



PART A: News pertaining to Planning Commission



08.12.2014

Compiled by:

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

and Communication, IT & Information Division

(महापुरुषों के प्रेरणात्मक विचार)

(Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached. उठो, जागो और तब तक नहीं रुको जब तक लक्ष्य ना प्राप्त हो जाये.)

Swami Vivekananda स्वामी विवेकानंद

1. Plans afoot to reshape Planning Commission: PM Narendra Modi

Economic Times: Dec 6, 2014, 04.18AM IST

(PM said government was planning...)

NEW DELHI: What will replace the Planning Commission? Some of the names for the new body that have been proposed — Niti Aayog; Development, Monitoring and Evaluation Organisation; National Development Reforms Commission; Sustainable Development Commission; National Development Agency; Social Economic Development Commission or Bharat Pragati Lakshya.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meet chief ministers of all states on Sunday to finalise the structure, functions and name of the new institution that will take forward the vision of this government. "I have convened a meeting of chief ministers on December 7. We will have detailed discussions with them. In the Planning Commission also there had been discussions earlier on how to bring it in tune with the changing times," Modi said in the Lok Sabha on Friday. "Taking all these aspects into consideration, plans are afoot towards a new shape (of the plan panel)," he said.

Government officials told ET that the upcoming meeting, which is Modi's first with state chief ministers after having taken over as Prime Minister in May, is likely to arrive at a consensus on the matter and a final announcement is expected soon. Besides the name, the meeting will also deliberate on the structure of the new institution. ET had earlier reported that the government is considering a stronger institution that would be a combination of three-four divisions or departments, each headed by a secretary.

These include the inter-state council, the planning division, the evaluation division and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) along with Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) as the fourth division. "There is a great sense of urgency at the PMO level to announce the details of the new institution as it has been more than 100 days since the PM announced the dismantling of the commission. Hence, a meeting with chief ministers of all states has been called at such short notice," said a government official cited above.

2. New body must meet changing economic needs: Planning Commission to PM Modi

The Economic Times: 7 Dec, 2014

The Planning Commission suggested to a group chaired by PM Narendra Modi that its replacement body should be structured to meet the need of changing economic paradigm.

The Planning Commission suggested to a group chaired by PM Narendra Modi that its replacement body should be structured to meet the need of changing economic paradigm.

ET SPECIAL: Save precious time tracking your investments

NEW DELHI: The Planning Commission today suggested to a group chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi that its replacement body should be structured to meet the need of changing economic paradigm and comprise sectoral experts and states' representative.

In her presentation before the group comprising Modi and chief ministers, Planning Secretary Sindhushree Khullar said that the new institution may have 8-10 regulars or executive members with half of them representing the states.

She suggested that the remaining members could be sectoral experts -- environmentalists, financial experts, engineers, scientists and eminent scholars from different fields.

The new body may be headed by the Prime Minister as the chairperson position would be ex-officio.

The meeting, convened by Modi to deliberate on replacement of the Planning Commission, is being attended by the several Chief Ministers, including Akhilesh Yadav (UP), Manohar Lal Khattar (Haryana), Devendra Fadnavis (Maharashtra) Vasundhara Raje (Rajasthan), Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Madhya Pradesh), Raman Singh (Chhattisgarh), Harish Rawat (Uttarakhand) and Oomen Chandy (Kerala).

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is skipping the meeting. State Finance Minister Amit Mitra is representing the West Bengal.

Khullar in her presentation suggested that the new institution would have functions including monitoring and evaluation; programme project and scheme evaluation; cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial expertise and appraisal and monitoring of projects.

It has been suggested that the new body would advise the Prime Minister on matters referred to it. Besides, it should act as think-tank and have network with universities and other institutions.

The new body could provide internal consultancy services to states and the Centre on different matters. It could also be used to design medium and long-term strategy.

The Prime Minister in his Independence Day speech had announced that the Commission, set up in 1950 at a time when government gave public sector the commanding heights of economy, would be abolished and replaced with a more relevant institution.

"We will very soon set up a new institution in place of Planning Commission...the internal situation of the country has changed, global environment has changed... We need an institution of creative thinking and for optimum utilisation of youth capability," Modi had said.

The Commission had held meetings with experts to discuss the structure of the new institution that would ultimately replace it.

Country's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had set up the Planning Commission to steer the nation's economic course.

Set up by a Cabinet resolution, the Commission had enjoyed immense power and prestige as it had always been headed by the Prime Minister. Its most important function was to fix targets for sectoral growth and allocate resources to achieve them.

3. PM Modi invokes Manmohan Singh to push for planning commission revamp

The Economic Times: 08.12.2014



Modi said Singh had sought a reboot of the Plan Panel at 'at the end of his term,' citing an April 30 meeting of the Commission.

NEW DELHI: [Prime Minister Narendra Modi](#) invoked his predecessor [Manmohan Singh](#) to bolster his push for replacing the virtually defunct Planning Commission, at a meeting with chief ministers to discuss the future of the panel where he mooted a bottom-up approach to policy planning instead of the top-down system.

"The current global scenario offered a chance for India to take a big leap forward," Modi said, seeking to abandon the 'incremental' approach of the past and creating a new team approach between the Centre and the states in the spirit of co-operative federalism.

Stressing that states should have a key role in the new body to replace the Commission often termed a Nehruvian relic, Modi recalled his own experiences while dealing with the Commission as Gujarat chief minister and said a better platform was needed to articulate states' views. co-operative federalism.

Modi said Singh had sought a reboot of the Plan Panel at 'at the end of his term,' citing an April 30 meeting of the Commission chaired by the ex-PM. But officials said Singh had originally raised the same concerns and sought to reinvent the [Planning Commission](#) at the start of his second

innings in May 2009, roping in change management expert Arun Maira to steer the process.

But the plan never took off, prompting Singh to voice the same concerns about the relevance of the Commission and its future at its last meeting chaired by him this April.

"Manmohan Singh, who had been associated for a long time with the Planning Commission, had noted that the body has no futuristic vision in the post-reform period. He had also noted that the Planning Commission would have to reinvent itself to remain more effective and relevant in the present situation," Modi told state CMs in his concluding remarks. Modi himself had announced the demise of the Commission in his Independence Day address to the nation, where he said it should be replaced by an organization which can think creatively, strengthen the federal structure and energise states.

"It is impossible for the nation to develop unless states develop... Can we develop a new mechanism, that plans according to India's strengths, empowers states, and brings on board all economic activity, including that which happens outside the government?" Modi asked, kicking off the consultation with the states on Sunday.

An official statement from the PM's office said the PM 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.

"In countries such as the [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," the PM said.

4. New body replacing Planning Commission likely by January-end; Congress opposing move

By ET Bureau | 8 Dec, 2014, 01.37AM IST

NEW DELHI: The Narendra Modi-led NDA government will move ahead with setting up of a new institution in place of the Planning Commission despite resistance from Congress-ruled states as a majority of states are on board. The new institution could be in place before the end of January 2015 and would have adequate representation from states and will include domain experts.

In a meeting convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with chief ministers of all states on Sunday, Congress-ruled states were of the view that the present Planning Commission should be evolved into a new structure, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley told the media after the meeting.

"Most states are in favour of a system that strengthens their ability to deliver and hence they want more flexibility. There was a larger consensus to the effect that the context has changed and there is a need to decentralise power and planning and states needs to be empowered," Jaitley added. Earlier, Modi referred to remarks by his predecessor to bolster his push for replacing the Planning Commission.

NDA states seek immediate disbanding of panel

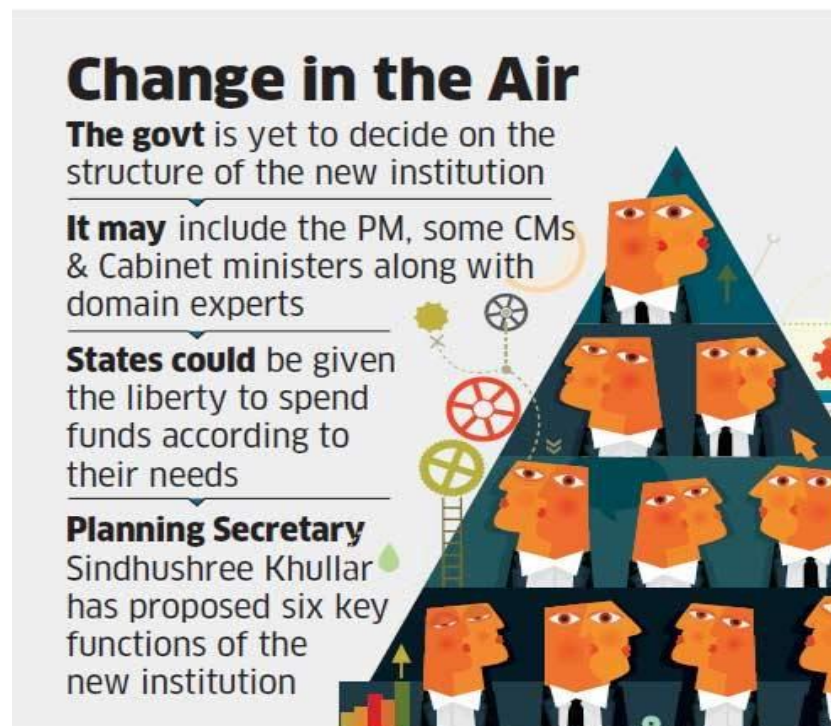
"Manmohan Singh, who had been associated for a long time with the Planning Commission, had noted that the body has no futuristic vision in the post-reform period. He had also noted that the Planning Commission would have to reinvent itself to remain more effective and relevant in the present situation," Modi told state CMs in his concluding remarks.

"The current global scenario offered a chance for India to take a big leap forward," Modi said, seeking to abandon the 'incremental' approach of the past and creating a new approach — in which the Centre and the states act as a team — in the spirit of co-operative federalism. Congress party spokesperson Anand Sharma said the move to dismantle the Planning Commission will be "unwarranted, shortsighted and dangerous" as it will have a long-term adverse effect on Centre-state relations, asserting that the panel needed "reorientation" and not "political burial".

His party colleague and Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy towed a similar line. "I am not convinced that the wholesale change of a time-tested institution is required, particularly so, when

we have not progressed even now beyond the conceptual stage of designing an alternative mechanism."

While chief ministers of [Jammu and Kashmir](#) and Jharkhand skipped the meet on account of elections in their states, states of [West Bengal](#) and Mizoram were represented by their finance ministers. However, some NDA states and those ruled by parties like the AIADMK and Telangana Rashtra Samithi wanted immediate disbanding of the Planning Commission.



West Bengal and northeastern states, barring Assam, have pitched for strengthening states and giving more powers to the inter-state council under the new institution. According to Jaitley, Prime Minister Modi had extensive consultation with states and the central government will take a considered view on the new institution as it is of the view that policy planning needs to change from "top to bottom" to "bottom to top".

Modi had said in his maiden Independence Day speech that the Planning Commission should be replaced by an organisation which can think creatively, strengthen the federal structure and energise states.

A new structure

While the government has yet to take a view on the new institution, the first meeting of the PM with chief ministers on the alternative institution hints that the government is considering an institution which will have the Prime Minister, some Cabinet ministers and some chief ministers along with technocrats and experts in various fields. States could be given the liberty to spend funds according to their needs, a demand made by various states which feel that "one size fits all" strategy isn't workable.

A presentation made by Planning Secretary [Sindhushree Khullar](#) on Sunday has proposed six key functions of the new institution: evolving a consensus on national development strategy, fostering cooperative federalism, defining reforms agenda, serving as a platform for cross-sectoral issues, acting as a knowledge and innovation hub besides capacity building and technology watch group.

Under the present allocation of business rules, the Planning Commission is responsible for formulating plans, assessing and allocating plan resources, identifying constraints, appraisal of plans, determining implementation machinery and formulating programmes for area development.

5. Opposition to target Centre over haste in disbanding Planning Commission

The Times of India: Dec 6, 2014, 10.01PM IST

NEW DELHI: Chief ministers from opposition parties are likely to target the Centre over the "haste" in which it has decided to disband the Planning Commission.

"Our party will oppose the manner in which the decision to dismantle the Planning Commission was taken," JD(U) chief Sharad Yadav told PTI.

The party's government in Bihar is functioning with the support of Congress and RJD.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called a meeting of chief ministers here tomorrow to give a new shape to the Soviet-era Planning Commission.

Samajwadi Party, which is ruling key Hindi state Uttar Pradesh has decided that while it will not oppose the restructuring, it will voice its disapproval of the "haste in disbanding" the plan panel.

"Chief minister Akhilesh Yadav is likely to caution against adopting the approach followed by Planning Commission of 'one size fits all'.

"The UP government is also likely to flag the issue of bureaucratic clutter when funds are sanctioned for states," a top UP official said.

Voices of dissent will also be there from Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress. Finance minister Amit Mitra will represent West Bengal as chief minister Mamata Banerjee won't attend the meeting.

Congress' chief minister from Kerala Oommen Chandy today said the existing body was well accepted and any new setup should be more effective in further strengthening the Centre-state relations.

Chandy hoped that the Centre would move ahead with its plan only after reaching a consensus on the issue with the states.

"Planning Commission is a well accepted system. It is an effective mechanism through which states and the Centre coordinate on financial issues including resource allocations. If there is any plan to restructure it, states should be taken into confidence," the senior Congress leader told PTI.

In his Independence Day address, Modi had announced that a new institution with a new soul will replace the Planning Commission, which is over six decades old.

Modi argues that it has lost its relevance in the contemporary world and to discuss what shape the Planning Commission should have.

6. PM Narendra Modi heads meeting with chief ministers on Planning Commission overhaul; Mamata Banerjee, Omar Abdullah give it a miss

Daily News and Analysis: 07.12.2014

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is presiding over a meeting with all the state chiefs in New Delhi to discuss various aspects relating to restructuring of the Planning Commission.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister will seek their views regarding the structure, scope and role of the new body that will replace the Planning Commission.

Plans are afoot for reshaping of the Planning Commission to make it in sync with the changing times, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said ahead of his meeting with all chief ministers on Sunday on the issue.

Making a brief intervention during Question Hour in Lok Sabha, the Prime Minister had said government was planning to involve knowledgeable people and those who can provide new ideas to redefine and restructure the Planning Commission. "I have convened a meeting of Chief Ministers on December 7. We will have a detailed discussions with them. In the Planning Commission also there had been discussions earlier on how to bring it in tune with the changing times. Taking all these aspects into consideration, plans are afoot towards a new shape (of the plan panel)," he said.

However, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will be giving it a miss, owing to TMC and the Bharatiya Janata Party's continued conflict over the Burdwan blast and Saradha chit fund scam. West Bengal Finance minister Amit Mitra will be attending the meeting on her behalf.

The BJP had however, not taken kindly to this action by the TMC chief.

They criticized West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief Mamata Banerjee for not turning up at chief minister's meet with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as 'irresponsible behaviour'.

The party added that no prior engagements of her's can surpass the importance about the priority of India.

"It is highly irresponsible behaviour of the Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee, when she says that she did not want to come for the meetings of chief ministers tomorrow to be held in Delhi. She says that she has certain engagements which were decided previously," BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra told ANI here. "Miss Mamataji no other engagement has more importance than the priority of India. You can hold every other engagement to the second tier, but you cannot hold India's priority on the second tier. So you should come and attend the meeting," he said.

Patra further criticised TMC saying that a politician cannot shrug off an all important meeting citing Sunday or for that matter any other day. "Secondly, her party says that because it's a Sunday Mamata Banerjee would not be able to come for the meeting. There are no Sundays, Mondays, and weekends for politicians," he said

According to reports, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will be skipping the meeting owing to the assembly elections in the state.

Opposition to target Centre over 'haste' in disbanding Planning Commission

"Our party will oppose the manner in which the decision to dismantle the Planning Commission was taken," JD(U) Chief Sharad Yadav told PTI. The party's government in Bihar is functioning with the support of Congress and RJD. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called a meeting of Chief Ministers here tomorrow to give a new shape to the Soviet-era Planning Commission.

Samajwadi Party, which is ruling key Hindi state Uttar Pradesh has decided that while it will not oppose the restructuring, it will voice its disapproval of the "haste in disbanding" the plan panel. "Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav is likely to caution against adopting the approach followed by Planning Commission of 'one size fits all'. "The UP government is also likely to flag the issue of bureaucratic clutter when funds are sanctioned for states," a top UP official said.

Voices of dissent will also be there from Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress. Finance Minister Amit Mitra will represent West Bengal as Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee won't attend the meeting. Congress' Chief Minister from Kerala Oommen Chandy today said the existing body was well accepted and any new setup should be more effective in further strengthening the Centre-state relations. Chandy hoped that the Centre would move ahead with its plan only after reaching a consensus on the issue with the states.

7. The Indian Right Arrives in Official Policy Prime

By PRATUL SHARMA, TheNew Indian Express: 07th Dec 2014 09:59:17 AM

NEW DELHI: With a BJP-led government in power, the Indian Right is gearing to occupy the centre stage. If UPA had its National Advisory Council with left-of-the-centre think-tanks driving the policy formulation, with good measure of literature festivals celebrating the liberal thought thrown in, the right-wing is slowly coming up with its own set—from conclaves, international conferences, to seminars for policy advocacy.

On Sunday, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi will go into a huddle for the first time with all the chief ministers to discuss the future of **Planning Commission**, he will have before him suggestions mooted by a RSS-inclined think-tank, India Policy Foundation (IPF), advocating greater role for private participation in policy formulation.

IPF Director Rakesh Sinha, who works as associate professor at the Delhi University, wrote to Modi on Saturday saying his “revolutionary” idea to replace the Planning Commission led them to hold a seminar and formulate suggestions.



Sinha has suggested four names for the policy body shorn of its “Nehruvian past”—National Commission for Planning and Development, National Commission for Policy and Planning, National Transformation Commission for Development and National Federal Commission for Growth and Justice. Among the suggestions mooted include doing away with five-year plans to three-year plans to sectoral planning for nine years.

In IPF’s recommendations lies the ideological pinning. “The Planning Commission has been a victim of infantile disorder. Nehruvian planning was obsessed with socialism and it delegitimised the private initiatives, capital and entrepreneurship,” Sinha said. Suggesting an 11-member body apart from chairman and vice-chairman, with each member heading a division, the new entity should work as a think-tank and also as a planner.

IPF sets its eyes on more serious topics—coming out with a health policy early next year, apart from providing inputs on education and democratic governance.

As the ‘new world order’ takes shape, with right-wing gaining prominence, Sinha says, “Earlier, the government co-opted the thinkers and included them into the government bodies, rather than giving space to wide generation of ideas. We are now providing for critical ideas for the policy.”

A Sangh ideologue says after the new government took over, right-wing thinkers are coming out of the shadows. “We need to build their confidence, strengthen them in their fields and create a space for engagement with each other,” a senior BJP leader said.

The fight is going beyond policy formulation to cultivate an intellectual space dominated by left think-tanks, and literature festivals like those at Jaipur, says another ideologue.

It’s where India Foundation’s (IF) new venture comes in. IF, which has BJP general secretary Ram Madhav and Shaurya Doval, son of national security advisor Ajit Doval, as directors, is bringing together 70 thinkers, ministers and politicians from across the world, to address a select group of over 400 participants, at a five-star hotel in Goa.

“The first-time event planned at this scale would aim to bring likeminded people together to discuss ideas. It’s a free flow of intellectual discussion on economics, governance and engage with each other,” says Madhav, a RSS leader who recently joined BJP.

IF has been holding discussions and generating contents on critical areas like security, diplomacy, terrorism, and economic order for the new government to get ideas from.

Doval, who is also Managing Director of Zeus Caps, says the event planned as a retreat would become an annual feature to carve its own identity. It is a gathering of finest brains that aims to shape up world order, discuss eclectic ideas ranging from spirituality to role of development, dialogue between civilisations, role of faith leaders, which may not deal with day to day events, but wider concerns.

The India Ideas Conclave has identified Sangh ideologue Deen Dayal Upadhaya’s philosophy of integral humanism as the key theme. Though ministers like Sushma Swaraj, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Nirmala Sitharaman, Piyush Goyal and MP chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Doval says there is a space for discussion at the societal level that is being created. The ideas generated will be collated in form of papers, and books for wider circulation.

The conclave to be held on December 19-20-21, in collaboration with Goa government, would see spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar who is also the chairman of the organising committee as the keynote speaker apart from many former heads of states from Slovenia, Jordan, Bhutan, Netherlands, Lithuania, participating along with many parliamentarians from friendly countries. Other key personalities include former Turkish Presidential candidate Ekmeleddin

Ihsanoglu, Lord Meghnad Desai, European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs Chairman Elmar Brok, economist Arvind Panagariya, former CAG Vinod Rai, author Amish Tripathi and RSS leader Dattatreya Hosabale

If the conclave is being billed as alternative to the other existing conclaves organised by other groups, IF is building up its own set of events which would rival World Economic Forum at Davos.

Doval says it will hold India Economic Forum in March next year in Delhi which will see participation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Last year, Modi as Gujarat CM had been the key speaker. While, International Conference on Counter-Terrorism in collaboration with the Rajasthan government will be held in February next. IF's other directors—Jayant Sinha and Suresh Prabhu—had recently joined the government as ministers.

Closer home to the BJP, its own public policy think-tank set up last year to bring out the vision document for the government is working on other policies. Innovation policy and new cyber law to deal with cyber crime is being prepared by the centre, which will be shared with the government.

Centre's head and BJP vice-president Vinay Sahasrabuddhe says, "Prime Minister has advocated policy driven governance. There is a huge home work deficit in the area. We are trying to do our bit for to fill the gap."

Another BJP think-tank, the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation, last month held a closed-door roundtable before the PM's visit to Australia to discuss areas of interests, and focus. Officials from the Australian embassy participated in the deliberations to work out areas of mutual interest.

But not all are happy with the BJP led think-tanks. They have been silent when those outside their immediate universe have been holding fort to formulate policy, a RSS ideologue said. However, the India Right has arrived.

8. BJP Steers Country's Right Wing to Official Policy Prime

By Pratul Sharma, The New Indian Express: 07th December 2014



A closed-door roundtable discussion organised by Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation, before the PM's visit to Australia

NEW DELHI: With a BJP-led government in power at the Centre, the right wing is gearing up to occupy the centre stage in the country.

If the UPA had its National Advisory Council with left-of-the-centre think tanks driving the policy formulation, with good measure of literature festivals celebrating the liberal thought thrown in, the right wing is slowly coming up with its own set -- from conclaves, international conferences, to seminars for policy advocacy.

On Sunday, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi will go into a huddle for the first time with all the Chief Ministers to discuss the future of **Planning Commission**, he will have before him suggestions mooted by a RSS-inclined think tank, India Policy Foundation (IPF), advocating greater role for private participation in policy formulation.

IPF director Rakesh Sinha, associate professor at the Delhi University, wrote to Modi on Saturday saying his “revolutionary” idea to replace the Planning Commission led them to hold a seminar and formulate suggestions.

Sinha had suggested four names for the policy body shorn of its “Nehruvian past” -- National Commission for Planning and Development, National Commission for Policy and Planning, National Transformation Commission for Development and National Federal Commission for Growth and Justice.

Among the suggestions mooted include doing away with five-year plans to three-year plans to sectoral planning for nine years.

“The Planning Commission has been a victim of infantile disorder. Nehruvian planning was obsessed with socialism and it delegitimised the private initiatives, capital and entrepreneurship,” Sinha said.

Suggesting an 11-member body apart from chairman and vice-chairman, with each member heading a division, the new entity should work as a think tank and also as a planner.

The IPF sets its eyes on more serious topics-coming out with a health policy early next year, apart from providing inputs on education and democratic governance. As the ‘new world order’ takes shape, with right-wing gaining prominence, Sinha says, “Earlier, the government co-opted the thinkers and included them into the government bodies, rather than giving space to wide generation of ideas. We are now providing for critical ideas for the policy.”

A Sangh ideologue said after the new government took over, the right-wing thinkers were coming out of the shadows.

“We need to build their confidence, strengthen them in their fields and create a space for engagement with each other,” a senior BJP leader said.

The India Foundation (IF), which has BJP general secretary Ram Madhav and Shaurya Doval, son of national security advisor Ajit Doval, as directors, is bringing together 70 think tanks, ministers and politicians from across the world, to address a select group of over 400 participants, at a five-star hotel in Goa.

A BJP think tank, the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation, last month held a closed-door roundtable before the PM’s visit to Australia to discuss areas of interests, and focus.

9. New institution to replace PlanComm: TN bats for state representation

Business Standard: 07.12.2014

'Chief ministers must be given representation in the new body and the views of the states need to be heard at different levels'



Welcoming Prime Minister's decision to replace [Planning Commission](#) with a new institution, [Tamil Nadu](#) chief minister [O Panneerselvam](#) batted for state-Centre co-ordination, besides urging the Centre to respect views of the respective state governments.

The chief minister urged for abolishing the centrally-sponsored schemes, while suggesting the central funding should be based on the recommendation of the constitutionally-mandated finance commission.

Delivering his speech in the Prime Minister's meeting with the state chief ministers to discuss the new institution meant for replacing the Planning Commission, he said, while the role of the Centre and state had changed over the years, the relationship remained stuck in a much older mindset and the respective states had been at the mercy of the ministers in the Centre for various approvals.

"Hence, a very important element of the reform would necessarily be a systematic mechanism in the new institution to take on board the views of the states. Chief ministers must be given representation in the new body and the views of the states need to be heard at different levels in the hierarchy of the organisation to make planning a federally-empowered function with active participation of the states," he said.

The background paper talks about developing co-operative federalism and institutionalising it through a council of chief ministers and one needs to be careful to ensure that the Council of Chief Ministers does not become a ritualistic exercise similar to the National Development Council or the Inter State Council. The proposed Council of Chief Ministers should be used to discuss issues concerning the nation and chief ministers' views should be heard and given due weightage.

10. New Plan panel to reflect federal structure

Business Standard: 08.12.2014

Modi meets CMs on shape of body; Congress terms move to dismantle Planning Commission 'shortsighted & dangerous'

The new body that will replace the five-decade Planning Commission of India is expected to have wider representation from the states, as it will devise central schemes in consultation with state governments.

According to a broad consensus that emerged from the day-long meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chief ministers, or their representatives, from all states on Sunday, the existing structure of the Commission will be disbanded and the schemes might not apply to all states uniformly.

The Congress party, however, termed the move to dismantle it “unwarranted, shortsighted and dangerous”. It will have a long-term adverse effect on Centre-state relations, it warned and asserted the panel needed “reorientation” and not “political burial”.

This was Modi’s first meeting with the chief ministers after coming to power six months ago. The new structure could be permanent, comprising the prime minister, some Cabinet ministers and some chief ministers, along with technocrats, bureaucrats and experts from various fields.

Chief ministers could be included in the body by rotation and the states could be given liberty to spend funds according to their needs.

The new body might have a statutory role, not enjoyed by the previous Commission. It could be firmed up by January 26.

Addressing the media after the consultations, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said most state governments favoured a change in the existing Commission’s structure and wanted a system where their ability to deliver was strengthened.

“There were a few state governments which wanted changes to be made in the existing structure and not a new body but an overwhelming majority was in favour of a new structure to replace the Planning Commission,” said Jaitley.

He added the government would take a considered view soon on the structure of the new Plan body, once the consultative process was over.

According to Jaitley, other issues related to the Commission, such as the name of the new body and future of the five-year Plan process, will be addressed later.

“There was also a view that the new structure should be more like a ‘think-tank’, so that the private sector can also have a role,” he said.

Planning Commission secretary Sindhushree Khullar in her presentation to the chief ministers said the new body should group states based on their geography, demography, state of economy and urbanisation.

A professional Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office should also be set up and a proper evaluation of project and programmes should be done.

In his opening address, Modi said the process of policy planning had to change from “top to bottom” and “bottom to top”.

Modi said the replacement to the Planning Commission must incorporate the concept of “Team India”, which according to him is a combination of three teams — the PM and chief ministers; Union council of ministers; and the bureaucracy in the Centre and states.

He also recalled the remarks made by former prime minister Manmohan Singh, while addressing the meeting of the Commission in April, that the body had no futuristic vision in the post-reform period.

Chief ministers of Congress-ruled states wanted the existing structure to continue.

Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy said the Centre’s “arbitrary decision to dismantle” the Commission without convening a meeting of the National Development Council (NDC) or consulting the states undermined the federal structure.

According to him, the proposal to replace the Commission with a new body was “half-baked, unwarranted and ignores the need of planned development” of the country.

Uttar Pradesh CM Akhilesh Yadav said the practice of “one-size-fits-all” should be discarded by the new body as without a flexible policy, states with differing needs cannot develop.

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee, who sent state finance minister Amit Mitra to attend the meeting, favoured replacing the Commission with the Inter-State Council where the NDC could be subsumed.

11.Govt claims consensus on replacing plan panel

The Statesman: 08.12.2014



Prime Minister Narendra Modi (lower right corner) with state chief ministers at a retreat at Race Course Road, following a consultation meeting on the replacing Planning Commission. In New Delhi on Sunday. SNS

Most chief ministers attending a meeting called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss the future of the Planning Commission today were in favour of restructuring of the Nehru-era body but some of them expressed reservations on disbanding the existing set-up. Indications from the day-long meeting suggested that the government is looking at a structure which will have the Prime Minister, some Cabinet ministers and some Chief Ministers on rotation basis along with technocrats and experts in various fields. The majority of Chief Ministers favoured the idea that states could be given liberty to spend funds according to their needs. The Prime Minister in his speech also sought to give greater role for the states in the new body.

Briefing the media, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley later said there was a “larger consensus” that the “context” has changed and there is a “need to decentralise both power and planning”. Mr Jaitley said no time-line has been fixed, saying the Centre will take a “considered view after consultations are over”. However, he indicated that the shape of the new structure could be firmed up by 26 January next year.

At the meeting, four Congress-ruled states supported the idea of revamping the Planning Commission set up by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1950 but suggested changes within existing structure. They said doing away with the Plan panel was likely to have an adverse effect on key areas like monitoring of human development in the states, Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan, facilitating and mainstreaming social sector reform and promotion of decentralized planning.

However, some NDA states and those ruled by parties like AIADMK and TRS wanted immediate disbanding of the Planning Commission.

Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy opposed the idea of dismantling the Planning panel without convening a meeting of the National Development Council (NDC) or consulting the states, saying this undermines the federal structure. He said the Centre's proposal to replace the panel with a new body is "half baked, unwarranted and ignores the need of planned development" of the country. "The proposed move to distribute the planning functions amongst the Ministry of Finance and subject matter ministries will result in loss of perspective and of long-term view," the Congress leaders said.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav hit out at the Centre for financially "burdening" states by executing schemes which come under the State List, saying such programmes were putting the resources of the state governments under undue pressure. He also said the practice of 'one size fits all' should be discarded by the proposed body, as without a flexible policy, the states with differing needs cannot develop. Congress Deputy Leader in Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma later told reporters that dismantling the Planning Commission would be "unwarranted, shortsighted and dangerous" as it will have long-term adverse effect on Centre-state relations. He said the panel needed a "reorientation" and not "political burial".

12.PM Modi pitches for 'Team India' to get states onboard

The Millenium Post:08.12.2014



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday used the forum for consultation with the state chief ministers on the restructuring of the planning commission to hold out an olive branch to political rivals strengthen 'cooperative federalism', the PM said that states must have a greater role in the new body which will replace the existing Planning Commission. In his opening remarks at the meeting, he stressed the need for abandoning the incremental approach. The process of policy planning also has to change from "top to bottom" to "bottom to top", he said, stressing that it was impossible for the nation to develop unless states develop.

Modi said the replacement to the Planning Commission must incorporate the concept of "Team India", which according to him, was a combination of three teams - the PM and CMs, the Union Council of Ministers and the bureaucracy in the Centre and states. He recalled that former PM Manmohan Singh had also stressed the need for a re-look at the Planning Commission. Recalling his own experience as chief minister of Gujarat, Modi said, he had felt the need for a better platform to articulate the view of the states. Listing out the national priorities on the growth path, the Modi further said, the time has come to develop a new mechanism to deliver growth and development.

Finance minister Arun Jaitley summed up the discussions saying that the role of the Planning Commission must be relooked in order to expand economic activity, adding that the new body, which will replace the existing commission, will aim towards cooperative federalism. "The thrust of the new model would be cooperative federalism. Both state and private sector would have an important role and the role, relevance and restructuring has to be looked at afresh," Jaitley said. Jaitley said there was a need to decentralise planning and states have to be strengthened. "There can't be a universal scheme which applies to all states," he said.

“Some participants felt whether the current Planning Commission could evolve into the desired structure. Most Chief Ministers favoured an alternative structure where the Centre, the states and experts could participate,” he added.

Jaitley also stated that the meeting was attended by all the chief ministers except CMs of West Bengal and Mizoram, who were represented by their finance ministers. Jharkhand and Jammu and Kashmir, which are currently in the midst of their five-phase state assembly elections, were represented by senior officials.

- **13..New plan body: PM invokes Manmohan to win over Cong**
Chetan Chauhan, Hindustan Times: 08.12.2014

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi invoked former PM Manmohan Singh on Sunday in the face of opposition from Congress-ruled states over his decision to scrap the Planning Commission, saying a new body was needed to "strengthen" the federal structure and empower states.

Speaking at his first meeting with chief ministers to seek suggestions on the new plan body, Modi stressed it was impossible for the nation to develop without its states.

"Can we develop a new mechanism that plans according to India's strengths, empowers states, and brings on board all economic activity, including what happens outside the government," the PM asked. Modi also recalled feeling the need for a better platform to articulate the views of states when he used to attend the plan panel's meetings as Gujarat CM.

The government dissolved the Planning Commission by a Cabinet decision on August 13, with the PM announcing the decision in his Independence Day speech.

Chief ministers of Congress-ruled states, however, appeared unimpressed and praised the plan panel's work in reducing regional and income disparities.

"The Planning Commission is a time-tested institution and the government should strengthen it instead of scrapping it. We need it to protect the interest of the deprived sections," said Uttarakhand chief minister Harish Rawat after the day-long meeting at the PM's Race Course Road residence.

To counter the Congress charge, Modi recalled remarks made by Manmohan Singh on April 30 this year, when the former PM had raised four questions about the future of the Planning Commission and the need for the institution to reinvent itself to remain relevant.

"Manmohan Singh, who was associated with the Planning Commission for a long time, had noted the body has no futuristic vision in the post-reform period," Modi said in his concluding remarks.

Rawat, however, dismissed Modi's contention, saying Singh never advocated the scrapping of the institution. "He (Singh) only said the panel needs to re-invent and change," Rawat said.

Congress CMs also expressed dismay at not being consulted before the decision to scrap the planning body. They said the issue should have been discussed in the National Development Council -- a body of all chief ministers headed by the PM.

"It came as a bolt out of the blue," said a chief minister of a Congress-ruled state, referring to the PM announcement of disbanding the Planning Commission.

Many Congress CMs, however, praised Modi for organising a retreat with chief ministers with no central minister or official present.

"We chatted with each other and the PM. Modi listened to our suggestions and appeared positive," said a CM of a Congress-ruled state.

Summarising the discussions, finance minister Arun Jaitley said there was a "large" consensus on the need to scrap the Planning Commission since the present context had changed with a need to "decentralise" decision making.

All CMs agreed that states have to play a bigger role in nation building, Jaitley said, adding that the "one-size fits all" concept of Central schemes have to be changed.

"Most states favoured an alternate body where both the Centre and the state participate and a bottom-up approach to policy making is adopted instead of a top-down approach," the minister said.

Jaitley also said Modi had stressed on Team India comprising the PM and the chief ministers, the council of ministers and the bureaucracy at the Centre and the states.

14. Legal backing for new plan body?

Chetan Chauhan, Hindustan Times: 08.12.2014

New body likely to be backed by Article 263 of the Constitution; aims at bettering Centre-state relations and building a more cohesive 'Team India'

NEW DELHI: The proposed body to replace the Planning Commission can have Constitutional backing as the government is looking at a structure to help foster better Centre-state relations and build "Team India".



Narendra Modi interacts with Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal after the restructuring meeting of the Planning Commission on Sunday.

The new body, primarily aimed at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "cooperative federalism" concept, would have the key function of resolving inter-state disputes, which is covered under Article 263 of the Constitution.

An inter-state council headed by the Prime Minister with all the chief ministers as members was set up under this article in 1980. Now, the government proposes to make the council — under the administrative control of the home ministry — as part of the new commission. The Centre is considering providing Constitutional backing to this body, as finance minister Arun Jaitely said the "alternate body" could be a "constitutional" body.

However, the National Development Council — another body of the PM and chief ministers — did not have Constitutional backing as it was set up by executive order of the Planning Commission, a creation of a Cabinet resolution not having legal backing.

The government also wants the new body to be accountable to Parliament.

A senior government functionary explained that providing Constitutional backing would provide "stability" and "seriousness" to the new body and will also check future governments from tampering with it. He added the move would also bring clarity in the functions of the proposed body, likely to be called Niti Commission.

Refusing to give a timeframe within which the new body will be set up, Jaitely said the government will take a final view at an appropriate time on all the issues, including whether the present concept of annual and five year plans should continue or not.

REASONS FOR CHANGE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No structure formed or engagement with stakeholders ■ Ineffective mediation of Centre-State and inter-ministerial dialogue ■ Inadequate capacity, expertise, weak networks with think tanks and lack of accessible expertise outside govt. ■ Set up in 1950 when population was 120 mn, GDP was 2.8 lakh cr; half contribution came from agriculture ■ Present population is 121 bn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ GDP is 12.5 lakh cr with services contributing 52% and agriculture only 14%
	Weak of new body
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One for knowledge, technology and innovation hubs ■ Appraisal, implementation, monitoring of plans ■ A Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office ■ Platform for resolution of cross sectoral issues between states and Centre

Jaitley also said the CMs wanted the body to enable the exchange of views with the Centre and to be a “knowledge hub” for India.

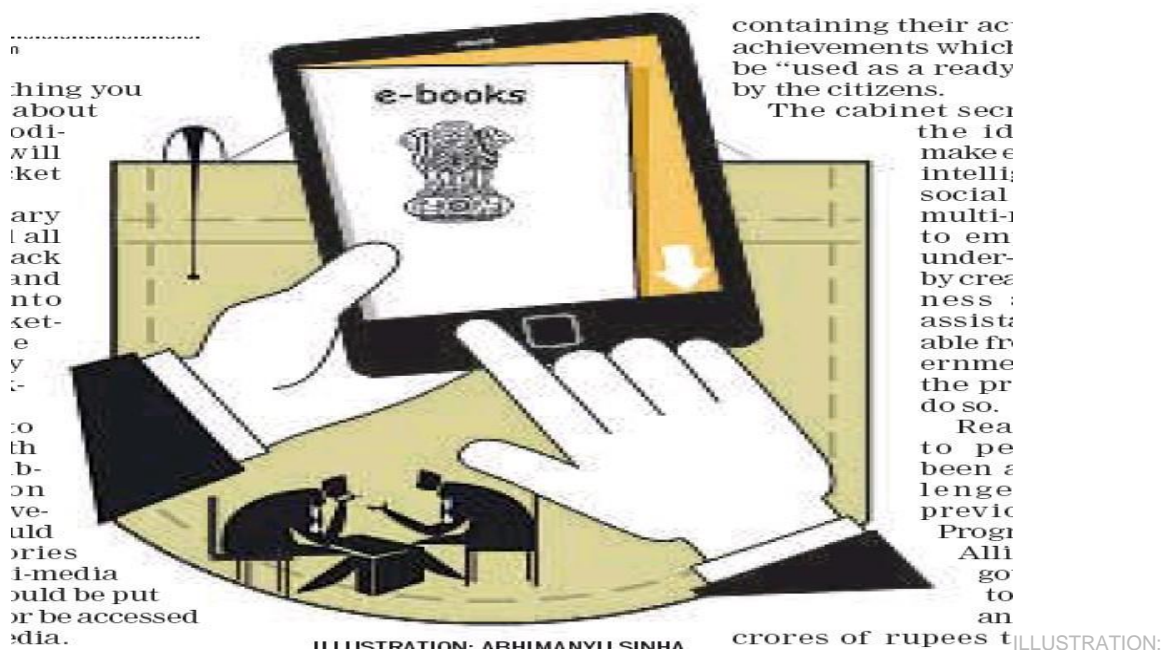
15. This new year, info on govt to fit in your pocket

The Hindustan Times: 08.12.2014

Cab secy directs departments to pack activities, 'quantifiable' achievements into e-books, pocket-books for easy access

NEW DELHI: Everything you wanted to know about the Narendra Modi government will fit into your pocket from January 1.

achievements into e-books, pocket-books for easy



ABHIMANYU SINHA

Cabinet secretary Ajit Seth has told all departments to pack their activities and achievements into e-books and pocketbooks that people can conveniently use as a ready reckoner.

In a directive to all secretaries, Seth asked them to publish the e-book on their major achievements, which should cover success stories as well using multi-media graphics. These could be put on their websites or be accessed through social media.

But he stressed they should use only success stories that reflect "only quantifiable work", a suggestion aimed at avoiding any debates around claims that departments might make.

"In order that such use of electronic tools is effective, the help of department of electronics and information technology as also other professional help needed to develop such information education and communication materials should also be taken," Seth said in his letter to all government departments.

For those who do not have access to the Internet, Seth also told secretaries — who are administrative heads of the departments — to "prepare small and handy pocket books" containing their activities and achievements which could also be "used as a ready reckoner" by the citizens. The cabinet secretary said the idea was to make efficient and intelligent use of social media and multi-media tools

to empower the under-privileged by creating awareness about the assistance available from the government and also the procedure to do so.

Reaching out to people has been a key challenge that the previous United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government too had faced and had spent crores of rupees to organise camps called public information campaigns in various remote parts of the country.

“The emphasis on the e-books would ensure that departments would have to keep the information updated, rather than make it a one-time effort,” said a government official, pointing that updating information on websites had been a key challenge in the past.

नई संस्था में राज्यों को ज्यादा हक

नई दिल्ली | विशेष संवाददाता

योजना आयोग की जगह नई संस्था में राज्यों की भागीदारी ज्यादा होगी। केंद्र के साथ राज्य सरकारों को भी योजना बनाने में हिस्सेदारी का मौका मिलेगा। वित्तीय मसलों पर भी राज्यों की सोच व जरूरतों का ख्याल रखा जाएगा। पीएम नरेंद्र मोदी की अध्यक्षता में रविवार को दिल्ली में राज्यों के मुख्यमंत्रियों की बैठक में यह खाका उभरकर सामने आया।

वित्तमंत्री अरुण जेटली ने कहा कि ज्यादातर राज्य संघीय ढांचे की मजबूती, राज्यों को ज्यादा अधिकार देने, योजनाओं

योजना आयोग में बदलाव क्यों?

- 64 साल पुराने ढर्रे पर ही काम कर रहा था
- मंत्रालयों की योजनाओं को लटका देता था
- केंद्र, राज्य और योजना आयोग अलग-अलग खड़े नजर आते थे

नए निकाय में राज्यों की बड़ी भूमिका होनी चाहिए। इसमें टीम इंडिया की झलक दिखने की जरूरत है। राज्यों के विकास के बिना देश का विकास असंभव है। -नरेंद्र मोदी



को राज्यों की जरूरत के मुताबिक उनकी सहमति से तैयार करने जैसे मसलों पर सहमत हैं। नए निकाय का ढांचा ऐसा होगा जिसमें केंद्र, राज्य व आयोग एक टीम के

रूप में काम करें। नया निकाय कब तक बन जाएगा, इसकी समयसीमा तय नहीं की गई है।

● मुख्यमंत्री परिषद का प्रस्ताव: पेज-12

नई संस्था में निजी क्षेत्र की भागीदारी बढ़ाने पर होगा जोर, देशभर के मुख्यमंत्रियों की परिषद की अध्यक्षता प्रधानमंत्री करेंगे

मुख्यमंत्रियों की परिषद बनाने का प्रस्ताव

बदलाव

नई दिल्ली | पंकज कुमार पाण्डेव

योजना आयोग की जगह प्रस्तावित नई संस्था में विकास हेतु रणनीति, लक्ष्य और वरीयता के सेक्टर तय करने के लिए मुख्यमंत्रियों की एक परिषद का सुझाव सामने आया है। इसमें सभी राज्यों के मुख्यमंत्री शामिल होंगे और इसकी अध्यक्षता प्रधानमंत्री करेंगे।

नवगठित संस्था में राज्यों को स्थायी प्रतिनिधित्व देने का सुझाव दिया गया है। यह भी सुझाव है कि विभिन्न सेक्टर के लिए स्थायी कार्यदल बनें और इसमें राज्यों का प्रतिनिधित्व और संबंधित मंत्रालयों की भागीदारी हो।

इस कार्यदल के सुझाव के आधार पर ही आगे की कार्ययोजना और परिवर्तन का ढांचा तय हो। मुख्यमंत्रियों के साथ चर्चा जिन बिंदुओं पर हुई उसमें यह भी सवाल उठा कि पंचवर्षीय योजनाओं को जारी रखा जाए या नहीं? यह भी चर्चा हुई कि



नया राज्यों व केंद्र के बीच वार्षिक योजना को अंतिम रूप देने की प्रक्रिया पूर्ववत् चलनी चाहिए? ऐसे तमाम मुद्दों पर मंथन हुआ।

नई दिल्ली में रविवार को मुख्यमंत्रियों की बैठक में राजस्थान की मुख्यमंत्री वसुंधरा राजे का अभिवादन स्वीकार करते प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी। ● पृष्ठ

50 फीसदी राशि एकमुश्त

प्रस्ताव है कि राज्यों की वित्तीय भागीदारी बढ़ाने के लिए उपलब्ध केंद्रीय सहायता का 50 फीसदी राज्यों को एकमुश्त उपलब्ध कराया जाए। इससे वह स्थानीय वरीयताओं को ध्यान में रखकर खर्च तय कर सकें। यह प्रस्ताव भी है कि राज्यों द्वारा इस धनराशि के उपयोग का आकलन उनके द्वारा दीर्घकालीन लक्ष्य की पूर्ति के आधार पर करना चाहिए।

राज्यों के लिए इनोवेशन

प्रस्तावित नई संस्था इनोवेशन या नौलेंज हब की तरह बनने का प्रस्ताव है। हब किस प्रकार से राज्यों के हित में काम कर सकता है और उसकी कार्यक्षमता क्या होना चाहिए इस पर भी चर्चा की गई। इनोवेशन या नौलेंज हब के रूप में यह संस्थान कैसे राज्यों से संबंधित योजनाओं के निराकरण के लिए अध्ययन व शोध करेगा इसके लिए जरूरी संसाधन उपलब्ध कराए जाएंगे। शोध निजी व सरकारी क्षेत्र की संस्थाएं करंगी और उनकी रिपोर्ट संबंधित मंत्रालयों और राज्यों को उपलब्ध कराई जाएगी।

योजनाओं में होगा लचीलापन

यह भी प्रस्ताव है कि केंद्रीय वित्त योजनाओं में पर्याप्त लचीलापन होना चाहिए। इससे राज्य अपनी आवश्यकतानुसार ढालते हुए इसका क्रियान्वयन सुनिश्चित कर सकें और योजना धनराशि का उपयोग कर सकें।

निजी क्षेत्र की भूमिका बढ़ेगी

भविष्य में महत्वपूर्ण व्यवस्थाओं व सेवाओं को प्रदान करने में निजी क्षेत्र की भूमिका निश्चित रूप से बढ़ेगी। प्रस्तावित हब को निजी क्षेत्र की भागीदारी बढ़ाने के लिए राज्य सरकारों की क्षमता बुद्धि पर निश्चित रूप से ध्यान देना होगा।

आर्थिक-सामाजिक स्थिति

चर्चा में चौथा अहम बिंदु वित्तीय अवदलन का है। गाड़मिल - मुख्यमंत्री फार्मूले से इतर कई सुझाव आए। राज्यों की आर्थिक सामाजिक स्थिति के आधार पर धन देने, केंद्रीय योजनाओं का भार उनपर नहीं थोपने का भी प्रस्ताव है। राख ही राज्यों को धन का आवंटन पारदर्शी प्रक्रिया द्वारा होना चाहिए।

मौजूदा व्यवस्था में ही

बदलाव हो : हरीश रावत प्रधानमंत्री की अगुआई में हुई बैठक के बाद उत्तराखंड के मुख्यमंत्री हरीश रावत ने कहा कि बैठक में राख और पर दो विचार थे। कुछ लोगों की राय थी कि योजना आयोग उपयोगिता छोड़ चुका है, इसलिए इसे खरब कर नई संस्था बनाई जानी चाहिए। जबकि कई राज्य चाहते थे कि मौजूदा व्यवस्था में ही बदलाव हो।

योजना आयोग पर राज्यों से

लें राय : अखिलेश यादव प्रधानमंत्री की अगुआई में हुई मुख्यमंत्रियों की बैठक में अखिलेश यादव ने कहा कि अगर इस बैठक से पहले योजना आयोग के मुद्दे पर राज्यों की राय ली जाती, तो ज्यादा अच्छा होता। उन्होंने योजना आयोग कार्यों की सराहना की।

योजना के बीच में नई संस्था

का गठन ठीक नहीं : मांडी बिहार के सीएम जितन राम मांडी ने भी योजना आयोग की जगह नई संस्था बनाने की पहल का विरोध किया। उन्होंने कहा, योजना के बीच में नई संस्था का गठन ठीक नहीं है। उन्हें लगता है कि सरकार ने फैसला कर लिया है और राज्यों को मुहर लगाने को बुलाया है।

आईना

विराट की हरिद्वार बॉलीवुड के 3 स्टार विराट के आसानी से लिफ्ट भी विशेष कप के लिए 3

राहुल का सोनिया

नई दिल्ली। अ हासिल करने के संबंध में अ तरुण गोमोई ने गांधी द्वारा की र सोनिया गांधी व अनुभवों से पार इकबाल बुलंद



17. Majority CMs back PM Narendra Modi's plan to replace existing Planning Commission

The Indian Express: 08.12.2014

A



Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Rajya Sabha

A majority of chief ministers on Sunday favoured Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposal to [replace the existing Planning Commission](#) with another institution that would reflect a truly federal polity and a changed economic scenario, and which recognises states' need for flexibility in spending.

Congress-ruled states, however, did not favour dismantling the 64-year old Commission, and instead suggested a revamp of the existing structure.

WHAT THEY TOLD MODI

MANIK SARKAR (Tripura):

Give rotational representation to states, special attention to NE ¶

AKHILESH YADAV (UP): Give states freedom to execute projects

NAVEEN PATNAIK (Orissa): Need special category status ¶

JEETAN RAM MANJHI

(Bihar): Where is the need to dismantle Planning Commission in middle of 12th Plan?

The issue was discussed during a four-hour meeting moderated by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, where the PM “invoked the spirit of [cooperate federalism](#) cooperative federalism” and stressed on the need for a suitable body to replace the Planning Commission.

“The process of policy planning also has to change from ‘top to bottom’ to ‘bottom to top’,” Modi is learnt to have told the chief ministers.

The PM also referred to remarks that his predecessor Manmohan Singh had made on April 30, to the effect that the Plan panel lacked a futuristic vision in the post-reform era. Singh had noted that the panel would have to reinvent itself in order to stay effective and relevant, according to an official release.

Government sources said an alternative to the Plan panel was likely to be announced within a month. It would be chaired by the Prime Minister and include some Cabinet ministers, chief ministers, as well as private sector experts. Chief ministers may be inducted by rotation, and have greater say in the allocation and use of central funds.



The new institution will, as recommended by the Planning Commission, also serve as a hub for innovation and research. In accordance with the recommendation of most state governments, it is likely to do away with the concept of planning and annual plans. An option on the table is to subsume the functions of the Planning Commission in the Inter-State Council, provided for by the Constitution.

Jaitley, who briefed the media after the meeting, said no timeline had been fixed for setting up the new body. “The central government will take a considered view after the consultation is over,” he said, and indicated that the Budget would be prepared as in the past.

“There is no disagreement on the need for change. But the transition should be managed well,” said a Congress chief minister.

In his Independence Day speech, Modi had proposed restructuring the Planning Commission to suit the current needs of the economy, and to empower the states which, at the moment, have little say in decisions on state plans.

BJP-ruled states including Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Gujarat were in favour of the move, as were Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Punjab and most Northeastern states. Bihar, Assam, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, however, questioned the need to replace the Planning Commission.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee did not attend the meeting, but has supported an alternative to the Plan panel in a letter to the Prime Minister. The chief ministers of Jharkhand and Jammu & Kashmir, which are in the midst of assembly elections, did not attend.



Sources said chief ministers were given five to seven minutes to present their views, with Jaitley in charge of managing the time. Prime Minister Modi interjected only once during the meeting (apart from the introductory and concluding remarks) to clarify his position on the Plan panel. He said he appreciated the work of the Planning Commission, and emphasised that he had never called for its abolition. He pointed out to states opposing the move that former PM Manmohan Singh too had called for restructuring the Soviet-era agency.

Some states are understood to have questioned the need for dismantling the Commission in the middle of a Plan period; those in favour of the proposal, however, asked for it to be disbanded immediately.



Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis suggested that the Planning Commission be replaced by a National Development and Reforms Commission, as well as a grouping of similar states. Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal is understood to have pointed out that states must have more say in the new body on decisions affecting them such as minimum support price for grains. CMs of Northeastern states said they often got a raw deal because of their small populations and the inability to raise resources.

Planning Commission secretary Sindhushree Khullar made a presentation on the need and role of the proposed agency — and sought comments from states on whether the five-year Plan should be continued, the scope and method of interaction in the new forum, restructuring of fund flows for the central Plan to states, and the role of the knowledge and innovation hub for states.

Lieutenant Governors of Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Puducherry were also present at the meeting. West Bengal and Mizoram were represented by their finance ministers.

18.अब 'टीम इंडिया' में बदलेगा 65 साल का योजना आयोग

अमर उजाला:08.12.2014

अमर उजाला ब्यूरो

नई दिल्ली। मोदी सरकार ने 65 साल पुराने योजना आयोग को भंग कर उसे 'टीम इंडिया' की शकल देने की कवायद शुरू कर दी है। रविवार को मुख्यमंत्रियों की एक विशेष बैठक में आयोग के स्वरूप में बदलाव पर सहमति बन गई। हालांकि, कांग्रेस शासित राज्यों के मुख्यमंत्रियों ने योजना आयोग को भंग कर नया निकाय बनाने के बजाय आयोग के अधीन ही नई व्यवस्था कायम करने की मांग रखी।

पीएम आवास 'सात रेस कोर्स' में मुख्यमंत्रियों के साथ करीब सात घंटे बिताने के बाद नरेंद्र मोदी ने नई व्यवस्था बनाने को वक्त की जरूरत करार दिया। उन्होंने कहा कि आज अब योजना की प्रक्रिया 'ऊपर से नीचे' की बजाय 'नीचे से ऊपर' करने की जरूरत है। आयोग को अब 'टीम इंडिया' और 'साझा संघवाद' की अवधारणा को मजबूती देने वाला निकाय बनाना होगा।

विरोध करने वाले कांग्रेस शासित राज्यों के मुख्यमंत्रियों को पीएम ने पूर्व पीएम मनमोहन सिंह के वक्तव्य की याद दिलाई। इसी साल 30 अप्रैल को सिंह ने योजना आयोग को नया रूप देने की वकालत करते हुए कहा था कि सुधारों की अवधि में इस निकाय में कोई भविष्योन्मुखी दृष्टि नहीं है। बैठक के बाद पीएम ने मुख्यमंत्रियों के साथ बिना किसी अधिकारी के अनौपचारिक बात की। उन्होंने हर राज्य के मुख्यमंत्री के साथ उनके यहां के विकास के मुद्दे और उनकी किसी सफल योजना के बारे में बात की, जो एक अनोखी पहल थी। मुख्यमंत्रियों ने इसे बेहद उपयोगी बताया। बैठक के बाद वित्त मंत्री अरुण जेटली ने दावा किया कि ज्यादातर राज्य योजना आयोग के पुनर्गठन के पक्ष में थे। इस पर एक बड़ी सहमति बनी है कि बदलते समय में सत्ता और योजना बनाने के अधिकार दोनों को विकेंद्रीकृत करने की जरूरत है। केंद्रीय योजनाओं के क्रियान्वयन के संदर्भ में जेटली ने भी कहा कि हर किसी के लिए एक योजना की बात करना गलत है। उन्होंने कहा कि ऐसी कोई योजना नहीं बनाई जा सकती, जो सभी राज्यों के लिए उपयुक्त हो। इस अहम बैठक में पश्चिम बंगाल, मिजोरम, जम्मू-कश्मीर व झारखंड के मुख्यमंत्रियों ने खुद आने के बदले अपने प्रतिनिधि भेजे। बैठक के पहले सत्र में योजना आयोग की सचिव सिंधुश्री खुल्लर ने प्रजेंटेशन में संभावित नए संस्थान की रूपरेखा पेश की। नए निकाय के गठन को लेकर कोई समय सीमा तय नहीं की गई है लेकिन माना जा रहा है 26 जनवरी से पहले इसका गठन हो जाएगा।

बलात्कार का आरोपी उबर कैब का ड्राइवर...

वहीं, पीड़ित युवती ने पुलिस को बताया कि उसे घटनास्थल से घर पहुंचने में 15 से 20 मिनट लगे थे। सोमवार को युवती का बयान अदालत में दर्ज कराया जाएगा। पुलिस बरामद कार को मथुरा से दिल्ली ले आई है। कार की फॉरेंसिक जांच की जा रही है। अभी तक की जांच में पुलिस को पता चला है कि कार में जीपीएस नहीं लगा था और ड्राइवर का पुलिस सत्यापन भी नहीं कराया गया था।

यादव सिंह ने विदेश जाकर बेचे हीरे...

बताते हैं कि एक बार प्रदेश के तत्कालीन मुख्यमंत्री ने प्रमुख सचिव स्तर के एक अधिकारी, प्राधिकरण के चेयरमैन और यादव सिंह को बुलाया था। मुख्यमंत्री ने यादव सिंह से कहा था कि जरा इन अधिकारियों को मेरी कोठी पर लाना। रुतबा के लिए इतना इशारा काफी था और अधिकारी यादव सिंह के घर पांच साल तक हाजिरी लगाते रहे।

अंधेरे में तीर न चलाएं, ठोस सबूत पेश करें...

राजदूत ने आगे कहा कि भारत और स्विट्जरलैंड के साथ इस मामले पर अच्छी बातचीत हो रही है, लेकिन बीते चीजें लौट नहीं सकती, भविष्य जरूर उज्ज्वल है। भविष्य में भारतीयों, जर्मन या अमेरिकियों द्वारा स्विस बैंकों में जमा धन के बारे में उनके देश की एजेंसियां खाताधारक से संबंधित देश को सूचित करेंगी, लेकिन पिछले 50 सालों में क्या हुआ इस बारे में कुछ नहीं किया जा सकता। एजेंसी

19.मोदी की मुख्यमंत्रियों के साथ बैठक, योजना आयोग के पुनर्गठन पर मंथन

जनसत्ता:08.12.2014



नई दिल्ली में रविवार को योजना आयोग को लेकर हुई बैठक में एक-दूसरे का अभिवादन करते प्रधानमंत्री मोदी व राजस्थान की मुख्यमंत्री वसुंधरा राजे।

योजना आयोग के पुनर्गठन पर विचार विमर्श के लिए प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की यहां बुलाई गई मुख्यमंत्रियों की बैठक में ज्यादातर राज्यों ने सोवियत व्यवस्था के ढर्रे पर गठित इस निकाय के पुनर्गठन के विचार का समर्थन किया। लेकिन मौजूदा ढांचे को भंग करने के बारे में उनमें कोई एक राय नहीं दिखी। प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने इस साल स्वाधीनता दिवस पर अपने संबोधन में योजना आयोग की जगह नया निकाय गठित करने की घोषणा की थी। उन्होंने कहा था कि नया निकाय नए आर्थिक विश्व की जरूरतों के अनुरूप होगा। उन्होंने पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह के इस साल 30 अप्रैल के वक्तव्य का भी उल्लेख किया। जिसमें उन्होंने कहा था कि 1950 में गठित मौजूदा ढांचे के पास आर्थिक सुधारों के दौर में कोई भविष्योन्मुख दृष्टिकोण नहीं है।

मोदी ने रविवार को कहा कि एक ऐसा कारगर ढांचा स्थापित करने की जरूरत है जो 'सहयोगपूर्ण संघीय व्यवस्था' और 'टीम इंडिया' की अवधारणा को बल प्रदान करे। दिनभर चली बैठक से ऐसे संकेत मिले हैं जिससे लगता है कि सरकार एक ऐसे निकाय की स्थापना का विचार कर रही है जिसमें प्रधानमंत्री, कुछ कैबिनेट मंत्री व कुछ मुख्यमंत्री शामिल होंगे और इसमें विभिन्न तकनीकी विषयों व क्षेत्रों के विशेषज्ञों को भी रखा जाएगा। नए निकाय में मुख्यमंत्रियों को बारी-बारी से

प्रतिनिधित्व दिया जा सकता है। राज्यों को योजनागत कोष को अपने आवश्यकतानुसार खर्च करने की छूट दी जा सकती है।

बैठक के बाद वित्त और सूचना प्रसारण मंत्री अरुण जेटली ने पत्रकारों से बातचीत में कहा कि अभी कोई समयसीमा तय नहीं की गई है। उन्होंने कहा कि सरकार विचार-विमर्श पूरा हो जाने के बाद सोच-विचार कर इस बारे में कोई फैसला करेगी। हालांकि यह भी संकेत है कि नया निकाय अगले साल 26 जनवरी तक गठित किया जा सकता है। बैठक में पश्चिम बंगाल और मिजोरम के मुख्यमंत्रियों के अलावा विधानसभा चुनाव के दौर से गुजर रहे जम्मू कश्मीर और झारखंड के मुख्यमंत्री शामिल नहीं हो सके। बैठक में प्रधानमंत्री ने नए निकाय में राज्यों की भूमिका बढ़ाने पर जोर दिया।



चर्चा के दौरान कांग्रेस नीत सरकार वाले राज्यों ने योजना आयोग को दुरुस्त करने के विचार का तो समर्थन किया लेकिन वे प्रथम प्रधानमंत्री जवाहरलाल नेहरू के स्थापित इस आयोग को खत्म करने के विचार से सहमत नहीं थे। उनका कहना था कि आयोग को नए ढंग से विकसित किया जा सकता है। वहीं दूसरी तरफ राजग सरकार वाले कुछ राज्यों व तमिलनाडु व तेलंगाना ने आयोग को तत्काल खत्म करने की जरूरत पर बल दिया। रविवार की बैठक का एक दौर अलग से बातचीत

का था। इसमें प्रधानमंत्री की मुख्यमंत्रियों के साथ अलग-अलग बातचीत हुई। इस दौर की चर्चाओं में कोई अधिकारी मौजूद नहीं था।

बैठक में मुख्य रूप से चार पहलुओं पर बात हुई। इनमें पंचवर्षीय योजना प्रणाली, वार्षिक योजनाओं और केंद्र से राज्यों को दिए जाने वाले कोष की वर्तमान व्यवस्था के भविष्य का मुद्दा प्रमुख था। वित्त मंत्री जेटली ने कहा कि यह सवाल भी उठा कि 12वीं पंचवर्षीय योजना (2012-17) चल रही है और इसे जारी रखा जाएगा या नहीं। नए निकाय में बौद्धिक और शोध संस्थानों की भूमिका पर भी विस्तार से चर्चा हुई। प्रधानमंत्री ऐसे संस्थान में विशेषज्ञों और तकनीकीविदों की भूमिका को महत्वपूर्ण मानते हैं। चर्चा में इस पहलू पर भी जोर दिया गया कि इससे योजनाओं और नीतियों के निर्माण में निजी क्षेत्र की भूमिका के लिए भी अवसर बनेगा।

जेटली के मुताबिक करीब-करीब सभी ने बदलाव का पक्ष लिया। लेकिन एक सवाल उठा कि क्या मौजूदा ढांचे को नए रूप में विकसित किया जा सकता है या एक नया ढांचा खड़ा करने की जरूरत है। उन्होंने कहा कि तीन-चार मुख्यमंत्री चाहते थे कि वर्तमान आयोग को ही विकसित किया जाए। यह पूछने पर कि क्या वे कांग्रेस शासित राज्यों के थे, उनका जवाब था-आपका अनुमान सही है। प्रधानमंत्री ने बैठक में कहा कि नीति नियोजन की प्रक्रिया बदलने और इसे 'ऊपर से नीचे के बजाए', 'नीचे से ऊपर' की प्रक्रिया बनाने की जरूरत है। उन्होंने जोर देकर कहा कि राज्यों के विकास के बगैर देश का विकास असंभव है।

नए निकाय में राज्यों के अहम रोल पर जोर देते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि कभी-कभी राज्य महसूस करते हैं कि उनके विचारों को अभिव्यक्त करने का कोई मंच नहीं है। अंतरराज्यीय विवादों के समाधान के लिए एक प्रभावी व्यवस्था होनी चाहिए। प्रधानमंत्री ने पूछा- क्या हम नई व्यवस्था तैयार कर सकते हैं जो भारत की शक्तियों के अनुसार योजना बना सके, राज्यों को सशक्त कर सके और सरकार के बाहर होने वाली आर्थिक गतिविधियों समेत सभी आर्थिक गतिविधियों को समाहित कर सके। सहयोगपूर्ण संघीय व्यवस्था की भावना का आह्वान करते हुए प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने कहा कि मौजूदा वैश्विक परिदृश्य ने भारत को आगे बढ़ने के लिए लंबी छलांग लगाने का एक मौका दिया है।

उन्होंने कहा कि देश अपनी शक्ति के सही उपयोग से इसे संभव कर सकता है व देश की शक्ति के समुचित दोहन के लिए योजना आयोग की जगह एक उपयुक्त निकाय के गठन की जरूरत है। प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि दो दशक से अधिक समय से योजना आयोग की भूमिका, प्रासंगिकता व पुनर्गठन पर बार-बार सवाल उठाए जाते रहे हैं। अब सभी के लिए विकास प्राथमिकता है व अब समय आ गया है जब वृद्धि और विकास के लिए एक नई व्यवस्था बनाई जाए।

मोदी ने यह भी रेखांकित किया कि अमेरिका जैसे देशों में जहां शोध संस्थान सरकार से स्वतंत्र रूप से काम करते हैं, उनकी नीति निर्माण में बड़ी भूमिका है। उन्होंने कहा कि भारत में भी सरकारी ढांचे से इतर भी आर्थिक गतिविधियां बड़े पैमाने पर होती हैं और उनके लिए भी नीतियां तैयार करने की जरूरत है। मुख्यमंत्रियों ने जो बातें कहीं हैं, उससे योजना आयोग की जगह नए निकाय को स्वरूप देने में मदद मिलेगी। बैठक में अधिकार और योजना के विकेंद्रीकरण पर प्रधानमंत्री के दिए गए बल का उल्लेख करते हुए जेटली ने कहा कि यह सोचना भ्रम है कि केंद्रीय योजनाओं के क्रियान्वयन के मामले में सबके लिए एक ही पैमाना उपयुक्त होगा। कोई भी ऐसी योजना नहीं हो सकती जो सभी राज्यों को समान रूप से उपयोगी हो।

प्रधानमंत्री और मुख्यमंत्रियों की अलग से खुले वातावरण में हुई गुप्तगू में विकास के मुद्दों और अपने-अपने राज्य की सफलता की विशिष्ट कहानियों पर चर्चा के दौर चले। यह पहला मौका है जब मुख्यमंत्रियों के साथ किसी सम्मेलन में उनके साथ प्रधानमंत्री की इस तरह के अलग वातावरण में चर्चा हुई। इसका उद्देश्य एक-दूसरे की सफलताओं से सीखना और उसे दूसरे राज्यों में लागू करना है। मुख्यमंत्रियों ने शासन या सामाजिक सेवाओं की डिलीवरी में सुधार से जुड़े कम-से-कम एक ऐसे पहलू पर चर्चा की, जिसमें उन्होंने कुछ नया किया है और जिसका असर साफ दिखता है।

सभी सहभागियों ने इसे बड़ा उपयोगी प्रयोग बताया और कहा कि भविष्य में भी इसे दोहराया जा सकता है। प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि दो दशक से अधिक समय से योजना आयोग की भूमिका, प्रासंगिकता व पुनर्गठन पर बार-बार सवाल उठाए जाते रहे हैं। 1992 में आर्थिक सुधार शुरू किए जाने के बाद जब यह महसूस किया गया कि सरकारी नीति में बदलाव के मद्देनजर अलग दृष्टिकोण अपनाने की जरूरत है, तब पहली बार इस बारे में आत्मनिरीक्षण किया गया। 2012 में भी संसदीय सलाहकार समिति ने योजना आयोग पर गंभीरता से विचार की जरूरत पर बल दिया और इसकी जगह नए निकाय के गठन की जरूरत बताया।

मंत्रिमंडल की 13 अगस्त को हुई बैठक में 15 मार्च 1950 के उस मंत्रिमंडल प्रस्ताव को खत्म करने को मंजूरी दी गई जिसके तहत योजना आयोग का गठन किया गया था। मंत्रिमंडल ने इसकी जगह नई संस्था की रूपरेखा तय करने के लिए प्रधानमंत्री को अधिकृत किया है।

प्लानिंग कमीशन का स्वरूप बदलने की दिशा में बढ़ी केंद्र सरकार

योजना का नया चेहरा

जागरण ब्यूरो, नई दिल्ली : कांग्रेस शासित राज्यों के 'रस्मी' विरोध के बावजूद राजग सरकार ने योजना आयोग का स्वरूप बदलने की दिशा में कदम बढ़ा दिया है। नई व्यवस्था में केंद्र सरकार के साथ राज्यों और विशेषज्ञों की भी भूमिका होगी। प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की तरफ से इस पर विचार करने के लिए शनिवार को मुख्यमंत्रियों की बैठक बुलाई गई। बैठक को संबोधित करते हुए मोदी ने कहा कि नई व्यवस्था में राज्यों की भूमिका बढ़ाई जाएगी, ताकि उनके हितों के अनुसार योजना में बदलाव हो सके। नई व्यवस्था 'टीम इंडिया' की तर्ज पर काम करेगी। यह राज्यों के बीच होने वाले विवाद के समाधान का भी मंच बनेगी। बैठक के बारे में जानकारी देते हुए वित्त मंत्री अरुण जेटली ने बताया कि कुछ कांग्रेसी राज्यों को छोड़ लगभग सभी ने इस बदलाव का समर्थन किया है। अब केंद्र सरकार को यह फैसला करना है कि नई व्यवस्था कैसी हो और उसे वैधानिक अधिकार दिया जाए या नहीं। उल्लेखनीय है कि योजना आयोग का गठन 23 मार्च 1950 को हुआ था। तत्कालीन प्रधानमंत्री पंडित जवाहरलाल नेहरू इसके पहले अध्यक्ष थे।

सामने कई सवाल

सरकार को अभी कई सवालों का जवाब खोजना है। सबसे अहम यह है कि क्या पांच वर्षों की योजना बनाने की मौजूदा व्यवस्था को तिलांजलि दे दी जाए। अब योजना किस तरह से बनाई जाएगी? राज्यों को फंड का आवंटन किस तरह से होगा?

- मुख्यमंत्रियों के साथ बैठक में केंद्र को अधिकतर राज्यों का समर्थन
- मोदी बोले, 'टीम इंडिया' की तर्ज पर काम करेगी नई व्यवस्था
- कांग्रेस शासित राज्यों के विरोध के बावजूद आगे बढ़ेगी केंद्र सरकार



नई दिल्ली में मुख्यमंत्रियों के साथ बैठक के दौरान प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी और केंद्रीय मंत्री रजनाथ सिंह व अरुण जेटली। प्रेस

संगठन में तीन स्तर

- नए संगठन की पहली टीम में प्रधानमंत्री और मुख्यमंत्री होंगे
- दूसरी टीम में केंद्रीय मंत्री
- तीसरी टीम में केंद्र व राज्य के अफसर

ये होगी व्यवस्था

अरुण जेटली से मिले संकेत के मुताबिक प्रधानमंत्री की अध्यक्षता में कुछ कैबिनेट मंत्रियों, कुछ राज्यों के मुख्यमंत्रियों और अलग-अलग विषयों के विशेषज्ञों को शामिल किया जाएगा। मुख्यमंत्रियों को बारी-बारी से इसका सदस्य बनाया जाएगा। पूर्वोत्तर राज्यों से एक मुख्यमंत्री को हमेशा मौक मिलेगा।

विभिन्न मुद्दों पर सुझाव देने वाले थिंक टैंक की क्या भूमिका होगी? मोदी ने अमेरिका के तर्ज पर थिंक टैंक को अहमियत देने की बात कही है।

इस तरह दिखेगा बदलाव

वर्तमान स्वरूप

- योजना बनाने में ऊपर से नीचे का दृष्टिकोण
- विकास दर, लक्ष्य और रणनीति तय करना
- कैबिनेट की मंजूरी से पंचवर्षीय योजनाएं बनाना, एनडीसी से पास कराना
- मूलतः केंद्र सरकार की संस्था, राज्यों की हिस्सेदारी नहीं
- राज्यों से विचार-विमर्श की कोई संस्थागत व्यवस्था नहीं
- राज्यों की समस्याओं को सुलझाने की सुदृढ़ व्यवस्था नहीं
- फिलहाल केंद्र प्रायोजित योजनाओं पर जोर

भावी स्वरूप

- योजना राज्यों से परामर्श के बाद बनेगी विकेंद्रीकृत नीति नियोजन
- राज्यों से परामर्श कर राष्ट्रीय विकास रणनीति बनाना
- केंद्र-राज्य मिलकर पंचवर्षीय योजनाओं की जगह मध्यावधि और दीर्घावधि रणनीति बनाएंगे
- राज्यों के प्रतिनिधि शामिल होंगे
- राज्यों से नियमित विचार-विमर्श होगा
- आयोग का सचिवालय केंद्र-राज्यों के बीच सेतु का काम करेगा
- राज्य अपनी जरूरत की योजनाएं बनाएंगे

संबंधित खबरें पढ़ें

>> 7

PART B

NEWS AND VIEWS

Monday 8th December 2014

Polity

: Lalu, Mulayam in new alliance

Economy

: Stalled infrastructure projects set for a Big push

Planning

: Modi wants States' role in new Planning body

Editorial

: Complex challenge in Kashmir

Communication, IT Information Division
Phone # 2525

■ Sebi to allow loan conversion at a lower price on RBI's request

Stalled infrastructure projects set for a big push

SHAJI VIKRAMAN &
GEORGE MATHEW

MUMBAI, DECEMBER 7

THE Securities and Exchange Board of India is considering changing rules to allow Indian banks to convert a larger portion of their loans into equity at less than the six-month average price of the stock in listed companies whose projects especially in the infrastructure sector are being restructured.

This is part of a wider effort by policy makers led by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to get these projects back on track.

Following talks between Sebi and RBI, a proposal is underway seeking to provide a special dispensation only for banks to convert part of their loan exposure to troubled or stalled infrastructure projects at a price lower than the market.

This may be allowed only if the restructuring has the explicit or implicit approval of the central bank, senior officials said. The RBI had approached the capital market regulator to seek a new pricing formula as it reckons that some of the projects are valuable resources.

As current rules allow conversion of loans into equity only at a price higher than the prevailing market price given the Sebi norm of a six-month average, banks have lost money in a few

SPECIAL WINDOW FOR BANKS



■ A proposal is underway to let banks to convert part of their loan exposure into equity at a price lower than the market

■ Current rules allow conversion of only at a higher price given the Sebi norm of a six-month average

■ Due to this restriction, banks have lost money in a few cases, notably Kingfisher Airlines, which has prompted a review of the rules

cases, notably Kingfisher Airlines. This has prompted a review of rules now.

Banks can now own only upto 10 per cent of the equity in a restructured project.

The capital market regulator is broadly in agreement with this provided the projects are those which form part of a scheme for stalled infrastructure projects or is vetted by the central bank, senior officials said. The difference between the lower price for such conversion and the market price will provide some flexibility to banks which have been hit by rising bad loans.

"We don't want the price to be too low... then the value gets transferred from minority shareholders. We don't want the value to be too high, then the value gets transferred from the banks," RBI Governor, Raghuram Rajan had said last week after the monetary policy review. Bankers have been complaining that the six-month average price was a major road-block in the restructuring process.

Figures compiled by the finance ministry show that 371 projects with a investment Rs 18,47,266 crore are pending for resolution with the Project Monitoring Group (PMG) of the government.

This has also led to a fall in new project investments in the country. State-owned banks which funded these projects predominantly are already saddled with Rs 2,43,043 crore of bad loans — which is 5.32 per cent of their advances.

In an inter-action with a select group of print media journalists last week, Rajan said that many of these projects are in deep trouble and will need new infusion of funds. "Unless the capital structure is remedied, there won't be any new infusion... even to complete the projects. You will have to restructure the capital structure," he said.

The RBI is keen to introduce adequate safeguards. "The question we have to ask ourselves is: can we build in enough safeguards that we don't have misuse of this

process? We are trying to create some flexibility with enough safeguards. If the project succeeds, you have a big chunk of equity which will give a big upside," Rajan had said last week. The safeguards that he hinted at could be because of past experience when such conversion of loans into equity was perceived as an attempt to mask bad loans.

In the case of loans to Kingfisher Airlines, banks which converted their debt at a price of Rs 65 a share are sitting on huge losses. The Kingfisher stock is now being quoted at Rs 1.34, — a massive loss of 98 per cent in the value of banks' equity holding in the company. This was when the loan conversion was done in line with the Sebi formula of six-month average price.

Following misuse of the restructuring mechanism, the RBI had, in May 2013, restricted conversion of loans into equity by banks to 10 per cent of the restructured debt.

The RBI now also plans to allow banks to use the 5/25 norms for infra loans — now available only to fresh projects — for existing projects. What that means is banks can give loans to new infra projects for a 25-year period and refinance them every five years provided these projects do not become a non-performing asset.

These loans would not be classified as a restructured asset — which attracts a higher provisioning of 5 per cent — but categorised as standard.

\$400-bn investments likely for 24x7 power

ON CARDS 1 bn tonne coal, 100,000 MW of solar power to be produced, \$50 bn investments in transmission & distribution

HT Correspondent

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Narendra Modi-led government's ambitious plan to provide 24x7 power to all in the country by 2019 would involve investments of around \$400 billion (about ₹24 lakh crore) in India's energy sector.

"I am looking at 1 billion tonne coal production, 100 giga watt (GW), or 100,000 mega watt (MW) of solar power capacity and investments of about \$50 billion in the transmission and distribution segment in the next five years," power and coal minister Piyush Goyal said at an event organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on Saturday.

Around \$100-billion investments in renewables alone is expected over the next 4-5 years. This part, thermal power generation, nuclear and hydel power addition will also attract sizeable investments.

"A \$400-billion plan with fair returns for investments would ensure 24x7 power and make India the capital of clean energy," a CII statement said citing Goyal.

The minister also highlighted the need to revive stranded power projects, especially gas-based power ones to create a balance of base and peak power. At present, it is estimated that 1.32 lakh MW of coal and gas-based power projects, involving



■ Power minister Piyush Goyal at the CII event in New Delhi PTI

investments of ₹6.2 lakh crore, are stranded for various reasons including fuel shortages and financial constraints.

The power ministry is working with the finance ministry to kickstart stressed power projects.

Steps to ease movement of coal from mines to power stations have been initiated, Goyal said. These include increasing the number of rakes (carrying coal) involving an investment of \$1 billion and rationalising coal linkages to optimise costs and save almost ₹6,000 crore.

Reforms are also being planned for ailing distribution companies. The government is providing provisions whereby the entire discom set up will be unbundled. While there will

be a government distributor to ensure that power is provided to the weaker section of society, competition will be introduced and the private sector role in the sector will be expanded.

"The government is hoping to come forward with a clear cut roadmap on how to achieve the 100-GW solar target at a global conference on renewable energy (RE-INVEST), which is scheduled in February 2015," the minister said.

Discussing the innovative financing models and the new framework that the government is now evaluating, he said: "Innovative financing models have helped make solar energy a viable business proposition. We are looking at graded tariffs to achieve grid parity; provide investors a fair return on investment over the lifecycle of the project and bring in an entity to provide power purchase assurance to investors."

Emphasising on the business case for investments in renewable energy, particularly for large investors, Goyal said: "Factoring in accelerated depreciation gains and leveraging the strong balance sheets to avail the benefits of lower interest rates will help reduce the cost of solar power downwards of ₹5, on a par with conventional power. This can change the whole economics of the business."

FM plans ₹13k-cr carrot to clear GST bottlenecks

Likely to clear a third of CST compensation dues to get states on board

VRISHTI BENIWAL
New Delhi, 7 December

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, who is meeting state finance ministers on Thursday to garner support for the Constitution Amendment Bill for a goods & services tax (GST), is likely to immediately dole out about ₹13,000 crore in Central Sales Tax (CST) compensation to states.

The minister, even as he is walking the tightrope to contain the government's fiscal deficit, might propose to clear about a third of states' ₹34,000-crore CST dues in the first supplementary demand for grants, to be tabled in the current Parliament session, officials said.

The empowered committee of state finance ministers is to discuss the draft Constitution Amendment Bill for implementation of GST at their meeting on Thursday. Later that day, Jaitley will meet the state FMs and try to reach a broad understanding on crucial issues. That will be against the backdrop of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Sunday meeting with chief ministers where he emphasised the need for states' greater role in the proposed body to replace the Planning Commission.

"We have shared the draft Constitution Amendment Bill with the empowered committee. The matter will be handled at the political level now," said a finance ministry official who did not wish to be named.

Among the states earlier opposed to the proposed GST regime, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat have relented since a Modi-led government took charge at the Centre in May this year. In two other major states, Maharashtra and Haryana, Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party has replaced the Congress at the helm of governments after the recent Assembly polls there. Tamil Nadu was a dissenting state but it is expected to mellow down after the Centre recently gave relief to J Jayalalithaa, chief of the ruling All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam there, in an old income-tax case.

Though consuming states will benefit from a destination-based tax, West Bengal might still not extend its support to the Bill easily, given the recent war of words between Mamata Banerjee, that state's chief minister, and BJP President Amit Shah. It is important for the government to



The empowered committee of state finance ministers will discuss the draft Constitution Amendment Bill at its meeting on Thursday. Later that day, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley will meet the state FMs to reach a consensus on crucial issues

ALL ON BOARD?

- Among states that were opposing GST earlier, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat have relented since a Modi-led govt came to power at the Centre in May this year
- In Maharashtra and Haryana, BJP has replaced Congress at the helm of the state govts after recent polls
- Tamil Nadu, another dissenting state, might change stance after the Centre recently gave relief to AIADMK chief J Jayalalithaa in an old income-tax case
- Bengal could still not extend its support to the Bill easily, given the recent war of words between Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and BJP President Amit Shah
- It is important for the govt to have Banerjee's Trinamool Congress on board, as NDA does not have the required numbers to get the Bill passed in the Rajya Sabha

have the Trinamool Congress on its side, as the BJP-led ruling coalition does not have the required number of members to get the Bill passed in the Rajya Sabha.

"States will press their demand to keep fuel outside the ambit of GST. The Centre's suggestion on keeping petroleum products zero-rated under GST will not work. If petroleum is subsumed, states cannot get CST on inter-state movement. Integrated GST gives revenue to the consuming state, while CST gives it to the originating state," said a state government official.

Though the Centre seems firm on its decision to subsume petroleum and entry taxes in GST, with a provision for first tranche of CST compensation, Jaitley is likely to assure states the Centre will compensate them for three years' losses under GST as well, even without a provision for that in the Constitution.

After the previous two finance ministers refused to release CST compensation till states extended their cooperation on GST, Jaitley promised to clear the dues over a

period of three years.

The central government wants to table the Bill in the current Parliament session, so that GST can be implemented from April 2016. The Bill is important for the government, especially at a time when industry is beginning to complain about the lack of crucial reforms even six months after the change of power at the Centre.

"If they do not present the Constitution Amendment Bill in this session, GST will not happen," said Harishanker Subramaniam, partner, EY. He, however, added it was equally important to bring out a GST with minimum exemptions. So, petroleum products, property, entry taxes and even alcohol should be subsumed in a GST.

As a robust information technology (IT) infrastructure would be the backbone of GST, as highlighted by the prime minister several times, the finance ministry has also started assessing IT preparedness of states. Revenue Secretary Shaktikanta Das is planning a meeting on the issue on Wednesday.

NEW FRONTIERS

India's communication satellite GSAT-16 launched successfully



■ Isro's GSAT-16 undergoing pre-launch tests

PHOTO: ISRO

Vanita Srivastava

■ vanita.srivastava@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: India's communication satellite, GSAT-16, was successfully launched at 02:10 am on Sunday by the Ariane-5 launch vehicle VA221 of Arianespace from Kourou, French Guiana.

Isro will put 48 transponders in space, the largest ever so far, through the launch of GSAT-16. GSAT-16, an advanced communication satellite, is being inducted into the INSAT/GSAT system.

"This will definitely boost satellite capacity as 48 new transponders will be added to the existing 180 transponders," Isro chairman Dr K Radhakrishnan told HT.

The designed on-orbit operational life of GSAT-16 is 12 years. The communication transponders on board GSAT-16 will ensure continuity of various services provided by the INSAT/GSAT system

and serve as on-orbit spares to meet the contingency requirements or for the augmentation of such services.

Isro's Master Control Facility (MCF) in Karnataka started acquiring the signal from the satellite at 0241 hrs IST and the commanding of the satellite was initiated. Initial checks have indicated normal health of the satellite.

The present orbit of the satellite will be raised to Geostationary Orbit of about 36,000 km altitude through three orbit raising manoeuvres by the firing of GSAT-16's Liquid Apogee Motor Engine.

Preparations are underway for the first firing, planned in the early hours of December 8, 2014. The satellite will be placed in the Geostationary Orbit by December 12 and subsequently the satellite's communication transponders will be switched on for in-orbit testing.

Defence, energy to top the agenda of Modi-Putin meet

RICHA MISHRA/AMITI SEN

New Delhi, December 7

Defence and energy will again be on top of the agenda as heads of Russia and India, Narendra Modi and Vladimir Putin meet end of this week.

Informed sources told *BusinessLine* that while there will be commercial talks between businesses of the two countries, there will be also strategic discussions, including technical tie-ups for military.

The two are likely to take forward the proposed 'energy highway' - pipeline network transporting hydrocarbons from Russia to Indian border - as well as strength nuclear cooperation.

Other focus areas

Besides energy and Defence, Putin will also look for cooperation in areas such as education, infrastructure, tourism, and bilateral trade, including starting work on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

Political critics are seeing Putin's visit to be followed by American President Barack Obama's tour in January as India's growing strength in Asia.

Putin's visit also gathers significance as it is being interpreted as Russia's attempts to renew its ties with old partners, including India, following sanctions by the West over the Ukraine crisis.

The External Affairs Ministry is pushing for a larger strategic role for India in the energy space.

"Energy Highway" as a concept has been earlier discussed when former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh

had visited Russia. At that time both the countries had agreed to explore the possibilities of direct flowing of oil and gas from Russia to India through the land route. It was also agreed to set up a joint study group.

DK Sarraf, Chairman and Managing Director, ONGC, had earlier told *BusinessLine* that, "Our team is working with Rosneft to look for real opportunities in exploration...But, the more important



Vladimir Putin

thing that will happen is direct transportation of hydrocarbons from there to India... it could be a pipeline from Russia, Kazakhstan to India."

Commercial talks

At the commercial level, talks have been going on between India's ONGC Videsh Ltd and Russia's Rosneft for 10 per cent stake in Vankor oilfields - largest field to be brought into production in Russia in last 25 years.

Russia has also offered OVL a proposal to do joint development of Yurubcheno-Tokhomskoye oilfield in eastern Siberia. An OVL official said, "we are doing due diligence. A final call will be taken."

The President may also take up the issue of the Russian Government's failed titanium joint venture with Kolkata-based Saraf Industries urging India to help it get back its. At present, India's trade with Russia is \$6 billion, which is less than one per cent of the country's total foreign trade.

Recently, Russia removed restrictions on bovine meat imports from India and this is likely to be followed by more imports of farm products.

Lalu, Mulayam in new alliance

Atiq Khan

LUCKNOW: Close on the heels of the assemblage of former constituents of the erstwhile Janata Parivar, the families of two prominent members of the "parivar" — Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh and Rashtriya Janata Dal president Lalu Prasad — on Sunday took a firm step to strengthen their relationship by announcing a matrimonial alliance between the two families.

Mr. Prasad's youngest daughter Raj Laxmi is set to marry Mr. Mulayam Singh's grand nephew and Mainpuri MP Tej Pratap Yadav. The wedding is likely to be held in 2015. It will mark the coming together of two prominent political families of U.P. and Bihar.

The former Bihar Chief Minister, accompanied by his close family members, was in Lucknow on Sunday to perform the pre-marriage ceremony — "shagun", or "roka" — at the Samajwadi Party president's residence. Mr. Prasad was received at the Amausi airport by Mulayam's younger brother and Public Works Department Minister, Shivpal Singh Yadav.



RJD chief Lalu Prasad and SP chief Mulayam Singh greet each other in Lucknow on Sunday at the 'shagun' ceremony held to finalise the marriage of Mr. Prasad's daughter with Mr. Singh's grandnephew. — PHOTO: PTI

Mr. Prasad told reporters that the engagement would be held in Delhi on December 16.

On the decision to forge a political alliance of the RJD, the SP, the Janata Dal (United) and the Janata Dal (Secular), the former Bihar Chief Minister said they had united to "expose the BJP." The alliance would prove to be strong and efforts would be made to bring together the other constituents of the Janata Parivar.

The ceremony was a family affair with only

prominent members of the two political families present. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, who was in Delhi in connection with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with Chief Ministers, was not present, SP sources said.

The political association of the two leaders dates back to the days of the Janata Party. When the Janata Dal was formed in the late 1980s, both emerged as Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in 1989 and 1990.

MSY, Lalu seal ties with shagun

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The two Yadav chieftains of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar — Mulayam Singh Yadav and Lalu Yadav — entered into a new alliance when the latter came to the State capital with 'shagun' for his youngest daughter's marriage with Mulayam's grandson Tej Pratap.

"This alliance is *pucca. Cement ka jod hai tutega nahi* (... it is bonded by cement. It will not break)," Lalu Yadav told the reporters at portico of 5, Vikramaditya Marg on Sunday when he came along with his wife Rabri Devi and son Tejaswi Yadav with marriage proposal of his daughter.

Lalu, in his inimical style said, "We have brought my youngest daughter Raj Lakshmi's shagun for marriage with Netaji's grandson Tej Pratap. We are entering into a new partnership which will continue till ages."

He and Mulayam's family members stood there at the portico for few minutes giving an opportunity to the photographers to click the family picture. This is just the beginning. There will be more such family pictures of the RJD chief and the Samajwadi Party chief posing with each other at the wedding ceremony of Tej Pratap and Raj Lakshmi.

"There are many programmes lined for near future. The engagement would be on December 16 in New Delhi. It will be held at a farmhouse outside Delhi," he said.

When asked, When is the marriage? Lalu replied, "Yeh hum kaise bataen. Yeh to panditji batayenge." "But it would be soon," he added.

Sources in the family said that marriage is likely to take



SP chief Mulayam Singh Yadav and RJD chief Lalu Prasad exchange greetings during the pre-wedding ceremony of Lalu's daughter with Mulayam's grandson, in Lucknow on Sunday

PTI

place in February, 2015.

The shagun ceremony was carried out at the drawing room of 5, Vikramaditya Marg. Tejaswi Yadav and Rabri Yadav presented gifts to the Tej Pratap while Lalu and Mulayam shared light moments with Ram Gopal Yadav.

Tej Pratap, son of Ranveer Singh, had won Mainpuri bye-elections after Mulayam vacated the seat.

The news of marriage

coming days after the announcement that Mulayam and Lalu will come together to reincarnate the Janata Dal, is being

viewed by the political class as the prelude to the mega merger that the Janata Dal break-always are planning.

The two party chiefs had split during the 1990s for leadership of the Mandal classes and Mulayam had even pub-

licly regretted when Lalu vetoed his name for prime ministership in the United Front Government in 1997. The coming together of Lalu and Mulayam in relationship is likely to erase bitter memories of what happened during the 1990s.

"When we have joined hand we will chart out a new political history," Lalu Yadav said. "The communal forces who have come to power by making false promises will be kicked out of power," he said.

Mulayam, however, stayed from making any political statement. "I welcome Laluji and all those who have come with him with an open heart," he said.

This alliance is pucca. Cement ka jod hai tutega nahi (... it is bonded by cement. It will not break)
LALU YADAV

PLANNING COMMISSION

No consensus among CMs on panel revamp

Centre to hold further discussions with States

Puja Mehra

NEW DELHI: There was no consensus among Chief Ministers at a meeting specially convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the nature of the body that should replace the Planning Commission.

At Sunday's meeting, Congress Chief Ministers questioned the Government's approval to scrap the Planning Commission, which was announced by the Prime Minister on August 15. Instead, they demanded that the Centre reinvent the plan panel rather than scrapping it and replacing it with a new body.

At the consultation meeting, the Centre and States also couldn't reach any agreement on whether India should retain or scrap five-year plans and the annual State plans. Briefing reporters after the meeting Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the Centre would hold further consultations to decide on the alternative mechanism to transfer funds from the Centre to the States for Central Plan Assistance.

He said that at the meeting,



Chief Ministers greet Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting in New Delhi. — PHOTO: PTI

Agreement on greater federalism and more powers for States

there was broad consensus on three points: federalism must be strengthened, States must get more powers and they must have greater flexibility to implement schemes and programmes. "All States agreed that the principle of one-size-fits-all as far as the design and format of schemes and programmes go does not work," Mr. Jaitley said. He al-

so said that all States were in favour of cooperative federalism.

Sunday's consultations follow a decision of the Cabinet on August 13, to repeal the March 15, 1950 Resolution by which the Planning Commission was set up. Mr. Modi said "Team India" was a combination of three teams — the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers; the Union Council of Ministers; and the bureaucracy in the Centre and States.

■ MODI FOR 'BOTTOM TO TOP' APPROACH | PAGE 10

FROM PAGE ONE-

Modi calls for 'bottom to top' approach to policy

Puja Mehra

NEW DELHI: At the specially convened meeting of Chief Ministers on restructuring the Planning Commission, Prime Minister Narendra Modi invoked the spirit of cooperative federalism and called for abandoning the incremental approach.

Mr Modi said process of policy planning has to change from "top to bottom" to "bottom to top."

In his opening remarks, the Prime Minister stressed on the need for a suitable body to replace the Commission and said the role, relevance and restructuring of the plan panel had been repeatedly questioned for more than

two decades.

"Can we develop a new mechanism that plans according to India's strengths, empowers States, and brings on board all economic activity, including that which happens outside the Government," the Prime Minister asked, according to an official release.

Further, the Prime Minister said that when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat, he had attended meetings of the Commission, and had felt the need for a better platform to articulate the views of States.

The meeting could not reach a consensus on the nature of the body to replace the Planning Commission.

States take Centre-stage in new think tank

Modi Govt To Shun One-Size-Fits-All Approach, Let CMs Tailor Plans To Suit Their Needs

Mahendra.Singh@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The BJP government's blueprint for a revamp of the planning exercise envisages giving states flexibility to tailor their plans to suit their needs and requirements instead of the Centre imposing a "one-size-fits-all" programme.

In a 40-page presentation during a meeting of chief ministers, the government said the institution to replace the Planning Commission would be empowered to formulate national development strategy in a market economy integrated with the globalized world in consultation with states.

Highlighting key weaknesses in the erstwhile planning panel, the presentation suggested six key functions for the new institution that included evolving consensus

NEW BODY IN THE MAKING

WHY THE NEED FOR A REVAMP?

- No structured mechanism for regular engagement with states
- Ineffective forum for resolution of Centre-state and inter-ministerial issues
- Inadequate capacity, expertise and domain knowledge, weak network with think tanks, lack of access to expertise outside government
- Weak implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes

WHAT WILL THE NEW ENTITY DO?

- Evolve consensus on national development strategy
- Foster cooperative federalism
- Platform for resolution of

cross-sectoral issues at Centre and states

- Define the reforms agenda
- Knowledge and innovation hub
- Capacity building and technology watch group

WHAT ARE THE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Whether five-year plans will continue and in what shape

Fate of annual plans and discussions on this between Centre and states

How will plan funds flow from Centre to states

The 'think tank' role of the new entity and if it should be the innovation and knowledge hub for states.

on national development strategy, defining reforms agenda, acting as a platform for resolution of cross-sectoral issues at the Centre and states and as a know-

ledge and innovation hub and capacity-building and technology watch group.

The plan visualizes partnership with states in promoting cooperative federal-

ism as it proposes permanent members from states in the new body.

The new institution will act as a platform for structured and regular inter-

action with states as there are indications that the government is working on a structure which will have the PM, some Cabinet ministers and some chief ministers along with technocrats and experts from various fields.

The government is also open for a relook on the mechanism for fund flows from the Centre to states as CMs were asked to give suggestions on the issue.

Pressing for an effective structure which strengthens "cooperative federalism" and the concept of "Team India", PM Narendra Modi said, "It is impossible for the nation to develop unless states develop."

Finance minister Arun Jaitley said, "There cannot be a universal scheme that suits all states. It is a fallacy that one size fits all in case of im-

plementation of central schemes. The strategy should be to empower the states to enable them to meet their own specific needs."

The blueprint visualizes the new organization to play an active role in forging partnerships with national and international policy hubs and think tanks while facilitating exchanges with national and international universities, academia and research institutes.

"The think tank role of the new institution was a very important agenda item and I think most people were in favour of that because it is more encompassing as it not only covers states' methodology of expenditure but also gives direction or indicates at least a direction in which the private sector can also have a role," Jaitley said.

Most states back end to Plan panel by Jan 26

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Centre on Sunday formally moved to bury the Planning Commission before January 26 with strong support from regional parties. The only resistance came from Congress-ruled states, which failed to garner support, except from the Bihar government controlled by Nitish Kumar, once a supporter of decentralization in decision-making.

PM Narendra Modi, who discussed the role of the commission with chief ministers, had announced the government's intent to replace it with a new entity in his Independence Day address. On Sunday, he made it clear that there was a need to replace the top-down approach in planning with a "bottom-to-top" approach and give states a key role. He argued for cooperative federalism and strengthening "Team India".

THE PLAN AHEAD: P 9

Amid stiff resistance from Congress chief ministers, Modi invoked his predecessor Manmohan Singh, who was once deputy chairman of the Planning Commission. "He said that Manmohan Singh... had noted that the body has no futuristic vision in the post-reform period. He had also noted that the Planning Commission would have to reinvent itself to remain more effective and relevant in the present situation," said an official statement quoting Modi.

Although finance minister Arun Jaitley said there was no deadline for a revamp, there are indications that the new structure will be in place over the next few weeks and will include a select group of CMs, central ministers and experts.

Sunday's meeting came against the backdrop of the opposition trying to step up protests against the government, and holding up Parliament last week.

Telangana, TN & Odisha team up against plan panel

► Continued from P 1

Though Sunday's meeting of PM Narendra Modi with CMs came amid tension between the NDA and its opponents in Parliament, it did not turn into a show of hostility as regional parties decided to focus on the interests of their states, leaving Congress with support mainly from the Bihar government, while Uttar Pradesh too backed change.

Although Nitish Kumar was critical of limited space that states enjoy in policy formulation, his nominee and Bihar CM Jitan Ram Manjhi's stance reflected the realities of the new alliance that his party JD(U) has crafted

PCR, Naidu bat for PM's 'Team India'

The CMs of Andhra and Telangana on Sunday welcomed the PM's proposal of a 'Team India' comprising a council of CMs replacing the Plan panel. While Telangana CM K Chandrasekhar Rao suggested a permanent secretariat for the team, his AP counterpart N Chandrababu Naidu proposed a 'Vision 2050' with specific targets. TNN

with bitter rival Lalu Prasad's RJD and Congress.

Official sources said TRS was the most vocal critic of the Planning Commission and suggested that it should be done



PM Narendra Modi meets Punjab CM Parkash Singh Badal and other CMs in New Delhi on Sunday

away with immediately, a stand that found support from J Jayalithaa's AIADMK-led Tamil Nadu government and BJD, which is in power in Odisha.

Bengal CM Mamata Baner-

jee, who did not attend the meeting, had written to the PM arguing in favour of strengthening the states and ending discretion in fund transfer. SAD and TDP, which are BJP's

Move short-sighted, dangerous: Cong

Congress on Sunday strongly rejected the BJP government's plan to dismantle the Planning Commission, saying the move was "shortsighted and dangerous" as it would have a long-term adverse effect on Centre-state relations. The party asserted that the Plan panel needed "reorientation" and not "political burial". "PM Modi's announcement to dismantle the Planning Commission is arbitrary. No meeting of National Development Council was convened and the states not consulted. This has undermined the federal structure of the country," Congress's Ajay Maken said. "Any move to rename or restructure is unwarranted in national interest and must be opposed," he added. Party spokesman Anand Sharma said it was interesting that the PM called a meeting of CMs to discuss the Plan panel's future almost four months after "unilaterally" announcing the decision to dismantle it. TNN

allies, also supported the move to scrap the Plan panel.

"There was larger consensus that the context has changed and there is a need for decentralization of both

power and planning and states need to be strengthened," Jaitely told reporters after the meeting.

For the full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com

Cong slams PM's 'arbitrary' plan, regional outfits give it thumbs up

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Regional parties, who for long have been seeking decentralization of power, on Sunday came out in support of the government's plan to revamp the Planning Commission with a crucial rider that there should be no discretion and states should be given representation in the new body.

The support comes at a time when Congress has launched an offensive against the government's plan to dismantle the commission.

In a letter to the PM, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee, who did not attend the meeting, said: "Any new structure that is thought of should strengthen the role of the states and eliminate actions like discretionary fund transfers." She also suggested assigning the decision-making responsibilities of the Planning Commission to the inter-state council.

TDP boss and Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu hailed the move, saying, "The decision will be in the interest of the nation and will help India become a superpower by 2050. The sensitivity that the new government has shown



PM Narendra Modi with CMs and governors at the retreat at 7, Race Course Road on Sunday. **For steps to download & use the Alive app, see P 2**

towards states is because of the fact that it is led by a man who was himself a CM."

Uttar Pradesh CM Akhilesh Yadav said the states and the Centre should have equal participation in the new body.

Tamil Nadu CM O Panneerselvam said CMs should be given representation in the new entity. He said the proposed body should prepare sector-wise strategic vision documents specifying the medium-

and long-term perspective while calling for abandoning of annual plan discussions.

However, Congress CMs opposed disbanding the Plan panel and sought a revamp of the existing body. "In my view, a new forum is not necessary. Presently, the Planning Commission has been guided by the deliberations of the National Development Council, in which all CMs are also participants," Karnataka CM

Siddaramaiah said. Himachal CM Virbhadra Singh said the Plan panel should be strengthened in its present form.

Assam CM Tarun Gogoi also opposed the move, saying replacing the body without carefully devising a new structure was likely to do more harm than good.

Kerala CM Oommen Chandy termed Centre's decision to dismantle the Planning Commission "arbitrary".

Centre sees more role for States, corporates in new-look Plan panel

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, December 7

Larger roles for States and the private sector are what the proposed alternative to the Planning Commission will have, if Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brainstorming session with chief ministers on Sunday is any indication.

While a majority of the States favoured a new body replacing the existing Commission, some — mostly Congress-led States — were inclined towards evolving the body into a new structure. Some State leaders like Nitish Kumar and Mamata Banerjee pitched for inter-State councils.

"Every State agreed that there was a need for change with more rights to them. Role of corporate and private sector is important and has to be kept in mind. The

New Plan

- Partner with States to promote 'cooperative federalism'
- Formulate National Development Strategy
- Frame medium- and long-term strategies of one-two decades
- Will tailor plans to suit States' needs
- Support States to remove bottlenecks and impediments

Planning Commission has to reinvent itself," Finance Minister Arun Jaitley told newsmen.

Asked how Modi's description of 'Team India' — the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers, the Union Council of Ministers, and the bureaucracy — fits into the new body, Jaitley said, while the PM and Cabinet Ministers could be representatives, Chief Minis-

ters could get turns in rotation.

Jaitley said that to questions raised by the Planning Commission Secretary, "States responded in writing. Some suggested that the number of central schemes should be brought down. States felt there is a need to decentralise both power and planning. There was a strong argument that not all schemes will fit every State equally, and States know what suits them best. The sum and substance was that States be more empowered."

All States and Union Territories were represented. Finance Ministers of West Bengal and Mizoram and officials of poll-bound States attended. The Finance Minister declined to give a time frame as to when the new body will be in place.

Also read p18

Dismantling Plan panel is 'shortsighted and dangerous', says Congress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, December 7

Congress Deputy Leader in Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma told reporters that dismantling the Planning Commission would be "unwarranted, shortsighted and dangerous" as it will have long-term adverse effect on Centre-State relations," said Anand Sharma, Deputy Leader of the Congress in the Rajya Sabha.

Reacting to the Chief Ministers' conclave called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to replace the Planning Commission here today, Sharma said the Planning Commission needed a "reorientation" and not "political burial".

At the meeting, Congress-ruled States supported the idea of revamping the Planning Commission set up in 1950 but disfavoured its scrapping as they felt it can be "evolved".

Opposing the move to disband the Planning Commission, Aru-



Chief Ministers of Odisha, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu Naveen Patnaik, Vasundhara Raje, and O Panneerselvam at the consultation meeting on Planning Commission revamp, in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

nachal Pradesh Chief Minister Nabam Tuki described the body as a single window for small states to air grievances on issues like regional aspirations and Centre-State disputes.

Except Chief Ministers of West Bengal, Mizoram and poll-bound Jammu and Kashmir and Jharkhand, CMs from all other States attended the meeting where Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and

Home Minister Rajnath Singh were also present.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said there is no merit or justification in the decision to dismantle the existing one creat-

ed six decades ago. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik supported the initiative "aimed at transforming India's cooperative federalism", saying inequitable distribution of resources in the past had caused imbalances in development across states.

Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy said the "arbitrary decision to dismantle" the Planning Commission without convening a meeting of the National Development Council or consulting the states undermines the federal structure.

Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi, a Congress veteran, said: "Perhaps, what is required is to reorient and reform the Commission to meet the needs of the current era. I would like to emphasise that such replacement, without carefully devising the new structure to meet the obligations of our polity and economy, is likely to do more harm than good."

No consensus on Plan panel burial



Prime Minister Narendra Modi shakes hand with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityan during a consultation meeting on Planning Commission in New Delhi on Sunday

PTI

**CMs agree on
devolution of power
to States; Congress
against dismantling
of 65-year-old body**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A consensus emerged over devolution of more "power and planning" to the States at a meeting of Chief Ministers called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday to decide the fate of the Planning Commission, though the Congress and some other parties opposed the complete dismantling of the 65-year-old body. However, BJP-ruled

States and some of those ruled by parties like the AIADMK, TRS and BJD supported the initiative taken by the Prime Minister.

There were indications after the meeting that the proposed new body would 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 rotation and the States could be given liberty to spend funds according to their needs.

While BJP-ruled States like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Haryana and Gujarat supported the move to dismantle the Plan panel, Congress-ruled Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Assam and Arunachal

Pradesh opposed the proposal.

West Bengal also opposed the move. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's representative proposed that the role of the Plan panel should be given to inter-State council and opposed its dismantling.

The important takeaway was in the PM's opening and closing remarks where he dropped enough hints about the structure of the new body. Modi pushed for an effective structure, which strengthens "co-operative federalism" and the concept of "Team India", and even cited his predecessor Manmohan Singh as saying on April 30 this year that the current structure has "no futuristic vision in the post-reform period."

Continued on Page 4

Modi wants States' role in new planning body

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the role, relevance and restructuring of the Planning Commission had been repeatedly questioned for more than two decades. He was speaking at the Chief Minister conference to discuss the Centre's proposal to dismantle the Planning Commission and its replacement by a new body.

Underlining that it was impossible for the nation to develop unless the States develop, he told the meeting that the process of policy planning needs to change from "top to bottom".

The States should have a key role in the new body, Modi said, adding that "states sometimes feel there is no platform to express their views... There should be an effective mechanism to address inter-state disputes."

"Can we develop a new mechanism that plans according to India's strengths, empowers states, and brings on board all economic activity, including that which happens outside the Government," he asked while setting the tone for the meeting. Modi also noted that in countries such as the USA, think-tanks that function independently of the Government have a major role in policy-making.

In India too, he added, there is a great deal of economic activity that happens outside the Government set-up, and there is a need to design policies for them as well.

Modi further said that inputs provided by Chief Ministers would help in shaping the structure of the new



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Chief Ministers and Governors of various States at the retreat at Race Course Road, following a meeting on the Planning Commission, in New Delhi on Sunday

PTI

body to replace the Planning Commission.

Later the Prime Minister held a retreat, a first of its kind where the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers met without the support of any officials in a relaxed, private setting and discussed developmental issues and specific success stories in their States.

Opposing the move to disband the Planning Commission, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Nabam Tuki described the body as a single window for small States to air grievances on issues like regional aspirations and Centre-state disputes.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said there is no merit or justification in the decision to dismantle the existing one created six decades ago.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik supported the initiative "aimed at transforming India's co-operative federalism", saying inequitable distribution of resources in the past had caused imbalance in development across States.

At the meeting, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav hit out at the Centre for financially "burdening" the States by executing schemes which come under the State list, saying such programmes were putting the resources of the State Governments under undue pressure.

He also said the practice of 'one size fits all' should be discarded by the new body which takes over the role of the Planning Commission as without a flexible policy, the States

with differing needs cannot develop. Yadav said the contribution made by the Planning Commission in "challenging times cannot be ignored. "We have to incorporate changes based on experience gained over a period of time," he said, referring to the revamp of the plan panel.

Asserting that the Planning Commission does not meet aspirations of the States, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday suggested its replacement with a new advisory body. He also suggested establishment of a "knowledge and innovation hub" under the proposed body. The plan panel "has a centralised structure. It doesn't meet the aspirations and needs of the States. There is a need to

change the mandate of Planning Commission," he said. The new body should be under the Prime Minister and have all Chief Ministers as its members, and have advisory role, he said.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis called for replacement of Planning Commission with a National Development and Reforms Commission to achieve *Sabka Vikas Sabka Saath* motto of the ruling NDA Government at the Centre. Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh and Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje also backed the idea of dismantling the archaic plan panel.

Raje emphasised that Co-operative Federalism in the true sense is the only way through which States can work together to achieve national goals. She thanked the Prime Minister and his Council for creating an enabling environment where States were being allowed to comment fearlessly on governance structures.

Modi also got support from Tamil Nadu Government, which backed the idea of dismantling the plan panel and pitched for a stronger role for states in the new mechanism.

TN Chief Minister O Panneerselvam recalled that Modi had highlighted the need to bring States to the Centre of the development process as the primary motivation to replace the Planning Commission.

"This is a welcome emphasis. In our constitution, for reasons of administrative efficiency and convenience, more of the taxation powers are vested with the Central Government.

New plan body: PM invokes Manmohan to win over Cong

Chetan Chauhan

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi invoked former PM Manmohan Singh on Sunday in the face of opposition from Congress-ruled states over his decision to scrap the Planning Commission, saying a new body was needed to "strengthen" the federal structure and empower states.

Speaking at his first meeting with chief ministers to seek suggestions on the new body to replace the plan panel, Modi stressed it was impossible for the nation to develop without its states.

"Can we develop a new mechanism that plans according to India's strengths, empowers states, and brings on board all economic activity, including what happens outside the government," the PM asked. Modi also recalled feeling the need for a better platform to articulate the views of states when he used to attend the plan panel's meetings as Gujarat CM.

The government dismantled the Planning Commission through a Cabinet decision on August 13, two days before the PM announced it during his Independence Day speech.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

PANEL BATTLE

IN SUPPORT

BJP ruled: Haryana, Gujarat, MP, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh

Others: Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh

THOSE OPPOSED

Cong ruled: Uttarakhand, Kerala, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Manipur, Meghalaya and Mizoram

Others: Bihar, West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir

- Consensus on states getting more powers
- Congress CMs object to scrapping panel

Many CMs back Modi on plan body change

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 7

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi calling a meeting of chief ministers on Sunday to discuss the broad contours of the new body that will replace the "Nehruvian" Planning Commission, there seemed a consensus among participants that more powers in development planning and execution should be devolved to the states. Congress chief ministers, particularly from Assam and Karnataka, however, strongly opposed any move to dismantle the existing 65-year-old body established by India's first PM Jawaharlal Nehru.

As a follow-up to his Independence Day announcement from the Red Fort that the existing plan body would "soon" be replaced by a "new institution", Mr Modi was with the chief ministers for nearly seven hours at his residence on Sunday, deliberating on what should be the future shape of plan panel's new avatar.

Making a strong pitch for "cooperative federalism" and his concept of "Team India", the PM also cited his predecessor Manmohan Singh, saying he too had said on April 30 that the current structure has "no



Prime Minister Narendra Modi exchanges greetings with Rajasthan chief minister Vasundhara Raje during their meeting on the Planning Commission revamp in New Delhi on Sunday.
— PTI

● **Modi points out that Manmohan too wanted change as existing body had 'no futuristic vision'**

futuristic vision in the post-reform period".

Barring the chief ministers of West Bengal, Mizoram and poll-bound Jammu and Kashmir and Jharkhand, the CMs from all other states attended the meeting, where finance minister Arun Jaitley and home minister Rajnath Singh were also present.

Briefing the media, Mr Jaitley later said there was a "larger consensus" that the "context" had changed and there was a "need to decentralise both power and planning".

Noting that there cannot be a universal scheme that "suits all states", Mr Jaitley said: "It is a fallacy that one size fits all in case of implementation of Central schemes." He emphasised that the strategy should be to empower the states to enable them to meet their own specific needs. Giving no specific

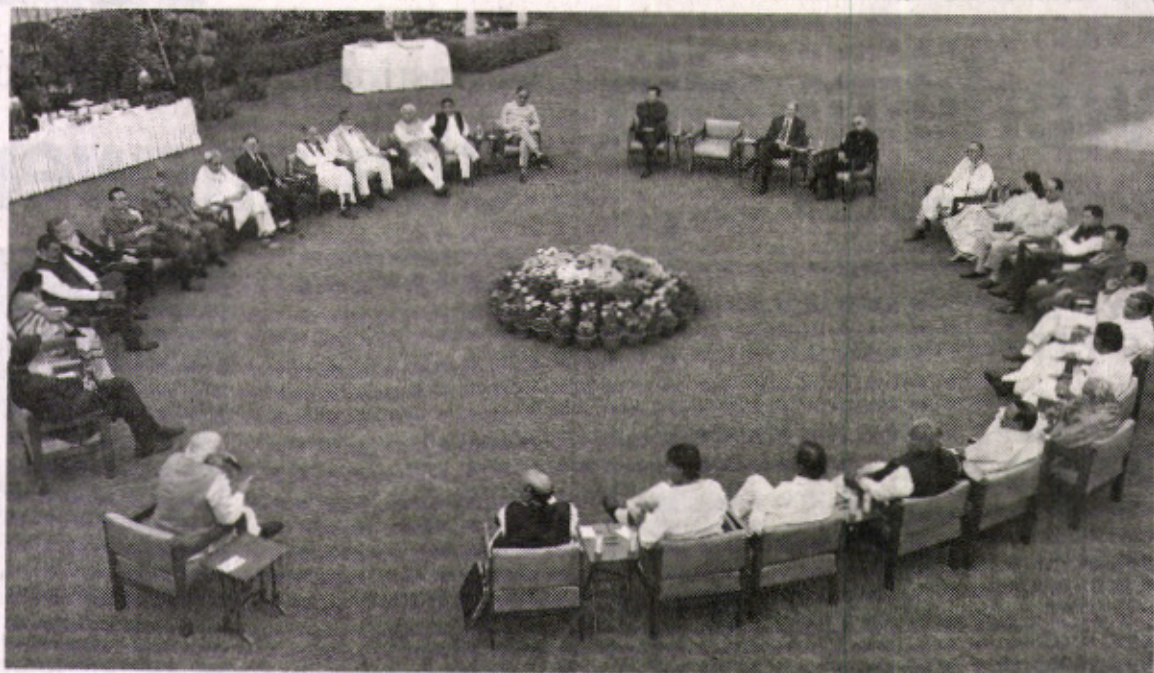
■ Turn to Page 3

Cong attacks govt efforts to dismantle Plan panel

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 7

While the main Opposition Congress on Sunday condemned the BJP government's efforts to dismantle the Planning Commission, the Janata Dal (U) disapproved this move.

AICC general-secretary and chairman of the AICC's communication department Ajay Maken said, "Today, this announcement was followed by a meeting with chief ministers without having any debates/deliberations at any forum whatsoever. The aim clearly is to roughshod and hoodwink for political one-upmanship." "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement to dismantle the Planning Commission is arbitrary. No meeting of the NDC was convened and the states not consulted. This, has undermined the federal structure of the country. The move is short-sighted and dangerous. It will have long term adverse impact on Central and states relations. Any move to rename or restructure is unwarranted in the national interest and must be opposed," Mr Maken said. The JD(U) chief Sharad Yadav criticised the Centre's move to replace the Planning Commission while pointing out that changing the institution would change the track of the nation's planning.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with chief ministers and governors of various states at the retreat at Race Course Road, following the meeting on Planning Commission revamp, in New Delhi on Sunday.

— PTI

Panel for experts from all fields

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 7

Suggesting that the new body, which will replace the Planning Commission, should be structured in such a way that it meets the need of changing economic paradigm, both domestic and global, the panel in its presentation at the meeting of chief ministers, which was chaired by Prime Minister, said that the new avatar should comprise of experts from different fields and state representatives.

In her presentation before the top leadership of the country, which the

● It is suggested that the new body would advise the PM on matters referred to it

Prime Minister once called "Team India", planning secretary Sindhushree Khullar said that the new institution may have 8-10 regulars or executive members with half of them representing the states. Ms Khullar suggested that the remaining members could be experts — environmentalists, financial experts, engineers, scientists and eminent scholars from different fields. She, however,

suggested that the Prime Minister might head the new body as its ex-officio chairman.

The secretary in her presentation also suggested that the new institution would have functions, including monitoring and evaluation; programme, project and scheme evaluation; across sectors and inter-ministerial expertise and appraisal and monitoring of projects.

It is suggested that the new body would advise the Prime Minister on matters referred to it. Besides, it should act as think-tank and have network with universities and other institutions.

The new body could provide internal consultancy services to states and the Centre on different matters. It could also be used to design medium and long-term strategy. The commission had held meetings with experts to discuss the structure of the new institution that would ultimately replace it. Country's first PM Jawaharlal Nehru had set up the commission to steer the nation's economic course. Set up by a Cabinet resolution, the commission had enjoyed immense power and prestige as it had always been headed by the Prime Minister.

Most states back revamp of Plan panel

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 7

Contending that winding up of Soviet-era Planning Commission as the "need of the hour", Andhra Pradesh chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday spoke of the need for all chief ministers of the country to come together and work in tandem to take the nation to greater heights.

In his interaction with the media after the chief ministers' conference on the issue called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr Naidu said he strongly supported Mr Modi's views that the Planning Commission has lost its relevance in the current situation and it needs to be revamped in a manner that it reflects the existing realities. "I am supporting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's idea of doing away with the Planning Commission. The new body should have a council of ministers and council of chief ministers who would work towards taking the nation to greater heights. All chief ministers should work in tandem," he said.

The Andhra Pradesh chief minister indicated that he did not raise the issue of accord Special Category Status to his state during the meeting, as the purpose of Sunday's conference was different.

Mr Naidu said the secretariat of the new body that is set to replace the Planning Commission would function in a non-partisan manner so that all states get equal importance.

Strongly batting for disbanding of Planning Commission, Telangana chief minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Sunday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure that the new proposed body to be effective to move towards the goal of cooperative federalism. Contending that development of India lies in the development of states, Mr Rao said the country could-

Didn't attend due to poll code: Omar

● J&K chief minister Omar Abdullah said he did not attend PM Narendra Modi's meet on plan panel as the Model Code of Conduct was in force. Omar, the NC working president, said had he said or demanded anything for the state during the meeting, BJP would have filed a case of violation of the Model Code of Conduct. — PTI

n't be strong if states remain weak and proposed that for effective interaction, the council of chief ministers under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister may participate as members of "Team India" to deliberate and decide on all the general and important policy issues.

"However, for issues specific to a region or a few states, such as the Ganga Action Plan or Left-wing extremism, chief ministers of states concerned may be grouped into sub-groups to deliberate on issues specific to them," he said in his address.

Castigating the Planning Commission's "arrogant and condescending" approach, Tamil Nadu chief minister O. Panneerselvam on Sunday put its weight behind the BJP government's move to do away with the plan panel and pitched the need for "genuinely" respecting the views of the state governments on issues that are of concern to the country.

In his 28-page speech that had the seal of his mentor and AIADMK chief J. Jayalalithaa in every word, he reminded those present that the past few decades have seen a "steady shift in real political and economic power" away from the Centre and that regional leaders are now far more significant players.

Most CMs okay with Plan Panel switch

Seek greater role for states in new body | Modi bats for bottom-to-top approach

KV PRASAD

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

Initiating a formal dialogue with states in taking forward the idea of having an alternative set-up to the Planning Commission, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday discussed with chief ministers the contours of its shape and structure.

Most CMs advocated a new arrangement with greater role for states, while a few preferred a revamp of the current set-up.

Endorsing the view of the states for an expanded role, Modi said the process should change from the current top-down approach to bottom-to-top, reiterating that the country's development was linked to that of states.

Expanding on his vision of the alternative body that he had announced on the Independence Day, the Prime Minister said: "Team India should be a combination of three teams—the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers; the Union Council of Ministers; and the bureaucracy in the Centre and



Prime Minister Narendra Modi shakes hands with Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal during a meeting for a revamp of the Planning Commission in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

3-tier mechanism

“Team India should be a combination of three teams – the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers; the Union Council of Ministers; and the bureaucracy in the Centre and states” Narendra Modi, PM

states.” Invoking the spirit of “cooperative federalism” in his opening remarks, Modi said the current global scenario offered a chance for India to take a big leap forward and

States' concerns

- Several CMs highlighted that Central plans prepared by the Commission were not according to requirements of states. It deprives states of funds allocated under such plans
- Some states, especially from the North-East, expressed concern over losing special category status
- One of the suggestions included the formation of groups of CMs who can hold focused meetings with the PM instead of all CMs converging on one platform

called for abandoning the incremental approach.

Missing from the assembly was the Chief Minister of West Bengal as also from poll-bound Jammu and Kashmir

and Jharkhand. In order to provide an informal touch to the process, Prime Minister organised a ‘Retreat’ where

CONTINUED ON P11

From the region

“States should be given freedom to opt for their own development path for achieving national objectives within the time frame defined by the national forum. The freedom to formulate need-based strategies will encourage innovation in governance”

Manohar Lal Khattar, HARYANA CM

“The plan panel had played a pioneering role in the past six decades. It should continue to assist the states in formulation of plans”

Virbhadra Singh, HIMACHAL CM

“We welcome the PM's initiative of making the planning process truly federal, with greater fiscal and planning autonomy to states...the nation needs to focus on basic amenities such as drinking water & quality education instead of diverting precious resources on projects such as bullet trains”

Parkash Singh Badal, PUNJAB CM

On Putin visit eve, India, Russia to hold talks on delayed FGFA project

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

Ahead of Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India this week, the two countries will hold talks on Tuesday to iron out differences on the much delayed joint multi-billion dollar Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft (FGFA) project.

Defence sources said the talks between Indian and Russian officials here are being held as both the countries are keen to go ahead with the FGFA. Putin is scheduled to arrive in New Delhi the next day.

However, there are issues on which both sides have not arrived at a consensus.

The sources said that it is "unlikely" that the contract would be signed during Putin's visit.

"There are issues that exist. Talks were held earlier too but nothing concrete has emerged so far," the sources said, adding another round of talks will be held on December 9.

At present, the final design and research and development contracts are under negotiations between the two countries. The preliminary design agreement on the FGFA

Design deals under negotiations

- The FGFA project is based on the Russian Air Force's Sukhoi T-50 PAK-FA platform. The Indian version will be tweaked to add some more advanced features. The total programme is expected to cost India about \$25-30 billion.
- At present, the final design and research and development contracts are under negotiations between the two countries.
- The preliminary design agreement on the FGFA had been signed in 2010 between Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and the Russian Sukhoi Design Bureau to build the jet for use by both countries.

had been signed in 2010 between Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Russian Sukhoi Design Bureau to build the jet for use by both countries.

But the final R&D contract, which was to be signed by 2012, is still to be finalised. The contract would pave the way for prototype development and flight testing.

Though India is investing 50 per cent of the cost of the multi-billion dollar programme, its work share in the research and development and other aspects of the programme has come down to around 13 per cent, something which Indian officials are not happy about.

Sources said this will impact India's indigenous

capabilities to develop such an advanced fighter aircraft.

They also said that there are issues related to other aspects of the plane too.

The FGFA project is based on the Russian Air Force's Sukhoi T-50 PAK-FA platform. The Indian version will be tweaked to add some more advanced features. The total programme is expected to cost India about \$25-30 billion.

Indian Air Force Chief Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha recently acknowledged that some issues regarding Indian work-share in the programme need to be resolved.

The FGFA is a long-term acquisition that would take at least eight years from the signing of the contract. — PTI

Most states back Plan to replace Commission

SURABHI

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

A MAJORITY of chief ministers on Sunday favoured Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposal to replace the Planning Commission with another institution that would reflect a truly federal polity and a changed economic scenario, and which recognises states' need for flexibility in spending.

Congress-ruled states, how-

ever, did not favour dismantling the 64-year old Commission, and instead suggested a revamp of the existing structure.

The issue was discussed during a four-hour meeting moderated by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, where the PM "invoked the spirit of cooperative federalism" and stressed on the need for a suitable body to replace the Planning Commission.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

WHAT THEY TOLD MODI

MANIK SARKAR (Tripura): Give rotational representation to states, special attention to NE

AKHILESH YADAV (UP): Give states freedom to execute projects

NAVEEN PATNAIK (Orissa): Need special category status

JEETAN RAM MANJHI (Bihar): Where is the need to dismantle Planning Commission in middle of 12th Plan?

FULL COVERAGE, PAGE 3

CMs from six states share their unique stories of development

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

WITH the intention of fostering competition among states, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday asked six Chief Ministers — a careful mix of Congress, BJP, and non-Congress non-BJP CMs — to

make short presentations on their development successes during the one-hour "agenda-less retreat" with all CMs, after his meeting with them over the form the Planning Commission should take.

The six states picked were BJP-governed Rajasthan and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

"The process of policy planning also has to change from 'top to bottom' to 'bottom to top'," Modi is learnt to have told the chief ministers.

The PM also referred to remarks that his predecessor Manmohan Singh had made on April 30, to the effect that the Plan panel lacked a futuristic vision in the post-reform era. Singh had noted that the panel would have to reinvent itself in order to stay effective and relevant, according to an official release.

Government sources said an alternative to the Plan panel was likely to be announced within a month. It would be chaired by the Prime Minister and include some Cabinet ministers, chief ministers, as well as private sector experts. Chief ministers may be inducted by rotation, and have greater say in the allocation and use of central funds.

The new institution will, as recommended by the Planning Commission, also serve as a hub for innovation and research. In accordance with the recommendation of most state governments, it is likely to do away with the concept of planning and annual plans. An option on the table is to subsume the functions of the Planning Commission in the Inter-State Council, provided for by the Constitution.

Jaitley, who briefed the media after the meeting, said no timeline had been fixed for setting up the new body. "The central government will take a considered view after the consultation is over," he said, and indicated that the Budget would be prepared as in the

Plan panel

past. "There is no disagreement on the need for change. But the transition should be managed well," said a Congress chief minister.

In his Independence Day speech, Modi had proposed restructuring the Planning Commission to suit the current needs of the economy, and to empower the states which, at the moment, have little say in decisions on state plans.

BJP-ruled states including Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Gujarat were in favour of the move, as were Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Punjab and most Northeastern states. Bihar, Assam, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, however, questioned the need to replace the Planning Commission.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee did not attend the meeting, but has supported an alternative to the Plan panel in a letter to the Prime Minister. The chief ministers of Jharkhand and Jammu & Kashmir, which are in the midst of assembly elections, did not attend.

Sources said chief ministers were given five to seven minutes to present their views, with Jaitley in charge of managing the time. Prime Minister Modi interjected only once during the meeting (apart from the introductory and concluding remarks) to clarify his position on the Plan panel. He said he appreciated the work of the Planning Commission, and emphasised that he had never called for its abolition. He

pointed out to states opposing the move that former PM Manmohan Singh too had called for restructuring the Soviet-era agency.

Some states are understood to have questioned the need for dismantling the Commission in the middle of a Plan period; those in favour of the proposal, however, asked for it to be disbanded immediately.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis suggested that the Planning Commission be replaced by a National Development and Reforms Commission, as well as a grouping of similar states. Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal is understood to have pointed out that states must have more say in the new body on decisions affecting them such as minimum support price for grains. CMs of Northeastern states said they often got a raw deal because of their small populations and the inability to raise resources.

Planning Commission secretary Sindhushree Khullar made a presentation on the need and role of the proposed agency — and sought comments from states on whether the five-year Plan should be continued, the scope and method of interaction in the new forum, restructuring of fund flows for the central Plan to states, and the role of the knowledge and innovation hub for states.

L-Gs of Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Puducherry were also present at the meeting. West Bengal and Mizoram were represented by their finance ministers.

Most CMs okay with Plan Panel switch

FROM PAGE 1

without aides, he and the chief ministers discussed developmental issues and specific success stories in their states.

"The purpose is to learn from each other's successes so that they could be replicated in other states. Chief ministers highlighted one area each where they had done something innovative and which had a visible impact, either in improving governance or in improving service delivery to citizens," an official statement said.

Summing up the deliberations, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said: "A large number of states were in favour of changing the structure while some favoured evolving the current Planning Commission. States were asked to respond to a set of four questions sent by the government earlier including on what should happen to the current Five-Year Plan.

Minister of State for Planning, Rao Inderjit Singh, told The Tribune some states, especially the North-East, expressed concern over losing special category status. Several CMs highlighted that Central plans drawn by the Commission had no bearing to requirements of the states thus depriving them of funds allocated under it. One of the suggestions included the formation of groups of Chief Ministers who can hold focused meeting with the Prime Minister instead of all CMs converging on one platform.

Reminding the formal assembly that discussion on the role and relevance of Planning Commission began with the advent of economic reforms in 1992, Prime Minister Modi cited remarks of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh towards the end of his term on April 30 this year in regard to the Planning Commission.

The Prime Minister said: "Dr Singh, who had been

associated for a long time with the Planning Commission, had noted the body has no futuristic vision in the post-reform period and that it would have to reinvent itself to remain more effective and relevant in the present situation."

Modi said the first introspection on the role, relevance and restructuring of the plan body was done in 1992 when it was felt that in the light of changing government policy, a different approach was required. Two years ago, the Parliamentary Consultative Committee underscored the need for a serious look at the Planning Commission and the need to replace it with a new body. This view for a better platform to articulate views of the state was reinforced when he (Modi) had attended meetings of the Planning Commission as Gujarat Chief Minister.

The Prime Minister also noted that in countries such as the US, think-tanks that function independently of the government have a major role in policy-making. In India too, he said, there is a great deal of economic activity that happens outside the government set-up, and there is a need to design policies for them as well.

"Can we develop a new mechanism, that plans according to India's strengths, empowers states, and brings on board all economic activity, including that which happens outside the Government," the Prime Minister sought to know.

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee sent a letter through her Finance Minister suggesting that instead of a new executive body, decision-making of Planning Commission be brought under the Inter-State Council, a constitutional set-up and National Development Council be subsumed within.

New body should address changing economic needs, says Plan panel

New Delhi, Dec 7: The Planning Commission on Sunday suggested to a group chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi that its replacement body should be structured to meet the need of changing economic paradigm and comprise sectoral experts and states representative.

In her presentation before the group comprising Modi and chief ministers, planning secretary Sindhu Khullar said that the new institution may have 8-10 regulars or executive members with half of them representing the states.

She suggested that the remaining members could be sectoral experts - environmentalists, financial experts, engineers, scientists and eminent scholars from different fields.

The new body may be headed by the Prime Minister as the chairperson position would be ex-officio.

The meeting, convened



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with home minister Rajnath Singh at a meeting on revamping the Planning Commission on Sunday

by Modi to deliberate on replacement of the Planning Commission, was attended by the several Chief Ministers, including Akhilesh Yadav (UP), Manohar Lal Khattar (Haryana), Devendra Fadnis (Maharashtra), Vasundhara Raje (Rajasthan), Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Madhya Pradesh), Raman Singh (Chhattisgarh), Harish Rawat (Uttarakhand)

and Oommen Chandy (Kerala).

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee skipped the meeting. State finance minister Amit Mitra represented West Bengal.

Khullar in her presentation suggested that the new institution would have functions including monitoring and evaluation; programme

The new planning body could provide internal consultancy services to states and the Centre on different matters, besides acting as a think-tank

project and scheme evaluation; cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial expertise and appraisal and monitoring of projects.

It has been suggested that the new body would advise the Prime Minister on matters referred to it. Besides, it should act as think-tank and have network with universities and other institutions.

The new body could provide internal consultancy services to states and the Centre on different matters. It could also be used to design medium and long-term strategy.

PTI

Modi's bottom-up idea to replace Plan panel secures support of CMs

■ Proposes think tank of independent experts, CMs and PM

By Bureau
New Delhi, Dec 7

TO ALIGN development priorities and resource-sharing between the Centre and states with the dynamic needs of the economy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday proposed a "bottom to top" approach in policy planning to be implemented by a think tank of state chief ministers, independent experts and the PM himself.

Modi discussed with state chief ministers in the capital the contours of the proposed modern think tank that would replace the over 60-year-old Planning Commission, which symbolises centralised planning of the Nehruvian era. Modi ruled out incremental steps and called for a total replacement of the Commission, although the last couple of years have witnessed easing of the Commission's micromanagement of centrally sponsored projects.

Stressing that it was impossible for the nation to develop unless states develop, Modi said states must have a greater role in the think tank and reflect the true spirit of "cooperative federalism."

"The process of policy planning also has to change from top to bottom to bottom to top," said a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office, quoting Modi. There is a need for the proposed new body, or the council of chief ministers, to design policies for the economic activity that happens outside government set-up, the statement said. "States should have a key role in the



PM Narendra Modi with home minister Rajnath Singh, finance minister Arun Jaitley and chief ministers and governors of various states after their meeting on the proposed restructuring of the Planning Commission, in New Delhi, on Sunday

TOWARDS A REVAMP

- Stressing that it was impossible for the nation to develop unless states develop, Modi said states must have a greater role in the think tank and reflect the true spirit of "cooperative federalism"
- Modi ruled out incremental steps and called for a total replacement of the Commission, although the last couple of years have witnessed easing of the Commission's micromanagement of centrally sponsored projects
- The Prime Minister wants to do away with the system of Planning Commission's five-year macro targets and resource allocation schemes being executed through the Union Budget

new body to replace the Planning Commission," it said.

In fact, the writing was on the wall as far as the Commission's future role was concerned — UPA finance minister P Chidambaram's 2014-15 interim Budget acceded to states' long-standing demand of transferring more funds straight to state treasuries rather than to project implementing agencies.

According to that, of the central assistance for states and union territories, the component of funds that goes straight to state treasuries was trebled to Rs 3.39 lakh crore for 2014-15, from a revised estimate of Rs 1.19 lakh crore in 2013-14. That resulted in funds for key centrally sponsored schemes, including UPA's flagship schemes on employment guarantee, rural housing, health and education, going to the consolidated funds of the states, rather than to implementing agen-

cies. The number of centrally sponsored schemes has also come down to 67, and the plan is to further reduce their count.

Chidambaram's interim Budget support for the Central Plan (the component routed through ministries via the commission) was slashed to Rs 2.17 lakh crore from Rs 3.56 lakh crore. Arun Jaitley, who succeeded Chidambaram, followed the same pattern in his maiden Budget on July 10.

Modi wants to do away with the system of Planning Commission's five-year macro targets and resource allocation schemes being executed through the Union Budget. The Commission's primary function is to determine the (quantum) allocation of Plan funds out of the gross budgetary support it receives to states, as opposed to the Constitutionally mandated role for the Finance Commission that evolves the formula for

sharing of central tax receipts with states.

Sunday's meeting was attended by most chief ministers. The few who could not participate were represented by their finance ministers or senior officers.

Finance minister Arun Jaitley, who briefed reporters after the meeting, said there was consensus that an alternative to the Commission was needed. "States have broadly responded in favour of strengthening their ability to deliver, for which they need more flexibility rather than a system of command and control," said Jaitley. He said there was consensus about the need to decentralise both power and planning.

"The requirement of each state is different and they know what suits them better. Therefore, the strategy is to empower states. There cannot be a universal scheme that fits all," said the finance minister.

New Body Replacing Plan Panel Likely by End-Jan

Majority of states are on board, but Congress opposing move

Our Bureau

New Delhi: The Narendra Modi-led NDA government will move ahead with setting up of a new institution in place of the Planning Commission despite resistance from Congress-ruled states as a majority of states are on board. The new institution could be in place before the end of January

Modi refers to remarks by Manmohan Singh to bolster his push for replacing the plan panel

2015 and would have adequate representation from states and will include domain experts.

In a meeting convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with chief ministers of all states on Sunday, Congress-ruled states were of the view that the present Planning Commission

should be evolved into a new structure, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley told the media after the meeting.

"Most states are in favour of a system that strengthens their ability to deliver and hence they want more flexibility. There was a larger consensus to the effect that the context has

Change in the Air

The govt is yet to decide on the structure of the new institution

It may include the PM, some CMs & Cabinet ministers along with domain experts

States could be given the liberty to spend funds according to their needs

Planning Secretary Sindhushree Khullar has proposed six key functions of the new institution



changed and there is a need to decentralise power and planning and states needs to be empowered," Jaitley added.

Earlier, Modi referred to remarks by his predecessor to bolster his push for replacing the Planning Commission.

GOVT CLAIMS 'CONSENSUS' ON REPLACING PLAN PANEL

CONGRESS CHIEF MINISTERS FOR REVAMP, NOT COMPLETE DISMANTLING

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi, 7 December

Most chief ministers attending a meeting called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss the future of the Planning Commission today were in favour of restructuring of the Nehru-era body but some of them expressed reservations on disbanding the existing set-up.

Indications from the day-long meeting suggested that the government is looking at a structure which will have the Prime Minister, some Cabinet ministers and some Chief Ministers on rotation basis along with technocrats and experts in various fields.

The majority of Chief Ministers favoured the idea that states could be given liberty to spend funds according to their needs. The Prime Minister in his speech also sought to give greater role for the states in the new body.

Briefing the media, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley later said there was a "larger consensus" that the "context" has changed



Prime Minister Narendra Modi (lower right corner) with state chief ministers at a retreat at Race Course Road, following a consultation meeting on replacing Planning Commission. In New Delhi on Sunday - SNS

and there is a "need to decentralise both power and planning". Mr Jaitley said no time-line has been fixed, saying the Centre will take a "considered view after consultations are over". However, he indicated that the shape of the new structure could be firmed up by 26 January next year.

At the meeting, four Congress-ruled states supported the idea of revamping the Planning Commission set up by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1950 but

suggested changes within existing structure.

They said doing away with the Plan panel was likely to have an adverse effect on key areas like monitoring of human development in the states, Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan, facilitating and mainstreaming social sector reform and promotion of decentralized planning.

However, some NDA states and those ruled by parties like AIADMK and TRS wanted immediate

disbanding of the Planning Commission.

Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy opposed the idea of dismantling the Planning panel without convening a meeting of the National Development Council (NDC) or consulting the states, saying this undermines the federal structure. He said the Centre's proposal to replace the panel with a new body is "half baked, unwarranted and ignores the need of planned development"

of the country. "The proposed move to distribute the planning functions amongst the Ministry of Finance and subject matter ministries will result in loss of perspective and of long-term view," the Congress leader said.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav hit out at the Centre for financially "burdening" states by executing schemes which come under the State List, saying such programmes were putting the resources of the state governments under undue pressure.

He also said the practice of 'one size fits all' should be discarded by the proposed body, as without a flexible policy, the states with differing needs cannot develop.

Congress Deputy Leader in Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma later told reporters that dismantling the Planning Commission would be "unwarranted, shortsighted and dangerous" as it will have long-term adverse effect on Centre-state relations. He said the panel needed a "reorientation" and not "political burial".

Modi Invokes Manmohan to Push for Planning Commission Revamp

Says former PM had also stressed that body needed to reinvent itself to stay effective & relevant in present situation



Our Bureau

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi invoked his predecessor Manmohan Singh to bolster his push for replacing the virtually defunct Planning Commission, at a meeting with chief ministers to discuss the future of the panel where he mooted a bottom-up approach to policy planning instead of the top-down system.

"The current global scenario offered a chance for India to take a big leap forward," Modi said, seeking to abandon the 'incremental' approach of the past and creating a new team approach between the Centre and the states in the spirit of co-operative federalism.

Stressing that states should have a key role in the new body to replace the Commission often termed a Nehruvian relic, Modi recalled his own experiences while dealing with the Commission as Gujarat chief minister and said a better platform was needed to articulate states' views, co-operative federalism.

Modi said Singh had sought a reboot of the Plan Panel at 'the end of his term,' citing an April 30 meeting of the Commission chaired by the ex-PM.

But officials said Singh had originally raised the same concerns and sought to reinvent the

Planning Commission at the start of his second innings in May 2009, roping in change management expert Arun Maira to steer the process.

But the plan never took off, prompting Singh to voice the same concerns about the relevance of the Commission and its

PANEL LACKS VISION

Manmohan Singh, who had been associated for a long time with the Planning Commission, had noted that the body has no futuristic vision in the post-reform period

future at its last meeting chaired by him this April.

"Manmohan Singh, who had been associated for a long time with the Planning Commission, had noted that the body has no futuristic vision in the post-reform period. He had also noted that the Planning Commission would have to reinvent itself to remain more effective and relevant in

the present situation," Modi told state CMs in his concluding remarks.

Modi himself had announced the demise of the Commission in his Independence Day address to the nation, where he said it should be replaced by an organization which can think creatively, strengthen the federal structure and energise states.

"It is impossible for the nation to develop unless states develop... Can we develop a new mechanism, that plans according to India's strengths, empowers states, and brings on board all economic activity, including that which happens outside the government?" Modi asked, kicking off the consultation with the states on Sunday.

An official statement from the PM's office said the PM 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.

"In countries such as the 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," the PM said.



CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS

Opposition unites against scrapping of Plan panel

What it needs is reorientation and not renaming or a political burial: Anand Sharma

Jatin Gandhi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to hold the first Centre-State consultation on replacing the Planning Commission has provided ammunition to the Opposition.

With the Parliament in session, the Opposition is preparing to team up against the decision and the manner in which it has been taken. They are likely to attack the Prime Minister for "first scrapping the Planning Commission and then seeking suggestions for its replacement," an Opposition MP in the Lok Sabha told *The Hindu*. He said the Opposition parties were holding consultations.

"The move is short-sighted and dangerous. It will also have long term adverse impact on Centre-State relations... What the Planning Commission needs is reorientation and not renaming or a political burial," Congress spokesperson Anand Sharma said, reacting sharply to Mr. Modi's meeting with Chief Ministers.

Mr. Sharma said Mr. Modi had called the meeting nearly four months after unilaterally announcing that the Commission would be disbanded. "It is ironic that the Prime Minister has claimed that the move is to empower State governments and strengthen the federal structure, after having taken the arbitrary decision without

Practice of 'one size fits all' ought to be discarded by the new body to help States with differing needs to develop: Uttar Pradesh CM

convening the meeting of National Development Council or consulting States."

The party's sentiments were echoed in the speeches of its Chief Ministers at the meeting. Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled States, on the other hand, praised Mr. Modi's re-vamp plan.

"It was unfortunate on the part of the Central government to unilaterally do away with the Planning Commission that came into being in 1950, [and] which had been playing a pivotal role in the development of the country," Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy said. He added that the Planning Commission had been instrumental in ensuring social equality, decentralised planning and monitoring of human development, especially of the socially and economically backward segments in the country's population. Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh Nabam Tuki said, "I firmly believe that this spirit of national consensus must continue."

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav said the practice of 'one size fits all' ought to be discarded by the new body to help States with differing needs to develop. He said the contribution made by the Planning Commission in 'challenging times' could not be ignored. "We have to incorporate changes based on experience gained over a period of time," Mr. Yadav added.

The Left parties are also likely to oppose the move in Parliament. CPI(M) MP Mohammad Salim said Mr. Modi's move was aimed at "providing a backdoor entry to the private sector in planning, in the name of consultation."

While West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee skipped the meeting, deputing her Finance Minister Amit Mitra to attend it, she had written to Mr. Modi on December 4 saying it would be appropriate to assign the decision-making responsibilities of the Planning Commission to the Inter-State Council. "We should take great care not to dismantle an existing functional mechanism without putting in place a credible and capable body," Ms. Banerjee cautioned in her letter.

JD(U) chief Sharad Yadav had said on Saturday said, "Our party will oppose the manner in which the decision to dismantle the Planning Commission was taken."



CONSULTATION: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Chief Ministers and Governors of various States in New Delhi on Sunday. - PHOTO: PTI

Modi misread Manmohan

National Bureau

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has implied that his predecessor Manmohan Singh felt that the Planning Commission had no "futuristic vision", but a close reading of Dr. Singh's April 30 remarks suggest otherwise.

An official statement quoted Mr. Modi as saying, "Dr. Manmohan Singh, who had been associated for a long time with the Planning Commission, had noted that the body had no

futuristic vision in the post-reform period."

In fact, Dr. Singh had said, "With an increasingly open and liberalised economy with a greater reliance on market mechanisms, we need to reflect on what the role of the Planning Commission needs to be in this new world."

In his remarks at this last meeting of the plan panel, of which he was Chairman for 10 years, Dr. Singh had said: "What the Planning Commission has achieved

over the last decade gives me confidence that it can address these challenges and questions. I am sure it will subject itself to a critical review and will continue to play a leading role in the policy debate in government and in the development of our nation."

Mr. Modi's remarks about Dr. Singh's views, according to an official release, came at the Chief Ministers meeting he had convened on the future of the Planning Commission.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2014

Complex challenge in Kashmir

The sense of satisfaction over the unprecedented voter turnout in Jammu and Kashmir, of more than 71 per cent in the first two phases of elections on November 25 and December 2, has been set back by a series of terror strikes in the Valley. The five-phase elections in the State is in a crucial stage now, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to address his first election rally in the Valley on Monday. Even those who are opposed to the elections understand the popular mood in favour of them and had avoided targeting voters so far. The attacks at four different places that claimed the lives of 11 security personnel and two civilians, were therefore intended to target India and question its narrative of normalcy in the Valley. The attackers came across the border from Pakistan, which has always maintained that Kashmir is the core issue to be resolved between the two countries. Immediate and concrete issues such as roads, electricity, drinking water and employment are important to the people of J&K, as anywhere else, and the people hope that participating in a democratic process would help. To consolidate this positive turn, New Delhi must appreciate other dimensions of Kashmir politics, and acknowledge that there are multiple stakeholders involved. Peaceful elections and wider people's participation are signs of a positive churn, but this is also the time for India to be sensitive to, and engage with, the multilayered and complex questions of Kashmiri aspirations, rather than wish them away.

The Indian response to the violence must not amount to falling into a trap laid by those for whom the goals are instability and strife. Frequent ceasefire violations along the border, cross-border terrorism, and frozen bilateral talks have led to a deterioration of India-Pakistan relations in recent months. India called off talks objecting to Pakistan engaging with Kashmiri separatists. Both countries must take note of Hurriyat leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's offer, made during an interview to this newspaper, to wait before immediately resuming talks and being involved in negotiations. Preconditions and ultimatums will help neither India nor Pakistan. New Delhi must find a partner in the new government that will come to power in J&K, with whom it must talk about the State's material and political aspirations. New Delhi must also engage those who are not participating in elections; after all, India has made peace with a long list of insurgent groups. History is presenting an opportunity in the Valley and it should be seized, not squandered the way the people's mandate in 2008 was. Six terrorists from across the border must not decide the course of a democratic country.