

**LIST OF NEWSPAPERS COVERED**

**BUSINESS LINE**

**BUSINESS STANDARD**

**DECCAN HERALD**

**ECONOMIC TIMES**

**HINDU**

**HINDUSTAN TIMES**

**INDIAN EXPRESS**

**PIONEER**

**STATESMAN**

**TELEGRAPH**

**TIMES OF INDIA**

**TRIBUNE**

## CONTENTS

<b>ADVERTISING</b>	<b>3-4</b>
<b>AGRICULTURE</b>	<b>5-7</b>
<b>BACKWARD CLASSES</b>	<b>8-9</b>
<b>CHILD LABOUR</b>	<b>10-12</b>
<b>CIVIL SERVICE</b>	<b>13-19</b>
<b>DISASTERS</b>	<b>20-25</b>
<b>ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>26-30</b>
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>31-33</b>
<b>HEALTH SERVICES</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS</b>	<b>35-36</b>
<b>INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</b>	<b>37-38</b>
<b>LABOUR</b>	<b>39-40</b>
<b>PARLIAMENT</b>	<b>41-42</b>
<b>POLICE</b>	<b>43-45</b>
<b>POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>46-48</b>
<b>PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>49-55</b>
<b>RAILWAYS</b>	<b>56-61</b>
<b>URBAN DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>62-64</b>
<b>WATER SUPPLY</b>	<b>65-66</b>

## **ADVERTISING**

HINDUSTAN TIMES, MAY 17, 2015

**Analysis: SC ruling on govt ads tramples on executive's domain**

**Satya Prakash**

The Supreme Court's verdict that photographs of only the President, Prime Minister and Chief Justice of India can be used in government advertisements impinges on the right of other leaders to connect with their people and militates against India's healthy federalism.

India's polity features a large number of powerful and charismatic leaders who have won office through the rough and tumble of electoral politics. These men and women need to reach out to their constituents, and state government ads legitimately showcase their achievements to the people who vote for them.

To take away this tool of communication and to shut them out of these ads by featuring the PM or President instead would be a tough blow. It would be incongruous to picture only the PM and not the chief minister in an ad that highlights a state government project, especially in a state run by political parties other than the BJP that rules the Centre.

The court may be right in checking extravagant spending on multiple government advertisements on birth and death anniversaries of leaders and political luminaries, but there should be a distinction between this sort of spending and legitimate public relations.

In any case, there exist adequate checks and balances on publicity spending in the form of the national auditor and more importantly, voters who hold profligate governments accountable every five years.

Former Tamil Nadu chief minister Karunanidhi has rightly pointed out that the Prime Minister was 'symbolic' of the central government, a chief minister was his equivalent in the state. Other states are also speaking out.

The SC has gone beyond individuals and said “institutions need not be glorified.” For the Supreme Court to say that is unfortunate, to say the least. Individuals come and go, institutions are permanent. Democracy functions through institutions, which are represented by individuals — elected or otherwise.

Coming at a time when the judiciary and the executive are already engaged in a turf war over judicial appointment following the enactment of the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, the verdict is bound to be viewed as yet another example of judicial activism — often criticised by jurists as a serious aberration from constitutional principle of separation of power.

While over 30 million cases remain pending in various courts across India, our judiciary has been entertaining public interest litigations on subjects ranging from nursery admissions, the number of free beds in hospitals on public land, air pollution, begging in public and the legality of constructions in Delhi.

It has been identifying the buildings to be demolished, determining the size of speed-breakers on Delhi roads, and dealing with how much auto-rickshaws charge.

India as a developing country faces multiple socio-economic challenges and the judiciary has a definite role to play in achieving the constitutional goals of social, economic and political justice. What it needs to remember is the fact that there can't be judicial solutions to all ills.

## AGRICULTURE

STATESMAN, MAY 20, 2015

**Climate and Food**

**Bharat Jhunjunwala**

The suicides by farmers are direly portentous. The fear is that the worse is yet to come. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has forecast that global warming will result in more frequent floods, drought and cyclones. The rainfall pattern is likely to differ from place to place. Heavy rain for a few days may be followed by long periods of drought even though the average rainfall may remain the same. The average temperature in India has risen by 0.6 degrees Celsius in the last century. It is expected to increase by 2.4 degrees by the year 2100.

A study conducted for the World Bank has predicted that extreme floods, that occurred once in 100 years till now, will take place once in ten years. The impact of climate change will be more severe on rain-fed agriculture. Crops like bajra, corn and ragi are cultivated in large parts of the country. These crops are not irrigated. Lack of rainfall as and when required can delay the sowing. Should this happen, no crops can be grown in that year at all.

Rainfall is often steady in Rajasthan followed by long dry spells. The farmer only harvests the straw at the end of the season. Often as much there is no rain at the time of sowing. In terms of output, the land remains barren. Climate-change will affect rain-fed agriculture considerably. Farmers will demand irrigation facilities with canals as the source. Crop yields in irrigated areas will also be hit. It is predicted that there will be a decline in winter rains. Long spells of no rain during the monsoon will raise the demand for paddy irrigation as well.

The availability of water will also decline. It has been predicted that there will be less snowfall in the hills, leading to less flow in the rivers during the summer when the demand for water is the highest.

Greater variability in the rainfall pattern will lead to less recharge of groundwater aquifers. Water seeps into the earth if the drizzle is continuous for several days. A spell of heavy rainfall, on the other hand, provides less time for the water to seep into the earth. The bulk of the water flows into the rivers and thence into the sea. Our efforts to control floods have also led to less recharge of aquifers. Previously flood waters used to inundate large tracts of land, and water would seep into the aquifers. Now we have built embankments along many rivers.

These prevent the spread of flood waters. This has lessened the recharge of aquifers. As a result, the groundwater level is fast declining across the country. The availability of water for irrigation will be further reduced due to evaporation from large storage reservoirs like Bhakra and Tehri. A study of 12 large reservoirs in the United States predicted that the evaporation-loss will increase by nine per cent in the next century. The loss is likely to be more acute in our warmer climate.

We are faced with a double whammy the demand for irrigation will increase while availability of water for irrigation will come down. Climate change will also have international political implications. Warmer temperatures will be mildly positive for colder countries of Europe and North America and hugely negative for tropical countries like India. This would mean that the developed countries will be able to produce larger quantities of food grain while our production may decline.

We had to go with a begging bowl to Washington in the 1960s for the supply of food grain under the PL480 programme. A similar situation may be created yet again. Thus climate change will not only affect our food security but also our sovereignty. We need to make changes in our agriculture and water policies to face these multiple challenges.

The indigenous varieties of food grain like paddy and wheat are more resistant to climate variations. We had abandoned these types in favour of High Yielding Varieties to augment our food production in the wake of the food crisis of the Sixties. We will have to

retrace our steps. We must encourage farmers to grow traditional varieties even though the production maybe less.

The farmer is willing to make this change. He wants to insulate himself from the vagaries of weather. His problem is that he cannot make ends meet if the production is less. Therefore, we must put in place a system of incentives for growing indigenous varieties. We must adopt water conservation measures such as drip irrigation so that we can grow the same amount of grains with less water. Once again the problem is that of price. The farmers do not have the income or the incentive to invest in drip irrigation systems. This requires an increase in price and provision of incentives.

We are consuming large amounts of water for growing water-intensive crops like grapes, sugarcane, and red chillies. Often these are produced for export. We pack our scarce water into these crops and export our water to foreign countries. It is imperative to assess the availability of water in each block and place restrictions on growing of crops that consume more water than is available. I have seen the richer farmers investing in the irrigation of the dry areas of Gulbarga and Jodhpur to grow grapes and red chillies. This must stop. Our water policy also calls for reflection.

At present we are constructing large reservoirs like Bhakra and Tehri to store monsoon water for use during summer. This is resulting in huge losses due to evaporation. Instead we must store water in groundwater aquifers. Indeed we will have to spend on electricity to pump out the water from the aquifers but that will be a small cost to pay for our food security.

We must also remove the embankments along the rivers and let the flood waters spread over large areas. We must build villages on mounds and houses on stilts so that the loss of life is minimised during floods. We must “live with the floods.”The flood waters will help recharge our aquifers and help establish our food security.

## BACKWARD CLASSES

TIMES OF INDIA, MAY 18, 2015

**National panel seeks govt nod to divide OBCs to ensure equitable distribution of reservation benefits**

**Subodh Ghildiyal,**

The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) has sought Modi government's nod to categorize backward castes in the central list of OBCs into three groups.

NEW DELHI: Will the Modi government bite the bullet and divide OBCs into groups along the lines of their "backwardness" to ensure equitable distribution of reservation benefits?

The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) has sought the government's nod to categorize backward castes in the central list of OBCs into three groups, and limit each group's claim to a fraction of the 27% reservation.

Highly-placed sources said the consultations between NCBC and the ministry of social justice, which started under UPA, have reached a critical stage with the national panel advocating the initiative to ensure that "the better-off OBCs do not corner the rights and facilities meant for the more deserving categories of OBCs".

"As there is no classification among different OBCs in the central list, the more advanced among OBCs are availing most of the benefits available to the OBCs to the detriment of the interest of the really depressed and downtrodden among the OBCs," the commission is learnt to have said, having earlier argued on similar lines in a letter to the prime minister.

Known as "sub-categorization", the idea is rooted in the grievance that "forwards among the backwards" are cornering the 27% Mandal quota because the "backwards among the backwards" are unable to compete with them owing to their inferior educational and financial status.

As a remedy, the OBCs are to be divided into sub-groups, with communities with similar levels of "social, educational and economic backwardness" to be clubbed together and apportioned a part of the 27% quota. The quantum allocated to each sub-group would be in proportion to their population.

It will ensure that "forwards among backwards" only compete with each other for a slice of the 27% quota, and not monopolize the entire quota cake. It will leave the "backwards among backwards" to vie with each other on a level-playing field.

Though resented by stronger OBCs like Yadavs/Kurmis as it would limit their quota benefits, sub-categorization is demanded by weaker castes who complain that the former have usurped their share.

Ahead of Bihar assembly elections to be followed by Uttar Pradesh, known as Mandal strongholds, the issue has a political sensitivity because of its potential to realign the loyalty of social groups.

Having positioned himself as an OBC, PM Narendra Modi would face the choice between sticking to the status quo and of trying to polarize the numerically stronger "extremely backwards" against Yadavs and Kurmis, represented by BJP rivals Lalu Prasad and chief minister Nitish Kumar (Bihar) and by Mulayam Singh Yadav (UP).

In its recent communication to the Centre, the NCBC asked the government to take a "policy decision" if it can go ahead with nationwide sub-categorization of OBCs and also sought the Centre's approval for its "methodology". It also wants "funding" for a study by an expert body like ICSSR to study backward class profile of each state to decide on the sub-groups.

## CHILD LABOUR

BUSINESS STANDARD, MAY 20, 2015

### **Ending child labour**

#### **Regulations must be easily enforceable**

The amendments to the law prohibiting child labour, approved by the Union Cabinet, have attracted a certain amount of controversy because they will allow children to work in family enterprises, provided the work is not hazardous, while attending school. On the face of it, any form of child labour should be disallowed and parents allowing it should be punished under the law. But children who go to school also helping out in their "mom and pop" stores is common in developed countries as is children in poor countries helping out on the family farm or taking care of younger siblings. Kailash Satyarthi, Nobel Prize-winning founder of the Bachpan Bachao Andolan, has issued a nuanced response that is worth heeding. While demanding a ban on any kind of labour for children under 14, he has qualified it by saying that they could work in family enterprises and during vacations provided they do so under the supervision of their parents or legal guardians and not relatives. The real menace is parents sending their children to work with better-off relatives, where they never go to school, and then collecting the child's pay at the end of the month. Any law, however, that replaces a blanket ban - relatively enforceable - with one that allows discretion as to timings and choice of occupation for the children is likely to open up many opportunities for graft and harassment.

Mr Satyarthi has gone on to add something that is arguably even more important. He has said it is "essential to provide education to them [children] as it can effectively eradicate child labour". That is the nub of the matter. It is not wise to impose a ban that will mostly remain on paper. The best way to eradicate child labour is to ensure that every child goes to school. Somebody from the school should call on a home from where a child has not been coming to school for some time. There is an even better way of ensuring school attendance: pay poor parents, who have notionally foregone the income of their children, an allowance for sending them to school - a "conditional cash transfer". This plus the mid-day meal at school should go a long way.

But more can be done. Make going to school an interesting, useful and happy experience for children. Surveys have found that some students often drop out of school, after being automatically promoted up to a point, because they cannot follow what is going on. This is because school teaching does not recognise the reality of children of varying learning attainments being in the same class and age group. Where policing is crucial is in prohibiting child labour in industries that have traditionally employed them in order to be able to pay lower wages. Regular policing of such establishments and prompt prosecution of offenders should be the norm. More intractable is the work for some of these industries like *beedi* rolling and embroidery done by children at home.

BUSINESS LINE, MAY 15, 2015

**Legislating social change**

**Making child labour illegal without addressing root causes will drive it underground**

The Centre's move to amend the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2012, which makes it illegal to employ children under the age of 14 in any kind of labour, commercial work or paid employment, but allows children to be employed in family business, hereditary occupations or family farms, entertainment and sports — with the proviso that this can happen only outside of school hours — is a good example of the morass that policymaking can get into when one attempts to legislate social change without addressing the underlying issues. In the first place, the amendments became necessary so that the existing child labour law did not come in conflict with the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, that had made education a fundamental right for all children in the age group of 6-14 years. Activists have been quick to lambast the move, claiming that by exempting certain types of work, the Act will give legal sanctity to the use of child labour. They point out that a bulk of child labour is in any case employed in 'home' businesses, ranging from farming to traditional handicrafts, *beedi* rolling, gem cutting and polishing, jewellery making, or petty shops and eateries. They also argue that the law will further weaken education for girls. Some of the Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu have even objected to the move on the grounds that this will pave the way for the return of caste discrimination, disguised as "hereditary education". Nobel

laureate Kailash Satyarthi has argued that child labour is exploitative and perpetuates the cycle of poverty, which can only be broken when children are given appropriate skill-based education.

While all these criticisms are valid, they do not pay enough attention to the fundamental aspect of the child labour problem: the economic imperative. Several studies have established that a majority of families use child labour in order to reach subsistence levels. A 2013 study of the impact of India's landmark child labour law by Prashant Bharadwaj, Leah K Lakdawala, and Nicholas Li for the US National Bureau of Economic Research (*Perverse Consequences of Well Intentioned Regulation: Evidence from India's Child Labor Ban*) found that after the ban, child labour increased, school enrolment fell, and family welfare, measured by household expenditure, consumption, calorie intake and asset holdings, actually fell after the ban went into effect. In other words, the earlier law made the situation worse, so tightening it poses the risk of worsening the situation further.

Poverty is the principal driver of child labour around the world and any meaningful attempt at reducing this must necessarily focus on addressing subsistence constraints first. A balanced approach, which ensures at least minimum social security to poor families, while ensuring that education becomes a realisable right by creating adequate infrastructure, will achieve the objective without criminalising parents compelled by poverty to put their children to work. That said, both the Centre and State governments need to ensure that enforcement improves, so that those exploiting children for commercial gain are punished. Otherwise, this law will join the long list of rights and protections we enjoy on paper.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated May 18, 2015)

## CIVIL SERVICE

PIONEER, MAY 21, 2015  
**AAP GOVT BLINKS FIRST**

As the tussle between the Lieutenant-Governor and the AAP Government aggravated latter's relation with the bureaucracy, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday took a calculated decision to climb down on his obstinate stance and reinstated Arvind Ray, a 1984-batch IAS officer, as Principal Secretary (General Administration Department). There is also a move to reinstate Aninda Majumdar as Principal Secretary (Services).

Ray, whose name figured in the list of panel of acting Chief Secretary, had been kept without portfolio for one month by the current dispensation. Deputy CM Manish Sisodia had written a note on Ray's file on May 13 that he should not be made the acting Chief Secretary as he was removed by joint decision of L-G Najeeb Jung and the CM. However, the perception changed quickly and Ray was reinstated as Principal Secretary (GAD) with immediate effect.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Government has convened a meeting of all the Principal Secretaries to explain the transaction of business rules. The papers accessed by The Pioneer say the meeting on Wednesday is an attempt to bridge the gap between the bureaucracy and the Government. According to sources, resentment has been brewing in the bureaucracy over the style of functioning of the Kejriwal Government and over 100 officers have sought transfer out of Delhi .

The situation was aggravated after the office of Principal Secretary (Services) was locked on the orders of the CMO. This didn't, sources said, go down well with the bureaucracy and even the officers — perceived to be close to the AAP Government — have turned against it. This turn of events is said to be the catalyst that prompted the Government to climb down on Tuesday over its handling of the situation.

Interestingly, the order to reinstate Ray was issued by Rajendra Kumar, the Secretary to CM and in his capacity as Principal Secretary (Services) though his appointment to the post by the AAP Government was declared "ab initio void" by the L-G on Monday.

The Principal Secretary charge of GAD as well as services department was given to Kumar after Aninda Majumdar was divested of both the responsibilities by the AAP Government. “After getting order the black and white, Ray, along with acting Chief Secretary Shakuntala Gamlin, met the L-G in the evening,” said the sources.

According to sources, Gamlin has asked Majumdar to take charge of Principal Secretary (Services) as the Lieutenant Governor had already declared the order to transfer him ‘void’ in his case. Sources said that Gamlin has asked Majumdar verbally to take charge of Services department but he is reluctant after Monday incident.

On Monday, Majumdar had found his office in Delhi Secretariat locked. Majumdar was removed on Saturday after he issued an order notifying the appointment of Gamlin as the acting Chief Secretary on Friday. The Lieutenant Governor, on the same evening, had declared the order to transfer Majumdar “void”.

ECONOMIC TIMES. MAY 20, 2015

#### **Nitish Kumar government hikes Dearness Allowance for employees, pensioners**

For both categories, which constitute about four lakh employees, the hiked DA would be applicable with effect from January 1 this year.

PATNA: The [Nitish Kumar](#) government in [Bihar](#) today announced a pre-election sop for government employees and pensioners by hiking Dearness Allowance by six to 11 per cent.

A decision to this effect was taken at a meeting of the state Cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

Briefing on the cabinet decisions, Principal Secretary, Cabinet Coordination, [Shishir Sinha](#) told reporters the DA has been increased from 107 per cent to 113 per cent for revised salary category for employees.

For those falling under unrevised category (those who could not avail 6th Pay

Commission because of some service related dispute) the DA was raised from 212 per cent to 223 per cent, Sinha said.

For both [categories](#), which constitute about four lakh employees, the hiked DA would be applicable with effect from January 1 this year, the principal secretary said.

The government would incur an additional financial burden of Rs 821 crore annually due to hike in the DA, he added.

The Bihar cabinet also approved a total of 24 agendas of different departments today.

ECONOMIC TIMES, MAY 20, 2015

**Go to SC if you want to change transfer policy: Centre to UP, Haryana**

By [Aman Sharma](#)

Singh said the provision was brought as per a Supreme Court direction in October 2013 to ensure fixed tenure for babus.

NEW DELHI: UP and Haryana have complained to the Centre that a new provision that would ask for an officer's views before transferring him prematurely was effecting bureaucratic reshuffle in the states. The two states are known for quick-fire transfers of bureaucrats. UP had transferred [IAS officer](#) Durga Shakti Nagpal, after a complaint against her for removing encroachments. Haryana has transferred whistleblower IAS officer [Ashok Khemka](#) repeatedly.

The change in transfer policy was raised by the representatives of both states at a meeting chaired by MoS for personnel, [Jitendra Singh](#), on Monday. Leena Nandan, the resident commissioner of UP, told Singh response from officers took a long time. No response was received in some cases, she said. These meant transfers were not taking place. Haryana also made a similar complaint, ET has learnt.

The Centre, however, refused to intervene. Singh said the provision was brought as per a

[Supreme Court](#) direction in October 2013 to ensure fixed tenure for babus. Singh also reminded the states that they had filed affidavits before SC that they would follow a fixed-tenure policy and hence would have to approach the court if they desired a change in policy.

Following the SC ruling, the Centre had this January brought new rules saying [All-India Service](#) officers will get a two-year-fixed tenure in a post and states will have to set up a [civil service](#) board to recommend all appointments and premature transfers. The new rules stipulated that the board will obtain comments or views of the officer proposed to be transferred after the state sends it a report with a "detailed justification" on why it wants to undertake the premature transfer.

TRIBUNE, MAY 20, 2015

**No LTC if posted in hometown: Govt**

The employees, who are posted in their hometown, cannot take Leave Travel Concession (LTC), the Centre has said.

“Government employees whose headquarters or place of posting and hometown is one and the same are not eligible for home town LTC,” it said.

Besides, these employees cannot convert hometown LTC to avail special concession scheme to travel to the North-East region, Jammu and Kashmir and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Department of Personnel and Training said in an order.

However, government employees whose headquarters are Delhi and reside in cities or towns outside the national capital and falling in other states of National Capital Region (NCR) are eligible for hometown concession, the order said.

Every new recruit in government service is required to declare his or her hometown to avail the benefits of the LTC.

The LTC allows grant of leave and ticket reimbursement to eligible Central government employees to travel to their hometowns.

However, the government has recently allowed employees to visit North-East region and Jammu and Kashmir, among others, in order to promote tourism and increase people-to-people contact. — PTI

TRIBUNE, MAY 20, 2015

**Amid CM-LG stand-off, babus opt to leave Delhi**

At least a dozen senior officers working with the Delhi government are understood to have approached the Home Ministry to get postings outside, amidst the ongoing row over appointment of an acting Chief Secretary.

Sources said the officers of both IAS and DANICS (Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands) cadre are keen to get postings in any other place under the jurisdiction of the Union Territory cadre or in the central deputation.

The officers were apparently not being able to adjust with the style of functioning of the AAP government and hence wanted to leave the city administration.

Some of them have approached officials in the Home Ministry, which controls the UT cadre IAS and DANICS officers. However, no formal communication has come from any of the officers, sources said.

They said the stand-off between Lieutenant-Governor Najeeb Jung and AAP government over appointment of Shakuntala Gamlin as acting Chief Secretary had a negative impact on Delhi government's bureaucracy that led to the development. — PTI

PIONEER, MAY 19, 2015

**AAP GOVT LOCKS PRINCIPAL SECY OUT OF HIS OFFICE**

A top Delhi bureaucrat on Monday found his office locked and another's appointment was declared void as the turf war between Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Lt-Governor Najeeb Jung turned murkier with both sides showing no signs of any let-up in

ending their bitter fight. Principal Secretary (Services) Anindo Majumdar's office was locked following an order by Chief Minister's Office on Monday.

When Majumdar reached his office this morning, he found that it had been locked as per the directive from Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's office. Majumdar was removed from the post by Kejriwal on Saturday after he issued the appointment letter to Gamlin, following instructions from Jung. The L-G, on the same evening, had declared the order to transfer Majumdar "void", saying it did not have his approval.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, MAY 16, 2015

**Bastar collector got needless dressing down for informal attire**

We often fault out bureaucrats for being excessively protocol conscious but our politicians are no less, as we found out last week. The Chhattisgarh government have sent 'warning letters' to the district collectors of Bastar (Amit Katariya) and Dantewada (KC Devsenapati) for not following the official dress code while meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to the state on May 9. This was not all: chief minister Raman Singh added fuel to the fire by saying that it is "necessary to teach new collectors about their protocol during a PM visit".

The stifling rule book says that a collector must wear a 'bandhgala' when he receives an official dignitary and so the conduct of Mr Katariya and Mr Devsenapati was a 'clear violation' of the All India Service (Conduct) Rules 1968. The Bastar collector was also reprimanded for wearing sunglasses while meeting the PM. Mr Katariya was wearing a blue formal shirt and black trousers, the usual attire one sees in the corporate world these days. To say that the state government over-reacted would be stating the obvious. As many senior bureaucrats have said, it is an over-reaction and the notices are frivolous. Even if a bandhgala is the norm, who on earth would wear one when the temperature is 40-plus Centigrade and had spent much of the day in the sun organising the visit?

Tradition gives a sense of security and permanence, but they must be altered according to the requirements of the day and age. When the British government, which built our administrative structure, ruled India, district heads would often go out for inspections on

horses, wearing a sola topee and breeches. But with time that has changed. A couple of years ago, former UPA Cabinet minister Jairam Ramesh called the practice of wearing the traditional coloured robe at convocation ceremonies as “barbaric colonial relics” and publicly removed his gown at one such event. Last year, a Supreme Court bench said that judges should be addressed in courts in a respectful and dignified manner and it is not compulsory to call them “my lord”, “your lordship” or “your honour”, because such terms are a “relic of colonial era” and “a sign of slavery”. While changing set rules is a cumbersome process, the government should review the service rules of officers and weed out such unnecessary protocols, in the same manner it is doing now with outdated and archaic legislation.

INDIAN EXPRESS, MAY 18, 2015

**Centre to review progress in setting up civil services boards**

The DoPT proposal to reduce duration of induction training from 8 weeks to 6 for IAS officers will also be taken up.

The Centre, on Monday, will hold a meeting to discuss the progress made by state governments and Union Territories to constitute Civil Services Boards as a follow up to the Supreme Court order for ensuring fixed tenure for IAS and IFS officers.

MoS, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Jitendra Singh will hold the meeting with Principal Secretaries (Personnel/GAD) of the state governments and Union Territories. The meeting will also consider IAS cadre review for Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim and AGMUT cadre, the government said. Determination of vacancies for promotion from state civil service officers and non-state officers will also be on agenda, it said. The DoPT proposal to reduce duration of induction training from 8 weeks to 6 for IAS officers will also be taken up. The DoPT has made it mandatory for all inducted officers to undergo the training. The DoPT will also direct states to ensure IAS officers are relieved timely for undergoing the Mid-Career Training Programme. The meeting will also review progress made in setting up five Special CBI Courts — three in West Bengal and one each in Andhra Pradesh and Jammu and [Kashmir](#).

## DISASTERS

STATESMAN, MAY 18, 2015

**Onus is on citizens to prepare for disasters**

**Bharat Dogra**

Alert and well-prepared citizens can play an important role in reducing mortality and injuries at the time of an earthquake. If people are well prepared and are sure of what they need to do in such an emergency, they will not waste precious time in reacting. Time is of the greatest importance. Even delay of a few seconds can prove to be costly.

So it is best to be well prepared. Generally it is believed and rightly that open spaces outside buildings are much safer than being indoors. However in congested areas, open spaces are not always available near homes and offices. If someone is inside a building, then the nearest safe place could be under a strong table or bed. Such pieces of furniture should be identified so that these can be quickly approached. It may be safer to keep the head down, and if we can grab a pillow, helmet, hat or turban, this will be a help. If such furniture is not available, it may be relatively safer to sit in a corner of the room or near stairs. It may be better to wear a helmet or headdress, or at least use a pillow cover and to cover the face with one's hands.

Proximity to windows with glass panes is to be avoided, as also to tall furniture such as a load-carrying almirah. Citizens should plan ahead for a safe open space in front of their homes which is away from a high tension wire. Attention should also be given to retrofitting to the extent possible so that buildings can cope better with quakes. A kit should be kept handy and should include two torches, two whistles as well as essential medicines required by any family member. Biscuits, water bottles and helmets/headgear should be easily accessible.

Even if these are not required in normal day to day life, torches and helmets should be kept at home for safety purposes. Similarly some equipment for clearing rubble such as shovels and spades should be available in the housing society or panchayat office. This will come in handy for rescue work before professional rescuers reach with their

equipment. If those buried under the rubble have a small whistle, this can come in handy to draw attention of rescuers. When coming out of high rise buildings, lifts should be avoided and stairs used.

At the community level efforts should be made for mutual help and to obtain expert consultancy for retrofitting where needed. Such help should also be extended to weaker sections and slum dwellers living nearby and they should be involved in efforts aimed at safety for all. Together communities should decide about safe open places and provide help to each other.

Similarly community pressure should be exerted to ensure that school buildings are safe. If these are not safe, new buildings should be constructed and/or adequate retrofitting should be taken up with expert advice. It should be ensured that adequate open space is available in schools. Such public pressure should also be exerted to ensure the safety of local hospital buildings and availability of adequate open and safe places near them.

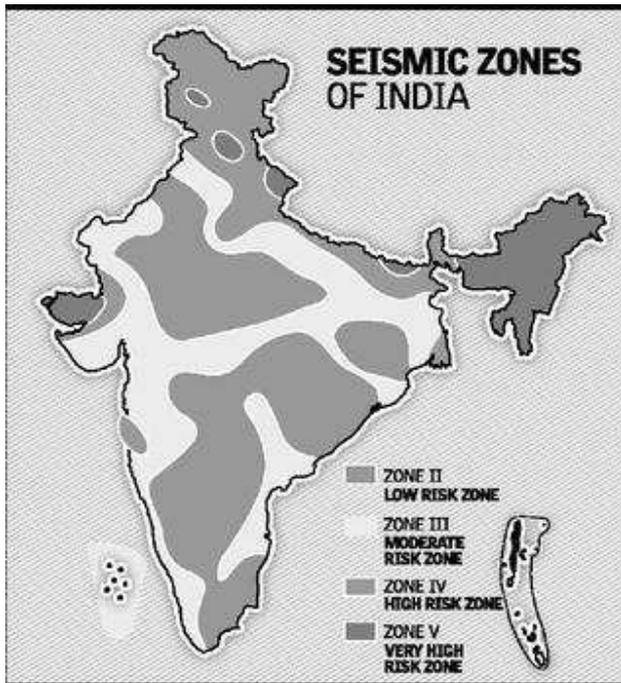
Unfortunately safety has not received top priority in our country. In the case of earthquakes and other disasters and accidents it is possible to save many lives. Safety must get high priority and careful planning activity should be taken up with the involvement of people.

HINDU, MAY 18, 2015

**Taking a comprehensive view of quakes**

C.P. RAJENDRAN

The tragic Nepal quake is an opportunity to learn and understand the threats of great temblors



The Nepal earthquake of April 25 is the largest in the Himalayan region since the 1934 quake which measured 8.2 on the Richter scale and destroyed not only parts of central Nepal but also the plains of northern Bihar in India. Mahatma Gandhi, shaken by the Bihar tragedy, wrote in the *Harijan* that the earthquake was “providential retribution to India’s failure to eradicate untouchability”. Although this statement dismayed the rationalist in Jawaharlal Nehru, it was Rabindranath Tagore who dared Gandhi by sending a letter to the *Harijan* saying, “Physical catastrophes must have origin in physical facts”. When Tagore, always far ahead of his times, made this insightful statement, the science of earthquakes had not developed. It was only in the 1960s that plate tectonics explained the origin of earthquakes.

Like other Himalayan quakes, the Nepal temblor is a dramatic manifestation of the ongoing tectonic convergence between the Indo-Australian and Asian tectonic plates that have built the Himalayas over the last 50 million years. A product of millions of years of crustal shortening, the Himalayas are under immense tectonic stress and occasional temblors. The last 200 years in the region have seen four great earthquakes. But central Himalaya has been an exception, researchers warn, and is considered to be susceptible to great temblors.

The Nepal quake is a painful reminder of what is in store for the communities that live in the region and in the adjoining Indo-Gangetic plains. Sadly, lessons after such tragic events are often short-lived in public memory. This quake, too, opens an opportunity to learn and understand the threats of great earthquakes which may occur in the vulnerable region of North India and we must retain these lessons.

### **Why was it so devastating?**

The Nepal earthquake was devastating due to many factors. The source of the quake was shallow and the fault plane extended right up to densely populated Kathmandu. Added to this, Kathmandu is on a primitive lake basin that amplifies seismic wave energy. The slip of 1 to 3 metres recorded along the 160-km-long rupture showed strain built up over a century. Research implies that this segment has seen no great earthquakes in the last 700 years. Thus, the unspent accumulated slip needed to be released through this quake and will further be released through future quakes. This means that the segment, which includes parts of Uttarakhand, is capable of witnessing more damage. The Nepal earthquake rupture probably did not move towards the Indian plains in the manner that it did in the 1934 quake. But India may not be so lucky next time.

As India's northern territory is interfaced with a 2,400-km-long seismically potential Himalayan arc, it needs to develop a workable strategy to lessen the impact of earthquakes in populated areas. The ability to minimise damage and prepare for the aftermath of an earthquake has to come from a deeper insight on earthquake processes, and analyses of large amount of data that will enable us to study the source and effects of a quake. The latest advances in seismic sensor technology, data acquisition systems, digital communication and computer hardware and software facilitate developing real-time earthquake information systems. In rapid data dissemination, India needs to learn from the U.S. Geological Survey. India's close proximity to an active plate boundary makes rapid dissemination of seismic data necessary. India should give priority to not only install but also sustain dense networks of observatories for both weak and strong motion data — like Japan, Taiwan and the U.S. do. Using such data to understand source characteristics is one way of helping the seismological community understand and

constrain the manner in which faulting occurred and its probable extent. This data can also be exploited to develop an earthquake alert system, which essentially uses the travel time difference between the body waves and surface waves. For example, a resident in Delhi can be given a few minutes of alert on a major Himalayan earthquake, originating about 250- km away, using the difference in travel time lag between the body waves and the damaging surface waves.

### **Better building practices**

This would also allow us to quantify reasonably the expected ground motion in any region, which can be the basis for designing earthquake-resistant buildings. Our experience in the Himalayan towns, of moderate earthquakes (the 1996 Chamoli and the 1991 Uttarkashi earthquakes, for example), indicates that better building practices are major factors in lessening the impact of destructive events. Another learning experience is the historical example of the 1803 Uttarkashi earthquake which generated distant liquefaction in Delhi and Mathura and triggered landslides that smothered Himalayan villages. The top part of Qutb Minar toppled, too.

Yet, we haven't made headway in risk assessment, the core database for disaster management. Risk assessment requires intense field studies, developing models that use data on the frequency and severity of a particular type of natural hazard that strikes an area, and combining this information with the nature and class of vulnerable structures. It would be prudent to calculate the earthquake risk in the region if such an earthquake were to happen in Uttarakhand. According to a study in 2000, if a 1905 Kangra earthquake were to occur today in the Himalayas, direct losses would amount to Rs.51 billion, cost around 65,000 lives and 4,00,000 houses. If all the houses were made earthquake-resistant, this would reduce to Rs.19 billion. The extra cost of retrofitting would be about Rs.19 billion, the loss of life would be reduced to one-fifth and the number of ruined houses would be reduced to one-fourth. It is also true that many new buildings in earthquake-prone areas do not comply with seismic codes because certificates of safety are easy to procure. People living in the hills should be encouraged to follow traditional building practices rather than concrete monstrosities. Laurie Baker, the legendary

architect, had some meaningful suggestions to strengthen traditional houses in the Himalayas. Some of his pencil sketches, preserved in archives, will be useful in this regard. But it is also true that traditional stone houses using rounded boulders in the Himalayas are known for very poor performances during the earthquakes. The Indian Standard IS: 13828 (1993) suggests several methods to improve their design and construction to make them earthquake-resistant.

We need to focus not only on earthquake engineering but also on seismological research. For this to happen, along with an ambitious vision for a seismic network, we need trained manpower to conduct high-level seismological research. One way to reinvigorate both institutional and university-based research is to develop a strong framework where both can interact. Research without teaching and teaching without research are failed models, but we continue to follow this path. Seismology is a global science and interacting with the global research community should be encouraged. Our researchers must conduct research on equal footing with the international community. The Himalayas are a fantastic natural laboratory where earth processes can be captured live for new insights. Tackling future natural disasters will require a healthy mix of technology, scientific studies, trained and committed manpower, professionalism and the development of engineering skill and public awareness.

(C.P. Rajendran is a seismologist at the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bengaluru. He is also at the National Centre for Earth Science Studies, Thiruvananthapuram.)

India's close proximity to an active plate boundary makes rapid dissemination of seismic data necessary

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

HINDU, MAY 19, 2015

**Kick-starting an economic revival**

SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY

When Narendra Modi took oath as Prime Minister on May 26, 2014, there were great expectations from him making decisive moves to put the economy back in recovery mode and on to a high growth trajectory of a '10+' per cent per year growth rate. It is '10+' because the Finance Ministry had chosen to use Paasche's Index instead of Laspeyres Index to calculate growth rate, which, under present inflationary conditions, will artificially raise growth rate figures (see Paul Samuelson and Subramanian Swamy, "Invariant Economic Index numbers and Canonical Duality", *American Economic Review* , 1974, and also *Economic Journal* , 1984 for the reasons.)

Hence, what I have been stating in the past, of a 10 per cent growth rate target as being desirable is now, by the Finance Ministry's revaluation of index numbers, more than a 10 per cent target now, perhaps even 12 per cent.

The blueprint for such a recovery, to a '10+' growth rate, had already been prepared before the general election, and the steps to be taken were documented by a committee of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Nitin Gadkari, now Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and Shipping, had been entrusted with task. On his suggestion, I had collaborated with a number of committed intellectuals to produce a 'Vision Document 2020', a road map for Mr. Modi to implement as soon as he became the Prime Minister. These steps have still to be taken.

### **Regressive markers**

The regressive markers in the projected path of the economy today make it worrisome as these indicate that if not rectified soon, the Indian economy can go into a tailspin. Though these markers are a consequence of the disastrous tenure of the previous government, now nearly a year on, they cease to be a credible excuse.

Some of these markers are: the Basel III norms for banks (effective from 2018) which require Rs.2,40,000 crore for capitalisation. Moreover, to retain 51 per cent of the equity of public sector banks by the government, it will need, this financial year, Rs.1,21,000 crore. The 2015-16 Budget has provided for only Rs.11,200 crore, which is not even a tenth of this. With rising non-performing assets of banks, there is a risk of a banking crash much like the 1997-98 East Asian crash.

This year, the rainfall deficit affecting 67 per cent of the single crop farmers, will cause inflationary pressures and a substantial shortfall in production, thus causing more misery to the farmer. While rainfall is in nobody's control, the economy, even today, lacks the necessary financial cushion to absorb the liabilities arising from crop failure and farmer destitution.

The rupee is on the edge of a fall as it happened in 2012-13. This is because there has been a large-scale sell-off or dumping of shares of Indian companies purchased by foreign investors earlier last year. Some foreign direct investment (FDI) companies have also pulled out. The fall in the rupee was a little moderated three months ago, but for the wrong reason: the increased inflow of funds from the subversive, corroding, money-laundering Participatory Notes (PN) derivative. But PNs are hot money derivatives and so can be pulled out anytime to cause a further devaluation of the rupee.

All these destabilising trends have had a profound impact on the stock market. One of these is in the form of market valuations now being well below the long-term average and even below the level in 2013. Therefore, it is no surprise that the top 10 corporate entities have reached a stage where their annual profits do not cover even their yearly debt repayments.

### **Negative factors**

While India has demonstrated impressive prowess in IT, biotechnology, automobile ancillaries and pharmaceuticals, and has also accelerated its growth rate to become the third largest nation in terms of GDP at PPP rates, nevertheless, it still has a backward,

agricultural sector employing 62 per cent of the labour force and where farmers are ending their lives unable to repay their loans.

The Indian economy is also saddled with a national unemployment rate that is over 15 per cent of the adult labour force, and a prevalence of child labour arising out of nearly 50 per cent of children not making it to school beyond standard five, a deeply malfunctioning primary and secondary educational system, 300 million illiterates and 250 million people in a dire state of poverty.

Moreover, India's educated youth is skill deficient, risk averse in attitude and largely unemployable in the cutting-edge manufacturing sector. According to Macaulay's Minute on Education, our universities still produce clerks for government administration and not innovators of the future.

Besides these, India's infrastructure is in a pathetic state, with frequent power breakdowns even in metropolitan cities, a dangerously unhealthy water supply system in urban areas, and a very poor road network where there are gaping holes even on the National Highways.

India's infrastructure requires about \$150 billion to make it world class, while the education system needs six per cent of GDP instead of 2.8 per cent today.

### **Need for reform**

These problems can be addressed only by comprehensive, second generation, systemic reform that makes the economy an efficient, competitive market oriented one that leverages our potentialities (such as our civilizational heritage of innovative intellect), and which minimises the inefficiency, squandering and corruption in the deployment of our vast resources.

India has much potential today to become a booming economy; it has a demographic dividend of a young population of average age of 28 years compared to China's 35 years, the U.S.'s 38 years, Europe's 46 years and Japan's 49 years.

Internationally, Indian agriculture has the lowest yield in land and livestock-based milk products whose yield can easily be raised judging by the performance in experimental agricultural plots of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and by also borrowing agricultural techniques from Israel. Indian agriculture and milk products are also internationally at a low cost of production. With proper infrastructure and packaging, India can certainly become a global player in agricultural exports.

Even though India is also gifted with a full 12 months a year of farm-friendly weather, it grows just one crop a year in over 75 per cent of arable land when it can grow three crops a year. It also has the advantage of a highly competitive, skilled labour force and low wage rates at the national level, the advantages of which have been already proved to the world by the outsourcing phenomenon. What is needed is a bold commitment of sufficient resources to harvest this potential.

An open competitive market system can find these resources as has been demonstrated in the auction of the 2G Spectrum licences if the quality of governance and accountability is improved.

A transparent policy regime, auctioning of natural resources (if it is used for commercial private enterprise), and the unearthing of the vast \$1.5 trillion in black money stashed abroad will enable the government to marshal sufficient resources for a massive investment in a second generation economic reform while reducing the tax burden on people.

As an economist, the only advice I can give the Modi government is to take some steps that will raise the morale of the consumer and investor. That means income tax abolition and reducing the annual interest rate to nine per cent.

The good news is that the built-in potential in the economy is easy to tap for revival, as is the basic resilience of the Indian people to face any situation as demonstrated from past crises.

Only one year of the mandate has elapsed, so there is still time to make the necessary course correction and put India on a fast, 12 per cent growth trajectory.

(Subramanian Swamy is a former Professor of Economics and Union Cabinet Minister of Commerce.)

India has the global advantage of a highly competitive, skilled labour force and low wage rates at the national level. What is needed is a bold commitment of sufficient resources to harvest this potential.

The factors hampering Indian economic growth can be addressed only by second generation, systemic reform that makes the economy an efficient, competitive one and which minimises the inefficiency, squandering and corruption in the deployment of the country's vast resources

## EDUCATION

TIMES OF INDIA, MAY 18, 2015

**CBSE wants court order for change of name, date of birth**

**Akshaya Mukul & Manash Pratim Gohain**

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi might be insisting on minimum government, maximum governance but the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) believes in just the opposite.

In a decision that has put thousands of students and parents in a spot, CBSE has issued an order that change of name/surname of candidates will be done only if the change has been granted by a court of law and notified in the government gazette before the publication of the results of the candidate.

The order issued on February 16 also said no correction in date of birth shall be made after one year of the date of issue of the qualifying certificates. Also, all applications for correction in date of birth will have to be submitted to the CBSE chairman.

Earlier, changes in name/surname or date of birth could be done by affidavit followed by advertisement in newspapers.

The CBSE order also said that "as a matter of due diligence and administrative propriety, all such decisions on the file since October 1, 2014 should be suspended on 'as is where is' basis and reviewed". This has caused a backlog that threatens to become big after Class X and XII results. In Delhi alone, some 400 applications have been pending.

Many parents outside Delhi are unaware of the new order and have made applications in regional offices. "My child has to go abroad later this year for higher education. In courts it is not easy to get quick hearing and early resolution," a parent said.

A senior CBSE official said, "There are at least 400 cases pending with us since February. Previously, affidavits and newspaper advertisements used to suffice. But the

new order, instead of simplifying the process, has made it even more complex. The result is many students and parents are running from pillar to post as they have to get name changed for higher studies."

STATESMAN, MAY 20, 2015

### **Trinamul's campus**

With the imbroglio over admission tests in Presidency University yet to be settled, the Trinamul Congress government has fine-tuned its interference in matters academic. Monday's passage of the West Bengal State Council of Higher Education Bill 2015 serves to reinforce the stranglehold of the party and government in university administration. And over the past four years, both the party and its government have been rather tangentially interested in education.

Two developments confirm the government's intent, and in a decidedly unabashed manner. First, the state's education minister whether an out-of-place stage actor or a failed industry minister will double up as Chairman of the Council. In one stroke of the legislative pen, the education department has accorded short shrift to the academic circuit. The long and the short of it being that a politician will head an entity that is expected to oversee higher education in West Bengal.

The segment is set to become more chaotic and politicized than it was during the CPIM regime. The Left Front government never did usurp posts earmarked for academics, however. Fears that the wheel of Trinamul interference might come full circle should the party appoint its activists as VCs and Pro VCs, even Principals of government colleges, cannot readily be dismissed. It is one thing for the party to recommend an academic; quite another to institutionalise political appointments. That anxiety is manifest no less in the other critical provision of the legislation to conduct a common entrance test for state universities.

This one size-fits all formula is preposterous not least because of the varying standards of the constituent colleges and the respective universities. Each institution is entitled to

pursue its own method of evaluation. The plan cannot inspire optimism in the context of the school-level Teachers' Eligibility Test and the primary teachers' selection exam. Both have degenerated to academic scams in West Bengal, with failed candidates owing allegiance to Mamata Banerjee's party being recommended for appointment.

It would be no exaggeration to submit that the Bill seeks to institutionalise loyalty to the party. Trashed is the autonomy of the West Bengal State Council of Higher Education. The search for learning appears to be secondary in the overall construct. Pray why? Its pursuit has been almost alien to the political philosophy of the Trinamul Congress.

## HEALTH SERVICES

TIMES OF INDIA, MAY 22, 2015

**Modiversary: Govt plans healthcare scheme for sr citizens**

In the absence of access to government medical facilities, healthcare is seen as a crucial missing link for senior citizens who have to rely on family members to take care of them in old age. (Representative image)

NEW DELHI: The government is set to launch a healthcare scheme for senior citizens as part of its social security initiative. Sources said the scheme would be funded through unclaimed deposits available with the government for which the law has already been amended as part of the budget exercise.

The amendment will enable the government to tap a "couple of thousand crores" for the healthcare scheme. "We will work out a threshold and people beyond that would be covered by the healthcare scheme," a source said.

In the absence of access to government medical facilities, healthcare is seen as a crucial missing link for senior citizens who have to rely on family members to take care of them in old age.

The Centre has launched the PM's Jan Dhan Yojana which has provided banking facilities to all households not part of the banking system. It has resulted in almost Rs 15,000 crore flowing into the financial system that was lying idle in households.

Further, earlier this month, three social security schemes - life insurance for Rs 330 a year, accident insurance for Rs 12 a year and a pension plan - were unveiled by PM Narendra Modi and these were a runaway success with over 6 crore people opting for them.

Government sources acknowledged that the pension plan will take a little more time for acceptance while life insurance cover will find more takers in the months ahead.

## INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

TRIBUNE, MAY 18, 2015

### **India grants \$1 bn credit to Mongolia**

China's neighbour integral to India's 'act-East policy': Modi | Both agree to deepen defence, economic ties

#### **Modi addresses Parliament**

Modi addressed the State Great Hural, Mongolian Parliament

The Parliament was specially convened on Sunday, a holiday, for the first time for a foreign leader

"Our security cooperation is growing. We can learn a great deal from each other. No one can doubt the well-known skills of Mongols!", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said while addressing the lawmakers

#### **Agreements signed**

The two PMs signed a joint statement committing to further consolidate bilateral ties between the two countries

A treaty was also signed on the transfer of sentenced persons

They inked 13 other pacts, including those on enhancing cooperation in border guarding, policing and surveillance, air services, cyber security and new and renewable energy

The two leaders agreed to encourage Indian companies to further explore cooperation opportunities in Mongolia's mining sector

India today announced a \$ 1 billion credit line to Mongolia for infrastructure development as they upgraded their ties to "strategic partnership" and agreed to deepen defence cooperation, besides exploring potential for tie ups in areas like the civil nuclear sector.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is on a two-day visit to Mongolia, the first-ever by an Indian Premier, held wide-ranging discussions with his Mongolian counterpart Chimed Saikhanbileg. The two leaders pledged to take bilateral economic partnership to a new level.

"I am pleased to announce that India will provide a Line of Credit of \$ one billion to support expansion of Mongolia's economic capacity and infrastructure," Modi said at a joint press interaction with Saikhanbileg at the State Palace here.

"Today Mongolia is also an integral part of India's act-East policy," he said adding, "The destinies of India and Mongolia are closely linked with the future of the Asia Pacific region. We can work together to help advance peace, stability and prosperity in this region." With Mongolia's rich mineral deposits in mind, Modi asked the country to partner in its economic transformation while vowing to step up bilateral trade and investment. After their talks, the two Prime Ministers signed a joint statement committing to further consolidate bilateral ties and upgrade the comprehensive partnership to "strategic partnership" and agreed to renew their Treaty of Friendly Relations and Cooperation. The two sides inked 13 other pacts, including those on enhancing cooperation in border guarding, policing and surveillance, air services, cyber security and new and renewable energy.

Stating that it was an honour to be the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Mangolia, Modi said, "It is a special privilege to come on the occasion of two important milestones that unite us – 25 years of democracy in Mongolia and 60 years of diplomatic relations between our two nations." — PTI

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

DECCAN HERALD, MAY 18, 2015  
**Delhi, Beijing must tackle suspicions**

India and China can draw satisfaction from the slew of agreements and business deals signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to China. The agreements provide for setting up of a hotline between the military headquarters of the two countries, space and deep space co-operation, setting up sister cities, extension of e-visas to Chinese nationals, opening of new consulates, and expansion of economic relations in infrastructure, agriculture, information technology, etc. For the first time, a high-powered task force has been set up to look at the yawning bilateral trade deficit, which is a key concern for India. On the business front, 21 agreements or memorandums of understanding worth an estimated \$22 billion were signed. These will bring in much-needed investment into India. Modi's interaction with the Chinese political and business leaders indicates a new energy in bilateral engagement.

And yet, has anything changed substantially in the bilateral relationship? The answer is 'no'. Mutual suspicions that have defined relations for decades, remain alive. This is because key issues that feed and fuel this suspicion have not been tackled with the energy and political commitment they deserve. During Modi's visit, the two sides articulated the same old tired rhetoric calling for "a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable resolution" to the border dispute that people in both countries have heard a countless times before. While the two countries are putting in place military and other CBMs to prevent border tensions from escalating, it is time they match this with substantial progress at the talks table. Modi has the public and parliamentary support to take bold steps on the border. He must take the initiative to accelerate the quest for a settlement to the border dispute.

It is important that the two countries address the suspicion underlying mutual perceptions. Holding dance programmes and festivals are welcome but they cannot break decades-old barriers. Our school curriculums should carry content on each other's society, culture and history. This will lead to removing negative stereotypes of each

other. It will reveal our shared history and culture and draw attention to how Indian merchants and monks benefited from the Silk Route. This could help Indians overcome their deep doubts of China's Silk Road and Maritime Silk Route plans. Rather than be preoccupied with a hidden military agenda, India should explore participation in the MSR plan. There are several similar initiatives India and China can work on together to mutual benefit. Selfies and smiles create good atmospherics but tackling mutual suspicion must be the priority of our leaders.

## LABOUR

BUSINESS STANDARD, MAY 21, 2015

**Firms with 10 workers might have to pay provident fund**

**Govt will have the power to reduce contribution of employers in factories with 10-20 workers from 12% to 9% towards EPFO**

**Somesh Jha**

The labour ministry has proposed easier provident fund rules for small establishments.

Establishments with at least 10 workers might have to pay provident fund, with the employer contributing nine per cent of a worker's salary. At present, provident fund is mandatory in establishments hiring 20 people or more, and employees and employers contribute 12 per cent each of a worker's salary.

The ministry has proposed amending the Employees Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952. The proposal had been sent for inter-ministerial consultation, sources said, and would likely be put up to the Cabinet in June.

"The central government will have the power to allow, through a notification, employers in a particular class of establishments to reduce the contribution to the Employees Provident Fund Organisation to nine per cent," a labour ministry official said.

For factories employing up to 40 workers, rules might be eased for recovery of dues. Dues may be recovered from the movable assets of small factories and the rest from immovable property with permission of the Central Provident Fund Commissioner. At present, recovery officers have powers to sell moveable and immovable assets and arrest employers.

Around 70 per cent of the factories in the country employ less than 40 workers, according to official estimates.

The draft rules say plant and machinery used in manufacture cannot be touched by the recovery officer within three months of issuing a notice. Owners of small factories may also receive immunity from imprisonment.

"These concessions will prevent loss of jobs," another official said.

The ministry has proposed a negative list for classes of establishments exempted by the EPF Act. "Defence and railways might continue to be kept out," sources said.

Regional commissioners have been proposed to help employers appeal against court orders. Employers elsewhere now find it inconvenient to approach the provident fund tribunal in Delhi.

Apprentices, contract workers, and staff of trusts and self-help groups may also become eligible for provident fund. Employees will have the option to switch to the National Pension System as proposed in the Budget.

The Centre might also have the power to reduce the employer's contribution of a certain class of establishments to the EPFO based on their financial conditions.

### **GREATER AMBIT**

What the amendments to the Employees Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, propose:

- Factories with at least 10 workers will be covered under the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), from 20 now
- Govt will have the power to reduce contribution of employers in factories with 10-20 workers from 12% to 9% towards EPFO
- In factories with up to 40 workers, penalty and recovery norms will be relaxed
- An appellate officer for employers so they don't have to come to Delhi to file appeal against order

## PARLIAMENT

STATESMAN, MAY 19, 2015

### **Ominous face-off**

Ugly and potentially threatening to the core of the bicameral system of parliamentary democracy are the increasingly shrill postures being taken by the NDA government and the Opposition over the role and authority of the Rajya Sabha.

While there was some inevitability to the “conflict” because the numbers crunch differently in each House, mature leadership would have averted a situation in which the leading parliamentary light of the government, Arun Jaitley, should have exacerbated the situation. His drawing a difference between the role and authority of directly and indirectly-elected MPs has been roundly slammed: the veteran parliamentarian and former Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Somnath Chatterjee, among the latest critics.

That Jaitley, Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha (he was defeated in the Lok Sabha poll) should undermine his “own” chamber, of which both AB Vajpayee and LK Advani have been members, confirms an increasing frustration, desperation perhaps, over the Council of States proving a speed-bump to legislation to which the government accorded priority. Yet the “trigger” was the Opposition taking serious exception to the Finance Bill a “money bill” over which they have no clout being the cover under which amendments were made to other enactments.

Jaitley tried to argue differently, but eventually declared that since the Speaker of the Lok Sabha had certified it was a money bill there was no questioning the decision. Technically correct, but not entirely convincing: surely if parent legislation was approved by both Houses independently it could not be amended without the Rajya Sabha’s considered approval? Not so long ago, when Leader of the Opposition, he had somewhat sarcastically cautioned then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh against being overly-influenced by lawyers has the wheel turned full-circle?

The Opposition in the Rajya Sabha protested vehemently, asked if it was being rendered impotent: there are reports of complaints to the Chairman, possibly a joint note to the Speaker. Now that the spat has spilled into the “public space” it could easily snowball. The BJP has yet to understand its 282 Lok Sabha seats is neither magic wand nor bludgeon, it must upgrade its management of parliamentary affairs: more so since it will not acquire a majority in the Rajya Sabha in the near future. Sure the Opposition is not cooperative even though not “obstructionist” as Jaitley contends, but the BJP must remember it had played the same game until not so long ago.

However, the potential for trouble is too serious to be reduced to a blame-game. The Speaker has to take note of the resentment of the other House, assert herself more independently. And the “elder statesman” in the NDA must advise the government that confrontationist-stridency lost relevance when the election results were declared.

## POLICE

STATESMAN, MAY 18, 2015

**A reformed cop**

**Sankar Sen**

The issue of police reforms has been a topic of intense discourse for a long while. When we joined the Indian Police Service in the 1960s, a constant refrain was the creeping politicization of the police and the woefully inadequate resources and infrastructure of the force. Another grouse was the control exercised over the district police by the Collector, as enjoined by the police manual. Some of my colleagues and friends publicly fell out with the District Magistrates and others maintained an uneasy equation.

By and large, political leaders and ministers at that time used to treat senior police officers with some respect and did not interfere in day-today police administration. But they would assert their authority and control whenever their political interests were involved. The situation started changing with time. Ministers and local MLAs, particularly of the ruling parties, became more assertive and abrasive and would demand postings and transfers of officers of their choice so that they could engage in investigation and prosecution of cases to help their cohorts.

In their anxiety to seek greener pastures, senior police officers would first bend and then crawl before the politicians, and particularly the Chief Ministers who in most of the states held charge of the police. I still recollect a conference in the early 60s when the then Chief Minister of Orissa severely criticised the police for its all-round failure in law-enforcement and maintenance of order and other acts of “omission and commission”.

We squirmed in our seats but the head of the force (at that time IG of Police) remained silent and petrified in his chair. But the Chief Secretary of the state, an ICS officer of outstanding caliber, took up the cudgels on behalf of the police and pointed out that some of the critical comments of the Chief Minister were unwarranted.

That sort of plain-speaking has now become history. IAS and IPS officers now cower before the Chief Minister and never dare to contradict him. The Police Act of 1861 has remained unchanged because the political leaders, who suffered at the hands of the police before independence, found it convenient to have a police totally subservient to its political masters.

The National Police Commission (better known as the Dharam Vira Commission, 1978-81) recommended for the first time certain bold and positive steps to insulate the police from extraneous political pressures so that it could function as the people's police and not the ruling party's police. In Prakash Singh's case of 2006, the Supreme Court issued a seven-point directive, including the setting up of a State Security Commission, fixed tenure of DGPs, and a Police Establishment Board. Unfortunately, no state has thus far implemented these recommendations and directives.

On the contrary, certain state administrations have taken recourse to various stratagems to scuttle the suggestions. Some of them have enacted Police Acts that are far more retrograde than the Act of 1861. The apex court has so far refrained from interfering, despite the report of the Justice Thomas Committee which pointed out deliberate non-implementation of the Court's directives by the states. With the march of time, the issue of police reforms has been mired in the doldrums. Against this determined opposition of the political class, cutting across party lines, the fate of police reforms remains uncertain. Another hurdle is that the force is not fully united on the issue.

It has never been urged to give an impetus to the reform proposals. Many police officers in the field, particularly those of subordinate ranks, feel that the proposed reforms will neither help in their functioning nor enable them to discharge their duty with greater dignity. They are not sure whether the brass will safeguard their interests suitably.

Indeed, the cause of police reforms will continue to suffer setbacks unless the higher echelons can convince their junior colleagues that the proposed reforms will insulate them from political influence and enable them to function with greater efficiency and

satisfaction. Public support for police reforms has always been lukewarm. It is generally felt that without a measure of political control, the police will degenerate into a rogue elephant and misuse its power and authority.

They forget that the unshackled police will also have to function under rules and laws circumscribing police authority and scope for misuse of power. They will be hauled up before the courts for acting against the law. They will never be omnipotent. Under the present arrangement, the police officers can enjoy considerable immunity and unaccountability if they can keep the political masters in good humour. This has become the be-all and end-all for many police officers and this is damaging the police administration.

The responsibility of upholding people's rights and standing by them has been relegated. This is detrimental to the public interest and snaps the chain of command and control in the police. In order to win public support the police will have to be more transparent, accessible, conscientious and honest. Instead of opposing the formation of the Police Complaints Authority, as recommended by the National Police Commission and directed by the Supreme Court, police leaders should welcome the initiative and urge state governments to establish such control mechanisms. Police reforms should go beyond the directives of the court and cover measures that will win public support. Community policing initiatives by enterprising officers have not been successful in many states because of the unwillingness of the police officers to share authority with the public and allow citizens an important say in the framing of policies and operations. Citizen-centric police reforms is the crying need of the hour. Correct strategies in the context of police reforms will have to be used. In the face of firm resistance from the political masters, excessive reliance on the Supreme Court's directives alone will not work. Steps will have to be taken to harness the support of the public as well as subordinate police staff for the cause of police reforms. Only then will the movement gather momentum and compel the political masters to unshackle the police to function in accord with the rule of law and not by the rule of politics. A neutral apolitical and efficient police functioning in accordance with the rule of law will help the cause of good governance and public welfare.

## POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

TELEGRAPH, MAY 18, 2015

**Digesting the result: David Cameron needs to work on the 'One Nation' message**  
**Westminster Gleanings: ANABEL LOYD**

What has felt like the longest and one of the most unpleasant election campaigns ever in the United Kingdom is over at last. The first layer of dust from the astonishing upheaval of last week's result is beginning to settle. There is an expectation in the political wind of storms and eddies to come but we have a clear result and, if only just, a majority government. Old and new MPs have turned up back at Westminster, *en masse* in the case of the clan's worth of new Scottish Nationalists who were somewhat bizarrely greeted on arrival by their first minister. She shouldn't have been there at all but back in her Edinburgh office. The Scottish government is very keen on 'greener travel' and 'leading by example', I wonder if she came on her bike. I suppose it is hard to grudge her her triumph although she wouldn't have got it on a popular vote beyond her own fiefdom. I have no idea what effect her party colleagues will have on the new government but, while it should be very aware and wary of Scottish feeling in order to maintain the union if it can, it is hard to see why this group of MPs will have any more actual power than any other minority Opposition party.

They may make a lot of noise and demand a great deal but they will need support from all over the Commons, including the ranks of the Conservatives, if they are successfully to win or defeat any vote on legislation. How they will play out to their adoring public north of the border remains to be seen. It is possible, with regard to questions over European exit, the left of the Conservative party may be pleased to have them on their pro-European side. One imagines that they will align themselves with Labour in other areas but in spite of the good old-fashioned socialist intent of the Scottish National Party, they don't like Labour and the feeling is mutual. I have a faintly laughable vision of the SNP phalanx with Alex Salmond in the lead, marching furiously round the Houses of Parliament for the next five years making threats like the Glasgow razor gangs and yet quite impotent in the lobbies.

Notwithstanding the closeness of the independence vote last year, the impression is that their runaway victory in Scotland last week was based more on their anti-austerity campaigning than on short-term hopes for another independence referendum. It was the former message that seduced many erstwhile Labour voters who no longer believe the party is on the side of the endlessly trumpeted 'hard-working family' especially with Ed Miliband doing the trumpeting. I am deeply sorry that Jim Murphy, leader of Scottish Labour, was one of the casualties. He is the best sort of moderate MP from any party whose views are based on the needs of his constituents, good information and careful thought, not on random ideology. He is one of many, in particular among Liberal Democrat former ministers in the coalition government whose loss to public service we should seriously regret. Whether any of them will fight again, who can tell? Most, with proven track records, will walk into jobs where they actually have a chance to make some money instead of being beholden to an always judgemental and rarely thankful electorate.

There is no doubt that the election result is, if not ideal, a lesser evil than a Labour/SNP coalition, if, given the aforesaid mutual dislike and distrust, such a thing was remotely credible. More probably, we would have had weeks of argy-bargy deal making and breaking followed by another election. Whether or not we would then have had a clear result is luckily purely hypothetical. Possibly the Liberal Democrats would have had an improved second result. Their own and their wobbling supporters' shock that tactical voting caused by fear as well as cruel punishment for promises broken on the back of political expediency in coalition, has had new members rushing to join the party. I am deeply sad to have lost their moderating influence to the extent that the best bet for moderate Conservatism now appears to be the prime minister. He may be pro-Europe compared with right-wing sceptics but does he really know what 'One Nation' Conservatism is? Well, that's a stupid thing to say. Of course, he does. But it is hard not to feel that he is trying to suppress an essentially Thatcherite body with his one-nation suit and it won't take long for the right-wing carbuncles to burst through the tailoring. With migration as a boiling issue all over Europe, the reinstated home secretary, Theresa May, is already vociferously raising the barricades to stop desperate people getting into this green and pleasant land.

For the time being, however, David Cameron seems determined to be inclusive on the domestic front at least, and to involve his whole parliamentary party in decisions. This has been a most unfashionable approach to government since 1997, and if it makes Parliament and ordinary MPs more relevant and valuable again, hooray for that. Perhaps the SNP in Parliament may then safely break into its individual pieces, some of its members I am sure really care about their constituencies and their inhabitants' problems, and would wish to do something useful on their behalf instead of engaging in full-time party-political point-scoring and attempting to elbow their way to whatever greater individual power they can grab.

There must still be plenty of MPs in all parties who focus on their constituencies, but the impression is that their lack of voice and power in Parliament today makes for a pretty rough deal, both for those represented and those who represent them. For the greater good, the small people lose their voice entirely and our parliamentary representatives sometimes seem to count only as numbers in a Westminster gang. Once they achieve their ambition for ministerial power, it sometimes seems a wonder if they bother with their constituencies at all except at election time. Mind you, for the last five years it has always been election time - it would be an excellent thing if the campaigning stopped for a while, but with the likes of David Davis, the senior Conservative back bench MP and Eurosceptic, suggesting that the in-or-out referendum on Europe is brought forward to next year, we may be on the starting blocks again any minute.

I hope not, a little reflection and bridge-building throughout the country would be in order as well as sensible and equally inclusive conversations with our European neighbours and allies based on reality and not reaction. People - Labour and Liberal Democrat most of all - have been frightened or provoked into voting in ways they would never otherwise have done and David Cameron is the slightly fragile beneficiary. He really does need to work on that 'One Nation' message and make people across party divides feel that they are batting for the same team and will all reap the rewards. A pipe dream no doubt, but worthier than the aspiration to some mystic splendid isolation outside Europe.

## **PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

STATESMAN, MAY 22, 2015

**Jung has crossed all limits**

**Seema Mustafa**

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Najeeb Jung seems to have extended his boundaries and thrown all caution to the winds as it were in the ongoing battle with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, now in the penultimate stage. At the start the jury was out on who was being more absurd, but now it does seem that Jung, getting the support of the Centre, is crossing all limits.

The question of the civil service and control of the Lt Governor over all postings and transfers seems to fall in a grey zone according to constitutional lawyers like Indira Jaising and Rajeev Dhawan, both renowned experts. However, keeping this aside as well as the rather pedestrian arguments presented by both sides, this face-off does bring into focus the exact powers vested in the Chief Minister of Delhi; the issue of federalism; and the authority (or otherwise) vested in the office of Lt Governor, particularly if an incumbent, such as the present one, demonstrates no respect for the elected representative heading the government.

In the media war generated by both sides, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that the spat is all about an acting chief secretary, who was to replace the chief secretary currently on 10 days' leave. The issue was small, and it appears that initially Kejriwal had shortlisted Shakuntala Gamlin as one of his suggestions for acting chief secretary.

He subsequently changed his opinion when her alleged close links with power discoms became known to him. By that time Jung, who incidentally had worked with one of the power companies, Reliance, earlier in his career, had appointed her. The CM wanted this cancelled, the LG refused, and what should have been quietly settled between the two has become an ugly war.

This spat can however have a positive side if it helps clarify the position of the Delhi Chief Minister in terms of the services. And if Jung and the central government are right in maintaining that he has no jurisdiction on something as basic as transfers and postings in his government, then clearly this needs to be looked at afresh.

The Delhi CM while being held accountable by voters for poor law and order in the state, has no control over the police that remains a Central subject. Former chief minister Sheila Dixit repeatedly asked for powers but even though her own party was in power at the Centre, this was not done.

The BJP government at the Centre is supporting Jung, and even though it is officially maintaining a distance, he is acting on the basis of this support. Kejriwal has said as much, and it is highly unlikely that a bureaucrat - even if he is the Lt Governor - would cross swords with a government to this point without being assured of backing from what he perceives as the more powerful force in the hierarchy today. Jung has therefore, taken on the chief minister matching him word for word in a confrontation that is geared towards rendering him completely ineffective.

Kejriwal realises this and it is thus unlikely that the spat will be resolved easily. Both sides have gone to President Pranab Mukherjee who no doubt will rise over his close friendship with the late Dhirubhai Ambani and take a totally non-partisan view to resolve the unseemly controversy. The issue, as the Delhi government has tried to explain, but a little late in the day when perceptions had already kicked in, is not anti-bureaucracy but pro-federalism. This has not stopped 100 IAS officers from signing a statement issued by their Association criticising Kejriwal on the issue.

It is imperative, now that matters have been pushed to this stage, for the grey areas to be cleared up and for the exact powers vested in the post of the chief minister in Delhi spelt out. The debate on more powers is secondary to this, as clearly there are two views even on what is available. This must be resolved, and a serious discussion started on the pros and cons of conferring full-fledged Statehood on Delhi. These kind of political brawls

will increase; they are in a sense natural if two conflicting interests are represented by the Delhi CM and the Lt Governor. Therefore it necessary to first, clarify existing powers and second, plug loopholes to prevent such outbreaks in the future.

The message underlying the Lt Governor's assertions currently are that he is in complete command, and that all officials working in the Delhi government do so under his authority. The Delhi CM, thus, is little more than a rubber stamp who cannot even determine the Chief Secretary he would like to work with. If that is so, then it needs to be changed; or the farce of an election that brings little more than an ineffective government to power should be done away with. Both cannot exist on the same page, more so if the Lt Governor and the Chief Minister represent opposing political interests.

The Central government of course is convincing no one with its 'we are above it all' attitude. The Lt Governor is one of the few officials to have survived the change in government, despite being very close to the Congress establishment earlier. He has pitched himself against the Aam Aadmi party since the beginning, with confrontation and not compromise or consultations being the order of the day. However, the Centre sees no reason to intervene directly as Jung is doing the job rather well, and has refused to budge despite the onslaught by the Aam Aadmi party. This way the issue becomes a Jung-Kejriwal feud, with no one being able to attack the BJP for political vendetta in Delhi.

**BUSINESS STANDARD, MAY 19, 2015**

**No need for a grand secretariat in Delhi**

**The world over capitals have government offices spread across the city**

Of all the many slogans that [Narendra Modi](#) used on the campaign trail last year, one stood out to many ears: "minimum government, maximum governance". It seemed to suggest that Mr Modi would, once in New Delhi, rein in the Indian state's tendency to expand itself in the most useless but self-aggrandising directions. He would instead, the slogan suggested, focus on what the Centre could and should do. It is now becoming clear that this was always a little too much content to read into a four-word slogan. Certainly, Mr Modi's time in Gujarat did not provide much evidence for the theory that

he was a small-government man. If anything, as chief minister he had been an empire-builder, happy to see public sector enterprises become larger and more powerful.

But, even so, there are elements of Mr Modi's premiership that startle. One of the less visible, but most symbolic, is the National Democratic Alliance's apparent dedication to the idea of a new and vast secretariat complex in New Delhi. Certainly, the old North and South Block were designed for a different age, and office space for government should continually be updated. But some of the plans being published in the media are startlingly grandiose. In addition, they seem to concentrate on the government excessively. Instead of decongesting Delhi, they would cause it to become further sclerotic. Any modern city must have multiple hubs - and if the central government offices are to be expanded, then a location south of the city, say, would serve as one such hub. Naturally, bureaucrats don't want that, because India's rulers cannot commute in the manner that their people they rule do. Other capitals have government offices spread across the city - look at Washington, where the US federal government has giant office complexes miles and miles away from each other - some, like the Central Intelligence Agency and the Pentagon, in suburbs. This has not notably affected the productivity of the US government, so the idea that every central government official must be close to every other for efficiency is genuinely puzzling - especially in the age of the internet.

In any case, India's central government has built itself offices in recent decades that are either hideous - Shastri Bhavan - or too large and sparsely populated - such as the office of the comptroller and auditor general. The first step, therefore, should be to reduce the amount of state-owned living and office space per senior functionary. The government can start with the Lutyens Bungalow Zone. Replace three-fourths of the crumbling and unremarkable bungalows with modern housing - or, better still, offices. India's democratic government should not live like its imperial predecessors. If Mr Modi starts on that instead of grandiose projects for skyscraper secretariats, then he will begin to live up to his "minimum government" promise.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, MAY 19, 2015

**Kejriwal-Jung showdown: CM warns babus not to bypass government and ministers**

**Neelam Pandey**

Government sources said the CM office is concerned about “verbal orders” being issued by the L-G office like it happened in the case of principal secretary services Anindo Majumdar. The senior official was removed by the Delhi government but lieutenant governor Najeeb Jung declared it null and void. (Illustration: Sajith Kumar)

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has issued an order that any instructions — oral or written — from the L-G’s office or those issued by the acting chief secretary will have to be approved by the CM or the minister concerned.

The chief minister issued the order, a copy of which is with HT, on Sunday amid the ongoing controversy over the appointment of senior officials, including chief secretary, in the Delhi government and the alleged intervention of the lieutenant governor’s office.

Deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia also issued an order on Monday, asking the chief secretary to route all files through ministers and the CM.

Government sources said the CM office is concerned about “verbal orders” being issued by the L-G office like it happened in the case of principal secretary services Anindo Majumdar. The senior official was removed by the Delhi government but lieutenant governor Najeeb Jung declared it null and void.

Kejriwal’s office has categorically told the chief secretary and the administration that “no action will be taken by the administrative secretary/chief secretary on such direction/order till written directions are received from the chief minister or the minister in charge of the same”.

The order has asked the chief secretary and the principal secretaries/secretary and head of departments to strictly adhere to the order.

The order has been issued under the provisions of article 239 AA of the constitution, the government of national capital territory of Delhi Act, 1991 and the transaction of business of the government of NCT of Delhi rules, 1993 (TBR). The order points out that Rule 4 of the TBR makes it clear that the minister in-charge of a department is responsible for disposal of the business pertaining to that department.

“Chapter IV and V of the TBR outlines the method for disposal of business relating to hon’ble L-G’s executive function and procedure to be followed in case of difference of opinion between hon’ble L-G and a minister/council of minister. None of the three statutes authorise hon’ble L-G to issue any order/direction to chief secretary or any administrative secretary bypassing the minister in charge and/or the council of ministers,” says the order.

STATESMAN, MAY 20, 2015

### **Shame compounded**

Scratch a “national” politician and it will reveal a mindset overly influenced by less than-positive factors such as religion, caste, community, region etc: factors that frequently come to the fore when there is opportunity to secure political capital.

It is disturbing, though not entirely surprising, that the first “intervention” of the union home ministry in the most distasteful and snowballing dispute between the Lieutenant-Governor and Chief Minister of Delhi should be an injection of regionalism/racism into the picture. That too from the generally well appreciated MoS for home affairs, Kiren Rejiju he has contended that the chief minister’s in excusable attack on an official is conditioned by Ms Shakuntala Gamlin being of Assamese origin. And to substantiate that, he asserts he has been receiving calls protesting her being discriminated against from Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and other North-eastern states.

As a minister at the Centre Rejiju ought to have quashed such emotional reactions rather than amplify, possibly authenticate them. Ms Gamlin is a civil servant with over three decades of experience, she would do well to confirm or deny the charge of being “racially” targeted: for unless she clarifies she will ensure a cloud hangs over other

officers from the North-east. With full respect to those folks, it would contribute to an unhealthy attitude that they demand “special” treatment. A self-inflicted wound on their professionalism, which has been displayed in several spheres, the battlefield too.

This is not a situation comparable with the vicious attacks on people from the North-east living in the Capital. The minister has to “grow up”. No condemnation would be too strong for the local government’s personal attack on Ms Gamlin. Arvind Kejriwal had tried to use “defamation” as self-defence, but has had no qualms about using it as an assault weapon, that too against a senior civil servant. Once again he has proved how reckless he can be when he is not getting his way, a sign of a lack of governance-capacity. His massive mandate does not authorise him to re-write the rule-book, shift the goal-posts at his convenience.

Treating officials whom he merely “suspects” in the same way as in-house dissenters confirms the dictatorial streak alleged by former fellow travelers Prashant Bhushan, Yogendra Yadav etc. Not that the lieutenant-governor has exhibited qualities worthy of his high office. That a standoff should erupt over a temporary appointment reveals all-round pettiness, best avoided.

Not insignificant is the chief minister securing some non-BJP support. Whether the highest authorities can restore a semblance of administrative propriety is an open question, Kejriwal must learn or be taught that he too must conform. Neither rabble-rousing, nor running away, is the answer. AAP too has to “grow up.” A final point.

The actions of the Centre and the Lieutenant-Governor have confirmed, if confirmation was needed, that the Delhi government has only mock executive authority. If an elected government cannot choose its officials for key posts, it wasn’t much of an election. Imagine how Jayalalithaa or Mamata Banerjee or Naveen Patnaik would react if told by Delhi who their Chief Secretary would be.

## **RAILWAYS**

STATESMAN, MAY 19, 2015

**The committee approach to chaos**

**Aarti Khosla**

After our Prime minister picked up Indian Railways as one of the areas needing reforms, we went over enthusiastic in our efforts to do so. The Railway minister (the second one of this government) could not afford time to first know the set-up, identify problems and then go about reforming the Railways. The committee route was followed. Actually there has been an onslaught of committees on railway reorganisation.

First was the one-man committee of Mr. E Sreedharan on Procurement. Given one month's time, the committee came up with radical recommendations on procurement demolishing well-established guidelines and properly laid down principles. A railwayman, Mr. Sreedharan earned his reputation as an architect of Konkan Railway and then Delhi Metro. But the report he gave on procurement seems to be the outcome of the bias or experience of one or two persons he consulted and also perhaps the minister's desire not to handle any file on tenders or to let members of the Railway Board do so, whatever be the value.

Hence the recommendation to delegate powers of accepting tenders of huge value to junior officers in Railway Board and to General Managers. The impact of this delegation would be seen after a year or two. For the moment one "reform" has been "achieved" without any discussion on the merit of the recommendation. Now comes the report, though interim, of the other committee on re-structuring of the ministry.

Headed by Bibek Debroy, well-known economist and now a member of Niti Ayog, the seven-member committee has a lone railway officer, a retired Financial Commissioner. The far-reaching suggestions made by the committee in over 300 pages shows that members did not spend much time in understanding the complex operations and nature of this behemoth and have gone by practices followed by other countries, the theoretical

maxims of corporate business, some oft-touted clichés of management experts and of course their own imagination.

They have consulted some railway officers, some of them retired and others on their last postings. For them it is 'after me the deluge'. The report recommend unbundling the Railways into two independent companies- one responsible for track and infrastructure and the other for operating trains. The committee recommends open access to any private party who wishes to run both passenger and freight trains, There will thus be many players in the business in addition to the Government entity which will now be a PSU known as IR.

The entire system which would include IR plus the private operators would be known as Indian Railways to distinguish them from IR. Ridiculous! Imagine the scene of trains being run on the same tracks by different operators, some of them private traders. Sounds familiar? The reference point for this recommendation appears to be the civil aviation sector where Indian skies were opened to private airlines to break the monopoly of Indian Airlines and Air India.

The committee forgets that trains run on track built and owned by the Railways unlike the open sky. The committee has recommended the entry of private parties in the rail business to promote "competition" and "choice" as also to break the "monopoly" of Indian Railways. What competition they are talking of ? The competition among many players for air travel has not resulted in any benefit to travelers by way of price or amenities. Getting even a glass of water on a flight is a big deal.

The committee also forgot to notice that this competition has destroyed Air India. As regards choice what are commuters are going to choose from? The passengers will take only one of those trains whether run by the Railways or a private operator. As for monopoly what kind of monopoly is it when the Railways cannot increase fare even when the costs go up?

If higher rates for freight are there it is not because of monopoly but because of cross-subsidisation of passenger fares by freight rate. Now when private players are brought in

to compete with IR in running the trains a regulator becomes necessary in order to allow them “non-discriminatory access to the railway infrastructure and ensure a level playing field”.

So in comes the Rail Regulatory Authority of India (RRAI) a statutory body with an independent Budget. Selection of routes, licensing for these and resolution of disputes will all be under its domain. Commissioner of Railway safety, who is now under ministry of Civil Aviation, will also now come under the regulator.

So far so good. But to let the regulator take over the work of setting technical standards by finishing off the Railway Design And Standards Organisation (RDSO) of the railways is not a good approach. RDSO is doing a fine job in matters of setting standards and inspection. Research is one area where they have to gear up. Why destroy an institution for creating something you are not sure of?

(To be concluded)

STATESMAN, MAY 20, 2015

**Throwing baby out with bathwater**

**Aarti Khosla**

A radical recommendation of the Bibek Debroy committee on the railways is to merge the eight Group A services into two groups. The three services viz. IRAS, IRPS and IRTS to which the selection is made through the Civil Services Examination conducted by UPSC are proposed to be merged into Indian Railway Logistics Service and the Engineering Services of five different disciplines are proposed to be clubbed into Indian Railway Technical Service. Out of these two services would be born the Indian Railway General Management Service.

The reason given for this amalgamation of services is to end the current departmentalism or what is fashionably called the “Silo mentality” of different departments of the Railways. There is no doubt that departmental rivalry is one of the banes of Railway working. But it is not due to large numbers of railway services but, as another committee

headed by two excellent railway men had commented, due to “opaque, inequitable and inconsistent policies, lack of transparency in personnel management and inequality among equals” (Gupta Narain Committee).

Why not tackle these problems instead of destroying the well-established Group A services with different charter of duties? Merger will create Himalayan problems of selection, fixing of seniority, postings, promotions and what not without ending the departmental approach. The recommendation of the committee to also stop the Apprentices route to recruitment to the Indian Mechanical Engineering service is a bad idea because these apprentices recruited through UPSC afterschool learn their Mechanical Engineering from the shop floor itself at the Jamalpur Workshop of the Railways and get their degree and placement after five years of rigorous training.

They are smarter and more efficient than those recruited directly through UPSC. The Committee also wants Railways to distance itself from its non-core activities like running schools, hospitals, having a separate railway Protection Force, production of coaches, locos etc and also construction and concentrate on the core business of running trains. Are these non-core activities not essential for the core business of running trains? Looking after the needs of a workforce which make for smooth running of such massive operations is I thought the first lesson for good management for any business.

Schools are necessary for providing easy access to education to wards of employees posted in the remote parts of the country, many of whom cannot afford to send their children to boarding schools. Railway schools like the Oakgrove School in Jharipani at Mussoorie enjoy a good reputation and employees at small stations put their children in hostels and are free to concentrate on their jobs. In any case these schools are welcome addition to the education sector of the country which still is lacking in number of schools. Similarly, railway hospitals are required to take care of medical needs of over 13lakh employees.

Medical units mostly located in Divisions are accessible to employees posted at very small stations where there is not even a shop what to talk of a doctor. The suggestion of the committee that Railway hospitals should be integrated with Central Government Health Scheme stems from a criminal ignorance of the state of affairs in the CGHS. As it is, employees and pensioners covered under CGHS are harassed a lot and there are complaints aplenty about the working of CGHS.

Offloading on the scheme another 13 lakh railway employees and also a large number of railway pensioners is a sure recipe for disaster. The so called non-core activities of the Railways are therefore meant to complement its core business, not interrupt it. Every organization has this non-core segment to supplement its core business. There are schools run by our army, air force and Navy. They also run hospitals and mind you both their schools and hospitals have reputations for excellence.

Going by this committee's argument since the core business of our armed forces is to protect the borders and fight wars they have no business to run schools and hospitals. Is it possible to do so? Railway operations of moving over 23 million people and 3 million tonnes of goods across the length and breadth of this country day and night is no less than fighting a war. They fight this war every day. These non-core activities are essential for their core activity.

In its recommendations the committee has also erred in subordinating Finance to the executive. The independence of Finance wing manned by officers of Indian Railway Accounts Service is very necessary for neutral advice and to check financial irregularities. It may be recalled that the Finance officers in the Railways were known for their independence and objective advice till they chose to barter it away for one or two posts of DRMs and General Managers for which their appraisal reports were brought under the aegis of the executive.

The role of Financial Commissioner, which was not a cadre post till the Fifth Pay Commission, has been diluted. The committee is further diluting it by clubbing PPP with

Member, Finance. The composition of Railway board, which will be only for IR, as recommended also leaves much to be desired. There are some recommendations which though not original need to be implemented. Accounting Reforms is one such. Railways have been working on this for over a decade with a separate directorate for this in the Railway Board. Consultants have given their reports. This aspect need to be expedited. Cost-benefit analysis of every new service must be done before introduction.

All Duranto trains and two Rajdhani running at a loss must be discontinued if it is not possible to raise fares. Merger of Railway Board Secretariat service into Central Secretariat service is desirable. It is also a good suggestion that gazetted officers should be made to man A1 and A stations for two-three years. As a matter of fact officers of IRTS should be posted as station managers on their first posting. Station Development by private parties is possible and should be done.

It is an attractive proposition for them if commercial space is provided to them around the premises in exchange for this work. All said and done the sweeping recommendation made by the Bibek Debroy committee have to be carefully considered. It will be suicidal to implement several of their ideas without proper debate for we are here to reform the Railways not demolish them.

## URBAN DEVELOPMENT

DECCAN HERALD, MAY 18, 2015

**Safe, Habitable or Smart? India's 100 Smart Cities must be all three**

Sanjiv Kataria

Each time there is a mention of Smart Cities in India, I get concerned about the safety of women because there is a surfeit of news stemming from the vulnerability of women in our cities.

A few incidents that shook India recently, include:\* A police officer attacks an allegedly errant scooter-riding woman with a brick in India's capital.

\* A 13-year-old girl pushed off a moving bus in Moga in Punjab along with her mother after they resisted molestation attempts.

\* A young girl walking back home in Ludhiana is raped on International Women's Day, March 8.

These incidents paint the picture of cities unsafe for women and children on foot, in own vehicles or while using public transport.

From unsafe to unhealthy cities, India attracts attention. A recent UN study noted that the highest concentration of PM (particulate matter) 2.5 is in Indian cities.

These tiny airborne particulates can increase the risk of heart disease and respiratory ailments. The PM 2.5 levels in the national capital New Delhi are so high that breathing the air for only a few hours can have an irreversible health impact. These upsetting reports bring out the need for safer and more habitable cities before India builds 100 Smart Cities. Even though proponents of Smart Cities may argue that the choice is not between safe and habitable versus Smart Cities, the government clearly

needs to take demonstrative action to instill confidence among women in India to restore a sense of safety.

India clearly needs to morph its Smart Cities plan into one that lays equal emphasis on making our cities most habitable and safe. While Smart Cities are necessary, the liveability aspect needs to get top priority. The recent, albeit temporarily halted, move by the National Green Tribunal to ban all over 10-year-old diesel vehicles from plying on Delhi roads is commendable. That perhaps is the only way to show to the rest of the country what needs to be done to make the country more habitable. One only hopes that its implementation does not lead to dilution.

At the same time, we urgently need a road infrastructure that does not hold up non-polluting vehicles on road a minute longer than is necessary. Once among most green Indian cities, Pune and Bangalore are now home to glass and concrete structures. Despite a salubrious climate and green spaces, these high-tech cities ranked 145th (Pune) and 146th (Bangalore) in the 2015 most liveable cities ranking by global consulting firm Mercer.

Singapore, known for its standards of cleanliness, discipline and safety, at No.25 is the highest-ranking Asian city in the same listing.

Ranked the most liveable city for six consecutive years by Mercer, Vienna also won global recognition for being a Smart City by climate strategist Boyd Cohen. Vienna may offer a good benchmark for the most habitable city. In addition to being green and clean, the city is also Safe.

After its inauguration 150 years ago, Vienna remains the most well-planned and architected city. Unlike Indian cities, it follows a zero tolerance policy towards departure from sanctioned building plans - an area that needs stricter conformance in India. The Austrian capital is a pedestrian-friendly, cycle-friendly city where lane discipline is

observed almost like a religion. The differently-abled, wheel-chair borne and the most careless walker can traverse through pothole-free levelled roads.

**Safe, Efficient and Reliable Public Transport**The next important element is an efficient transport system ensures that every part of the city is well connected. By deploying smart travel cards, it affords safe and convenient travel for women, those with children and elderly people by various modes, at any time of the day.

For safe, habitable and smart cities, India's public transport system needs to be scaled up to create options where most citizens prefer public transport to their private vehicles. The dependence on personal vehicles for work has to reduce. Movement on India's inadequate road infrastructure will become even tougher and unsustainable as it adds nearly two million vehicles a month.

Very few Indian cities can boast of roads that offer a safe journey to its inhabitants. Even though the recent budget allocation to the sector gives one the confidence that the road infrastructure will get created, it needs to be backed by an infrastructure that is safe, takes into account the future traffic needs and ensures that sidewalks are not dysfunctional.

Climate strategist Boyd Cohen says Smart City has to be much more than just a buzzword: it is the way of the future. A Smart City needs measures to radically reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions and further optimize the public transportation network to deliver an even higher quality of life for many years to come.

## WATER SUPPLY

ECONOMIC TIMES, MAY 20, 2015  
**Delhi government cuts sewer, water**

In a major relief to the people living in unauthorised colonies, Delhi Government today decided to reduce one-time sewer and water development charges for new connections by 80 per cent.

NEW DELHI: In a major relief to the people living in unauthorised colonies, [Delhi Government](#) today decided to reduce one-time sewer and water development charges for new connections by 80 per cent.

According to officials, the long-pending decision got approved during a cabinet meeting here.

Sewer development charges have been reduced from Rs 494 per square metre to Rs 100 per square metre and water development charges from Rs 440 per square metre to Rs 100 per square metre.

The officials said the new charges will be applicable to domestic and mixed land use consumer up to the plot size of 200 square metres. People can avail the benefit of discounted rate for three months from the date of notification.

People who fail to avail this benefit within the stipulated time of three months will have to pay the charges as per existing rates.

"Reduction in the charges will benefit lakhs of people living in about 1,700 unauthorised colonies in the city. As per the existing rate one end up paying Rs 98,800 for a plot of 200 sq metres but as per the new rate a user will only have to pay Rs 20,000 saving Rs 78,800.

Similarly, for water development charge a user will be able to save Rs 68,000 paying just Rs 20,000 for a 200 square metre plot," one of officials said.

Chief Minister [Arvind Kejriwal](#) also directed the [Delhi Jal Board](#) to organise special camps to facilitate new water and sewer connections under discounted rates.

He also asked DJB to take up awareness campaign to the new rates. He emphasised that the citizen should get water and sewerage connection in a hassle free manner.

Presently piped-water supply is available in 917 unauthorised colonies and sewerage line has been laid in 152 colonies. The resident of these colonies can avail the facility immediately.

Beside these, piped-water supply and sewerage services will be made available by DJB in a number of new colonies during the current financial year. Residents of these colonies can also avail the benefit of new rates within a period of three months of notification of new colonies.