and want to see a rollback, the current batch enrolled in FYUP is concerned about their own programme. "I will be happy in case of a rollback, but hope there will be some provision for us to complete the degree in three years. The first year has been a complete waste because of the FCs," said Meenakshi Sharma (name changed) of SRCC, a student of the first batch of FYUP.

Even DUTA has a plan in place for these students. "The alternative proposed by DUTA is only for those students who are already under FYUP (see box). For the rest we want a rollback to the pre-semester, annual mode. The semester system destroyed the School of

Open Learning because migration became impossible," said DUTA president, Nandita Narain.

Inder Mohan Kapahy of NDTF said it is possible to reconstruct the undergraduate structure. He has proposed to do away with FCs and replace them with Discipline 1 & 2 courses as well as Application Courses in the III to VI semesters so that the current batch of FYUP students can complete the degree in three years.

"It is possible to reconstruct the structure by reducing FCs in the second year. The two FCs in third and fourth semester can be replaced by discipline courses. Similarly, all discipline courses can be done in three years. All these courses can be compressed in three years, including the application courses by doing away with foundation courses." Kapahy said.

Kapahy added that with DU following a different policy, it will restrict migration of students from and to other universities.

Another critic of FYUP, history professor Nayanjot Lahiri, said, "There are lot of right-minded academics like Andre Beteille, Pratap Bhanu Meha and Ramchandra Guha who were deeply disturbed by the way the curriculum was prepared and the manner in which consultation was ignored while implementing reforms in DU. FYUP should either be made a national policy and introduced in all universities or it should be reviewed. The university did not think of consulting its own faculty to create even the foundation courses."

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JUNE 6, 2014

SCRAPPING FYUP WON'T BE EASY: DU OFFICIALS

NEW DELHI: Scrapping the four-year undergraduate programme (FYUP) won't be easy, Delhi University officials said. This comes in the backdrop of talk in the Union human resource development ministry that the new government may do away with the programme. NEW DELHI: Scrapping the fouryear undergraduate programme (FYUP) won't be easy, Delhi University officials have said.

This comes in the backdrop of talk in the Union human resource development Ministry that the new government may do away with the programme.

"The university followed all rules when they were passed the new programme. The Delhi University is an autonomous body; it has its own statutes and ordinances. The academic and executive councils are its highest decision-making bodies and had ratified the proposal. If the programme is to be rolled back, the whole process will have to be repeated and it seems very unlikely," said a senior DU official.

The university administration has made it clear over several times that while it is open to a dialogue with the ministry, a rollback is very unlikely.

While the semester system was imposed using the emergency powers of the vice-chancellor, the FYUP was passed in both the academic and the executive councils with a majority.

Mass protests against the semester system and the FYUP have become a regular feature in the past three years. During this time, the feud between the vice-chancellor and a set of teachers had come out in the open.

Speculation of the FYUP being scrapped has been lent credence in the past few months after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) made it part of its manifesto. The National Democratic Teachers' Front (NDTF) has also stepped up its ante against the programme in the last few months.

Teachers' associations had in the past maintained that the four-year degree programme was opposed to the national framework that says that an undergraduate degree can only be of three-year duration.

“What people are forgetting is that the university is still giving a degree after three years. It is just not an honours degree. The university followed all rules. If the MHRD plans to crack its whip, it will be very difficult to justify the action. It will mean the ministry is questioning the autonomy of the university,” an expert said.

TIMES OF INDIA, JUNE 5, 2014

Private schools too come under RTI Act: CIC

NEW DELHI: In a significant order, the Central Information Commission has ordered that private schools, whether public authority or not, must provide information on service records and salaries. The order came on an RTI plea filed by an ex-employee of Jindal Public School with Directorate of Education seeking a certified copy of service book and other details from her past employer.

The Directorate of Education provided the information available with them but the school refused to furnish the reply, saying RTI Act did not apply on it. Private unaided schools had challenged an earlier CIC order in court which said that schools must give information related to vacant seats, EVS quota but would be exempt from providing information on disbursement of salaries, public budget estimate of receipts etc.

Information commissioner Sridhar Acharyulu directed the school to provide the information, reasoning that provisions of RTI Act applied on private schools since they were governed by laws such as the Delhi Education Act. Directing the school to disclose information sought by its ex-employee, CIC said the school was duty bound under Sections 4 and 8 of Delhi Education Act, 1973 to abide by the regulatory conditions of service, payment of salaries as prescribed for which the school has to maintain records which provide an "inherent and implied" right to information to their employees.

"Under Right to Education Act, 2009 also, the recognized school is under an obligation to appoint eligible teachers and provide them with prescribed wages. This also reveals that it has given inherent right to information to the teachers from their employers," Acharyulu said.

ASIAN AGE, JUNE 3, 2014

High Court rejects plea for DU law entrance in Hindi

The Delhi high court has dismissed a plea seeking a direction to the Delhi University to conduct the entrance examination for its LL.B. course in Hindi.

A bench of Chief Justice G. Rohini and Justice R.S. Endlaw dismissed the public interest litigation filed by Shailendra Mani Tripathi, saying that judgments are pronounced and reported primarily in English.

"We cannot shut our eyes also to the fact that the language of the courts, particularly in Delhi, primarily remains English and the judgments of the courts are pronounced and reported in English language," the court said.

"Use of the English language is also necessitated owing to the present day policy of transfer of judges of the high court and of the chief justice being necessarily from another court and who may or may not be well-versed in the Hindi language," the court said.

The plea had sought a direction to the Delhi University to conduct the entrance examination for the LL.B. course in Hindi on the ground that the Union Public Service Commission and certain Central Universities are holding examination in Hindi. The petition had contended that since the LL.B. semester examinations were permitted to be taken in Hindi, same criteria must be used for the entrance exams as well.

The Delhi University counsel, however, said the entrance examination stands in different category as it is an objective test.

PIONEER, JUNE 2, 2014

OPEN LEARNING STAFF WERE NOT SUSPENDED: DU V-C

In a fresh twist in suspension case of five non-teaching staff of School of Open Learning (SOL), who are accused of leaking documents relating to Human Resource Development Minister Smriti Irani undergraduate admission, Delhi University's Vice Chancellor Dinesh Singh on Saturday claimed that no such "suspension" order was issued.

Earlier in the morning, the Minister had appealed to the V-C to "reinstate" suspended officials of the SOL. A statement issued by Singh read, "The University of Delhi has learnt that no suspension order has been issued to any employee of the School of Open Learning. The university views with grave concern the matter of leakage of information related to the personal records of any student of SOL. Such personal records are held by SOL in a fiduciary capacity and are not available to the public at large. The university

condemns such acts in the strongest possible terms. Further, it has directed SOL to ensure that no such incidents occur in the future.”

Singh’s statement came in lieu of Smriti Irani’s tweet where she appealed to him to reinstate the officials suspended. Her tweet read, “Since DU is an autonomous institution I have put forth my personal appeal to the V-C to reinstate the officials.”

A university spokesperson on Friday had confirmed to the press that five SOL non-teaching staff members were suspended from the college for illegally leaking confidential documents of Irani. However, when The Pioneer sought his response to the statement issued by the V-C, he said that the information he disseminated was based entirely on what he was told by SOL director CS Dubey. Dubey and the officials were unavailable for an official comment on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the Congress attacked the Narendra Modi Government over the suspension of the officials. “Five officials of the Delhi University suspended for leaking HRD Minister’s educational qualification details! Does this Govt believe in transparency,” party general secretary Digvijay Singh tweeted. Taking another potshot at the Government, he said, “ACHHE DIN AA GAYE HEIN. Would anyone stand up for the suspended officials of DU ?”

After Irani sought revocation of the suspension, Singh quipped, “Thanks Smriti for appealing for reinstating DU officials. Now let people of this Country know your actual Educational Qualification”. Earlier, Sources said the officials have admitted to SOL’s Director Chandra Shekhar Dubey to leaking the documents.

Congress leader Manish Tewari also asked Irani to “explain the correct position to the country” about the contradictory declarations about her educational qualification she had made when the HRD Minister contested Lok Sabha elections in 2004 and 2014. Noting that an affidavit is a “sworn legal document”, Tewari said, “Since there are discrepancies between the various affidavits I think it is incumbent upon the Minister to explain the correct position to the country”.

Meanwhile, Delhi University Teachers’ Association (DUTA) president Nandita Narain said that it was a welcome step by the HRD Minister as the suspension of the five non-teaching staff members was unwarranted.

TIMES OF INDIA, JUN 2, 2014

HRD ministry may junk appointment of VCs to 12 central universities

NEW DELHI: The HRD ministry is likely to put on hold the process of appointment of vice-chancellors to 12 central universities. Though shortlisted names have been submitted by most of the search-cum-selection committees barring the one for Central University of Rajasthan, the ministry is not averse to having a serious relook.

The ministry is likely to argue that search-cum-selection committees were not constituted properly and then request President Pranab Mukherjee to form fresh search panels. It has

been pointed out that one search committee is headed by a college principal of which IIT director and former VC of Hyderabad University are members.

Another disturbing trend in the search committee is the way outgoing VCs of some of these CUs have been made members by executive council of other CUs. For instance, Surbhi Banerjee, VC, Central University of Odisha, is on the search committee of Guru Ghasidas Central University and M M Salunkhe, VC, Central University of Rajasthan, is on the search committee of Hari Singh Gour Central University.

Senior BJP leader and former HRD minister Murli Manohar Joshi has already asked Mukherjee to put on hold the process of appointment of vice-chancellors. In the midst of the election process, Joshi had written to former PM Manmohan Singh, chief election commissioner V S Sampath and Mukherjee and 15 central universities. Joshi had said constitution of search committees was quite disturbing and "clearly indicates the manipulation by the HRD ministry".

He had requested Mukherjee to get the academic credentials of the shortlisted candidates scrutinized who, he said, "are not suitable to be appointed as VCs of central universities". He alleged "extra academic reasons for the appointments". Joshi had said the appointment process should have been initiated six months in advance. He ascribed the rush in appointments to "pressure of HRD secretary and other officials, who are going to retire in two months time."

TIMES OF INDIA, JUN 2, 2014

Smriti Irani okays national database of school, university certificates

NEW DELHI: HRD minister Smriti Irani has given the go-ahead to National Academic Depository (NAD) scheme. Conceived during UPA-2, the scheme seeks to create an online national database of board and university certificates and is being implemented by Central Board of Secondary Education on a pilot basis.

Last week, Irani was briefed in detail about the NAD project. She said it was a useful scheme and should take off quickly. In fact, she has asked the ministry to prepare a list of ministry files and documents that have been digitized or are in the process of getting digitized. A review of progress of digitization within the ministry will take place on June 3.

Once NAD is in place, it will act as the central database for records which students can use in case they need duplicate certificates or attested copies of it. Employers will find the database useful to carry out verification of certificates. Academic institutions - boards, schools, colleges, universities - will act as agents of the NAD office by registering students and linking their certificates. Registration of students will be done after verification of identity.

NAD will act as a deterrent to those forging certificates and online verification will build confidence of employers. The ministry has already sent an advisory to central

universities/institutes and school boards to join NAD. Enough security has been built into the system so that certificates are not tampered with or downloaded. A student can only see his certificate, not edit it. There will be audit trail of access and usage of the system. NAD Bill is in Parliament and is likely to be prioritized for early passage.

As part of the new government's mantra to bring efficiency, the ministry is also looking at ways to speed up decision-making. "Processes will be streamlined in a big way very soon," a source said.

TIMES OF INDIA, JUNE 6, 2014

DU decision on marks deduction discriminatory: CBSE

NEW DELHI: CBSE has described as "unfair" and "discriminatory" Delhi University's decision to deduct 2.5 per cent from the aggregate marks of those aspirants of the four-year undergraduate course who had opted for Informatics Practices as an elective subject in their class XII exams.

Taking strong exception to the DU guidelines for admission into undergraduate programme, the Central Board of Secondary Education has sought review of the decision and accord same advantage to those who had opted for Informatics Practices.

In its admission guidelines, the DU has said the students who had chosen Informatics Practices in class XII tend to lose 2.5 per cent from the percentage aggregate marks for admission into FYUP.

In a letter to DU vice-chancellor Dinesh Singh, CBSE chairman Vineet Joshi asked the university to review the decision saying a large number of students will be at disadvantageous position in the admission process as they have become aware of the decision at a very "late stage".

Joshi said CBSE treats all the courses of computer stream such as Computer Science and Informatics Practices on par with elective subjects.

"In this regard, CBSE would like to express its concern that it would be really unfair, unjustified and discriminatory for students who have studied Informatics Practices instead of Computer Science to be put at a disadvantage by reducing 2.5 per cent marks from the percentage aggregate marks," Joshi said.

Seeking review of the decision by the University, the CBSE chairman also suggested that a team of experts may be asked to examine contents of both the courses.

"In absence of any discrimination by the CBSE between these courses, it is imperative that the course contents may kindly be examined by a team of experts and both the courses may please be treated at par so that students who have studied Informatics Practices are not discriminated against at the time of admission," he said.

Joshi mentioned that such a rule did not exist when the students chose the subject.
"Academically and administratively, this seems like a gross injustice."

ENERGY RESOURCES

BUSINESS STANDARD, JUN 6, 2014

India uses 12.95% of green energy

The installed capacity of [renewable energy](#) has touched 32,269.6 Mw or is 12.95 per cent of the potential available in the country as on March 31, 2014. With this, renewable energy, including large hydro electric projects, constitutes 28.8 per cent of the overall installed capacity in India.

According to the India Renewable Energy Status Report 2014 released at the ongoing [Green Summit 2014](#) in Bangalore on Thursday, the total renewable energy potential from various sources in India is 249,188 Mw. The untapped market potential for the overall renewable energy in India is 216,918.39 Mw that shows a huge growth potential for renewable energy in India.

The Ministry of New & Renewable Energy ([MNRE](#)), government of India, has set a target of overall renewable energy installed capacity of 41,400 Mw by 2017. This creates an opportunity worth \$10.51 billion for the renewable energy market in India till 2017.

India has the world's fifth-largest electricity generation capacity, which presently stands at 243 Gw. The power sector in India is highly diverse with varied commercial sources for power generation like coal, natural gas, hydro, oil and nuclear as well as unconventional sources of energy like solar, wind, bio-gas and agriculture. The demand for power has been growing at a rapid rate and has outstripped supply, leading to power shortages in spite of a manifold growth in power generation over the years, the report said.

Focused efforts are going on to bridge this demand-supply gap by way of policy reforms, participation from private sector and development of Ultra Mega Power Projects (UMPP).

"The power sector offers tremendous opportunities for investing companies due to the huge size of the market, growth potential and returns available on capital. Industrialisation, urbanisation, population growth, economic growth, improvement in per capita consumption of electricity, depletion of coal reserve, increasing import of coal, crude oil and other energy sources and the rising concern over climate change have put India in a critical position," the report said. It has to take a tough stance to balance development and environmental sustainability. One of the primary challenges for India would be to alter its existing energy mix.

Which is dominated by coal to a greater share of cleaner and sustainable sources of energy, it said.

ENVIRONMENT

HINDU, JUN 4, 2014 4

Air quality in Delhi worsening: TERI survey

Half of the respondents recently surveyed by not-for-profit research institute The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) feel that the air quality in the Capital has worsened, and 40 per cent are of the view that air pollution policies have not been implemented properly.

Fifty per cent say the quality and availability of drinking water and waste management have improved.

Nearly 70 per cent say citizens use more water than required, but only 17 per cent are willing to pay the actual cost of the subsidised water they use.

These findings are part of the TERI annual Environmental Survey 2014 which was released on Tuesday.

The survey threw light on public attitudes on various environmental issues, including perceptions on the 'environment versus development' debate.

The survey, carried out in collaboration with the Department for International Development (DFID), UK's international development agency, covered eight cities including Delhi.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, JUNE 5, 2014

All for a cleaner Yamuna: Green court takes exception to new projects in most polluted zone

NEW DELHI: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Wednesday stayed expansion plans of Hindu College and construction of a new building of Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies, questioning environment clearances (ECs) granted to the two projects.

The NGT also asked the state level environment impact assessment authority (SEIAA) to explain why it should not face action for granting the clearances despite an earlier ban. ECs are needed for construction projects with built-up areas of 20,000 sqm or more. Both sites fall within the Najafgarh drain basin, a critically polluted area.

The union ministry of environment and forests (MoEF) has twice — in 2010 and 2013 — banned grant of ECs in the area. While hearing a petition that sought cancellation of ECs granted after the MoEF freeze to over 70 projects in the basin, the NGT in February also stayed the grant of fresh ECs in the basin.

The 61.8-km-long drain — from Wazirabad to Najafgarh — is one of the three major drains discharging sewage, both treated and otherwise, into the Yamuna. Its basin area runs into 374-sqm.

“Wastewater management in the drain basin is key to controlling pollution in the Yamuna. The basin is severely polluted as many secondary sewer lines from a number of industrial and residential areas in Delhi terminate there,” said Manoj Misra of NGO, Yamuna Jiye Abhiyan.

The SEIAA granted the ECs to these two colleges about two months after the NGT ban. Hindu College wants to build a new academic block and a girls’ hostel within the college premises. Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies is functioning from a school building near Vivek Vihar and wants to build its new campus in Rohini. The Delhi Development Authority has allotted land for the purpose through the Delhi government’s directorate of higher education.

Praduman Kumar, acting principal, Hindu College, said, “We will obey the court order. We have not yet started construction”.

Poonam Verma, principal of the other college, said she had not yet received the order. Construction for the Rohini campus project, pegged at more than ` 100 crore, has not started as well.

The green court has asked the SEIAA to explain why the two ECs should not be cancelled.

“We are prima facie satisfied that NGT’s order has been violated. The two ECs were granted much after our order,” the NGT said on Wednesday. It also ordered both colleges be made party to the case, adding, “The operation of the two ECs is kept in abeyance, until further orders.”

The central pollution control board in March 2011 made a plan to take the drain basin off the list of critically-polluted areas through pollution-control measures. But that did not happen.

Other projects allowed in the basin area after the MoEF freeze include luxury hotels towards the Delhi airport, hospitals, colleges, parking complexes and group housing in areas such as Dwarka, Rohini, Raja Garden and Vasant Kunj. The basin includes Anand Parbat, Naraina, Okhla and Wazirpur industrial clusters.

Petitioner’s lawyer Gaurav Bansal said, “The whole episode shows environmental watchdogs don’t care for the river.”

BUSINESS LINE, JUN 6, 2014

US green building body to support LEED in India

The US Green Building Council is expanding its support for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), the popular global green building programme, in India.

“The uptake of LEED across the globe has been extraordinary,” said Rick Fedrizzi, President, CEO and founding chair, USGBC.

“Because LEED buildings save energy, water and precious resources, they are our first line of defence in the worldwide fight to slow the impacts of climate change and promote wellness. The multinational architectural, engineering and construction companies that are leading the building boom around the world were early adopters in the US. And they are now applying its principles and benefits in more than 150 countries,” he said in a statement.

Widely-used system

India ranks third for the most LEED-certified space globally, with nearly 12 million square metres, according to a report released by the Council.

The LEED system is the most widely used rating system guiding the design, construction, operations and maintenance of green buildings.

Project teams in more than 150 countries have implemented this to create structures that cut greenhouse gas emissions and lower utility bills for building owners through reduced energy and water use.

HEALTH SERVICES

BUSINESS STANDARD, JUNE 3, 2014

Plans to bring drug approval processes online

The country's top regulatory agency in the [health sector](#) will follow the [Narendra Modi](#) mantra of [e-governance](#) to bring more transparency and accountability while reducing red tape in clinical trials, drug approvals as well as manufacturing licences. The office of Drugs Controller General of India ([DCGI](#)) is preparing a plan to go online with all approval-related processes, etc, an official said.

This would enable companies to apply online for approval of their products and also upload required documents. Companies will be able to track their pleas on a daily basis, the official said.

E-governance will help the regulator and government maintain data related to drug approvals and clinical trials. Recently, the regulator and the health and family welfare ministry were rapped by the [Supreme Court](#) for lack of data management and monitoring in clinical trials and deaths that occurred during these.

The move is also in line with the key areas identified by health minister [Harsh Vardhan](#). After the new government formation at the Centre early last week, Vardhan had said he would move fast to put in place e-governance systems in all government-to-citizen and government-to-business interfaces under the ministry. "Accountability standards will be fixed at the highest level and corruption will be checked at source with transparent systems."

The official said the minister in his first briefing had given instructions to follow e-governance model. He added the regulator's office was studying the models of US Food and Drug Administration, UK's Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency and Canada drug regulator.

HINDU, JUNE 3, 2014

MCI plans national-level 'exit test' for graduates

The Medical Council of India (MCI) is planning to conduct a national-level 'exit test' for medical graduates to assess their "competence".

The proposal, which was mooted sometime ago, recently got the MCI's Executive Committee (EC) and the governing body's nod in an amended form, and will be sent to the Union government for approval.

Elaborating on the status of the exam, Vedprakash Mishra, chairman of the MCI's Academic Cell, said the MCI's governing body had cleared the proposal amended by the EC on March 28. "When the proposal was placed before the EC, the committee modified

it to make the exit exam optional. The governing body then approved it and now it will be placed before the Union government,” he told *The Hindu* on the sidelines of the 18th foundation day of the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences here on Monday. About the necessity of such an exam, Dr. Mishra said the standards of exams conducted by different universities varied and a common yardstick was essential to evaluate graduates. “The exit exam is expected to certify their competence. The exam should be so formulated to incorporate international standards,” he said.

Incentive

The MCI’s Executive Committee, apart from amending the exit test plan by making it optional and not mandatory, has suggested that an incentive be given to those taking the test, Dr. Mishra said. “The incentive proposed is to include those who clear the test directly in the Indian Medical Register. This could motivate the graduates to take the test,” he added.

TRIBUNE, JUNE 6, 2014

All AIIMS will be made green hospitals: Vardhan

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan today said that the government would initiate steps to turn all AIIMS across the country into ‘green hospitals’ by adopting environment-friendly methods for disposal and recycling of medical waste. “The focus will be to make processes at AIIMS environment friendly,” Vardhan said, as he stressed on the need for proper sanitation, hygiene, disposal and recycling of medical waste within hospitals.

Vardhan was addressing a symposium on ‘Impact of Environment on Health’ on the occasion of the World Environment Day here.

“Environment impacts our health and almost 24 per cent of diseases are caused due to environment issues,” Vardhan said.

He emphasised that by educating the masses about the adverse effects of environmental issues like air and water pollution which are responsible for several lifestyle diseases, many diseases could be prevented.

He informed that a week-long drive for enhanced sanitation at hospitals across the national capital will also be started by the Health Ministry. The minister further said that health should be made a strong social movement and stressed on developing a positive attitude towards health issues. — PTI

INSURANCE

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, JUNE 6, 2014

RBI allows FPIs & NRIs to invest up to 26% in insurance

The RBI on Thursday said overseas investors, including FPIs and NRIs, can invest up to 26% in insurance and allied activities through the automatic route. "Effective from February 4, foreign investment by way of FDI, investment by FIIs/FPIs and NRIs up to 26% under the automatic route shall be permitted in insurance sector," RBI said in a circular.

Earlier in February, the government had allowed 26% foreign investment in activities related to insurance like broking, third party administrators and surveyors and allowed FIIs and NRIs to invest in insurers within the stipulated cap.

In case of insurance companies, the 26% cap will include FDI and investments from FIIs and NRIs, said a DIPP press note.

Earlier, only FDI under the automatic route was allowed in insurance companies. Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) encompass all FIIs, their sub-accounts and qualified foreign investors (QFI) under a new regime that came into force on June 1.

Under the new norms, 26% foreign investment including FDI, FII and NRI will be allowed under the automatic route in insurance companies, insurance brokers, Third Party Administrators (TPAs), surveyors and loss assessesees.

The companies bringing in foreign investment will, however, have to obtain necessary licence from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) for undertaking prescribed activities.

Insurance brokers are entities which for remuneration arrange insurance contracts with insurers or reinsurers on behalf of their clients.

The TPAs help in facilitating health insurance on behalf of insurers. Surveyors and loss assessors provide technical services to the insurance companies.

All these entities are required to obtain a licence from the IRDA for undertaking specific activities.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ASIAN AGE, JUNE 6, 2014

G7 warns Russia to curb Ukraine unrest

World leaders urged Vladimir Putin on Wednesday to stop destabilising Ukraine or face further sanctions as they met without a Russian President for the first time since the 1990s.

Mr Putin reached out a hand despite being banned from the Group of Seven summit following Russia's annexation of Crimea in March, saying that he was ready to meet Ukraine's President-elect.

But G7 leaders said that while they still hoped for "constructive" talks with Putin on the sidelines of D-Day commemorations in France on Friday, Moscow could face further punitive measures.

In a joint communiqué they said Mr Putin must recognise the results of Ukraine's May 25 presidential election, won by Petro Poroshenko, stem destabilisation in the east of the country, and pull Russian troops back from the border.

"Actions to destabilise eastern Ukraine are unacceptable and must stop," the group said. "We stand ready to intensify targeted sanctions and to implement significant additional restrictive measures to impose further costs on Russia should events so require."

US President Barack Obama earlier hit out at Russia's "dark tactics" in Ukraine in a hawkish speech in Warsaw that harked back to some of the darkest days of the Cold War. Mr Obama has shown no signs of wanting a meeting with Mr Putin despite the fact that both will be in Normandy to mark the 70th anniversary of the World War II D-Day landings in Europe.

Other G7 leaders whose economies are more exposed to Russia than Washington took a softer tone.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that European leaders would "take stock" of Russian actions at a summit end June and "reflect which further sanctions are necessary". But Ms Merkel, who is due to meet Putin in France, said that "the main thing is to be constructive" and that further sanctions would take effect only if there had been "no progress whatsoever".

French President Francois Hollande — who was scheduled to have separate dinners with both Mr Putin and Obama in Paris on Thursday — agreed that "dialogue and deescalation must be encouraged".

British Prime Minister David Cameron said he would be taking a similar message to Mr Putin when he meets him.

Mr Putin hinted that he could meet both Poroshenko and even Obama, saying “I don’t plan to avoid anyone”. But he taunted the United States and waved away allegations of Russian military meddling in eastern Ukraine.

Meanwhile, US President Obama expressed concern to France about its intentions to keep building warships for Russia at the same time that Europe and the US are trying to isolate Russia over the crisis in Ukraine.

LIBRARIES

HINDU, JUN 4, 2014

Rs. 1.10-crore plan for facelift to Saraswati Mahal Library

The racks containing King Serfoji-II's personal collection of books at the Saraswati Mahal Library in Thanjavur.— Photo: B.Velankanni Raj

The centuries-old Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji's Saraswati Mahal Library in Thanjavur, which has been a treasure trove of rare manuscripts, maps, books and paintings, is all set to get a facelift. The Thanjavur district administration has drawn up an ambitious plan to develop the library, set up during the reign of the Nayaks of Thanjavur, with Central and State assistance.

A proposal seeking funds to the tune of Rs. 1.1 crore would soon be forwarded to the Ministry of Culture, authorities told *The Hindu* .

The library is a repository of culture and a treasure house of knowledge.

The library has a rich collection of Sanskrit, Tamil, Marathi, and Telugu manuscripts that chronicle the history and culture of South India, besides King Serfoji-II's personal collection of books.

As part of the plan, library authorities have proposed to refurbish the readers' hall with computers and internet connection and provide air-conditioner facility to help research scholars and students of Tamil, History, Archaeology, Music, and Sanskrit to access materials. The library's entrance would get a swanky new look. Besides establishing tie-ups with publishers, the authorities have proposed to go for online sale of library's publications.

The authorities have also planned to improve the library's website to attract more eyeballs and improve online sale. Of the 140 publications of the library given for reprint, 40 of them had already been printed. The library, declared as an institution of national importance in 1983, has over 37,000 Sanskrit manuscripts in the form of palm leaves and paper collections.

The Tamil manuscript section has more than 7,500 palm leaf titles of literary and medical manuscripts. The library has a separate holder containing King Serfoji II's personal collection of books in English, French, Latin, and Italian numbering a little over 4,500.

Steps have been taken to digitise the manuscripts preserved at the library.

The manuscripts were being cleaned periodically by the conservation department of the library.

HINDU, JUN 4, 2014

100-year-old library association to split

P. SUJATHA VARMA

The more than 100-year-old Andhra Pradesh Library Association (APLA) is falling apart, thanks to bifurcation.

Ironically, the Association recently celebrated completion of 100 years of its existence, recalling the hoary past which has witnessed concerted and committed efforts of individuals from across Andhra Pradesh, both Telangana and Seemandhra region, in promoting library movement across the length and breadth of the nation.

The executive committee of the Association met recently in Hyderabad where some of its members from Telangana region expressed their desire to part ways and float their separate Association. The meeting decided to constitute an ad hoc committee with Boyinapalli Venkata Rama Rao, the now vice-president of the APLA, and a combined meeting would be called to float the new Telangana Library Association.

“The demand for a separate Association came from that side and we did not want to disrespect it. We hope that the two organisations will work with equal enthusiasm for promotion of the principles we have so long adhered to,” Raavi Sarada, secretary of the APLA told The Hindu.

The main aim of the Association was to take the library movement into the public and to establish libraries in every village.

With changing times, a strong need was felt to set up a library in the heart of Vijayawada city and on March 30 in 1987, a library was inaugurated on Ugadi day by the then APLA secretary Pathuri Nagabhushanam and called ‘Sarvotthama Grandhalyama’, named after Mr. Nagabhushanam’s predecessor Gadicherla Harisarvottama Rao. Since, then the library has grown in leaps and bounds and currently equipped with 22,000 books.

The library is a favourite spot for those pursuing a research in Telugu literature. The collection includes stuff on English literature, history, material on personality development and competitive exams. The library is fully automated and served, on an average, 200 readers everyday besides providing internet, printing and photocopying services to the readers.

“Government should take note of the services rendered by libraries in disseminating and enhancing knowledge and provide financial assistance for their further improvement,” says Ms. Sarada.

PARLIAMENT

ECONOMICS TIMES, JUNE 2, 2014

Paperless Parliament dream may come true in 16th Lok Sabha

NEW DELHI: A 'Paper-less Parliament' may still be a term or two away, yet NIC officials working towards that goal hope that their efforts this time will have a better hit rate with a highly techsavvy prime minister and a [Lok Sabha](#) that counts over half of its members as first-timers.

A slew of measures that NIC has lined up - the [National Informatics Centre](#) (NIC) comes under the a [Department of Electronics](#) and spearheads all such e-governance initiatives - this year include preloaded tabs for MPs, an online messaging system that will replace 'paper slips', live webcast of house sessions, and of course, a detailed training programme for the parliamentarians.

To start with, MPs will be given tablets that come pre-loaded with literature on proceedings of the house. "They will be given these devices when they register at the parliament counter. This time, the tablets will be configured with the day's agenda, minutes of last session and other papers," a senior official at the [Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs](#) told ET.

A senior official at the NIC said that unique mail-ids for the MPs have been configured already and have been kept simple. "This is to make it accessible for people. All mails with the MP's name will be directed to his/her website. We are now in the process of configuring their tablets with relevant data," he said.

To help the MPs connect with each other, the NIC is looking at launching messenger services. "Inside the house, there is no wi-fi facility but to help MPs connect with each other in the lobby that has high-speed network, we will have a messenger system that can be accessed in areas other than the house. They can dispose off files, discuss the session and reply to e-mails."

The official added that MPs will be given a choice if they want hard copies of the agenda documents or will go only with the soft copy. About 58% of MPs elected to the new Lok Sabha this time are 'first-timers', the highest number of debutant members elected to the lower house in the last 30 years. "We hope they are comfortable with technology but we have many tutorials scheduled for them beginning from June third week," said the official. "We are looking for an entirely paperless parliament this time. While we implemented 10 per cent of it last session, there was little enthusiasm. This time we will go full throttle, and we hope at least 40 per cent of the house opts for 'only mail' option," he added.

Parliament will also launch a video portal soon that will have live online streaming during proceedings. "We will have different [categories](#) in there, especially one where in you can get all the speeches made by a certain politician," he said.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

TRIBUNE, JUNE 2, 2014

India gets its first tobacco-free village in Nagaland

Gariphema village in Nagaland has been declared the country's first tobacco-free village. The declaration was made by Principal Secretary R Benchilo Thong on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day on Saturday at the Gariphema Village Council hall near Kohima.

It was a result of an initiative taken by the Gariphema Village Council, Village Vision Cell and Village Students' Union, Thong said.

A resolution was taken at the village that whoever sells alcohol and tobacco or whoever gets drunk and disturbs peace would be imposed a fine of Rs 1,000 while those consuming alcohol, 'bidi', 'paan', betel nut or smokeless tobacco on the street and public places would be fined Rs 500. Thong said Gariphema had shown a great example not only to villages in Nagaland but also to other regions of the country and urged the villagers to strictly follow the declaration.

At the programme, Deputy Director, National Tobacco Control Programme, MC Longai said 67.9 per cent men and 28.1 per cent women of Nagaland consume tobacco. — PTI

TRANSPORT

BUSINESS STANDARD, JUNE 2, 2014

Vehicle registration, sight-seeing likely to cost more

Finance ministry is preparing a list of the services where user charges can be increased

Charges for government services such as [licence fee](#) for [vehicle registration](#) and entrance tickets for tourist places might go up, with the [finance ministry](#) pushing for a higher levy.

The proposal is aimed at rationalising the charges in line with economic growth and inflation. Many of the charges have not been revised for years and sometimes the government is not even able to recover its cost, leave alone depriving the exchequer of more revenue.

The ministry is preparing a list of the services where user charges can be increased. It might soon write to all administrative ministries, pressing the need for the same. This would add to the revenue kitty of both, the Centre and the states.

"Easily, this can give Rs 10,000 crore more. Though the funds will go to the state governments in most of the cases, it will help improve the combined fiscal position of the governments," said a finance ministry official, requesting anonymity.

The official said the focus was on getting more from such sources as non-tax revenue since not much could be done to maximise tax revenue given the state of the economy.

The issues were also highlighted in a presentation to Finance Minister Arun Jaitley this week.

An increase might also be considered for charges related to public works, patents, security, copyright, posts etc. Some of the other general, social, community and economic services provided by the government include education, sports, art and culture, medical and public health, housing, security, royalty from petroleum, fee received by registrar of companies, telecommunications, health services, education, broadcasting, transport and civil aviation, among others.

According to the interim Budget, total non-tax revenue in 2014-15 is expected at Rs 1,80,713 crore, lower than Rs 1,93,225 crore in the previous year. Of this, revenue from general services is pegged at 12,954 crore, over eight per cent higher than Rs 11,954 crore in 2013-14, while the revenue from social and community services is estimated at Rs 2,850 crore, more than double of Rs 1,355 crore earned in the last year. From economic services, however, it is projected to go down to Rs 64,266 crore, compared with Rs 66,284 crore in 2013-14. In the past, too, the finance ministry had tried to review charges for various services where the cost of delivery was higher compared to the revenue generated from such services but the efforts did not yield much result.

WATER SUPPLY

ECONOMICS TIMES, JUNE 2, 2014

Government readies plan for Rs 25,000 crore national waterway grid

NEW DELHI: The [Narendra Modi government](#) has drawn up an ambitious Rs 25,000-crore plan to create a [national waterway grid](#) linking Ganga, Brahmaputra, Mahanadi and Godavari rivers.

"The plan is ready....We will soon move a formal proposal," a senior shipping ministry official said, adding that the underlying objective is to enable water from big perennial [Himalayan rivers](#) to flow into peninsular ones generally have strong seasonal flows.

[Nitin Gadkari](#), the new minister for roads and shipping in the [BJP](#) government, has given an in-principle clearance to the eight-year project, which aims to ensure high water levels in rivers through the year, improving their role in crop irrigation and making them navigable. The waterway grid will also help control floods.

The proposed grid will have road linkages to ports to facilitate faster movement of cargo. According to the ministry's estimates, transportation of goods on this network could lead to savings of about Rs 300 per tonne. "It will create a network of passageways in a large part of the country in rivers that are navigable," the official added.

In 2002, the NDA government under Atal Bihari Vajpayee had set up a task force to look into inter-linking of rivers. The same year, the [Supreme Court](#) ordered the constitution of a committee to take the idea forward. The plan, however, could not take off in earnest.

It was only recently that the Rajasthan government started to pilot project to take the idea forward. Five inland waterways have already been declared as national waterways, though only three are operational so far.

The shipping ministry has also readied Cabinet notes for a coastal shipping policy aimed at cheaper and faster movement of cargo among the nine coastal states. On its part, the [Inland Waterways Authority](#) has written to state governments to plan roads keeping in view waterways falling in their states.

The shipping ministry successfully bucked slowdown in 2013-14 and awarded 30 projects worth Rs 20,709.93 crore that would lead to the creation of 217.57 mtpa capacity in the country.