

## **PART A: News pertaining to Planning Commission**



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*Compiled by:*

**S. Wadhawan, ALIO  
Mrs. Varsha Satija, SLIA  
Planning Commission Library**

**and Communication, IT & Information Division**

**(महापुरुषों के प्रेरणात्मक विचार)**

(Loyal and efficient work in a great cause, even though it may not be immediately recognized, ultimately bears fruit. वफादार और कुशल महान कारण के लिए कार्य करते हैं, भले ही उन्हें तुरंत पहचान ना मिले, अंततः उसका फल मिलता है.)

**Jawaharlal Nehru जवाहरलाल नेहरू**

## 1. False perceptions and unanswered questions: Why Modi should let the Planning Commission be

**JAIVEER SHERGILL, Daily Mail: 13.12.2014**

Ever since the new Government came to power, the future of the Planning Commission, a body that symbolizes the economic structure of our country, has become a subject of intense speculation. With the BJP in power, Nehru's economic legacy is being dismantled.

One of the first acts of Prime Minister Modi was to announce the unceremonious shutting down of the Planning Commission—that venerated pillar of old nation-building – and then to announce the proposal to set up a “Niti Ayoga”.

Maladies

A recent circular directed all major ministries and departments to furnish their plan budget estimates for 2015-16 directly to the finance ministry, marking the formal shift of responsibility of determining annual plan expenditure from the Planning Commission to the ministry.

Every institution has its own inherent mechanism that allows it to evolve over time. Since the Planning Commission has been constituted, it has also evolved according to the requirements of time. The Commission had been holding discussions with stakeholders on PPP projects on power and infrastructural sector to name but a few. It also held discussions for skill building in schools with stakeholders at various fora. Therefore, to assume that Planning Commission has been immune to changing needs is not correct.



Ex-PM Manmohan Singh and then Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia. PM Modi wants to replace the Commission with a new body

It is not that the Commission has not realised its maladies. It has started taking corrective measures by introducing greater stakeholder participation, and identifying critical intervention areas, such

as improving business regulatory environment and human asset environment for enhancing manufacturing. Yes, there is ample scope for improvement and those areas need to be identified and strengthened to make it an effective mechanism in the process of good governance.

The Commission should be allowed to evolve with the needs of the economy, and its actions must be open to public scrutiny. If need be, it can be made answerable and accountable to Parliament and modalities in this regard can be worked out. Of course, a detailed examination is required examining the pros and cons of bringing the Commission under Parliamentary control.

The Planning Commission has been perceived by many as an instrument of centralisation against the spirit of federalism. This perception that the Commission has one framework for all the states or stake-holders, is wrong. In fact, it is the ministries who have such a mindset.

The Commission, in its right, has insisted that you must have an objective method of allocating funds. Like, for education, it is the extent of deprivation of education in a state that should drive the allocation of funds.

All this straight-jacketing emanates from the ministries. It doesn't come from the Planning Commission. Rather, financial planning by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) will violate the spirit of an independent view on allocation of funds in light of competing demands between ministries (and states), need for planning body to assess appropriate schemes and to have an integrated view of the economy.

#### Development

The Planning Commission was set up by a Resolution of the Government of India in March 1950 in pursuance of prime objectives of the Government to promote better standards of living. India as a state has not matured enough to move away from economic and investment planning and to completely shed the welfare character of the State.

Fruits of development are yet to reach millions. The Prime Minister is pushing hard for the new body but there is no clarity when the new body will take shape.

#### Retention

There are many unanswered questions regarding this new body. Will it mean the end of the planning process itself? If not, who will formulate and monitor the five year plans as the Planning Commission was doing? What will happen to the 12th plan document? How will plan fund flow from Centre to the States? Who will answer? As Modi is discovering, the fate of the Indian economy and the country's planning shall depend on the charity of the private sector.

The Planning Commission is not only a fund allocator and target setter but also facilitates, within an institutional framework, the dialogue process, cutting across party lines, to set a national goal. There is no doubt that, if reformed effectively, the Commission can meet the requirements of the 21st century. Even in a market-oriented economy of today, a body such as the Planning Commission can have a useful role to play.

The NDA Government can, and should, work closely with a strengthened Planning Commission. The tools and functions of the Commission can be restructured, and the idea of abolishing it should immediately be dropped. When nearly half of the States in the country are opposed to the idea, the Centre should not press it further, as the essence of federalism lies in consensus and not in coercion. Doing away with the Planning Commission means diluting the spirit of federalism and cutting the bridge that connects the Centre with the periphery.

The writer is a Supreme Court Lawyer

## **2. Reform of Centre-states relations need of hour'**

### **The Times of India: 13.12.2014**

JAIPUR: Restructuring of Centre-states relations is one of the focus areas of the Union government and it is expected that a lot of work will be done in the coming days for development of the country, speakers at the second annual Shiv Charan Mathur (SCM) memorial lecture said.

During the lecture on centre-states relations held at SCM Social policy research Institute (SCMSPRI) on Friday, N K Singh, former bureaucrat, MP and member Planning Commission said, "It is increasingly realized that for economic reforms to succeed in India, partnership with states has become highly important."

Singh pointed out that the most important agencies for Centre-states relations are the interstate councils, the national development council and the Planning Commission. He asserted that the new Planning Commission or Niti Ayog should be formed by an enactment of the Constitution and should be accountable to Parliament.

The proposed Niti Ayog should have three critical functions he said. The financial powers must be exercised by the ministry of finance with the financial devolution should be a formula and entitlement-based which minimize political predilections. "The second role should be on forming a vision for development. The formula 'one size fits all' has not served us well," he said. The third function of the commission must be to become a think tank acting in close concert and cooperation with research and academic institutions of the country and in other emerging markets as well as in the more developed countries. The new entity must have a project monitoring and evaluation division, he added.

SCMSPRI director IAS (retired) Sudhir Varma talked about the recent changes in the Centre-states relations with the states demanding more power and autonomy. He said many states in their interstate disputes, especially on sharing river waters, have not accepted the verdict of the Centre and conflict resolution have become very difficult. Varma concluded by saying a question now arises that although it is very true that the current excessively centralized system of governance and decision-making can no longer continue, how will more powers - financial or otherwise - be devolved to the states without destroying the basic fabric of the Constitution.

Former UP governor B L Joshi said from the experience of being the governor of four states, there are situations when conflicts arise between the Centre and states and inter-states.

### **3. Chief Ministers at loggerheads over Planning Commission revamp**

#### **Daily News and Analysis: 13 December 2014 - 7:45pm IST**

Uttarkhand Chief Minister Harish Rawat on Saturday criticised the move to dismantle Planning Commission saying it has created uncertainty in the country, a view countered by Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis who claimed the new framework will give more rights to states.

Rawat said that institutions like Planning Commission are "time tested" and it has tried to do justice with states in the federal structure. He said one should not talk of dismantling it unless a "unanimous alternative" is reached. The Congress leader stated that just saying that the process of consultation has started is not enough "because for the last six months, this uncertainty is there which is not good for the country".

However, BJP leader Fadnavis defended the Centre's move to dismantle the Planning Commission and termed the concerns raised by Rawat "baseless". He said that government is a "continuous" process and the Planning Commission still exists. "Till the time the, new institution comes up, the planning body will keep functioning," he said.

"Institutions like Planning Commission, finance commission, they are such institutions which are time tested ones and have tried to do justice with states in the existing federal structure, provided states a platform to give their opinion. Unless a unanimous alternative is reached upon, it (Commission) should not be finished," Rawat said during a discussion in a TV programme in which Fadnavis also participated.

Rawat accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of not consulting any political party or making any attempt to arrive at national consensus on the issue. "You are taking such a big decision, have you tried to reach a national consensus or are you trying to impose your own thoughts on national consensus. You did not take Chief Ministers in the decision, you did not consult the political parties, you did not conduct any open house consultations. "He (Modi) did not do any such thing and only said it should be dismantled and has not made it clear what should be done next on the issue. This is our concern," Rawat said.

Fadnavis said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has worked for many years both as Chief Minister and in the opposition and has experienced the difficulties in the centre-state relationship. It is because of this he wants Centre-state relationship to be stronger, the Maharashtra Chief Minister said, adding that in a democratic set up, when a institution replaces the others, it is done for good.

## **4. Planning Commission in Limbo**

**Kashmir Times: 13.12.2014**

Till a final decision on new body to replace PC is taken, most of economic schemes will be engulfed in uncertainty

Going by the discussions that have been dominating the scenario at the national and state levels for the reconstitution of the Planning Commission (PC) of India with diverse powers to the states for pushing in the planning process in a decentralized manner has been left in limbo. No consensus appears to have been reached on the process or the points to be resolved for the new body that would ultimately replace the Planning Commission. The traditional working of the PC has been going on for decades since the mid-1950s when it was first constituted to give a shape to the economic activities and planning process for re-building India in modern age has been considered to be an old model by majority of the people in the corridors of power. Only one consensus appears to have emerged during discussions by the chief ministers conference with the prime minister and union finance minister. It was that the states should have main say in planning, designing and managing the schemes devised by them so that a decentralized process takes care of the economic needs of the respective units. It will also empower the states with powers to devise new and comprehensive schemes best suited to their needs under the present economic conditions not only within the country but also around the world. But some of the chief ministers had divergent views due to their own political and vested interests and no common ground could be discovered as a result of which the entire process of having a new body to replace the current PC has been put on hold for an indefinite period. To some extent the need for this was felt by the BJP government due to their personal experiences of some of the members of the central ministry who managed the states when they were chief ministers in the past and had difficulty in dealing with the conception of the members of the PC at that time.

Despite the fact that BJP while in opposition had been seeking a decentralized PC to suit the needs of the states and different regions of the country, but at present they have certain reservations with states ruling by opposition parties. In fact, the BJ leaders wanted financial autonomy for different states of the country when they were ruling some of these units. Since the PC has been headed by the prime minister and was instrumental in doling schemes and plans for different states as per their conception of needs for economic development besides designing schemes on uniform basis. Apart from this, the PC was entrusted with the job of carrying out research in various fields so that the data received from the states and the feedback on schemes and plans could be analysed for further improvement. But now, it has been felt that the new body should keep scope for openness in preparing fresh plans, design schemes and innovate programmes on their own in different states with active participation of private individuals and corporate sector. This will also open incorporation of innovative people from different fields in universities and other organizations, which have specialized expertise on certain issues. This will also open up new vistas for innovations so far as local needs of diverse regions in the country are concerned and come up with

plans best suited to their environment and also allow the planning process to begin from the grassroot level. This will also pave the way for innovations at the village and panchayat level for forward submission to their administrative units and ultimately reach the PC level for finalization. Another question was how to incorporate chief ministers from different states with the new body on rotational basis so that they could have a bigger say in the planning process. Since no concrete decisions have been reached, there are many unanswered questions about the shape and style of the new body to come up and ultimately replace the PC. Till then, majority of the plans of the states and schemes requiring central funding will also remain hanging in uncertainty.

## 5. NCS officers told to maintain integrity, justice and impartiality

### The Morung Express (Nagaland): 13.12.2014

Kohima, December 12 (DIPR): NCS officers are ‘Team Leader’ in their own respective circles and sub-division and are expected to lead and guide all the agencies of the State Government stated the Chief Minister of Nagaland, TR Zeliang while addressing the 42nd General Conference of the Nagaland Civil Service Association (NCSA) at the Capital Convention Centre, Kohima on December 12.

He said that NCS officers are present in the remotest corners of the State, and have become an invaluable asset to the government in providing leadership and direction to the people and in maintaining law and ensuring justice in the activities of the government. Also terming that NCS officers are the most visible and influential face of governance, it was of utmost importance that officers of the service maintain the highest level of integrity, justice and impartiality so that the trust of the people on the State government and its agencies are strengthened.

With technology changing by the day, the Chief Minister expressed his confidence that the NCS officers will keep up with such technology changes and to use it as an important work tool. He said one of the challenges facing the bureaucracy today is red-tapism and delay and should try to tackle these problems through the aid of technology that is now available. The Chief Minister also advised the officers to be well informed on key policies of the government and issues that are confronting and added that officer need to have a holistic perspective so that the decisions and efforts made are in harmony with that of the State government’s overall goals and objective.

He said that the Prime Minister is moving to change and redesign the structure of the **Planning Commission** of India in order to make the system more relevant. The country is poised on the edge of significant change that will impart the entire country upto the grassroots level. He explained that such changes will impose on new responsibilities and officers must be prepared from now to meet the challenges and responsibilities.

The Chief Minister viewed that it was very unbecoming of many officers who resort to intense political lobbying at the expense of their less fortunate colleagues on the matters of transfer and posting and expressed his deep concern on the issue and said that this practice must be stopped. He added that such practice not only cause heartburns amongst the officers, but also effects the moral, productivity and efficiency of the officers and appealed all officers to desist from such lobbying.

The Chief Minister also said the State government is aware of the difficult circumstances under which officers have to work in the interior areas, particularly because of the poor infrastructure and connectivity and assured the members of NCSA that the government is making all efforts to address the problems gradually.



Guest of Honour and Chief Secretary, Toshi Aier IAS in his speech said that the NCS was indeed the 'prime service' of the State and encouraged the officers to continue working for the upliftment of the State. He also shared his experience as an administrative officer with the gathering.

President NCSA, Rovilatuo Mor while delivering the Presidential address appreciated the government for according due recognition of the State Civil Service in thrusting with the head of district administration as DC's in 9 out of 11 districts and also for enhancing senior cadre posts including two post of super time scale during the last cadre review, facilitating better promotional avenues.

The programme was chaired by Akunu S. Meyase while Wepretso Mero read from the scripture and invoked the programme. Vote of thanks was proposed by Joint Secretary NCSA Hiazu Meru and a special song was presented by NCS Probationers of 2014 batch.

## **6. States fearful about losing Planning Commission: Uttarakhand CM**

**Zee News: December 13, 2014**

New Delhi: There is a strong sense of apprehension and uncertainty among states like Uttarakhand following the union government's proposal to wind up the Planning Commission, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Harish Rawat said Saturday.

The Congress leader made the comments at a summit organised by the India Today group in the national capital on centre-state relationships, as he locked horns with BJP leader and his Maharashtra counterpart Devendra Fadnavis over the issue of centre-state relations in the Indian federation Saturday.

"There is uncertainty among small states like mine regarding the potential dismantling of the Planning Commission. Who do we approach for funding and other concerns now? Rawat asked as he shared his fears over the loss of an autonomous body at the Centre that sets the country's development agenda.

"There is a logical concern because it was the Commission that interacted with us (the states) at every level until now," Rawat added.

Defending Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposition to strengthen cooperative federalism by replacing the Commission with a new framework based on greater centre-state partnership, Maharashtra Chief Minister Fadnavis dispelled such apprehensions, terming Rawat's concern as "baseless".

"Modi is a visionary and he wants to strengthen centre-state relations. The Congress "governed states are raising baseless concerns only because they are in the opposition," Fadnavis said at the summit.

## 7. Planning for a new commission

### Sanjeev Sharma, The Tribune: 14.12.2014

Narendra Modi's made it clear that the Planning Commission has to go. His predecessor had five years back sought recommendations on shaking up the panel, but these were left unattended. A new institution to replace the plan body is now in the works. There's receptivity among CMs, with varied degrees of acceptability. What works out and what doesn't remains to be seen.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Home Minister Rajnath Singh, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and Chief Ministers during a meeting on the revamp of the Planning Commission in New Delhi on December 7. PTI

#### **Flow of funds**

- Union Budget is Rs21.77 lakh crore. Of this, 74 per cent is non-plan, which is Rs16.02 lakh crore
- Plan budget under the Planning Commission and Finance Ministry is 26 per cent or Rs5.75 lakh crore
- Central sector gets 41 pc of plan budget or Rs2.37 lakh crore
- 44 pc of plan budget or Rs2.53 lakh crore is given to ministries for the 66 centrally-sponsored schemes
- Rs85,000 crore is given as grants to states and union territories

#### **Plan panel's own diagnosis**

- No structured mechanism for regular engagement with states
- Ineffective forum for resolution of Centre-State and inter-ministerial issues
- Weak implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes
- Inadequate capacity, expertise and domain knowledge
- Lack of expertise outside government
- Many new ideas don't get translated into action

- 57 meetings of NDC since 1950, but are ritualistic and of limited use for resolving states' specific development needs
- Annual plan discussions are formulaic and rigid, allocations are inadequate and have limited flexibility to modify according to states' requirements

### **Govt's proposed solution**

- To foster cooperative federalism, consensus on overall scheme priorities at meetings between PM, Council of CMs
- Based on agreed priorities, finalise schemes in consultation with ministries
- States may decide to seek assistance under schemes relevant to their strengths, potential and needs
- In partnership with ministries, assist in schemes tailored to suit the states' requirement
- Engage in planning within medium and long-term strategy frameworks
- Continuous review and assessment of strategy and goals
- Formulate a national development strategy
- Review and restructure the Five Year Plan cycle and rework the annual plan process to synchronise with working season, budget cycle and national priorities.

### **Proposed contours of new body to replace Planning Commission**

- Planning Secretary Sindhushree Khullar says the new institution may have 8-10 regular or executive members with half of them representing the states
- The remaining members could be sectoral experts — environmentalists, financial experts, engineers, scientists and eminent scholars
- To be headed by the Prime Minister
- Functions include monitoring and evaluation; programme project and scheme evaluation; cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial expertise and appraisal and monitoring of projects
- Would advise PM on matters referred to it
- To act as think-tank and have a network with universities and other institutions
- To provide internal consultancy services to states and Centre
- To design medium and long-term strategy

### **'Determine functions'**

- The idea is to create a lean organisation and see how to accommodate the existing personnel. The Prime Minister has something of this structure in mind, but may not want to create a new body with the old inertia. First determine the processes and functions and then look for capabilities and resources, not the other way round. —Arun Maira, former member, Planning Commission

### **'Increase share of states'**

- The states must get 50 per cent share of the central taxes and non-tax revenue, instead of the present 32 per cent. These funds should be given in an untied manner, without prior conditionalities. The distribution among states should be based on a transparent formula in

an untied manner, instead of through political discretion under which larger states walk away with all funds. —Parkash Singh Badal, Punjab Chief Minister

It was in 2009 that Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh had alluded to the Planning Commission having outlived its utility and asked the members to consider changes to make it more relevant.

A year later, recalls Arun Maira, a member of the Planning Commission till recently, recommendations on the changes in the structure, role, functions and resources were given. The then Prime Minister and the then Deputy

Chairman of the Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, sat on these.

Just months into the job, as Narendra Modi stood up to deliver the Independence Day address, he announced his stand: the Planning Commission had to go, a new institution would take its place.

Maira says the changes recommended to Dr Singh are very similar to what Prime Minister Modi is attempting to do now. “It is not as if suddenly a dramatic idea has appeared. We consulted the stakeholders — states, ministries, private and civil society,” he adds. What’s changed is the urgency and firmness to get on with things.

Maira, who headed the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) in India, reveals that in 2012, a Parliamentary Standing Committee also gave a report which said that it was time for an independent evaluation of the functioning of the Planning Commission. “Ahluwalia did not respond adequately to the Committee's report. The government was told what needed to be done, but did not respond.”

On August 13, the Union Cabinet approved the repeal of the Cabinet resolution dated March 15, 1950 by which the Planning Commission was set up. It also authorised the Prime Minister to finalise the contours of the new institution to replace it. For now though, status quo prevails and things will go on as they were in this financial year till a new arrangement comes into place.

The country’s apex institution for economic policy-making, fund allocation and running the Five Year Plans was set up by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1950, with him as the ex-officio chairman.

Trying to dispel doubts about any intention to concentrate power in the Centre or giving a raw deal to states, Prime Minister Modi during consultations with Chief Ministers recently outlined his

vision for the new body and recalled how the idea for change had germinated two decades back. The first introspection, he told them, was done after the launch of economic reforms in 1992.

As he recalled his not-so-pleasant experience in dealing with the Planning Commission as the Gujarat Chief Minister, and how he always felt the need for a better platform to articulate the views of states, Modi's pitch did find resonance. Coming down to Yojana Bhavan for grants and being lectured was often a sore point for Chief Ministers with popular mandates.

“It is impossible for the nation to develop unless states develop. The process of policy planning also has to change from ‘top to bottom’ to ‘bottom to top’,” Modi elaborated, pointing out how more say for states and recognising that the government was no longer at the centre of economic activity were at the core of his decision.

“In countries such as USA, think tanks that function independently of the government have a major role in policy-making. In India, too, there is a great deal of economic activity that happens outside the government setup, and there is a need to design policies for them as well,” Modi said. States, he stressed, should have a key role in the new body with an effective mechanism to address inter-state disputes.

But what exactly does the Prime Minister have in mind?

He's described “Team India” as a combination of three “teams” — the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers; the Union Council of Ministers; and the bureaucracy in the Centre and states.

The meeting saw most Chief Ministers favouring restructuring of the Planning Commission, but there was no consensus on disbanding the existing setup.

The government is looking at a structure which will have the Prime Minister, some Cabinet ministers and some Chief Ministers along with technocrats and experts in various fields. The Chief Ministers could be included in the body on a rotation basis and the states could be given liberty to spend funds according to their needs.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said no timeline had been fixed and the Centre will take a “considered view after consultations are over”. At the meeting, the Congress-ruled states supported the idea of revamping the Planning Commission, but did not want it to be scrapped as they felt it could be “evolved”.

While some NDA states and those ruled by parties like AIADMK and TRS wanted immediate disbanding of the Planning Commission, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav said the new entity should be a transparent and impartial mechanism which would focus on the basic elements of socialism.

Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal called for a recast of the Constitution to give the country a genuinely federal structure. He wanted the formula for distribution of resources between the Centre and the states to be drastically reversed. “The states must get 50 per cent share of the central taxes and non-tax revenue, instead of the present 32 per cent, and these funds should be given in an untied manner, without prior conditionalities,” he said.

Badal called for the distribution among states to be based on a transparent formula in an untied manner “instead of through political discretion under which larger states walk away with all the funds”.

At present, the share of untied grants to states constitutes only 15 per cent of the plan funds and the remaining 85 per cent are determined by the Centre. “These should be completely reversed, with the states getting 85 per cent as untied funds,” Badal said. Former Planning Commission member Arun Maira, meanwhile, lists the four broad recommendations given in 2010. Relationship between the Centre and states, he says, has to be different. “Not states coming every year and being given a lecture on what to do. The body has to look at how the two can work together and installation of new processes.”

Second, ministries often work in a silo mode while issues and problems run across departments. “The new body has to work towards forging a coalition of ministries.”

Third, the new body has to stitch a network of thinking organisations to find answers to the country’s problems. And fourth, with states becoming independent and the private sector increasing its footprint, civil society is more relevant and there is a need to create collaborations.

All this would require staff with new capabilities and expertise to work with people outside. “Then what do you do with the existing people? The idea was to create a lean organisation and see how to accommodate the existing personnel. The Prime Minister has something of this structure in mind, but may not want to create a new body with the old inertia. First determine the processes and functions and then look for capabilities and resources, not the other way round,” says Maira.

### **‘Focus on key issues’**

Noted economist YK Alagh, a former member of the Planning Commission and at present Chancellor of Central University of Gujarat, feels that the Planning Commission could be replaced by a more focused body concentrating on issues like energy, water and demographics.



These issues, he says, have long-term perspectives, as in China where the state planning committee was replaced by the National Economic and Social Development Commission. Yojana Bhavan as it has been is going to be history soon.

Alagh, who participated in a meeting of experts called by the Planning Commission in August on the new role for the body, says there is some agreement on long-term planning required in some crucial sectors, while there is a difference of opinion on whether the body should allocate resources.

“If the Planning Commission is to be dissolved, first we have to look for its alternative after due discussion,” he stresses. “Resource allocation is an important function of the Planning

Commission and states are already asking the Centre for their plan budgets as they are in the process of designing budgets for the next financial year,” he says.

The main problem, he points out, is grants under Section 382. “Who will administer that function? Some say that the Finance Commission can do it but for that, the Constitution will have to be amended, which will be a tall order for the government.”



## 8. Yashwant Sinha: time for bold reforms

**Business Line: 15.12.2014**

**India** needs to free infrastructure and core sector projects from bottlenecks: former FM

Chennai, December 14 Former Finance and External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha on Saturday hoped the 2015 Union Budget would be “transformational” and set off a series of second-generation reforms to lift the country’s GDP growth rate on to a higher trajectory.

In a conversation with a select gathering of Chennai’s business elite at a ‘ Breakfast with BusinessLine’ event at the Park Sheraton Hotel & Towers, Sinha said the Narendra Modi government has already taken small steps to improve investor sentiment.

Now, it is time for bold reforms, he added, noting that expectations were high and “if there was any delay, people would get disappointed”.

Sinha drew parallels to the current situation with his stint as the Finance Minister in 1998, “when the situation was similar and everyone was asking how to kick- start the economy”. He shared his recipe for a revival of the economy: bring down inflation, give space for the RBI to cut rates, and take up large infrastructure projects to attract investment.

The veteran BJP leader said: “Now, we are caught up in the trap of sub- 5 per cent GDP growth. My advice to the government is to unlock held- up infrastructure and core sector projects.”

But Sinha, under whose stewardship the Finance Ministry had unleashed reforms in the insurance, telecom and housing sectors, cautioned that “the government should act, and should be seen as acting, on livelihood issues and quality of life issues. Hopefully the next year’s Union Budget will cater to this area also,” he said.

He acknowledged that the corporate world was “frustrated” with the delay in bringing out new policies. At the same time, he added: “Reforms in **India** have always been very difficult and elude consensus among political parties.”

A thinking think- tank

Sinha addressed the gathering after a sumptuous breakfast. As the invited audience settled down, he gave them some food for thought.

Responding to a question from former Tamil Nadu Health Minister HV Hande on what could replace the **Planning Commission**, Sinha said: “I think we need a body to think for the government. The **Planning Commission** had stopped thinking because it was caught up in routing/ allocation ( of funds) to States.”

“I think there should be a small wing in the new **commission** that will follow up on behalf of the Prime Minister some nationally important schemes, such as rural infrastructure, education and health, and employment,” said Sinha.

Defending his step as Finance Minister to lift restrictions on imports in April 2001 under the agreement with the WTO, Sinha said that this “single step has helped Indian industry to become competitive. If they ( companies in China) are manufacturing ( idols of) Indian gods and making Diwali Chinese, then we have to face that competition. That is the way forward and we shouldn’t look for protection.”

An idea whose time has come

Sinha asked the gathering, which included some of the leading businessmen from Chennai, to be patient with the implementation of GST ( Goods and Services Tax). “It is a fundamental change from the Constitution of **India**, which had given States the right to impose taxes. Now, that power

is being taken away... it is a difficult exercise and we have come so close that it doesn't matter if it is passed in the Winter Session or in the session after that. GST is coming because the time of the idea has come," said Sinha.

Reiterating the importance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), Sinha said that the Prime Minister, too, agrees that there should be reforms to incentivise SMEs. "India won't prosper until the small-scale sector prospers. You can't have 50 per cent of the population depending on agriculture, which is 15 per cent of the economy," said the veteran leader.

#### Modi wave

Shifting gears to politics, Sinha said that the 'Modi wave' has become stronger since the Lok Sabha elections, and that the BJP would win by a comfortable margin in the ongoing assembly elections in Jharkhand. He brushed away a few of the opinion polls that predicted the party would fall short of a majority. "My reading of the ground situation in Jharkhand is that the BJP will get a comfortable majority on its own, without its allies," said the former Member of Parliament from Hazaribagh, Jharkhand.



## 9. PLANNING COMMISSION

**The India Today: 15.12.2014**

The PM has asked the review to be completed by January 15, just before US President Barack Obama's visit to **India**, signalling his intent to deliver his end of the deal. Quantifying support to agriculture and classifying it according to WTO parameters is the first step towards meeting the organisation's requirements and its transparency norms—a call that fundamentally overturns the Government's initial instinct but has brought **India** back into the main fold of the trade debate.

An exasperated Modi would be a rare sight but, according to those privy to discussions on the future of the **Planning Commission**, the PM does betray this sense going by the “ever-changing” contours of fresh proposals and the “never-ending” nature of the debate. But what is clear after his grand August 15 announcement is that the **Planning Commission** is not going to be reduced to just a think tank as proposed earlier.

Again, in the same time frame from September to November, through several meetings, the PMO has come to the conclusion that the **Planning Commission** is an effective counterbalance in the governance system, expressing and running the PM's writ, a tool that Modi needs. But with the PM having made a public declaration, the Government is working overtime to find areas where the **Commission's** powers can be pruned and its functioning more streamlined. Here, some key questions were raised before the PM, which has prompted a change of approach.

First, can the custodian of financial resources also be the last word on resource allocation? Second, who will resolve disputes and differences between ministries in the early stages of making proposals to the Cabinet? And third, which body will negotiate on behalf of states with the Centre in case they have issues and demands? Last is the question of programme evaluation, a part of which is currently being done by the Cabinet Secretariat too.

While the expectation is that the body may shed some of its fund allocation powers, the rest will stay in the new charter. Evaluation too, according to sources, may become a more focused activity to avoid overlap with other arms of the Government. However the new body may become the platform for Modi's vision of cooperative federalism.

PART B

## NEWS AND VIEWS

Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014

**Polity**

: BJP not to enter any post-poll alliance  
in J&K, says Jaitley

**Economy**

: Road Builders Eye □ 60,000-cr Orders

**Planning**

: Govt plans Rail Corp exclusively for  
major ports

**Editorial**

: A step toward humanisation

Communication, IT Information Division  
Phone # 2525

# केंद्र प्रायोजित स्कीमें कम होंगी

## राज्यों को वित्तीय स्वायत्तता देने पर जोर मसाले की जैविक खेती का केंद्र बनेगा पूर्वोत्तर

जागरण ब्यूरो, नई दिल्ली : योजना आयोग की जगह नई संस्था बनने पर केंद्र प्रायोजित योजनाओं की संख्या में कटौती हो सकती है। फिलहाल केंद्र प्रायोजित योजनाओं की संख्या 66 है। केंद्र सरकार अपने बजट में इनके लिए ढाई लाख करोड़ रुपये से अधिक आवंटन करती है। केंद्र प्रायोजित स्कीमों की संख्या घटने पर राज्यों को अधिक स्वायत्तता मिलेगी। इससे राज्य सरकारें अपनी सुविधा व जरूरत के हिसाब से विकास कार्यक्रम चला सकेंगी। प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के साथ हाल में मुख्यमंत्रियों की बैठक में इस बारे में चर्चा हुई है। उत्तर प्रदेश सहित कई राज्य चाहते हैं कि उन्हें केंद्र प्रायोजित योजनाओं के तहत धनराशि जारी करने के बजाय एकमुश्त केंद्रीय सहायता दी जाए।

केंद्र के कुल योजनागत बजट का 44 प्रतिशत इन्हीं केंद्र प्रायोजित योजनाओं के माध्यम से खर्च होता है। ऐसे में इनकी संख्या कम होने पर राज्यों को एकमुश्त

### सूबों को मिलेगी रकम

◆ पहले ही घट चुकी है ऐसी स्कीमों की संख्या

धनराशि अधिक मिलने का रास्ता साफ हो जाएगा। सूत्रों ने कहा कि फिलहाल केंद्र के 33 मंत्रालय और विभाग केंद्र प्रायोजित योजनाओं के दिशानिर्देश तैयार करते हैं, जबकि इनका क्रियान्वयन राज्यों में होता है। इसलिए आवश्यक है कि राज्यों को स्थानीय जरूरतों के अनुसार कार्यक्रम चलाने की स्वायत्तता दी जाए। सूत्रों का कहना है संसद की वित्त मामलों संबंधी स्थायी समिति ने भी इस बारे में योजना मंत्रालय से ब्योय मांगा है। बारहवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना से पहले केंद्र प्रायोजित योजनाओं की संख्या 147 थी। योजना आयोग के तत्कालीन सदस्य बीके चतुर्वेदी की अध्यक्षता वाली समिति की सिफारिश के आधार पर संग्रह सरकार ने इनकी संख्या घटाकर 66 कर दी।

जागरण ब्यूरो, नई दिल्ली : केंद्र सरकार ने पूर्वोत्तर के राज्यों में जैविक खेती को बढ़ावा देने के लिए विशेष योजना तैयार की है। इसके तहत जैविक खाद, वर्मी कम्पोस्ट, जैविक बीज और अन्य सभी सुविधाएं मुहैया कराई जाएंगी। मसाले की जैविक खेती को आगे बढ़ाने के लिए केंद्रीय बागवानी बोर्ड से वित्तीय मदद दिए जाने का प्रावधान किया गया है। जैविक मसाले की घरेलू मांग के साथ निर्यात के चलते इस पर खासा जोर है।

बागवानी फसलों में शुमार मसाले की जैविक खेती की लागत का 50 फीसद तक सरकारी मदद के रूप में दी जाएगी। इसके लिए प्रति हेक्टेयर 10 हजार रुपये की सब्सिडी देने का प्रावधान है। जैविक उत्पादों के प्रमाणीकरण करने के लिए 50 हेक्टेयर का क्लस्टर बनाना होगा। इसके लिए पांच लाख रुपये की मदद दी जाएगी। इसी तरह वर्मी कम्पोस्ट इकाई लगाने वाले किसानों को उनकी लागत का 50 फीसद दिया जाएगा। लेकिन इसे बनाने की लागत एक लाख रुपये आंकी गई है। इसमें से 50 हजार रुपये सरकारी मदद के रूप में मिलेंगे। राज्यों को कहा गया है कि इस तरह के प्रस्तावों को वार्षिक

### कृषि को सहायता

◆ केंद्रीय बागवानी बोर्ड से वित्तीय मदद दिए जाने का प्रावधान किया सरकार ने

योजना में तैयार कर केंद्र को भेजें। खेतों की सेहत प्रबंधन व एगो वेजीटेबल वेस्ट कम्पोस्ट उत्पादन इकाई स्थापित करने के लिए भी नेशनल मिशन फॉर सस्टेनेबल एग्रीकल्चर (एनएमएसए) के मद से वित्तीय मदद मुहैया होगी।

नाबार्ड जैविक खेती के लिए पहले से ही क्लस्टर बनाकर खेती करने वालों अथवा जैविक गांव घोषित करने वालों को सहायता देता है। वाणिज्य मंत्रालय का मसाला बोर्ड भी जैविक मसाले की खेती को प्रोत्साहित करता है। पूर्वोत्तर के राज्यों को जैविक मसाले की खेती का हब बनाने की योजना को और अधिक प्रोत्साहित किया जा रहा है। इससे जैविक मसाले के निर्यात को बढ़ाया जा सकेगा। यह वजह है कि इस इलाके में अदरक, हल्दी, मिर्च और अन्य जड़ी बूटी की जैविक खेती का चलन खूब बढ़ा है।

# योजना आयोग पर उत्तराखंड और महाराष्ट्र के मुख्यमंत्रियों में ठनी

एजेंसी. नई दिल्ली

योजना आयोग को भंग करने को लेकर शनिवार को दो मुख्यमंत्रियों के बीच ठन गई। ये मुख्यमंत्री थे उत्तराखंड के हरीश रावत और महाराष्ट्र के देवेंद्र फडणवीस। रावत कांग्रेस और फडणवीस भारतीय जनता पार्टी से हैं। कांग्रेस सीएम ने योजना आयोग को भंग करने की आलोचना करते हुए कहा कि इससे देश में अनिश्चितता का माहौल बना है। इसका विरोध करते हुए भाजपा सीएम ने दलील दी कि नई संस्था के गठन से राज्यों को ज्यादा अधिकार मिलेंगे।

## फडणवीस की दलील



प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह ने भी आयोग की भूमिका को नकारा था और बड़े बदलाव की वकालत की थी।

सरकार एक सतत प्रक्रिया है। नई संस्था का गठन होने तक आयोग बना रहेगा। मोदी लंबे समय तक मुख्यमंत्री रहे। विपक्ष में भी थे। केंद्र-राज्य रिश्तों की मुश्किलों को अनुभव किया है। वह इस रिश्ते को मजबूत बनाना चाहते हैं। लोकतांत्रिक प्रक्रिया में जब एक संस्था दूसरी की जगह लेती है तो वह अच्छे के लिए होता है। पूर्व

## हरीश रावत के तर्क

योजना आयोग जैसे संस्थान जांचे-परखे हुए हैं। संघीय ढांचे में आयोग ने राज्यों के साथ व्याय का प्रयास किया है। एकमत विकल्प मिलने तक इसे भंग नहीं करना चाहिए। सिर्फ यह कहना काफी नहीं कि विचार चल रहा है। क्योंकि बीते छह महीने से अनिश्चितता है जो देश के लिए ठीक नहीं। नरेंद्र मोदी ने फैसला करने से पहले किसी राजनीतिक दल या मुख्यमंत्री से चर्चा तक नहीं की। यह जनमत पर अपने विचार थोपने जैसा था।

## Road Builders Eye ₹60,000-cr Orders

The govt is likely to award projects totalling around 8,000 km in last quarter of the fiscal to March

Rachita.Prasad@timesgroup.com

**Mumbai:** India is likely to award road projects worth ₹60,000 crore in the last quarter of the fiscal to March, providing much-needed relief to infrastructure companies that have been struggling with dwindling order books and muted cash flows amid the lull in government contracts for almost three years.

The government is likely to award projects totalling 8,000 km primarily as EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) contracts, officials said. These cash contracts promise a shot in the arm for infrastructure companies, most of which have underutilised or idle labour and

equipment. "Large EPC projects are coming up for bidding in January-March and we hope to bag some of them. But there will be some aggression in bidding for these projects because people have not got large jobs in two years and they want these to utilise capacity," said Satish Parakh, managing director of Ashoka Buildcon.

The contractors that had forayed into project development are now looking at beefing up their EPC orders book. Most infrastructure companies have highly leveraged balance sheets and do not have appetite to take on any more projects under the BOT (build-operate-transfer) model as they don't want to increase the debt obligation. Of the orders being tendered as EPC contracts by the National Highways Authority of India, six-eight were to be bid out as BOT projects earlier but the government decided to award them as cash projects in view of the reluctance of the developers to take up these projects.

"The government is trying to make cement and other raw materials available at discounted rates for these projects to reduce the billing and help these companies

manage liquidity better," said Vinayak Chatterjee, chairman of infrastructure consultancy Feedback Infra. "Infrastructure companies will want to take up orders to improve utilisation of machine and labour but they should be careful that they don't erode margins while bidding aggressively," he added. The ministry of road transport and highways is in the process of tying up with cement makers and steel manufacturers to ensure supplies for concrete road projects for the next one year. In a recent report, rating agency Crisil noted that an unprecedented pick-up in execution amid a proactive government and faster approvals by implementing agencies is visible among road projects as work on almost 75% of the ones awarded in 2013-14 has started compared with just 18% in the year-ago period.

"If the government swiftly implements the measures already announced and continues with efforts to further streamline approvals, we expect average delays to come down to less than six months over a period of time," said Prasad Koparkar, senior director, Crisil Research.

## Govt plans Rail Corp exclusively for major ports

**New Delhi, Dec 14:** To bolster port development, the Centre plans to set up a Railway Corporation exclusively to build rail connectivity to 12 major ports. "We are going to set up a Railway Corporation, which can be important for connectivity of ports.... Our proposal to the Cabinet is that every port will have some equity in the company," road transport, highways and shipping minister Nitin Gadkari said.

Profits earned by ports vary as some have ₹200 crore in profit while others have ₹400 crore, he said, adding "they will contribute accordingly, it is just a viable way".

Gadkari said the shipping sector development would be his priority. "We want to give highest priority to the shipping sector. We have already taken a decision that we are going to increase the capacity of our ports," he said.

**We want to give highest priority to the shipping sector**

**NITIN GADKARI,**  
Shipping minister

India has 12 major ports — Kandla, Mumbai, JNPT, Marmugao, New Mangalore, Cochin, Chennai, Ennore, VO Chidambarnar, Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata (including Haldia) — which handle approximately 61% of cargo traffic.

After connectivity with ports, the Railway Corporation would ensure "goods traffic by railway," he said.

The development comes in the wake of ports facing problems in rail connectivity.

The Railway Corporation, once set up, will implement all planned rail links to these 12 ports.

## Crucial insurance, companies Bills to come up in Parliament this week

**New Delhi, Dec 14:** Crucial pro-reform bills such as Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2008, and Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2014, will be taken up this week for consideration and passing in both Houses of Parliament.

With the Lok Sabha already having passed 13 Bills and the Rajya Sabha clearing nine, the winter session is set for good performance in transaction of legislative business. "The Lok Sabha passed 13 Bills in the first three weeks of the session ending on December 12, and the Rajya Sabha cleared nine," a senior parliamentary affairs ministry official said.

However, the Rajya Sabha is yet to take up four Bills passed by the Lower House —

**With the Lok Sabha having passed 13 Bills and the Rajya Sabha clearing nine, the winter session is set for good performance in transaction of legislative business**

Appropriation Bill, 2014, Payments and Settlement Systems (Amendment) Bill, 2014, Repealing and Amending (Second) Bill, 2014 and Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Bill 2014. Legislative business transacted in 15 sittings of the winter session so far and Bills likely to be taken up in the remainder of the session of seven sittings will surpass by a wide margin the 12 Bills passed in the Budget session. While the Insurance Bill seeks

to enhance FDI limit in the capital starved insurance sector, the Companies Bill aims to enhance ease of doing business. Lokpal and Lokayuktas (Amendment) Bill, 2014, is also to be taken up in both Houses.

In addition, Bills proposed by the government for consideration and passage in the Lok Sabha in the rest of the session include Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2014, National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special

Provisions) Amendment Bill, 2014, Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Bill, 2014, Anti-Hijacking (Amendment) Bill, 2010 and Warehousing Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2014.

In addition to the four Bills to be discussed in the Rajya Sabha as passed by the Lower House, the business advisory committee of the Rajya Sabha has allocated time for consideration of Anti-Hijacking (Amendment) Bill, 2010 and Public Premises Bill, 2014.

Motions relating to annulment and modification of Centre's notification of December 2, 2014, seeking to increase the basic excise duty on petrol and diesel will also be taken up in the Rajya Sabha. PTI



# Electricity Act changes to usher supply overhaul

Changes allow those using less than a Mw to choose supplier

SHREYA JAI  
New Delhi, 14 December

The amendments to the Electricity Act are likely to change the business dynamics for power distribution companies (discoms).

It will provide small consumers a choice of suppliers and allow distribution companies (discoms) to procure power from their own renewable energy plants to meet their renewable purchase obligation.

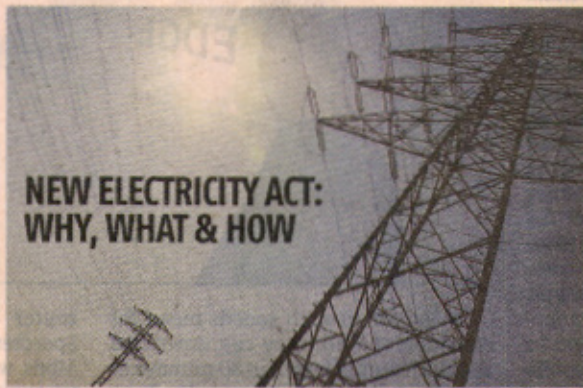
The Union Cabinet on Wednesday cleared changes in the Act. Union Power Minister Piyush Goyal earlier this week said the Bill would be tabled in Parliament soon.

Aimed at creating a competitive market for retail buyers, open access will allow consumers of less than one Mw to choose their supplier.

In the Electricity Act-2003, consumers of more than one Mw can change their distribution company.

Power generators, too, will be allowed to sell their surplus outside a state. "Opening the sector will make sure the supply of power is in line with market realities," said an executive in a distribution company.

Currently, state govern-



NEW ELECTRICITY ACT: WHY, WHAT & HOW

- Open access for over 1 Mw allowed – enabling inter-state transmission from surplus to deficit points
- Power supply business separate from setting infrastructure for supply – opens the market for ancillary business, increases competition
- Choice to consumer to select his power supplier – market driven tariffs, better supply and open ground for competition
- Time-bound distribution licence – pressure on discom to perform better
- RGO along with RPO – promotion of clean energy and its adoption

**Building infrastructure for power supply and the supply of power will be two different business entities. Besides, any power supplier can use the infrastructure**

ments can appeal to the regulator to stop such sales in extraordinary circumstances. Distribution companies in other states are unable to freely procure such power.

"We end up scheduling costly power, which has pushed us to the wall. Banks have also withdrawn any support from the discoms," said a senior execu-

tive with a Delhi-based private power distribution utility.

The distribution industry owes ₹13,000 crore to power plants.

A big relief for the distribution sector is the separation of the content and carriage businesses. Building infrastructure for power supply and the supply of power will be two different business entities. Besides, any power supplier can use the infrastructure.

The bill also has an important insertion imposing a

"duty to connect, supply to request", where the last-mile supply will keep in mind the economics and viability.

"In most developed markets, the carriage business is controlled by the regulator and content, that is power supply, is market driven within a price band," said the executive.

As a separate business, the onus of development of the network will rest with the carriage provider.

Distribution companies from across the country have written to the ministry of power seeking a clear demarcation of duties and responsibilities for content and carriage.

The distribution companies, which have repeatedly pointed to their financial stress as the reason for not complying with the renewable purchase obligation, have now been asked to generate renewable power to meet their targets.

The Act proposes a National Renewable Energy Policy and a new Renewable Generation Obligation.

The head of one of the distribution companies said the sentiment among Indian consumers was that power should be cheap.

"All consumers think they are burdened with costly power, whereas the discoms struggle with recovering their cost. In a situation like this, an unbundled distribution sector helps all," said the executive.

# Productive winter session so far, but hurdles ahead

BS REPORTER  
New Delhi, 14 December

Bills that are central to economic liberalisation, such as the Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2008, and the Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2014, will come up in both Houses of Parliament in the coming week.

The winter session has been more productive than the one previous year, for both the Houses. In 2013, Rajya Sabha managed to do only 29 per cent business, and Lok Sabha an abysmal six per cent in the session. This year, the Lok Sabha has already passed 13 Bills and the Rajya Sabha, nine.

Unlike previous Parliament, where the Lok Sabha held up the Bills, this time, the Rajya Sabha — where the ruling National Democratic Alliance does not have a majority — the Opposition is trying to exact a price for its cooperation.

Four Bills — Appropriation Bill, 2014; Payments and Settlement Systems (Amendment) Bill, 2014; Repealing and Amending (Second) Bill, 2014, and Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Bill

— cleared in the Lok Sabha are likely to come up in the Upper House next week. If the government is not careful about courting controversies, the Opposition can pounce upon it and the Bills could be derailed.

The Opposition is already claiming the government has virtually abandoned the Standing Committee and Select Committee consultations. If the clamour for referring the Bills to the two committees grows, the process of clearing them legislatively could be delayed.

In addition, the Bills proposed by the government for consideration and passing in the Lok Sabha during the rest of the session include Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2014; National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Amendment Bill, 2014; Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Bill, 2014; Anti-Hijacking (Amendment) Bill, 2010, and Warehousing Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2014.

For full reports, visit  
[www.business-standard.com](http://www.business-standard.com)

## IPC Bill seeks to add clause on confiscating property of corrupt

The proposed amendment deals with seizure of ill-gotten gains

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, December 14

A Bill that will allow confiscation of property owned by people convicted in fraudulent or corrupt activities has been introduced in the Rajya Sabha. The Bill, titled Indian Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 2013, wants an additional clause stating that property and wealth amassed by cheating the people or government or institutions will be confiscated.

The amendments proposed are to Sections 206 and 207 of the IPC. CPI(M) leader KN Balagopal, who introduced the Bill, said its intention is to curb corruption and make a proper amendment in the laws to enable recovery of property acquired by corrupt people as part of a penalty clause.

"We have plenty of laws dealing with corruption and financial offences. Though prosecution is initiated against the wrong-doers, there is no effective mechanism to deal with the seizure of ill-gotten money or proceeds of corruption," Balagopal said.

Citing the judgement in the multi-crore Satyam case, he said the punishment awarded to the Satyam chairman was for just one year and the penalty was ₹5 lakh. "The company cheated the people of ₹5,000 crore," he said.

The Bill says that the words, "and the properties concealed or transferred or delivered shall be recovered from the person to whom it has been transferred" must be added in the IPC. He said such provisions are already present in the Smugglers and Foreign Exchange Manipulators (Forfeiture of Property) Act, 1976.

MPs from the Samajwadi Party and the Congress supported the Bill but discussions were inconclusive.

## Drug money linked to terror, menace a national pain: PM

SNS & PTI

New Delhi, 14 December

Calling the "devastating" drug addiction menace as a "national pain", a concerned Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said the money spent by youth on drugs could be funding terrorism.

In an emotional appeal to youths to say "no" to drugs, asserting that its consumption is neither a 'style statement' nor 'cool', Modi said a toll-free helpline would be set up soon to assist those seeking solutions. He said the society as well as the government will have to work together to combat the problem.

In his third 'Mann Ki Baat' programme on radio, he said the menace is a "national pain" but instead of the youth being mired in the problem, drugs should be shunned.

He said drug addiction is "a malaise filled 3D - darkness, destruction and devastation - as it leads to the dark alleys of destruction and devastation".

Modi also asked the youth taking drugs whether they know that the money they spend on drugs might be going to fund terrorism.

"Have you thought that the money you spend on drugs might be going to terrorists who buy bullets

to kill our soldiers? You also love mother India. How can you help terrorists?," he told the youth in his broadcast to the nation.

The Prime Minister said a thinking process should begin to ensure that the country is rid of this problem and added that he will try to involve celebrities from the cine world, sports and other fields to campaign for a "drug-free India".

"For long, I have been having concern about the young generation... That some son has got caught in such a quagmire where everything is devastated. Drugs are such a devastation."

# BJP not to enter any post-poll alliance in J&K, says Jaitley

Jammu, Dec 14

**R**ULING OUT a post-poll alliance with any regional party in Jammu and Kashmir, the BJP on Sunday said it has not deviated from its ideology on the issue of revocation of Article 370 from the state.

"Our views are the same which always were there and you know what our views are," Union minister Arun Jaitley said in reply to a query about BJP not raising the issue of revocation of Article 370 in the ongoing assembly elections.

On the possibility of a post-poll alliance to form the next government in J&K, he said, "We will not join hands with any regional party to



form the government. BJP is trying to form the government of its own. If someone from the nationalistic forces want to come and sit with us, we will let them join." "We haven't political relationship with these two regional parties (NC, PDP) as we have different ideologies," he said.

At a party function here, Jaitley said that issues taken up by the party during cam-

paigns were in context to the elections: "Every election has its own context and the issues that we have raised are in context with the assembly elections here."

Without naming Article 370, which prohibits non-state subjects from buying immovable property in J&K, Jaitley said, "People are not ready to invest where they have so many complications and difficulties. Top universities want to come in Jammu and Kashmir, but would you be able to provide land for such universities?" He said if BJP forms the next government in the, it would form three regional councils so that there is equal distribution of funds and resources.

PTI

## 'Elections offer historic chance'

**Jammu, Dec 14:** Finance minister Arun Jaitley on Sunday said the 2014 assembly elections offered a historic opportunity for the people to undo the "injustice" meted out by successive governments in the state.

At a public rally in Channi near here, he said they should elect a government that will give a say to the people. "This election will script history for the people of Jammu region. This is a historic opportunity to undo the injustice done to the region by successive governments," he said.

PTI

# Jharkhand sees 61% polling despite low urban turnout

Sonali.Das@timesgroup.com

**Ranchi:** Voting percentage in the fourth phase of Jharkhand assembly polls increased by 7.1% from the 2009 elections, to 61.08%. However, urban voters' indifference in Bokaro and Dhanbad, remained a cause for concern.

Bokaro, the largest of the 15 assembly constituencies that voted, recorded the lowest turnout on Sunday at 51.11%. The coal city performed better with 55%. The party that should be worried by this trend in urban assembly segments is the BJP as it is banking on urban votes.

Chief electoral officer PK Jajoria, however, said it the low turnout was because the electoral rolls were not corrected that the turnout was shown to be low.

Deoogarh district registered the highest voter turnout of 66.82% while Bokaro district finished at the lowest of 57.30%. But Chandankyari assembly segment in Bokaro district registered the highest turnout with



A voter in Jharia, Jharkhand

71.28% followed by Madhupur (70.20%) and Bagodar (66.30%).

In Giridih, where former chief minister Babulal Marandi was contesting, poll percentage stood at 62.61% along with Tundi at 62%. Sunday's election was peaceful though villagers boycotted polls in booth No. 119 in Tundi and No. 227 in Giridih to protest against lack of basic amenities like roads, electricity and water.

For the full report, log on to [www.timesofindia.com](http://www.timesofindia.com)

# J&K: Polling dips to 49% in 4th phase

## Forces Called After NC, PDP Workers Clash

Saleem.Pandit@timesgroup.com

**Srinagar:** Jammu and Kashmir recorded 49.5% polling in the fourth phase of assembly polls on a cold Sunday even as workers of various parties clashed in some places. This is a jump of about 4% from the corresponding figure from 2008 polls.

Chief electoral officer Umang Narula said the voting percentage figures received from the 18 constituencies were tentative. Srinagar district (eight seats) recorded 28% polling, Shopian (two seats) 50%, Anantnag (six seats) 61% and Samba district (two seats) 81%. While Shangus recorded the highest turnout (67.27%) in



People wait for their turn to vote at a polling station in south Kashmir's Anantnag. **For steps to download and use Alive app, see page 2**

Kashmir division, Vijaypur saw the highest (81.31%) in Jammu division, Narula said.

The poll boycott call by separatists and militants affected voting at several polling stations in downtown Srinagar. Till 11am only seven of 563 votes had been cast at the poll-

ing station in a school at Chota Bazaar. BJP candidate from Shopian constituency, Javed Ahmad Qadri, allegedly thrashed a voter inside a polling station at Moochwa while in Srinagar's Natipora, forces had to be called in after PDP and NC workers exchanged blows.

## 'No dilution in BJP's stand on Article 370'

Sanjay.Khajuria@timesgroup.com

**Srinagar:** Union finance minister Arun Jaitley on Sunday said that BJP's stand on Article 370 was "still the same" and hadn't undergone



Arun Jaitley

any dilution or revision. In recent days, the Congress accused BJP of joining hands with Kashmiri separatists and asked it to clear its stand on Article 370. Hitting out at the Congress, Jaitley said it won't reach even double digits in the state, and said it

## Hina Bhat allegedly slaps poll official

**B**JP candidate from Srinagar's Amira Kadal constituency, Hina Bhat, allegedly slapped a poll official on Sunday. Bhat, who was at Chan Pora booth, denied the allegation, but accused the official of unfair practice. Presiding officer Malik Suhail said Bhat entered the polling station at around 1:30pm and slapped him thrice besides smashing voter machines. **TNN**

had become used to being a "tail" of two regional parties, PDP and NC, for remaining in the power in J&K.

## SARADHA SCAM FALLOUT

# Trinamool will take fight to Parliament

### Contentious issues like Insurance and Coal Bills on the table

National Bureau

**NEW DELHI:** With the Trinamool Congress in a combative mood after the arrest of West Bengal Transport and Sports Minister Madan Mitra by the CBI in the multi-crore Saradha chit-fund scam, proceedings in both Houses of Parliament are likely to be disrupted on Monday.

On Friday West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced that "we will protest against the Centre in Bengal and Delhi; we will protest in Parliament." Apart from protesting at the entrance to Parliament House on Monday morning, Lok Sabha member Saugata Roy said there would be a demonstration inside the House also. He did not divulge details on what was being planned but this

session has already seen Trinamool members use black umbrellas, don black shawls and cover their mouths with black bands to register protest on various issues.

The government business also has several contentious issues; chief among them the Insurance Bill and the Coal Bill. And, Opposition notices in both Houses against the government's decision to amend the Central Excise Act to hike excise duty on petrol and diesel have been admitted.

On the Coal Bill, the Congress and the Left are on the same page. While their demand for a Standing Committee reference was turned down in the Lok Sabha, Opposition plans to use its numbers in the Rajya Sabha to press for referring the Coal Mines (Spe-

cial Provisions) Bill to a Select Committee for proper scrutiny.

The informal collective within the Opposition that has been holding out against the government in both Houses is divided on the Insurance Bill as the Congress supported the recommendations made by the Select Committee which submitted its report last week. Though the government is keen on getting the Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill passed this session and is scheduled to move it on Tuesday in the Rajya Sabha, it may not be smooth sailing as the Congress has said its support would depend on the details of the draft legislation.

As for the excise duty hike on petro products, the Business Advisory Committee of the Rajya Sabha has scheduled

an hour each for taking up the statutory motion moved by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) for amending the government notification and another for the Trinamool notice seeking annulment of the same order.

Two similar notices on the same issue — one given jointly by the Congress and the Revolutionary Socialist Party, and another by the Trinamool Congress — in the Lok Sabha have also been admitted. With the Congress joining the Left in raising this issue, chances of the statutory motion being adopted by the Rajya Sabha have brightened; resulting in yet another embarrassment for the government at a time when it is already feeling the heat in Parliament.



## A step toward humanisation

**F**inally, a ritualistic burial is to be given to Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, the 'living-dead' law that has haunted India's criminal justice system for decades. Taking a step towards a more humane law, the Union government has decided to repeal Section 309 with overwhelming favour from a majority of the States. Under Section 309, an attempt to commit suicide is punishable with simple imprisonment up to one year and/or a fine. Anachronistic in its approach, this law dealt with those in agony by holding up medical help through procedural delays and then penalising them rather than rehabilitating them through counselling and care. Over the years, this law has seen a tumultuous journey of contestations, to and fro, between retention and suspension. In an early attempt to repeal it, the Rajya Sabha had passed the IPC (Amendment) Bill, 1978, but the Bill lapsed as the Lok Sabha was dissolved in 1979. Later, the Supreme Court, in *P. Rathinam* (1994), stated that the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution included the "right not to live a forced life", thus holding the provision unconstitutional. But subsequently, in *Gian Kaur* (1996), a five-judge bench overruled *P. Rathinam*, upholding the validity of Section 309. *Gian Kaur* stated that sanctity of life was a significant aspect of Article 21, and "by no stretch of imagination can extinction of life be read to be included in protection of life". Similarly, the Law Commission of India in its 42nd Report (1971) recommended the repeal of Section 309, while in the 156th Report (1997) recommended retention, based on *Gian Kaur*.

The Commission's 210th Report (2008) again recommended a repeal of the law, which was favourably reiterated in Parliament and decided upon recently. Globally, a significant historical factor aiding the penal law against suicide was perhaps the condemnation of suicide by institutional Christianity. St. Augustine called suicide "an unrepentable sin", while for St. Aquinas, suicide was "unnatural". This ethic found its way into English common law in the mid-13th century, and suicide remained an offence in England until 1961. No wonder that the 42nd Report of the Law Commission relied, *inter alia*, on Manusmriti, that holds suicide circumstantially permissible, to recommend the repeal. In resisting the repeal, Bihar urged caution, saying suicide-bombers would no longer be covered and deterred by law. This is however a minor concern because there are several anti-terror laws to deal with such situations. Madhya Pradesh believed that the repeal would dilute Section 306 dealing with abetment to suicide. But this claim overlooks the *Gian Kaur* decision that stated that "Section 306 enacted a distinct offence which is capable of existence independent of Section 309".