

PART A: News pertaining to Planning Commission



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and Communication, IT & Information Division

(महान लोगों के विचार)

(वह लोग जो जिनके स्पष्ट, लिखित लक्ष्य होते हैं, वह कम समय में दूसरे लोग जितना सोच भी नहीं सकते उससे कहीं ज्यादा सफलता प्राप्त करते हैं)

Brian Tracy ब्रायन ट्रेसी

1. Aadhaar in focus again, Madan team hits ground running

Ruhi Tewari, Indian Express:25.11.2014

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The Authentication Division, another key function of the unique ID, is headed by DDG Shreeranjana. He joined only earlier this year.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's emphasis on the UPA's Aadhaar project, and his aim of universal coverage under the scheme by mid-2015 has resulted in renewed activity at the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). The UIDAI, which had gone near dormant after high-profile chairperson Nandan Nilekani quit earlier this year, has drawn its work strategy afresh under a group of senior officials.

The UIDAI was constituted and notified in 2009 with the objective of providing a unique identity for each resident of India, but was hobbled by teething problems and tussles within the UPA government. Nilekani was the project's brain, whose two key roles, according to sources, were laying down the vision for Aadhaar, and managing external stakeholders. The Authority's internal affairs were handled by its director general.

Broadly, the UIDAI has eight divisions: Authentication, Enrolment, Financial Inclusion, Administration, IT, Finance, Media, and Knowledge Management and Training. Nearly all the officials running them were handpicked by Nilekani.

D-G V S Madan, whom Nilekani chose last year, manages the show, attending all high-level meetings, including with the Prime Minister. Madan, a 1981-batch IAS officer, is assisted by a team of key bureaucrats.

DDG (Enrolment) Sujata Chaturvedi handles the core aspect of Aadhaar — enrolling residents, and keeping close track of all updates, while also being in charge of the Authority's legal and media related activities. Chaturvedi was a part of Nilekani's core team, having been with UIDAI since 2011. Her term, however, runs out soon.

The Authentication Division, another key function of the unique ID, is headed by DDG Shreerajan. He joined only earlier this year.

ADG (Financial Inclusion) Rajesh Bansal heads the crucial division that looks after the integration of Aadhaar with the financial sector, including the Direct Benefits Transfer scheme. Bansal has been with the Authority since 2009. All three — Chaturvedi, Shreerajan and Bansal — operate out of the Authority's Delhi office.

DDG Ashok Dalwai, in-charge of the Bangalore tech centre which handles the backend operations of the project, too has been with the Authority for several years.

Keshni Anand Arora, DDG, Chandigarh regional office, is in charge of states such as Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. She is a key member of the team that runs UIDAI; her importance stems from the fact that the Authority conducts most of its pilot projects in areas under her jurisdiction.

The UIDAI works closely with several ministries, including Finance, Rural Development, Health, Telecom and Petroleum. Among themselves, the DDGs have meetings with the relevant joint secretaries nearly every week.

While the Authority is within the jurisdiction of MoS (Independent Charge) Planning Rao Inderjit Singh, sources say it is monitored directly by the PMO, which is in touch with UIDAI officials on an almost weekly basis. Modi had his first meeting on Aadhaar on July 5, and most instructions have since come straight from the PMO.

While it remains unclear whether the government will appoint another high-profile chairperson to follow Nilekani, the sharper focus on UIDAI, and its increasing need to communicate better, is indicated by the fact that it decided finally to appoint a spokesperson in September — the first that the Authority has ever had.

2. Saarc needs Modi magic

Rajiv Kumar, Financial Express: November 25, 2014 12:18 am

SUMMARY

In Kathmandu, he must ensure that Saarc is not held hostage to the chronic Indo-Pak conflict

The 18th summit of heads of governments of the eight South Asian countries that make up the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) is scheduled for November 26-27 in Kathmandu. There are strong portents that this could be summit with a difference, one that could place Saarc on a higher trajectory in its evolution.

There is a strong possibility that this summit could see the finalisation of the road-transport agreement amongst Saarc members. There is also talk of the regional railways agreement and South Asian power grid being approved. This would represent a real breakthrough in improving physical connectivity in the subcontinent, especially if Pakistan also decides to join. The transport agreement, a component of the multi-modal transport proposal approved earlier by the ministers, will lay the basis for unimpeded movement of commercial vehicles from Dhaka to Kabul and from Kathmandu to Chennai. The big question, of course, is whether Pakistan will join, and if it does come on board, will it permit transit rights for Indian vehicles to reach Afghanistan?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, attending his first Saarc summit, can ensure that this does indeed witness the long-awaited breakthrough and, unlike in the past, Saarc is not held hostage to the chronic Indo-Pak conflict. This unfortunate circumstance has held back regional cooperation in the South for more than three decades. It is time that this Gordian Knot is finally cut. This will require Modi to take some bold steps. In doing so, he will emulate Atal Bihari Vajpayee whose term was characterised by a fresh and bold approach towards Saarc and India's South Asian neighbours. There are six tangible steps that Modi can take to push Saarc forward despite the Indo-Pak rivalry.

Modi has already laid the groundwork for these initiatives by having already invited South Asian leaders to his government's swearing-in ceremony and his path-breaking visit to Kathmandu. As a result, expectations are already high. This is also reinforced by the clear shift in India's posture towards Saarc. From having effectively opposed the regional formation until rather recently, India has now demonstrated its strong support for it and willingness to take the extra step for its success.

The first measure is to announce India's willingness to provide unimpeded access across its territories to regional freight carriers, but extending this to cover Myanmar as well. This measure will provide a huge fillip to intra-Saarc trade, which has been stagnating at a measly 4% of total South Asian trade flows. India's central location and size makes it imperative for it to take an unambiguous stand on facilitating transborder movement of people and freight across South Asian space.

The related second step is to address the vexed issue of visa regimes in the region. In the case of India and Pakistan, the current visa arrangements defy all logic except as a cussed attempt to prevent the growth of people-to-people relationship. Cynics would tell us that both governments covertly welcome such an outcome, as they are genuinely apprehensive of a rising momentum in people-to-people interaction. It is also true that both in Bangladesh and Pakistan there is massive demand for Indian visas. That is clearly an advantageous position for India, which it should build upon. Therefore, it is time that India considers further liberalisation of the visa regime to be announced by Modi at the summit.

Third, India should announce its intention to bring the digital and telecommunication connectivity across South Asia at par with India's other trading partners. It is supreme irony that telecom rates within South Asia remain higher than for communications outside the region. Moreover, India and Pakistan do not permit roaming facilities for mobile telephones, ostensibly due to security reasons. My repeated enquiry from all concerned on how this improves our security has never been answered satisfactorily. It is time to eliminate this Luddite feature, which only constraints honest traders and tourists.

Fourth, India should announce a large recurring annual grant for strengthening the Saarc Secretariat. In return, it should insist on the Secretariat being manned by high quality professionals. Diplomats could qualify but not be the exclusive cadre from which such talent is selected for long-term tenures. This will greatly improve the delivery capacity of the Secretariat. This step will contribute to the growth of a class of professionals who are committed to and specialised in promoting regional cooperation in South Asia.

Fifth, India should announce a Kailash Satyarthi Fund to be used for fighting against any form of child and women trafficking, exploitation and bondage in South Asia. By so honouring the Nobel Laureate, Modi will create an organisation that will, while pursuing its stated goals, help in the fight against the worst forms of social malpractices in the region. Modi can be assured that this one measure will win him friends and gratitude in all South Asian countries.

Sixth, an even bolder step would be for India to announce unilateral liberalisation of market access for Pakistan's exports without any longer waiting for the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status being granted by Pakistan. This is not likely to happen because the 'establishment' in Pakistan is opposed to it. And, in any case, India already has a huge trade surplus with Pakistan. The 'establishment' plays on the ordinary Pakistani's fear that this trade deficit will only worsen if Pakistan grants India the MFN or NDMA (Non-Discriminatory Market Access). Before taking this step, Modi will have to explain to the Indian people the likely positive outcomes of this measure for India. He will have to convince himself and his party colleagues that unilateral economic and commercial liberalisation will enhance India's standing amongst the Pakistan business community and civil society. At the same time, it will remove another argument that is used by the Pakistani armed forces establishment along with its junior partners in the bureaucracy and diplomatic core against normalisation of ties with India. Such a development will be in India's national interest.

Modi has a track record of converting ideas into implementable projects and then successfully executing them. Rejuvenation of Saarc is one such idea. All six proposals given here are individually implementable projects, amenable to deadlines. If implemented, each of them will make a tangible positive impact on regional economic cooperation in South Asia. Modi will achieve a real breakthrough in Kathmandu by announcing these implementable steps. He should eschew any attempt at outlining a grandiose vision or using high rhetoric, which has so far resulted in greater disappointment in the region. In any case, that is not his style. He has an uncanny knack for seizing an opportunity. One such opportunity to change South Asia's destiny beckons him in Kathmandu. Let's hope he seizes it.

The author is senior fellow, Centre for Policy Research, and founder director, Pahle India Foundation

3. Breaking through the climate chakravyuh

Arunabha Ghosh, Business Standard: November 24, 2014

On November 12, China and the United States issued a joint statement: the United States would seek to reduce carbon emissions by 26-28 per cent by 2025 (against 2005); China would peak carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 with an "intention to try to" peak sooner. The declaration has been applauded for injecting "momentum" in global climate negotiations. It has been also criticised for not going far enough. The Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)'s calculations find that both the United States and Chinese targets are lower than if their earlier 2020 targets were extrapolated. What should be India's response?

The deal amounts to a pincer attack on India's climate negotiation strategy. From one flank, the United States and China have effectively signalled that they are in a league of their own in terms of carbon emissions, industrial structure and political weight, and would not let distinctions between countries within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) get in the way of self-interested actions. Consequently, negotiation blocs such as BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) would risk being undermined, if not entirely abandoned.

From the other flank, the deal allows the rest of the world to pressure India. Whatever India announces now (as its intended nationally determined contributions) would be compared against the United States-China deal and, a few weeks earlier, by the European Union (EU). India is different: low per capita emissions (1.7 tonnes against China's 6.2 tonnes in 2010); aggregate emissions six per cent of the total (against China's 23 per cent, US' 16 per cent and the EU's 11 per cent in 2010). But in this battle of perceptions, India is unlikely to win. It is after all the world's third largest emitter of greenhouse gases. It is also perhaps the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Given their own vulnerabilities, smaller developing countries would also evaluate India on a nebulous scale of "climate leadership".

When encircled in battle, there are three options: surrender, fight from within, or have allies open up an escape route from outside. India will have to dispassionately develop a climate-negotiation strategy that combines all three.

First, which issues make little sense for India to oppose? A global phase-down of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), greenhouse gases much more potent than carbon dioxide and widely used as refrigerants, would be a good place to start. India has previously resisted discussing the

issue under the Montreal Protocol, insisting that any deal on the HFCs should be part of a comprehensive package under the UNFCCC. The CEEW's first-of-its-kind modelling of India's HFC emissions found that 33-39 per cent of warming from the residential air-conditioning sector during 2010-2050 could be reduced by a shift to alternative (and more energy-efficient) chemicals. Indian appliance and automobile firms are innovating with alternatives, but receive no multilateral support yet (Chinese manufacturers already do).

Last week, India shifted its stand at the Montreal Protocol and asked for a detailed report on the HFC production and consumption by country. India should now insist on a policy framework that is technology-agnostic, promotes energy efficiency, ensures no adverse impacts on the ozone layer, and sends a long-term signal to firms and innovators with support from the Protocol's Multilateral Fund.

Secondly, how should India keep up the fight on equity and common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR)? India could be bold: reducing emissions intensity of gross domestic product (GDP) by up to 50 per cent by 2030; increasing the share of renewable energy in electricity generation to 20 per cent by 2030 (with hydropower, 25 per cent). These aggressive targets would, of course, be contingent on available financing, appropriate technology learning curves and dissemination, and a global carbon price; all of which India should demand. Moreover, India should promote differentiated responsibility within countries (say, higher carbon tax on large point sources or on luxury emissions, such as purchase of diesel sports utility vehicles). This would be more equitable than the already pioneering coal cess, which India applies. It would demonstrate that India was willing to consider alternative ways to categorise countries and citizens without abandoning the principle of differentiated responsibilities.

In the Mahabharata, Abhimanyu was trapped within the chakravyuh because he had not learnt how to escape the formation and others were not available for help. India needs to think of climate leadership not simply as announcements from within but about finding allies outside. Where could India lead with others following?

One, an "energy access prize" would set a target for lowering the cost of decentralised renewable energy to a specified level or lower than a certain share of household income. India already has significant capabilities in this sector, and could partner with countries, firms and investors to promote technologies and business models.

Two, a "global partnership on energy efficiency" would showcase India's efforts (efficient appliances, building standards, perform-achieve-trade scheme) and establish strategic ties with countries such as Germany, Japan and the United States.

Three, a "partnership on energy storage R&D, enterprise and deployment" (PES-RED) would bring together innovators, firms and countries developing storage technologies and grid-management practices to balance intermittent electricity supply from renewables.

Four, an "international coalition for low-carbon rural development" would focus on agriculture, water, climate adaptation and livelihoods facing imminent climate-related risks. The above strategies are core to India's interests, in line with its climate-action plan, and would secure supporters among both poor and rich countries. The chakravayuh might just be breached.

4. Protecting biodiversity with rigour

Neha Sinha, *The Hindu*: 25.11.2014



A PRIORITY: "Keeping biodiversity and nature protection at the centre of climate action and growth strategy is a pressing requirement." Picture shows a tiger in the Western Ghats. Photo: Kalyan Varma

To protect biodiversity, India must take hard decisions and set thresholds for environmental regulation and pollution

The Prime Minister recently reorganised his National Council on Climate Change and called on an indigenous answer, yoga, to alter consciousness and tackle climate change. The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) is currently working on the National Democratic Alliance's position on climate change, with two major United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change meetings coming up. While some say that these recent developments have rightly raised the profile of climate change in the new government, others believe that India needs to do more, particularly in the face of a new U.S.-China agreement on mitigating climate change. Voluntary action on climate change in India has centered around economic decisions, such as cutting down on carbon intensity and increasing renewable sources of energy. But what is lacking in the discourse is an understanding of keeping the natural natural, or conserving biodiversity. Two important events have taken place in the past few months in the country, which are tied to climate change and the pressing issue of how we deal with it. First, the Convention on Biological Diversity, a Convention under the United Nations which seeks to regulate our use of the natural world, has reached important funding decisions. Second, a high-level committee set up to propose amendments in environmental laws in India has submitted its recommendations to the MoEF. Both developments set the tone for changing the character of growth.

Biodiversity and climate change

Biodiversity and wildlife protection is often termed as a 'co-benefit' of mitigating climate change. Other co-benefits, usually understood as secondary to economic decision-making, are clean air, potable water, ecosystem services and a stable microclimate. Conservationists have argued that

biodiversity has become a low second fiddle to climate change in international negotiations, and decisions related to biodiversity are not yet part of the 'mainstream' decisions related to growth, trade and carbon emissions. At the just-concluded conference of parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Pyeongchang, Korea, many stressed that biodiversity targets cannot just be 'stand alone' targets. "In order to move the biodiversity agenda forward, approaches and tactics must evolve. In the framework of the post-2015 development agenda, stand alone targets on biodiversity would not be useful. The principle of universality and integration must define the nature of sustainable development goals," said Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, urging that the world could not "continue to be a mere librarian of extinction, threat and destruction." At the meeting, an important commitment for resource mobilisation was made. Parties have agreed to double biodiversity-related financial flow to developing countries, small island developing states, least developed countries, and economies in transition. The funding is for average annual biodiversity funding for the years 2006-2010, and is to be delivered by next year. The way this funding is utilised when a part of it comes to India needs to be seen as more than just side efforts to climate change action.

For instance, climate change action in India is currently focussed on a lowering of carbon intensity in growth. But we are also seeking to peak emissions by a certain period, allowing growth to optimise by then, and then allow a tapering off of emissions. But this carbon space can also be consistently at odds with biodiversity protection efforts. For example, the concept of 'peaking' emissions holds no value for biodiversity, and may actively threaten it. A habitat once destroyed takes decades to be restored as we set up man-made infrastructure. So the question is: are we going to dismantle natural infrastructure and then restore it? If the answer is no, then this will mean taking hard decisions, such as identifying critical, inviolate areas in forests which cannot be mined or dammed, and setting thresholds for environmental regulation and pollution.

On the topic of regulation, a crucial review is currently underway. A high-level committee chaired by former Cabinet Secretary T.S.R. Subramanian has reviewed all the environmental laws of India including the Wildlife Protection Act, the Forest Act, the Forest Conservation Act, and the Environment Protection Act. While decisions related directly to biodiversity, such as species and habitat protection, are under the ambit of review, there are also indirect connections which bridge decisions for both climate change action and biodiversity protection. One of the most pressing questions is that of regulation. What will be revised thresholds for air and water pollution? The government has made moves to lift the moratorium for projects (and thus allowing more emissions) in critically polluted areas, such as Vapi in Gujarat. Further changes in these regulations will set the tone for levels of industrial effluents in seas, rivers, and the sky, and how much clustering of infrastructure and projects can be allowed in an area.

The second question is one of environmental and forest clearances for projects. In public statements, including the one made when Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar accepted the environmental act review, the government says it wants the environmental clearance process made "speedier" and "more transparent." This sentiment is echoed in States too: for instance, Himachal Pradesh has a committee on 'Speedy development of small hydro projects.'

Decision-making on environment should not be a question of time; rather it should be one of rigour. While developers want to believe that problems in environmental decision-making lie in

time spent around getting a clearance, the issue really is one of technocratic discretion. The MoEF needs to have the forthright discretion to say ‘no’ to projects with deleterious impacts on biodiversity and climate action. While it is a Ministry meant to appraise projects and clear them, it is also one that is meant to halt projects which denigrate biodiversity and environmental conservation efforts.

Changing consciousness

The final question then is: in our development efforts, and in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, what rigour will the Indian government put in for capturing our hard-won climate quota, while simultaneously guarding a healthy environment? While conventional sources of energy will stay for a while, environmental regulation and post-project monitoring have to be strengthened and upheld because the country is a constituency wider than just developers who clamour for hasty clearances. Further, in creating a different scenario — that is new forms of energy and low carbon development pathways such as biogas, solar and marine, wind mill energy and energy efficiency — there is a real chance for new job creation.

Finally, keeping biodiversity and nature protection at the centre of climate action, and thus our growth strategy, is a pressing requirement. The World Bank estimates that India loses more than 5 per cent of its GDP each year to environmental degradation. A robust and growing biodiversity protected area framework will save money spent on pollution-related illnesses and buoy climate change mitigation work.

On yoga and its role in combating climate change, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, “It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help us deal with climate change.” This change in consciousness and ‘oneness with nature’ has to be rethought now, at the cusp of our new climate and biodiversity action strategies. We cannot develop now to ask questions later.

(Neha Sinha is with the Bombay Natural History Society. The views expressed are personal.)

5. A fix for the financial products market

D Sampathkumar, Business Line: 25.11.2014



For some light in the pricing of trades gopixa/shutterstock.com

It isn't quite cricket. Libor had been fixed and bullion, too. Now, if the UK's Financial Conduct Authority is to be believed, dollar-pound (WM Reuters 4 pm) and euro-dollar (ECB 1.15 pm) rates have been fixed as well. Of course, we are not talking about the process of setting rates in these asset classes but the process of manipulating them to deflect them away from their true value.

Two things stand out. One, there is the financial community's obsession with 'value' as a notion specific to a point of time, that split-second assessment, if you may. But there is an alternative notion of value that encapsulates a flow of transactions over a 24-hour period into one representative number which could serve the purpose of the financial community and the world of global commerce just as well.

The former may have served a purpose in the past. When all trades were conducted under a banyan tree (as was once the case with the Bombay Stock Exchange) or some such exotic location; where all transactions were manual, a case could be made for conducting a ritualistic trade with a degree of Masonic pomp and secrecy, to serve as a benchmark rate for use by the rest of the trading community.

The picture today

But in these days of automated and screen-based trading, where orders can be entered and instantly matched against one another based on best available quotes and in the order of time, there is need neither for open-ended (rate to be determined at a later point in time) transaction nor determination of the actual value of the transaction through an episodic exercise at 'rate' determination.

The National Stock Exchange, for instance, has effortlessly put together roughly 7.9 million trades in equities with weighted average price disseminated at all times across 1,500-odd equity instruments (data for November 18, 2014). Each of these transactions was matched for a precise price and counterparty clearly identified against each and every trade.

The present 'clubby' nature of the market in international financial assets serves the interests of entrenched players but does little to secure the interests of other participants, investors and businesses. The sooner the governments of the G20 nations, which account for 85 per cent of the global output of goods and services, resolve to introduce a new financial architecture for markets across different asset classes, the better it would be for all concerned.

A beginning has been made with countries at least now talking of the possibility of a trade repository for all 'over the counter' (OTC) transactions for disseminating information to the general public.

Unfortunately, there is no commitment as yet within the global community for legislative changes to mandate market participants to switch over to exchange-based electronic trading platforms.

The argument that the OTC market provides for flexibility in terms of innovative instruments catering to specific customer needs is no longer valid. There is a fair degree of standardisation as to the products on offer in these OTC markets. In any case, those that have become well established can be made to move over to exchange-based platforms. You don't really need an OTC market for a plain vanilla euro-dollar spot quotation.

A global norm

An electronic, exchange-based trading architecture as an international norm is preferable for another reason as well. That brings us to the second issue that the recent scandal in spot rate fixes has highlighted. The phenomenon of proprietary trades coexisting in apparent harmony with client orders is the worst form of 'conflict of interest' that one can think of.

Assume for a moment that you spot your neighbour stepping out of his house with a shopping bag. You ask him what he was getting up to, and he replies that he is going to the market to buy half-a-dozen apples. You request your neighbour to buy another six on your behalf.

He manages to get six of the choicest from the first shop that he visits at ₹30 a piece. Let us assume that the shop had either exhausted its stock of apples or that the rest were not of the appropriate quality. Your neighbour has perforce to go to another shop and buy six more apples but at ₹35 a piece.

So what should he declare as the cost of apples that he bought for you? Is it ₹30 or ₹35 or ₹32.50? Mind you, each one of these answers can be defended on some well-grounded moral principle.

The moral dilemma

Hypothetical or not, this much is certain. Your neighbour would never have had to experience this moral dilemma if he had gone to the market to buy, not apples but something else, or was merely

going to fetch his child from the school and along the way bought the apples that you had requested.

Indeed, a moral dilemma or the potential for a conflict of interest is inherent in a situation where you seek to represent a person in a commercial relationship and at the same time engage in the very business of the principal whom you have promised to serve. For then, there is every likelihood that some of the profits coming to you are at the expense of the very person you represent as an agent with all the attendant implications of promising to act in his best interests and to the utmost of your abilities.

The choice is clear. The global financial system can have an OTC market structure and live with conflicts of interests that the arrangement poses for agents in the system. Or declare that such conflicts of interests are unfair to consumers/investors and mandate an electronic, exchange-based market structure.

PART B

NEWS AND VIEWS

Tuesday 25th November 2014

Polity

: J&K, J'khand polls begin today

Economy

: Road map for 'a \$10-trillion economy'

Planning

: Govt planning interest subsidy
for low-income housing loans

Editorial

: For peace in the Garo Hills

Communication, IT Information Division
Phone # 2525

J&K, J'khand polls begin today

TURF WAR 45,000 security men deployed for elections in which the BJP hopes to make gains from Cong-JMM split

Sanjoy Dey

sanjoy.dey@hindustantimes.com

RANCHI: More than 3.3 million voters will pick their legislators amid tight security in 13 Maoist-overrun constituencies of Jharkhand on Tuesday as a five-phase assembly election gets underway in the tribal-dominated state.

While the BJP is looking to sustain its winning habit having swept the Lok Sabha polls and key states this year on the back of Narendra Modi's popularity, the Congress and big regional players like the JMM are fighting to halt the juggernaut.

A total of 199 candidates including nine sitting legislators are contesting in the first phase. Labour minister KN Tripathy from the Congress, party state president Sukhdeo Bhagat, AJSU's Kamal Kishor Bhagat, Chamra Linda from the JMM, BJP's Brajmohan Ram and RJD state president Girinath Singh are some of the big names.

This will be the third assembly election in Jharkhand which was carved out of Bihar in 2000. Since then the state has



■ Election officials board a chopper to reach polling stations on the eve of the first phase of the Jharkhand elections, in Daltonganj PTI

seen nine chief ministers and three stints of President's Rule.

About 45,000 security personnel have been deployed at 3,961 polling stations while three helicopters have been pressed into service for aerial monitoring of the election.

"All preparations are in place to conduct safe and peaceful elections in the first phase. Altogether 263 polling stations will also go live through web-casting," said state chief electoral officer PK Jajoria.

The Congress, which had won 14 of the state's 81 constituencies in the 2009 polls, is struggling to retain half a dozen seats this time after severing ties with the ruling JMM last month following failed seat-sharing talks, boosting the BJP's chances.

The BJP and the JMM are contesting 12 seats each in the first phase while the JMM-P is fighting 11. The Congress-RJD-JD (U) alliance is contesting all 13 seats - the Congress seven, the RJD four and the JD (U) two.

PDP may be biggest gainer, but BJP could play the kingmaker

Toufiq Rashid

toufiq.rashid@hindustantimes.com

SRINAGAR: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is hoping to ride the Narendra Modi wave to make inroads into Jammu & Kashmir as the state goes to the polls on Tuesday, but the People's Democratic Party (PDP) could emerge as the biggest gainer, say analysts.

The BJP is looking to tap into the people's anger over the slow rehabilitation of flood-hit Kashmiris as it seeks to expand its support base to the Muslim-majority Valley, where it has no presence, and increase its base in Hindu-dominated Jammu region.

Analysts say the party may not achieve its aim of winning 44 in the 87-member assembly but could emerge as a key player with the ruling National Conference (NC) facing people's ire after the state's worst flooding in a century. It can also benefit from the falling out between the NC and Congress, after being in government together for six years.

"If not the largest party, the



■ J&K chief minister Omar Abdullah shakes hands with supporters of the National Conference in Srinagar on Monday WASEEM ANDRABI/HT

BJP wants the role of a king-maker, something the Congress has held for the past 12 years," said Kashmir University political science professor Gul Wani.

Based on their performances in the general elections, BJP and PDP are likely to be two main players in the assembly poll. The BJP, which was leading in 24 assembly segments in Jammu in the general election, is counting on getting a few more from Pirpanjal and Chenab valley

regions this time.

Analysts say even if the party's calculation of low voter turnouts and consolidation of migrant Pandit votes works in its favour, it may get a few more seats, but will still fall short of a majority.

In such a scenario, the PDP, which led in 41 assembly segments in the Kashmir Valley in the April-May elections, could emerge as the single-largest party in the assembly.

Modi seeks 'results' from Winter Session



Narendra Modi arrives in Parliament.

National Bureau

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday sought the Opposition's cooperation for a "fruitful and result-oriented" Winter Session of Parliament, but the Trinamool Congress struck discordant notes on the very first day and the Bahujan Samaj Party remained ambiguous on whether it would extend support to the government.

While the Trinamool said it would not allow the passage of the Insurance (Laws) Amend-

ment Bill, 2008, which raises the FDI in insurance, BSP chief Mayawati said her party might not "unnecessarily" oppose the Bill.

Both Houses of Parliament were adjourned after obituary references. In a statement outside Parliament, Mr. Modi said, "People of the country have given us responsibility to run the government, but they have also given MPs the responsibility to run the country."

Road map for 'a \$10-trillion economy'

Puja Mehra

NEW DELHI: If India wants to build a \$ 10-trillion economy by 2034, growing at a rate of 9 per cent a year, it will have to focus on investments in R&D and undertake radical improvements in the Human Development Index, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) said in a report released on Monday.

The report defined three possible scenarios for India's economic growth. Of the three, the "Winning Leap" is the most aggressive growth scenario and the only one that will generate the 240 million

new jobs India's growing demography needs, said a PwC statement on the report.

The three scenarios are not growth projections, PwC clarified at the launch of the report here on Monday. "India can only build shared prosperity for its 1.25 billion people by transforming the way the economy creates value," said PwC International chairman Dennis Nally at the launch. The other two economic growth scenarios in the report are "Pushing old ways faster" and "Turbocharging investment."

INDIA MUST PLAY-TO-WIN
| PAGE 10

India must 'play-to-win' to ensure GDP growth: PwC

Puja Mehra

NEW DELHI: PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in a report released on Monday, defined three possible scenarios for India's economic growth. Of the three, the "Winning Leap" is the most aggressive growth scenario.

The other two economic growth scenarios are "Pushing old ways faster" and "Turbocharging investment". The former outlines a focus on investment in education, health and other dimensions related to human capital. Under this scenario India's GDP, according to the report, could see a 6.6 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) between now and 2034. The scenario

"Turbocharging investment" outlines the impact of rapid and significant investment in physical infrastructure and envisions a

7 per cent CAGR for GDP leading up to 2034.

For India to undertake the "Winning Leap" says the report, it will also need a concerted effort from Corporate India, supported by a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem and a constructive partnership with the government. It will need a "play-to-win" mindset shift for industry leaders and the country overall, says the report.

"The report stresses that linear growth in each sector will not be enough to meet the growth ambition envisioned for India... Given the scale and complexity of the challenges facing India, the resources required, and the urgency of demands for change coming from Indian citizens, sector players must deploy solutions that deliver non-linear growth," said PwC India partner Shashank Tripathi at the launch.

Govt planning interest subsidy for low-income housing loans

New Delhi, Nov 24

THE GOVERNMENT plans to offer interest subsidy on housing loans to help the poor buy homes and boost real-estate demand.

Addressing the CREDAI conclave here, minister for housing and urban poverty alleviation Venkaiah Naidu said the Real Estate Development and Regulation Bill, would soon be tabled by the Cabinet for approval. He hoped that at least by the Budget session, the proposed law would become a reality. "We are coming out with an



interest subvention scheme for the housing sector for the economically weaker section (EWS) and the lower-income group (LIG) and also partly to the lower middle-class group," Naidu, who also holds the portfolio of urban development, said on the

sidelines of an event.

He said the government is moving towards reduction in interest rates, which are difficult to manage.

Asked about timeline, the minister said when the new housing policy will be launched, the interest subvention scheme will be a part of it. According to the government estimate, the housing shortage was 18.78 million units in 2012, out of which 95% was in EWS/LIG category. The real-estate sector is facing a slowdown in demand due to high interest rates and skyrocketing property rates. *PTI*

Trai to govt: Auction only after releasing more spectrum

'Or else explore ways other than auction'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 24

RESPONSE TO GOVT

STICKING to its stand that auction should only be held if the government is able to release sufficient spectrum, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) on Monday asked the Centre to explore alternate ways (other than auctions) of allocating radio waves to the mobile operators.

In its 38-page response to the government, which had wanted the regulator to reconsider its stand on holding a mega auction by releasing more spectrum and a simultaneous bidding process for 2G and 3G spectrum, the Trai said that unless alternate methods are explored the policy goals of the government such as 'Digital India' and broadband connectivity would collapse.

Trai chairman Rahul Khullar said that a public debate on alternate ways of allocating spectrum should begin now or else we would never be able to solve the problem of spectrum shortage in the country. "I can only repeat what wise people have said before: The risk of a wrong decision is better than the terror of indecision," Khullar added.

The communication to the department of telecommunications (DoT) clearly brings out the urgency towards exploring alternate means when it says, "spectrum availability in India for commercial use, as a whole is about the lowest in the world ... It is important to recognise that auc-



■ The Centre had asked the regulator to reconsider its stand on holding auction by releasing more spectrum and a simultaneous bidding process for 2G and 3G spectrum

■ Trai said that unless alternate methods are not explored the entire policy goals of the government such as 'Digital India' would collapse

tions are not the only way spectrum is allocated. Even in jurisdictions where far larger quantities of spectrum are available for commercial deployment, different approaches are being taken."

Underlining the importance of alternate means has also been stressed by the Trai since so far the government has failed to release more spectrum for commercial use. "For the past seven years (or more) a dialogue has taken place between the DoT and ministry of defence to release additional quantities of spectrum. To be perfectly candid, this dialogue has gone nowhere, i.e. it has remained inconclusive," the Trai has said.

It has even given the example of Japan which has never used auctions to allocate spectrum or Nordic countries where spectrum is allocated at a nominal price but with onerous roll-out obligations. ■

Aadhaar in focus again, Madan team hits ground running

RUHI TEWARI

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 24

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi's emphasis on the UPA's Aadhaar project, and his aim of universal coverage under the scheme by mid-2015 has resulted in renewed activity at the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). The UIDAI, which had gone near dormant after high-profile chairperson Nandan Nilekani quit earlier this year, has drawn its work strategy afresh under a group of senior officials.

The UIDAI was constituted and notified in 2009 with the objective of providing a unique identity for each resident of India, but was hobbled by teething problems and tussles within the UPA government. Nilekani was the project's brain, whose two key roles, according to sources, were laying down the vision for Aadhaar, and managing external stakeholders. The Authority's internal affairs were handled by its director general.

Broadly, the UIDAI has eight divisions: Authentication, Enrolment, Financial Inclusion, Administration, IT, Finance, Media, and Knowledge Management and Training. Nearly all the officials running them were handpicked by Nilekani.

D-G V S Madan, whom Nilekani chose last year, manages the show, attending all high-level meetings, including with the Prime Minister. Madan, a 1981-batch IAS officer, is assisted by a team of key bureaucrats.

DDG (Enrolment) Sujata Chaturvedi handles the core aspect of Aadhaar — enrolling residents, and keeping close track of all updates, while also being in charge of

TEAM UIDAI	
VS MADAN, D-G & Mission Director	RAJESH BANSAL, ADG (Financial Inclusion)
SUJATA CHATURVEDI, DDG (Enrolment)	ASHOK DALWAI, DDG, tech centre
SHREERANJAN, DDG (Authentication)	KESHNI ANAND ARORA, DDG, Chandigarh regional office

the Authority's legal and media related activities. Chaturvedi was a part of Nilekani's core team, having been with UIDAI since 2011. Her term, however, runs out soon.

The Authentication Division, another key function of the unique ID, is headed by DDG Shreeranjana. He joined only earlier this year.

ADG (Financial Inclusion) Rajesh Bansal heads the crucial division that looks after the integration of Aadhaar with the financial sector, including the Direct Benefits Transfer scheme. Bansal has been with the Authority since 2009. All three — Chaturvedi, Shreeranjana and Bansal — operate out of the Authority's Delhi office.

DDG Ashok Dalwai, in-charge of the Bangalore tech centre which handles the backend operations of the project, too has been with the Authority for several years.

Keshni Anand Arora, DDG, Chandigarh regional office, is in charge of states such as Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. She is a key member of the team that runs

UIDAI; her importance stems from the fact that the Authority conducts most of its pilot projects in areas under her jurisdiction.

The UIDAI works closely with several ministries, including Finance, Rural Development, Health, Telecom and Petroleum. Among themselves, the DDGs have meetings with the relevant joint secretaries nearly every week.

While the Authority is within the jurisdiction of MoS (Independent Charge) Planning Rao Inderjit Singh, sources say it is monitored directly by the PMO, which is in touch with UIDAI officials on an almost weekly basis. Modi had his first meeting on Aadhaar on July 5, and most instructions have since come straight from the PMO.

While it remains unclear whether the government will appoint another high-profile chairperson to follow Nilekani, the sharper focus on UIDAI, and its increasing need to communicate better, is indicated by the fact that it decided finally to appoint a spokesperson in September — the first that the Authority has ever had.

Mamata dares Centre to arrest her

Special Correspondent

KOLKATA: Lashing out at the probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the Saradha chit-fund scam, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday dared the Centre to arrest her.

"I am standing right here. Come and arrest us. How many can you arrest? Build as many prisons as you can," she said at a meeting here.

Throwing a challenge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Ms. Banerjee threatened to launch an agitation in New Delhi. "You [Mr. Modi] may take people with you to the U.S., to London, to Australia, and have selfies taken there. Now if I go to Delhi are you ready to face the consequences?" she asked.

On Saturday, Ms. Banerjee accused the Centre of indulging in political vendetta by using the CBI as a tool. The agency recently arrested Rajya Sabha member and Trinamool Congress leader Srinjoy



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addresses a rally in Kolkata on Monday. — PHOTO: ASHOKE CHAKRABARTY

Bose for his alleged involvement in the scam.

At a workers' conference on Saturday, Ms. Banerjee linked Mr. Bose's arrest with her visit to New Delhi to attend the 125th birth anniversary of Jawaharlal Nehru on an invitation from Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

On Monday, she ruled out

the possibility of an immediate alliance with the Congress. "I went there only because Sonia Gandhi invited me and not to do politics," she said.

Coming down heavily on the Centre's economic policies, Ms. Banerjee said the BJP-led government was "selling the country" within

six months of coming to power. "By selling everything, does he hope to get a Nobel Prize?" Ms. Banerjee said in an obvious reference to the Prime Minister.

Ms. Banerjee blamed the Centre for the chit fund scam, and said her government had returned money to five lakh investors in the State.

SENA SIDES WITH OPPOSITION ON INSURANCE BILL

Trouble for reforms

SNS & PTI

New Delhi, 24 November

The government's reforms agenda in Parliament is in for trouble with its biggest ally Shiv Sena today joining some Opposition parties in declaring resistance to a Bill on raising the FDI cap in the insurance sector from 26 per cent 49 per cent.

However, the BSP indicated that it will not oppose the crucial Bill "unnecessarily" in Parliament, where work of the Winter Session will begin tomorrow.

"We are going to oppose the Insurance Bill if the government fails to bring suitable amendments which would help people in



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the media during the opening day of the winter session of Parliament in the Capital on Monday. © SNS

general and employees and farmers in particular," Shiv Sena spokesperson and Lok Sabha MP Arvind Sawant told PTI.

Sena's expression of resistance to the Bill came amid moves by some Opposition parties

like Congress, JD(U) and Trinamool Congress to forge unity on this issue in Parliament. "Where is the need for such legislation and why foreign capital is being brought in a sector which was nationalised at one point of time for helping the

people," asked Sawant, whose party is a part of the NDA government at the Centre.

Insisting that private insurance companies only aim at profit, he said public sector insurers have to look after the interest of the common man and wondered if the move to hike FDI to 49 per cent in the sector would be of any good.

Seeking to drive home his point, he said Prime Minister Modi's pet 'Jan Dhan Yojna' was being implemented by public sector banks and not by private sector banks. The opposition by Sena to the Bill in Parliament will be a jolt to the govt as the party has 18 MPs in the Lok Sabha and three in the Rajya Sabha.

B'luru to host first Commonwealth Science Conference from today

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU

World renowned scientists from 34 Commonwealth countries are congregating in Bengaluru on Tuesday for the first Commonwealth Science Conference under the leadership of eminent Indian scientist and Bharat Ratna awardee Professor CNR Rao.

President Pranab Mukherjee and Duke of York, Prince Andrew will attend the inaugural ceremony. Noble laureate and president of Royal Society, Prof Paul Nurse and noted scientist Prof CNR Rao, former chairman of the Scientific Advisory Council to the Prime Minister of India, will deliver key-note lectures on the opening day of the four-day conference. The conference is being organised by Royal

CSC had attracted 350 scientists from different scientific fields and this also includes 120 research scholars from as many as 34 Commonwealth countries across five continents

—Bharat Ratna awardee Professor CNR Rao

Society and is supported by the Union Government, Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust and city based Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCAR).

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Prof Rao said, "CSC had attracted 350 scientists

from different scientific fields and this also includes 120 research scholars from as many as 34 Commonwealth countries across five continents". He said the conference was the first global event being conducted by the 354 year-old Royal Society and it aims to celebrate excellence in Commonwealth science, to provide opportunities for cooperation between researchers in different countries, to inspire young people and to build scientific capacity in the developing nations within the Commonwealth.

"We are receiving representative scientists and leaders of science from almost all Commonwealth countries. Youth will be given priority and we will witness 120 PhD students in the conference," he said.

Saarc summit returns to a new, peaceful Nepal after 12 years

Prashant Jha

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KATHMANDU: For a city that has become synonymous with unplanned development, unchecked population growth and traffic gridlocks, Kathmandu looked calm, and at peace with itself, on Monday

It strikes you at the airport itself. The runway is spotless, as flags of Saarc member states flutter around at the VIP entrance. The slogan — Deeper Integration for Peace and Prosperity — flashes as soon as one steps out.

The roads are clean. A few kilometres down, the dirty and

unkempt Tinkune park has been covered up to hide the city's underbelly. Images of all heads of government to arrive on Tuesday are pasted around. Key roads of the city have been expanded, and plants have been brought in overnight to green it all up.

The city seems to have shrunk. Traffic is one-fourth its normal flow, and fewer people are to be seen. Residents explained that the Nepal government, learning from how the city was clogged during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit in August, has declared the days of the summit as public holidays. Traffic is also being regulated. Nepal has spent over

Rs 2 billion (close to ₹1.4 billion) for the summit preparations.

About 28,000 security personnel have been deployed, CCTV cameras are in place and security at border areas has been tightened. But it is not just a new, spruced up Kathmandu that Saarc leaders will see when they arrive on Tuesday. It is a new Nepal, for the country has transformed since the last summit here in January 2002.

In 2001, the security situation in Nepal was fragile. The crown prince had killed the king, and his family — an act that crippled the Nepali polity. A civil war had just intensified with the then Royal

Nepal Army battling an insurgent radical group, the Maoists. Nepal managed to host the meeting, but under very adverse circumstances.

Today, the country is at peace. The monarchy is abolished, and the war is over. The Maoists are the principal opposition in Nepal's parliament. And the country is in the midst of writing its new constitution.

While politics remains unstable and often dysfunctional, the country has turned a corner — ready to take the leap and become an active participant of the South Asian community. Kathmandu is ready to welcome the neighbourhood.



Photos of heads of Saarc states line roads in Kathmandu, Nepal on Monday.

DRDO, GSI to develop early warning system for landslide prediction

VIJAY MOHAN
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, NOVEMBER 24
The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Geological Survey of India (GSI) are undertaking a joint project to develop a system to provide early warning about landslides in mountainous regions.

Under the project, DRDO's Defence Terrain Research Laboratory (DTRL) would develop instrumentation and allied technology for the system, while the GSI would undertake ground-based geological works such as boring, ground survey and geo-technical analysis, DTRL director MR Bhutiyani said.

The mountainous regions of the country, particularly lower and mid-Himalayas as well as hilly terrain in central and south India, are increas-

Wreaking havoc

- Landslides rank third in the list of natural disaster for causing death and destruction
- In the Himalayas, landslides kill one person per 100 km
- According to a study, landslides affect about 15 per cent of the country's area, with the average annual damage pegged at 200 lives and Rs 550 crore



ingly becoming prone to landslide due to massive deforestation, mining, unauthorised and unregulated constructions and encroachments along natural water channels.

The DTRL is involved in assessment of terrain characteristics, developing terrain database management and creating thematic maps and terrain intelligence reports for the armed forces and certain other government agencies. It is also associated with disaster

management studies.

Another DRDO laboratory, Snow and Avalanche Studies Establishment is involved in terrain and snow cover analysis as well as forecast and mitigation of avalanches in upper Himalayas for facilitation of troops as well as civilians.

The DTRL-GSI project is aimed at developing technology for an early warning system for landslides that is based on instrumentation and empirical relation between rainfall, ground saturation and displacement.

Labour Laws to be Recast into Five Codes

TO ENSURE CLARITY All the existing 44 laws will be reclassified into these categories, marking another step in the series of labour reforms

Recast To Reform



LABOUR MINISTRY WANTS TO SET UP FIVE CODES WHICH WILL ACT AS STANDARD FOR ALL LABOUR ISSUES

THESE ARE: industrial relations, wages, social security, safety and welfare and working conditions.

MOTIVATION:

The Second National Commission on Labour had suggested formulation of labour codes in 2002

EXISTING LAWS: All 44 labour acts will be subsumed within these five comprehensive codes

Such Labour codes already prevailing in Russia, Germany, Hungary, Poland and Canada

HOW WILL IT HELP

Once in place, the codes are expected to make it easier for labourers to seek better recourse in case of dispute

Setting up of standard codes is essential as even the definition of a worker is different under different acts

The rewriting will allow the government to make the laws progressive

Yogima.Sharma
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New Delhi: The government plans to push through labour reforms by revamping existing laws into five broad codes dealing with key issues, as recommended by a panel more than a decade ago, to introduce uniformity of terms and definitions and remove anomalies.

All the existing 44 laws will be reclassified into these categories, marking another step in the series of labour reforms kick-started by the BJP government aimed at redefining them and bringing about greater clarity.

The government's plan is based on the Second National Labour Commission's report of 2002, which suggested there should be five groups of laws pertaining to industrial relations, wages, social security, safety and welfare, and working conditions.

The ministry has set up an inter-ministerial group for this, which is scheduled to hold its first meeting on Wednesday.

"We have prepared a draft on the five codes on labour laws based on the recommendations of the Second National Commission on Labour and this will now be reviewed by the inter-ministerial group set up for the purpose before we come up with a final

note," a senior labour ministry official told ET, requesting anonymity.

According to an official, this will bring about clarity in the laws.

The gov't plan is based on the Second National Labour Commission's report of 2002

"This is pro-labour as well because the labourer would now find it easier to seek recourse under the standard definitions and the introduction of uniform codes would remove differences existing across 44 acts governing employment of labour in the country as of now," the official added.

The commission was of the view that the coverage as well as the definition of the term 'worker' should be the same in all groups of laws, subject to the stipulation that social security benefits must be available to employees, including administrative, managerial, supervisory and others excluded from the category of workmen or not treated as workmen. The inter-ministerial group will be chaired by the additional secretary in Ministry of Labour and Employment and will include representatives from Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, textiles, commerce and the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises.

NSA Doval to head China border talks

Dated: 25/11/2014
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TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: National security advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval has been named as the special representative (SR) for the boundary talks with China.

A statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), announcing the appointment on Monday, said Doval would "conduct boundary negotiations and strategic consultations with China. This arrangement will be part of NSA's overall assignment".

The appointment has been a while coming, even though the last three NSAs have performed the task of the point-person for bounda-



Ajit Doval

ry discussions. The Chinese side is represented by state councillor Yang Jiechi.

India and China have held 17 rounds of boundary negotiations but remain far from an agreement. The last round was held in February in Delhi between ex-NSA Shivshankar Menon and Yang. The dialogue on the boundary issue has limped along. The official explanation is that the two sides are working on the framework of a settlement which is taking time. Meanwhile, India has been racing to keep up with China's formidable infrastructure in the border areas.

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

Govt looks at tax breaks for affordable housing

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



New Delhi: Urban development and housing minister **M Venkaiah Naidu** on Monday promised a

turnaround in the real estate sector, impacted by the economic slowdown, by invoking Narendra Modi's leadership. The government is considering tax breaks for affordable segment of housing, to give a fillip to the real estate sector and is expected to announce a subvention scheme on home loans for middle and lower income group housing.

"We need to relocate urban India and economic development, which will lead to advancement of India. We understand the contribution of our partners and we know that we cannot progress in

achieving our Housing 2020 plan without support of the private sector," Naidu said on Monday. Revival in the housing sector will also boost GDP growth, he added.

"The government believes in unleashing forces of growth through various sectors. The real estate sector contributes to 6% of the GDP and I am confident it will go up to at least 12-13% by 2022." Addressing a conference of real estate developers, Naidu said, "housing sector has tremendous growth opportunities and it is the second largest employer in the country today."

Citing Narendra Modi's leadership, Naidu said, "3D Modi is the remedy for economic recovery and rapid growth will help people of the country fulfill their aspirations... Narendra Modi is dynamic, decisive and dares to think big and these three dimensions of the PM are mak-

ing him hugely popular both within and outside the country." Lalit Jain, chairman of real estate body Credai, said the government's measures would help revive the real estate sector. Streamlining of approval processes will also provide a fillip, he added.

On the proposed Real Estate Regulatory Bill, Naidu said it won't hit private investments and instead, would help them by seeking to enhance the credibility of the sector. The urban development ministry has put passage of the bill as its top priority during the current session of Parliament.

Sources said the real estate lobby is trying hard to push for dilution in two crucial clauses. First, to relax norm to reduce mandated escrow amount per project from 75% to 50% of investors' money. As per the proposed bill, every developer must put 75% of investors'

money only for a particular project to restrict the practice of diverting buyers' investment to launch fresh projects, rather than finishing current projects, for which they have already received payments.

Second, the developers are also seeking dilution of the norm, which proposes imprisonment for defaulting builders. "While the first relaxation that the realty players are seeking is ridiculous and government should not compromise on this, the second demand is convincing. There are other deterrent measures rather than putting people in jail," said a realty expert, who did not wish to be named.

TOI has learnt that Naidu took a review meeting on Sunday and has asked officials to come out with a detailed presentation, specifying protection of consumers' interests and the logical demands of real estate players.

Petronet plans to use 'cold energy' to set up power units

■ Feasibility studies done; board to decide on commercial viability

Siddhartha P Saikia
New Delhi, Nov 24

Petronet LNG, India's biggest liquefied natural gas (LNG) importer, is carrying out feasibility studies on harnessing 'cold energy' for commercial usage by setting up power generation units, or specialised cold storage warehouses, at its LNG terminals. The concept, popular in Japan and China, is being experimented with in India, where the possibility to set up cold storages near LNG terminals has been explored.

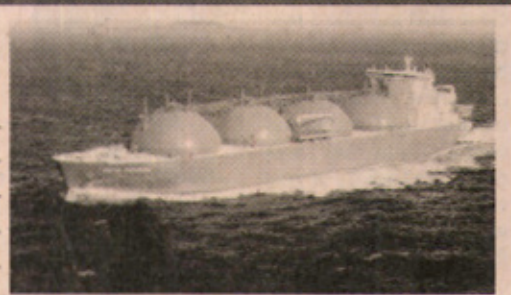
A K Balyan, managing director and chief executive officer of Petronet, said the firm has conducted detailed feasibility studies on use of cold energy for power generation, besides looking at cold storage facilities. "Our board would consider if these projects are commercially viable," he told *FE*.

In an LNG terminal, the imported gas is received at cryogenic conditions (minus 1600 celsius). It is stored in specially designed storage tanks and re-gasified using various sources of heat. During re-gasification, there is a reasonable potential for recovery of 'cold energy.' A few possible ways

LNG terminals in India

Terminal, State	Installed capacity (in mtpa)	FY14 capacity utilisation (in %)
Dahej, Gujarat	10	100
Hazira, Gujarat	5	56.4
Kochi, Kerala	5	1-5
Dabhol, Maharashtra	5	8.3

mtpa: million tonne per annum



could be an air separation unit to generate liquid industrial gases such as liquid nitrogen, oxygen and argon, cryogenic power, warehousing, production of dry ice and integration with adjacent power plants.

Balyan said that in case of power generation, cold energy gives additional efficiency of 5-10%. It could be integrated with a power plant in the vicinity of the terminal, or with a power station within the facility.

In an LNG terminal, the imported gas is received at cryogenic conditions (minus 1600 celsius). It is stored in specially designed storage tanks and re-gasified using various sources of heat. During re-gasification, there is a reasonable potential for recovery of 'cold energy'

But unless there is a long-term power purchase agreement (PPA), it may not be viable.

In addition, cold energy could be used for specialised cold storages. These are not normal warehouses — they require storage at cryogenic conditions and used to store drugs/vaccines, he explained.

The possibility of setting up cold storages near LNG terminals is one the energy conservation programmes

discussed by PM Narendra Modi after taking charge. The implementation is monitored by the Cabinet Secretariat and the petroleum ministry.

The petroleum ministry is learnt to have advised Petronet to seek consultations with central and state departments and private operators, including foreign companies with expertise in utilising cold energy. A detailed action plan is expected to be put in place by the end of December.

"In spite of such potential, only a small portion of cold energy is recovered during the regasification process. As LNG terminal integrated cold storage units exist in Japan and China, the technical feasibility of such projects already exists globally," a senior government official told *FE*.

Govt sets new benchmark for skill development

Subodh Ghildiyal
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New Delhi: Rural India Skills Emblem (RISE) will be the new standard for recognition of skills, a measure that the government is seeking to develop a global brand to instill confidence about skilled Indian workers.

The rural development ministry is laying down eligibility norms to enhance the sanctity of training and the process of assessment of trainees under the 'Aajeevika' scheme for skill development (under National Rural Livelihoods Mission), renamed by the BJP government as Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Yojana.

Under the new norms, the training centres will be required to have minimum facilities and infrastructure to ensure quality in training imparted. Bio-metric systems and CCTVs will be in place to keep a tab on attendance of those who sign up.

The government is look-

ing at introducing third-party evaluation, besides the evaluation at training centre, to grade trainees in their chosen trade. "The sector-specific councils will have a role in the process," rural development secretary L C Goyal told TOI. The RD ministry has issued revamped guidelines for the scheme.

Goyal said a credible process of training and assessment would increase "employability" in the country and abroad.

In a bid to beef up targets and improve training under the scheme, the ministry has devised the concept of "champion employers" - business houses that would take 10,000 youths annually for training and in-house placement. These companies will sign MoUs with the government.

This is besides other smaller companies that would sign up to impart skills. In all, 700 projects with 18 lakh candidates are lying for approval at the state and Central level.

Government, Opposition on collision course

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi, 24 November

The Narendra Modi government might be making a strong pitch for a new wave of economic reforms but the Opposition parties do not appear to be on the same page, even as the two sides appear to be heading for a protracted showdown in Parliament over a slew of reform legislations - including the insurance amendment, labour reform and Goods and Services Tax (GST) Bills.

The Prime Minister Mr Modi today hoped that the Opposition will cooperate with the government in Parliament to make its current winter session "fruitful and result-oriented".

Several Opposition parties, including the Congress, the Trinamul and the JD-U among others, however sent out clear signals that they would take on the government on a host of issues including reform Bills, black money, communal riots, proposed dilution of land acquisition law as well as MNREGA scheme.

The one-month-long winter session of Parliament got underway this morning, but both Houses were immediately adjourned after condoling the recent deaths of three sitting members - including two Lok Sabha MPs.

Hemendra Chandra Singh (BJD) and Kapil Krishna Thakur (Trinamul), and a Rajya Sabha member Murlidhar Deora, 77, passed away this morning in Mumbai.

There were signs that the Opposition parties were closing their ranks to forge a "larger, united Opposition" to counter the ruling BJP which enjoys a commanding majority on its own in the Lok Sabha. The BJP-led NDA does not have a major-

Parliament session



A number of Opposition parties - including the JD-U, the Trinamul, the Left, the RJD and the Samajwadi Party - are likely to oppose the insurance Bill that proposes to increase FDI limit in the insurance sector to 49 % from the existing 26 %.

ity in the Upper House though, so its bid to push reform Bills could run into a roadblock there.

The finance minister Mr Arun Jaitley has maintained that pushing the insurance amendment and GST constitutional amendment Bills will be the government's priority for this session. A number of Opposition parties - including the JD-U, the Trinamul, the Left, the RJD and the Samajwadi Party - are likely to oppose the insurance Bill that proposes to increase foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in the insurance sector to 49 % from the existing 26 %.

The Congress today also sought to keep the government on tenterhooks despite the party spokesman Mr Abhishek Singhvi asserting that his party had been "in principle" supportive of the GST and insurance Bills as they had been originally brought by the previous Congress-led UPA government.

"But, there cannot be a blank cheque from us on our support to these Bills as we would like to first see their

nitty-gritty...devil lies in details," Mr Singhvi said.

The GST would subsume indirect taxes like excise duty and service tax at the central level and VAT at the state level, besides local levies.

Mr Singhvi said the GST was "entirely a Congress baby and in principle our party has no reason to jettison it". However, he added, this will be subject to the Bill's final content as the Congress was not aware whether it will be similar to the UPA's Bill. On the insurance legislation, Mr Singhvi said the Congress will first go through the Select Committee report once it is finalised and then take its call. He accused the erstwhile Opposition BJP and Mr Modi as the then Gujarat

CM for having thwarted the passage of the GST Bill earlier. "PM Modi and FM Jaitley are giving us sermons today, forgetting the BJP's own obstructionist and disruptive role in Parliament for 10 years, with even entire sessions being wiped out due to their stalling of the proceedings...and now they are coming up

with our reform initiatives that they had earlier not allowed to take off," Mr Singhvi alleged.

The Congress also charged that the proposed land acquisition amendment Bill "could be dictated by corporates who want walk-in and walk-out policies...just like environmental legislations that are sought to be diluted". The government was forced to send the insurance bill to the Select Committee during the previous monsoon session after it could not work out a consensus involving Opposition parties in its favour.

PM Modi told reporters this morning: "People of the country have given us responsibility to run the government, but they have also given the responsibility to all those sitting in Parliament to run the country."

He hoped that they will all work together for people's welfare and the country's progress. Mr Modi also said, "In the last session, the positive role of the Opposition has resulted in good work, I am hopeful that this time too we will experience the same."

The JD-U and the Trinamul have reportedly given the notice to the Rajya Sabha Chairman Mr Hamid Ansari for suspension of Question Hour tomorrow to discuss the black money issue. The BSP chief Miss Mayawati, however, gave the hint that her party may not toe the line of other non-NDA parties to oppose a number of reform legislations.

"The matter of insurance Bill is with the Select Committee and that committee hasn't taken any final decision yet. Our party will take a stand only after its decision. We will put forth our demands...if the Committee agrees to them then why would we oppose the Bill," she said.

Jan Dhan: Inclusion scheme excludes most

Restricts scope of life insurance cover to bring down burden on the exchequer

VRISHTI BENIWAL
New Delhi, 24 November

The government has started applying exclusion principles to its inclusion scheme, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY). The life cover of ₹30,000 announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for all those opening a bank account under the scheme will now exclude many.

The finance ministry has put several riders for defining one's eligibility for a life insurance policy under PMJDY. In the guidelines issued to banks last week, the ministry said the insurance would be provided only to one person in a family for accounts opened between August 15, 2014, and January 26, 2015.

Those filing income tax returns, serving and retired central and state government employees, employees of central and state public sector entities, and people already covered

under the Aam Aadmi Bima Yojna have been excluded. The families of the individuals in all these categories will also be ineligible for it.

"The scheme aims to provide security to those families who cannot afford life insurance, namely the urban poor and the rural poor, who are not covered under any social security scheme," the finance ministry said, in the guidelines reviewed by *Business Standard*.

The life cover will initially be only for five years and provided to the head of the family or an earning member in the age group of 15-59 years. The person will be excluded from the life insurance scheme after turning 60. So, someone who opted for it at the age of 59 will be covered only for one year.

The account holder should also have an active RuPay debit card (used at least once in 45 days) and a biometric card linked to the account to get the benefit

of the life cover.

"Those who already have a life cover from some other scheme will have to choose between the existing one and the one under PMJDY," said a finance ministry official, asking not to be named.

Since accident insurance of ₹1 lakh, along with a RuPay debit card, was available even before the launch of the scheme and would be effective only up to March 31, 2015 (its extension will be reviewed later), life insurance and credit facility were the two main attractions of PMJDY. Absence of a life cover might make the scheme unattractive to many and hurt the financial inclusion drive.

Launching the scheme on August 28, the prime minister had set a target of taking banking to 75 million households by January 26, 2015. Although 78 million accounts have already been opened, 20 per cent of households are still unbanked.

Many people who already had an account opened another one. Only 47 million of these account holders have a RuPay card and 59 million accounts have zero balance.

"Now, only the families which are truly eligible for the scheme will get the benefit," said a member of the State Level Bankers Committee, looking at the rollout of the scheme in a western state.

Restricting the scope of the scheme will reduce the burden on the exchequer. Life Insurance Corporation of India will create a fund for life coverage with an initial corpus of ₹100 crore from the Social Security Fund of the Centre. It will be replenished by the government from time to time within the stipulated premium amount to meet the outgo and administrative expenses.

Earlier, the government had said the accidental insurance cover and life cover will be available to all account holders.

Problems have started surfacing on the accidental insurance front, too. Although the insurance programme had come into effect from April 1, 2014, claims have shot up after the launch of PMJDY and the issue has been raised with the finance ministry as the insurers did not anticipate such high claims.

"People who got the RuPay card as part of PMJDY have started filing accident insurance claims. We are awaiting more clarity from the finance ministry," said the person mentioned above. The RuPay card is being given free of cost to the customer and the National Payments Corporation of India pays the premium of ₹0.47 per card to HDFC Ergo. It can be given to any account holder and every member of a family. A person who is already having a bank account with any bank just needs to get issued a RuPay card in his existing account to get the benefit of insurance.

Oil price seen falling to \$60 if OPEC does not cut output

REUTERS
London, 24 November

Some commodity fund managers believe oil prices could slide to \$60 per barrel if OPEC does not agree a significant output cut when it meets in Vienna this week.

Brent crude futures have fallen by a third since June, touching a four-year low of \$76.76 a barrel on November 14.

They could tumble further if OPEC does not agree to cut at least one million barrels per day (bpd), according to some commodity fund managers' forecasts.

"The market would question the credibility of OPEC and its influence on global oil markets if there was no cut," said Daniel Bathe, of Lupus Alpha Commodity Invest Fund.

That could send Brent down to around \$60, Bathe said.

"Herding behaviour and a shift to net negative speculative positions should accelerate the price plunge," he said.

Yet fund managers and bro-

OIL TURMOIL

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- Oil prices have been falling since the summer due to abundant supply, partly from US shale oil, and because of low demand growth, particularly in Europe and Asia
- US crude closed at \$76.51 on Friday, with Brent just above \$80



kerage analysts are divided over whether OPEC will reach an agreement on cutting output.

Bathe put the likelihood at no more than 50 per cent.

Oil prices have been falling since the summer due to abundant supply, partly from US

shale oil, and because of low demand growth, particularly in Europe and Asia.

As a result, some investors believe a small cut of around 500,000 bpd would not be enough to calm the markets.

Doug King, chief invest-

ment officer of RCMA Capital, sees Brent falling to \$70 per barrel even with a cut of one million bpd.

"With this, I would expect lower prices in the first half of 2015," he said.

If OPEC fails to agree a cut, prices will drop "further and quite quickly", with US crude possibly sliding to \$60, he said.

US crude closed at \$76.51 on Friday, with Brent just above \$80.

'Oil war'

With member states struggling to balance budgets, many OPEC countries will be pushing for an output cut when OPEC meets in Vienna on November 27.

"Prices below \$80 are putting significant strain on the cartel's weakest members such as Venezuela," said Nicolas Robin, a commodities fund manager at Threadneedle.

He said a bigger cut, of one million bpd or more, was an "outlier scenario" but said such a move could rapidly push prices above \$85.

Western Railway awaits green signal to run trains at 130 km per hour

₹1,110-cr speed improvement project also mooted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vadodara, November 24

The Western Railway is awaiting clearance from the Commissioner of Railway Safety, for running trains on this high-speed corridor at 130 kmph which will help cut down travel time by at least 30 minutes.

Successful trials

Hemant Kumar, General Manager of Western Railway, said, "The Western Railway has already carried out successful trials to run trains on the cor-

ridor at 130 kmph. We are waiting for the clearance from Commissioner of Railway Safety, after which some trains can run at this speed."

Kumar was in the city on Sunday as Chief Guest for the State rally of Western Railways' Bharat Scouts & Guides held at Madhav Rao stadium here.

Speed improvement

He also gave details on submission of a ₹1,100-crore speed improvement project to the Railway Board for approval.

"Under this project, the plan of Western Railway is to increase the speed of some trains on the corridor to 160 kmph. For this, the Western Railway will have to under-

The detailed study report by Japan International Cooperation Agency on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor is scheduled to be submitted in May.

take improvement of tracks, barricading of vulnerable locations and regulating the over head equipment, among other things.

"It is also aimed at reducing travel time between two cities of Mumbai-Ahmedabad by at least two hours," the official said.

On a regular train, it takes between seven and to eight hours to cover the 493-km distance between Mumbai and

Ahmedabad and two hours is a substantial saving in time, if it happens, Kumar said.

After approval from the Railway Board, the entire exercise can be completed in a year.

"It will be done in two phases. In the first phase, only trains that run with LHB-designed fully air-conditioned coaches such as Shatabdi, Duranto and Rajdhani will be able to attain the speed of 160 kmph while the increase in speed in other trains will be done in the second phase," he said.

The detailed study report by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor is scheduled to be submitted in May 2015.

For peace in the Garo Hills

The Garo Hills region of Meghalaya has faced turmoil for years with multiple militant groups fighting what are essentially turf wars, their eyes primarily on the spoils from the extortion of coal mine operators. Among the 10 groups at work, the Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA), less than five years old, has been particularly brutal in its actions. In the third such attack within a year targeting police personnel, GNLA militants killed two policemen in a blast in the South Garo Hills district last week. The GNLA's patently unrealistic demand has been for the creation of a separate state of Garoland. The claim put forward by the GNLA's parent outfit, the Achik National Volunteer Council (ANVC), which was born in 1995, and its splinter group, the ANVC (B), was the creation of 'Achik Land', comprising the Garo Hills region and parts of Assam. Eventually, they scaled it down to the strengthening of the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC). An agreement signed in New Delhi on September 24 in the presence of Home Minister Rajnath Singh and State Chief Minister Mukul Sangma — that the GNLA opposed — has now laid the ground for the disbanding by next month of the ANVC and ANVC (B): the former had signed a tripartite cease-fire agreement with the State and the Centre in 2004.

The latest agreement, which provides for enhanced autonomy for an expanded GHADC — elections to its current number of 29 seats are due to take place early in 2015 — goes some way in meeting regional aspirations. Among other things, it seeks to ensure enhanced autonomy and powers for the body. The Centre has agreed to extend a special package for the socio-economic and educational development of the area and the rehabilitation of surrendering militants. But this represents only partial progress, and nobody expects the low-intensity run of militancy to wind down so easily. Yet, with one significant chunk of militants out of the way, based on a coordinated approach with and active support from the Centre the State should move vigorously to deal decisively with the remaining terror-mongers in a time-bound manner. Over the last few weeks, several cadres belonging to different outfits have either surrendered or been nabbed, following stepped-up operations by the security forces. Putting down the militancy in Meghalaya — which has a 445-km boundary with Bangladesh — with a firm yet sensitive hand should serve as a strong message to all insurgent groups in northeastern India. This message should be that negotiations over reasonable demands will be their only option. At the same time, any nexus between politicians and militants to gain political mileage — as has often been alleged by some leaders — should be rooted out, so militancy gets no leeway in the sensitive region.