

New schemes soon for panchayats

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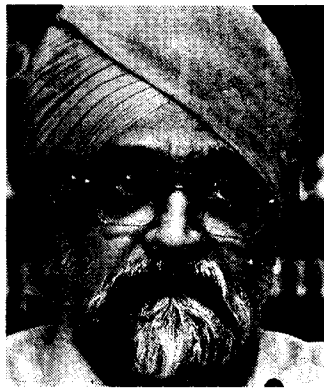
Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana to be expanded

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Central Government is now devising schemes that can be implemented at the panchayat levels to empower the Panchayati Raj institutions, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, said here on Saturday.

Addressing a conference on "The State of the Panchayats and the Way Forward" organised by the Union Panchayati Raj Ministry and the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), Dr. Ahluwalia said the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was one such scheme that would be implemented at the village and district levels. The present Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana would be expanded and re-christened for the development of the backward regions of the country and their funding would depend on the district plans submitted to the Government.

"Even ambitious schemes like the National Rural Health Mission, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Midday Meal Scheme



Montek Singh Ahluwalia

were primarily meant to be implemented at the village levels," he said. These schemes are to be designed, implemented and monitored at the local level, he added.

He said the Planning Commission had issued guidelines to the States to ensure that more functions and at least 30 per cent of the annual funds were devolved to the Panchayati Raj institutions, but he admitted that this was not happening.

According to Dr. Ahluwalia,

the liberalised industrial policy also "re-defined" the role of the State, particularly in the public service delivery system, as these services will now gradually come under the domain of the panchayats instead of the State.

Calling upon the elected representatives to get over the feeling of being "subservient" to the Government officials and their political mentors, Union Panchayati Raj Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar said once elected they had enough power to rise on their own. He said there was a need to define the roles of those elected at the various levels of the Panchayati Raj system, which could be partly done by identifying the activities to be taken up at these levels.

The former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, Digvijay Singh, said there was a need to amend the Constitution to give more powers to the Panchayati Raj institutions. He was also critical of the Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill and said it would only empower the Forest Department officials to encroach upon forest land.

19.05.2005

THE HINDU

Urban Reforms—Can we stay the course?

from the
RINGSIDE
NK Singh



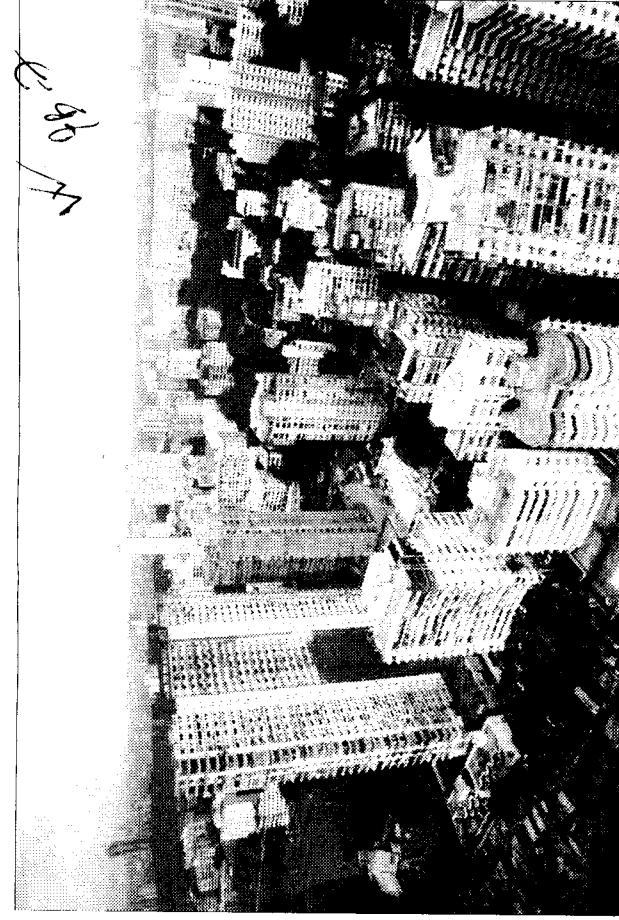
JUST before the Prime Minister left for Moscow, he launched the Jawahar Lal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission. The Prime Minister's speech outlined the challenges of urban planning and highlighted the unresolved issues not all of which have been addressed in the Mission statement.

Enhanced pace of urbanisation is an inevitable outcome of our new growth trajectory. Agriculture still provides livelihood for 68 per cent of our population while contributing 24 per cent to our GDP; sustained growth in manufacturing, coupled with the services sector, will significantly alter past trends on urbanisation. An integrated approach must address regulatory and legal issues, enforcement of existing laws, upgrading infrastructure quality, redressing problems of the urban poor including access to civic amenities, health and education. Planning for new urban centers, renewing and redevelopment of existing conglomeration, while addressing

mega cities' concerns pose multiple challenges. So do the strains of massive temporary internal migration. This is not the first time that an urban initiative has been launched. Earlier variations include the Urban Reforms Incentive Fund, the City Challenge Fund not to speak of the Good Urban Governance Campaign, the Urban Transport Policy, the Slum Policy and the Hawkers Policy. Presumably most of these are now amalgamated in the newly launched Urban Renewal Mission.

So what is new about this initiative? Urban reforms

Agriculture still provides livelihood for 68 per cent of our population while contributing 24 per cent to our GDP; sustained growth in manufacturing, coupled with the services sector, will significantly alter past trends on urbanisation



dividing State Governments to do so remains a daunting challenge.

● **ON access to resources** contingent on meeting conditions, the ability to leverage funds is a critical component of the programme. Will State Governments create Special Purpose Vehicles? Or organisations through whom these activities are to be implemented do so and the borrowing undertaken on the collateral of the expected resource devolution? Predictability of resource flow is necessary for meeting debt liabilities. Resource flows based on annual Budgetary appropriations will remain uncertain. A non-lapsable fund is a budgetary aberration but makes servicing of contingent debt liabilities easier. The modalities on leveraging resources remain unclear.

● **THE choice between either rationalising the Rent Control provisions or repealing the Urban Land Ceiling Act** except in relation to activities for the poor, is not rational. The objective of improving housing for the poor and meeting their infrastructure needs is desirable and must be separately funded. The repeal of the Urban Land Ceiling Act is necessary to re-

duce litigation, improve supply-side response and minimise corruption in the administration of the Urban Land Ceiling Act. Rationalisation of the Rent Control Act is crucial for encouraging investment in the housing sector. One is not a substitute for the other.

● **THE need to progressively apply user charges, contingent on assured quality of infrastructure, is vital to restore the financial health of urban local bodies.** The stipulation in the Mission Statement that "Levy of reasonable user charges with the objective that the full cost of operation and maintenance is collected within 7 years" is opaque. It postpones the problem and makes implementation difficult to monitor.

Urban reforms cannot brook delay. Securing cooperation of State Governments, persuading them on the adequacy of compensation and the multiplier benefits of urban reforms is not easy. Adhoc changes in policy, or periodically altering the nomenclature of the programme is not a substitute for difficult action. Reforms need consistency, coherence and consensus. And above all political will. Can we stay the course?

Urban reforms will now be implemented in a 'Mission mode' to cover 63 cities, comprising a population exceeding one million, State capitals and 23 other cities of religious and tourist importance. An estimated provision of Rs 50,000 crore for a period of seven years is to be given as Grant-in-Aid for leveraging additional resources.

Fund which had similar conditions remained unutilised. While resources have now been enhanced, is the 'carrot' now attractive enough for States to undertake some onerous reforms? ● **THE review of the Tenth Plan based on the Rakesh Mohan committee estimates annual requirement to be Rs 27,773 crore which is far in excess of even the now enhanced allocations.** ● **A CRITICAL factor is need for transfer of resources to effect on the recommendation of the State Finance Commission.** Incen-

Project for urban areas launched

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4/12

Urbanisation a relentless process: Manmohan

Gargi Parsai

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh launched on Saturday a Rs.1 lakh crore Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission for integrated development of infrastructure services in urban areas. The Mission makes it mandatory for States and municipal bodies to undertake reforms to avail themselves of Central funds.

The Centre will, initially, give a grant-in-aid of Rs. 50,000 crore over seven years. The States will have to raise the rest of the funds from market borrowings. Initially, 63 cities, with over one million population, and 23 cities of religious and tourist interest will be covered. Two sub-missions will focus on infrastructure, governance reform, and basic services to the poor.

Dr. Singh said urbanisation was a "relentless process" that had to be factored into all development processes. "We are poised to have nearly 50 per cent of India living in cities by the early part of this century. Rapid urbanisation has brought in its wake proliferating slums, homelessness, urban poverty, crime, pollution and ecological damage which gives an idea of the challenge ahead."

The country's cities were not able to cope with the pressures

of industrial development and growth of the service economy. "Unless remedial steps are taken, it could jeopardise the future."

An important element of urban development should be improvement of slums and providing houses for the poor. "Options like giving the urban poor land rights at affordable rates may see an increase in private investment. We have to make the poor increasingly bankable. Property rights can also be used as a collateral for financing new investment in support of social development."

"No shortage of funds"

Hoping that the States would evolve programmes to attract investment, Dr. Singh said there was no shortage of finance in the infrastructure sector, especially if public-private partnerships were sought. "Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia said the Centre could only provide initial funding for the process of reforms to gain momentum.

Minister for Urban Development Jaipal Reddy suggested the setting up of a task force, including members of the civil society, to adopt appropriate strategies. "Home Minister Shivraj Patil, Chief Ministers and State Ministers were present on the occasion.

04 DEC 2005

THE HINDU

Disaster Management Bill passed in RS

Panel suggestion to include zila parishad chairman at district level heeded

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Rajya Sabha on Monday passed the Disaster Management Bill aimed at swiftly tackling natural calamities and man-made disasters. The Bill envisages institutions at Central, State and local levels, a national institute for disaster management and a national disaster response force comprising initially of eight Central paramilitary battalions.

The Bill, introduced earlier in May this year, was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee, which suggested inclusion of a people's representative at the district level in view of the fact that the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers head the bodies at the national and State levels.

Introducing the Bill and replying to the debate later, Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil said the Government had acceded to the Standing Committee's view

by deciding to have the zila parishad chairman as co-chairman of the district disaster management authority along with the district Collector. He said if the need arose, the Government could later consider giving more nominations to elected representatives at various levels.

Responding to demands from nearly all the speakers, Mr. Patil clarified that the Union Cabinet had considered the Standing Committee's suggestion to make a people's representative head of the district disaster management authority but decided against the move because the authority of the zila parishad chief did not extend to directing the activity of the State Government. "Therefore some representative of the State Government has to be there." The Union Home Minister felt "many [of the speakers] had misused the role" of the local bodies. The responsibility for imple-

• Eight paramilitary battalions to initially form disaster response force

• Members seek greater role for local bodies

menting the plan would involve 30 lakh representatives from local bodies.

On the specialised force to tackle disasters, Mr. Patil said the Centre had earmarked eight battalions from the Central paramilitary forces and asked States to make provision for battalions from their forces. The Minister said district bodies would be allocated "small amounts" to deal with the calamity till the National Disaster Management Authority stepped in.

Opening the discussion, S. S. Ahluwalia (Bharatiya Janata Party) wanted the proposed na-

tional disaster management institute to give weight to traditional knowledge about "sensing" natural disasters. Jai-ram Ramesh (Congress) drew attention to the absence of a scientist or technologist in the National Disaster Management Authority and said instead of earmarking troops for the Disaster Response Force, the Government should have adopted the neighbourhood approach. He felt the "top down approach" could have been eschewed. The Government should consider an auditing mechanism for the vast amounts of sum — projected at Rs. 21,000 crores — for the next five years to be allocated for disaster relief.

Most speakers dwelt on the absence of people's representatives, some wanted regional balance in the bodies at the Centre and States and Saifuddin Soz (Congress) felt there was no need for another institute.

THE HINDU

29 NOV 2005

Disaster management authority soon: Azad

NO-15
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Priority to accommodate quake victims before winter

Staff Reporter

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has said that the State Government will set up a disaster management authority to deal with natural calamities such as earthquakes and snowstorms.

At a news conference here, Mr. Azad said the priority of the Government was to make sufficient arrangements for the construction of temporary sheds, community halls and pre-fabricated housing structures, so that the quake victims could be properly accommodated before the onset of winter.

While some 200 engineers of the Public Works Department were yet to report for duty in the affected villages in Poonch district, only five per cent helped residents in north Kashmir in building quake-resistant houses, as directed by him as Union Housing and Urban Development Minister, he said. If the engineers did not report by Monday, they would be suspended and later dismissed from service.

A total of 1,209 people died in the earthquake in the State. Of these, 975 families received compensation of Rs. 50,000 each from the State Government. They would also get Rs. 1 lakh from the Centre. Some 100 community centres were being constructed by the Union Urban Development Ministry. By November 15, 30 community halls would be ready and by the end of this month, all 100 would be constructed. Some 100 persons could be accommodated in one hall.

When people returned to their houses, the halls would be converted into hospi-

• Says providing proper shelter to quake victims before winter is first priority

• Praises the Army's relief and rehabilitation operations

tals and educational institutions. Mr. Azad said that some 900 families, comprising 6,000 persons in nine villages of Tangdhar, would have to be permanently rehabilitated in other places due to the damage caused to the villages. For them, four locations had been identified. The villagers would get an additional cash amount of Rs. 30,000. If the people constructed their sheds by November 30, they would get an incentive of Rs. 5000. The overall compensation would be three and a half times the national average.

Troop withdrawal

On the demand for troop withdrawal, he said: "While asking for such things, they should also stand guarantee for stoppage of violence in its all forms." The killings of innocent persons and incidents such as bomb blasts were still taking place.

Defending the Army, especially its relief and rehabilitation operations in the quake-affected areas, he said vested interests had projected the security forces as an "enemy of the people."

On the surrender and rehabilitation policy, he said there should be a complete change in the mindset. A surrendered militant might pretend that he had shunned violence but could be indulging in anti-national activities in disguise.

14 NOV 2005

THE HINDU

SC FORCES GOVT TO ACT ON NEERA YADAV

UP chief secy removed

Press Trust of India

LUCKNOW, Oct. 6. — Acting swiftly on a Supreme Court directive, the Uttar Pradesh government today removed the controversial chief secretary, Ms Neera Yadav, and shifted her to the less significant post of chairman, Revenue Board. The principal secretary, urban development and employment, Mr R Ramani, has been given additional charge of chief secretary, an official release said.

Senior IAS officer Mr Ravi Mathur, who has been replaced by Ms Yadav, has not been given any assignment, the release said. He is believed to be in the race for the post of chief secretary.

The Supreme Court had earlier today directed the state government to shift within a week Ms Yadav, facing charges of corruption.

The order came following a meeting Ms Yadav had with chief minister Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav after the SC directive.

Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court directed the Uttar Pradesh government to shift controversial official Ms Yadav from the post of chief secretary within seven days.

In an interim order, a Bench comprising Ms Justice Ruma Pal, Mr Justice Arijit Pasayat and Mr Justice CK Thakkar directed the state government to transfer Ms Yadav to some other post with the same rank. A Public Interest Litigation was filed seeking a stay on her appointment as the chief secretary of the state.

The PIL, filed by the Centre for Public Interest Litigation, had alleged that despite several cases registered against Ms Yadav, including by the CBI for corruption, she was appointed as chief secretary. The Supreme Court-appointed Justice KT Thomas Committee was also inquiring into the alleged land scam during her tenure as the chairman of Noida.

Refusing to comment on the Supreme Court verdict

against her appointment, Ms Yadav today said the matter concerned the state government which was the respondent in the case.

"As of now I am yet to receive the certified copy of the verdict ... And the matter concerned the state government which is the respondent in the case and has to file its reply," she told reporters here. Whether today's directive was a setback for her, she replied in the negative.

It is learnt that the state government was trying to acquire the certified copy of the judgment and would be studying it. The chief minister was consulting his senior officials, including the chief secretary, on the issue, they added.

Judgment reserved: The Supreme Court today reserved its judgment on a petition challenging the UP government's move to withdraw charges under Pota against controversial legislator Raghuraj Pratap Singh alias Raja Bhaiya, his father Uday Pratap Singh and a relative Akhilesh Pratap Singh.

THE STATESMAN

Big win for LDF in Kerala civic polls

LDF's tactical adjustments pay dividends; BJP gains from tie-up with UDF

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: In what may well be a pointer to the electoral mood of Kerala, the Left Democratic Front (LDF), led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), has registered a landslide victory in the local body elections. LDF candidates won all the five city corporations, at least 33 out of the 52 municipalities, 13 of the 14 district panchayats and a majority of the 152 block panchayats and 999 grama panchayats.

Elections to the State Assembly are due in May 2006. The

Congress-led United Democratic Front is in power in the State.

The LDF, aided by tactical adjustments with the Democratic Indira Congress (Karunakaran), gave the UDF a comprehensive drubbing. The UDF could acquire itself somewhat tolerably only in Alappuzha, Kottayam and Malappuram districts. The surprise winner is the BJP, which emerged as the largest single party in Palakkad municipality, came second in 18 wards in Thiruvananthapuram Corporation and opened its account in several municipalities.

The UDF-BJP tie-up appar-

ently proved more beneficial to the BJP than the UDF. On the other hand, that between the LDF and the DIC (K) proved useful for both, helping the LDF in several local bodies and the DIC (K) to turn the election into a

show of strength. In all the corporations and most of the municipalities that it has won, the LDF can rule on its own.

The Opposition alliance took five municipalities from the ruling Front while conceding just



RESULTS AT A GLANCE

	TOTAL	RESULTS RECEIVED	LDF/ DIC(K)	UDF	BJP
Corporations	5	5	5	0	0
Municipalities	52*	52	33	13	1
District Panchayats	14	14	3	1	0
Block Panchayats	152	120	77	42	1
Grama Panchayats	999	584	409	168	7

* In five municipalities no coalition/party has a majority

one. It snatched the Thrissur Corporation from the UDF. The LDF put up an impressive show in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Idukki and Wayanad while retaining its hold in Palakkad, Kozhikode and Kanur. Palakkad Municipality will continue to be held by the UDF-BJP; the UDF and the LDF have won 16 seats each, ceding the lead to BJP, which has 17 seats.

The results from the grama panchayats and block panchayats were only trickling in, but the LDF is poised to secure control of 77 block panchayats against 42 of the UDF and one of the BJP. Among the grama panchayats, 409 appeared to go the LDF's way against 168 in favour of the UDF and seven of the BJP.

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THE HINDU

Bihar babus may drag EC to court

'Arbitrary' ways of poll panel upset officers

HT Correspondent and PTI Patna, September 11

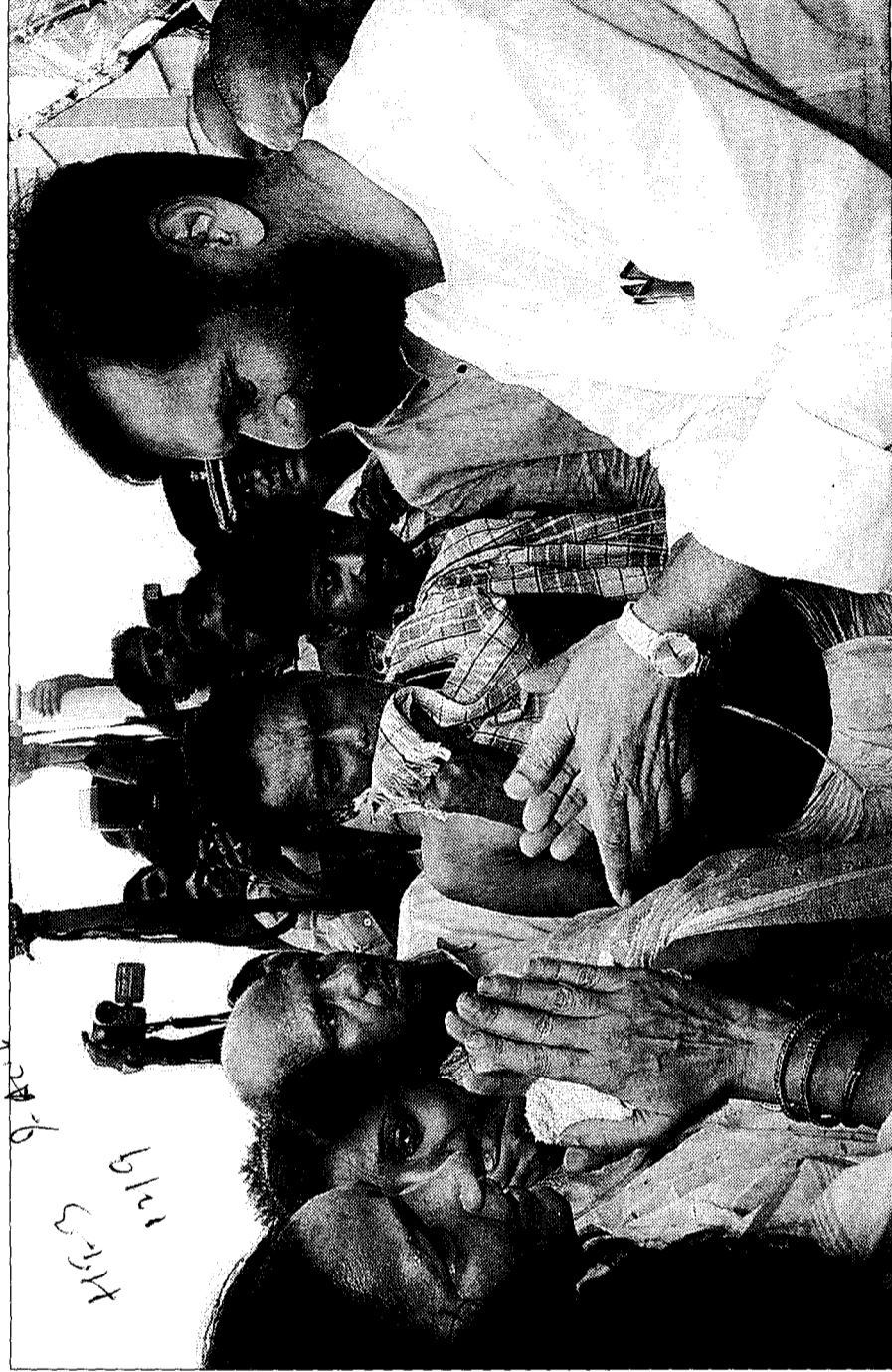
FEARING 'FURTHER humiliation' at the hands of the Election Commission, some IAS officers of the state are exploring legal options available to them. A face-off between the Bihar Administrative Service (BAS) officers and the EC also seems imminent following the latter's decision to hold examinations before appointing them returning officer (RO).

A group of IAS officers recently held a closed-door meeting to discuss the issue. Confirming this, an IPS officer said the officers were upset with the ways of the EC and as a way out they were contemplating filing a PIL in the High Court against the "EC's arbitrary actions".

Another meeting was slated next week, he added.

The IAS Officers' Association and the BASA stand rock-solid behind their members and have offered to extend support. President of the IAS Officers' Association, R.S. Tewari, said, "The Association will definitely help any aggrieved officer if he approaches us."

EC sources, on the other hand, said it was the Commission's prerogative to test the trainees. "It's a matter between the trainer (EC) and the trainee (BASA officials). And the EC is well within its rights to take at least oral test of the candidates," said chief election officer NK Sin-



PTI

RIGHT MOVES: LJP leader Ram Vilas Paswan with the family of former Congress MP Rajjo Singh who was killed in Bihar last week.

ha when Hindustan Times contacted him.

Lalu will be wiped out: Paswan

Taking on Lalu Yadav in his stronghold of Madhepura, LJP chief Ram Vilas Paswan

said the RJD supremo would barely get 25 seats in the Assembly polls and asked the Congress to snap its poll alliance with RJD if it wants not to be reduced to a cipher in Bihar politics.

"The people of Bihar, particularly Muslims, have realised that RJD had been taking them for a ride all these years and are no longer ready to support it. Lalu has to shed a lot of sweat to get to 25 seats".

In UP panchayat polls, money talks

It's All About Cash, Booze And Muscle As Parties Target The Grassroots Now

By Avijit Ghosh/TNN

Muzaffarnagar: Candidates selling off land to contest for the gram pradhan's post. Liquor shops recording unprecedented sales. Langars dispensing free food for over three weeks. And contestants spending anything between Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh each.

The fatwa and the poll killings were much-talked about; but hard cash was the new calling card in the Uttar Pradesh panchayat election whose results were declared earlier this week.

Politicians, villagers and administrators point out that there are clear signs of a paradigm shift at the grassroots. In the past, a panchayat election was about individuals; now it is also about political parties working behind the scenes.

Observers say that parties want a village pradhan to act as their pointman or resource person for the next UP assembly polls. And to get the right person there, they have invested heavily.

Traditionally, both money and muscle have played an important role in the assembly and Lok Sabha elections in UP. However, money was seldom an issue for the panchayat polls where muscle power has always played a more important part. Not anymore. In the recent election where over a million candidates fought for the posts of over 50,000 gram pradhans and over 6,50,000 panchayat members, money was the defining factor.

A senior police official in western Uttar Pradesh illustrates the point. When a top regional newspaper's executives asked a couple of candidates to advertise at a highly discounted rate of Rs 1,400, one of them made a quick calculation and said: "That's worth 28 votes; Rs 50 for each voter. Why waste money on ads?"

Even politicians admit to the money game. "One of my contractor friends told me," says Lok Dal leader Ashok Baliyan, "he made more money selling booze in the past three weeks than he had in the past one year." Most of the liquor was bought by candidates who supplied it free to voters.

The practice reached alarming propor-



tions. In fact, a local newspaper reported that in Andawali village in neighbouring Meerut district, women vowed to boycott the elections if liquor distribution was not stopped.

A section of the populace believes that the inflow of money is good news for village democracy because it shows that coercion doesn't work anymore. But the story runs deeper. Sources say that candidates were willing to spend money for the pradhan's post because it is more lucrative and glamorous now.

"The government spends a lot of money on villages these days. With increasing decentralisation, the pradhan gets to decide where and how it is going to be spent. So people are getting attracted," says school teacher Srikant Sharma of Rohana village.

In fact, Bilu Pradhan, a contestant from Sarvat village, even sold off his land to finance his campaign.

But more importantly, as Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait says, political parties are far more involved than ever before. "They are acting from behind the scene. And they financed the candidates of their choice," says the BKU spokesperson. Sources say that with more and more social groupings wanting a share in political power, the polls have become more competitive.

And parties are leaving nothing to chance. Clearly, the preparations for the next UP assembly polls have already begun.

4 killed in U.P. Panchayat polls

29/8 11-5 J. A. N. ...
80 per cent turnout recorded in the third phase; re-polling held in 81 booths

LUCKNOW: An estimated 80 per cent of the 25-million electorates exercised their franchise in the third phase of Uttar Pradesh Panchayat polls with reports of four deaths and 30 wounded in poll-related violence.

One death each were reported from Ferozabad, Farrukhabad, Fatehpur and Pilibhit, while about 30 persons were injured in group clashes at Auriyya, Fatehpur, Etawah, Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Sant Kabirnagar, Allahabad and Badaun.

Dharampal, brother of a pradhan candidate, was shot dead at Jasauli village under Bisauli block in Pilibhit district, while one person was killed and three wounded in a clash at Latipur village in Fatehpur.

Father-in-law of a woman candidate was shot dead in Baljatpur village under Nawabganj block of Farrukhabad and one person was killed by miscreants at Nargapur village in Ferozabad.

State Election Commissioner Aparmita Prasad Singh said about 80 per cent polling was recorded in the third phase and reports of three deaths had been confirmed so far in poll-related violence.

The polling, which started on a dull note due to heavy rains at many places in east UP, however picked up later in the day.

Repolling in 81 booths, where polling were held in the first and second phases, also took place on Tuesday.

During the last two phases on August 17 and 20, over 25 per cent polling was witnessed since the start of polling with the poll average hovering between 80 and 90 per cent.

Despite tight security arrangements during the first two phases, at least four persons were killed and over 50 injured



POLICE ACTION: A villager gets a thrashing from a policeman at the Bhashani polling station in Muzaffarnagar district during the third phase of Panchayat elections in Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday. PHOTO: PTI

in poll related violence.

State Principal Secretary (Home) Alok Sinha said except for stray incidents the polling was by and large peaceful.

Fate of 2.61 lakh candidates

for the post of pradhans and gram panchayat members had been sealed in this phase of polling. An estimated 25 million voters were eligible to exercise their franchise in 39,473 polling

booths spread over 208 development blocks of 70 districts.

Already 140 candidates had been elected unopposed for the post of gram pradhans in the first phase, followed by 117 in the

second and 147 in the third phase so far. The fourth and the last phase of polling would be held on August 25. Counting of votes for all four phases would be taken up on August 28. UNI

AUG 20

THE HINDU

90 p.c. voting in UP panchayat polls

Sporadic incidents of violence reported from various places; one killed, 15 injured

LUCKNOW: Around 90 per cent voter turnout was reported during the first phase of panchayat polls in Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday amid sporadic incidents of violence resulting in the loss of one life and injuries to 15.

State Election Commissioner (SEC) Aparnita Prasad Singh said here that around 90 per cent voters exercised their franchise in the first phase of the four-phase panchayat polls in 70 districts of the State.

Mr Singh said polling in entire Jsrana block of Ferozabad district has been countermanded following manhandling of the assistant polling officer.

He said one person, identified as Jagbir (23), was killed and another Sudhir was injured in a group clash at Wajidpur under Barot block in Baghpat district.

As per preliminary reports, repolling is expected in five poll-

- Polling in one entire block countermanded

- First phase to decide fate of 2.6 lakh candidates

- Next phases scheduled for August 20, 23 and 25

- Counting to be taken up on August 28

ing booths in Barabanki district, two in Pratapgarh, two in Kanpur City and one in Sultanpur district, Mr Singh added.

Meanwhile, State Principal Secretary (Home) Alok Sinha told media persons that the polling was by and large peaceful barring some incidents of arson and group clashes.

State Election Commission sources here said SHO of Biswampur in Mainpuri district, Swami Dayal Yadav, was injured when miscreants hurled bombs at him.

In the same district five other people were injured at Khatana,

Ganpatpur and Sultanpur in poll-related violence.

Five people were injured at Gonaria polling station in Gonda when two groups hurled bombs at each other. Later, police had to open fire to control the rival groups.

In Jamdihara polling station of Gonda, four people sustained minor injuries when anti-social elements resorted to pelting stones.

Reports of firing were also received from Kanpur (Dehat), Bijnour, Farrukhabad and Etah.

In Gonda, some miscreants

reportedly ran away with ballot papers from Khaira village, forcing temporary stoppage of poll process.

Incidents of damaging of ballot boxes were also reported from various parts.

The first phase of polling would decide the fate of 2.68 lakh candidates for 14,195 seats of pradhans and 94,252 posts of gram panchayat members in 233 blocks.

Already 140 candidates have been elected unopposed for the post of gram pradhans and 84,448 for the post of panchayat members.

A total of 26 million voters were expected to cast their ballots in today's election.

Next three phases of polling are scheduled for August 20, 23 and 25. Counting of votes for all four phases would be taken up on August 28. -- UNI



DON'T DO IT AGAIN: Two boys being punished for impersonating during panchayat polls at Aral near Allahabad on Wednesday.

All panchayats to get networked computers

Panchayat Raj Ministry will spend more than Rs. 1,000 crores in the next 2 years

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Panchayati Raj Ministry is to spend over Rs. 1,000 crores in the next two years towards installation of computers in 2.4 lakh panchayats, interlink them with one another and also with a national panchayat portal.

But realising that it would not be able to raise funds for this from its own resources, the Ministry is banking on the Planning Commission and the Finance Ministry.

Empowered committee

Besides linking rural areas, the programme would also provide employment to at least two persons from each gram panchayat who would be trained to operate the computers.

The Ministry would soon enter into a memorandum of understanding with the State Governments, with the target of

- 2.4 lakh panchayats to be linked with one another and with a national panchayat portal
- To provide employment to two persons from each panchayat
- About 35 to 40 per cent of panchayats to be computerised in the first year
- Rs. 8,000 crores recommended for Panchayati Raj Institutions for 2000-05

completing the work within two years. An Empowered Committee will be constituted to implement the programme and an officer of the rank of joint secretary would be designated as ex-officio director for the mission.

This decision was taken at the meeting of the Committee of Chief Secretaries and Principal Secretaries (Panchayati Raj) of States and Union Territories here last week.

About 35 to 40 per cent of the panchayats are likely to be com-

puterised in the first year.

Rough estimates made by the Ministry recommend a cap of Rs. 45,000 for every gram panchayat for the installation of the hardware component.

The Ministry would spend Rs. 4,000 on training two individuals in every gram panchayat.

The total expense of training 5 lakh persons, including upgradation and refresher courses over two years, would be about Rs. 100 crores.

The Ministry is making ef-

orts to club its computerisation programme with the Bharat Nirman project that aims at providing infrastructure in rural areas. Computerisation is an important component of the Rs. 1.74 lakh crores Bharat Nirman project initiated by President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

Chairing the meeting, Union Panchayati Raj Secretary Wajahat Habibullah asked the State Governments to expedite constitution of district planning committees (DPCs) in all districts on a priority basis.

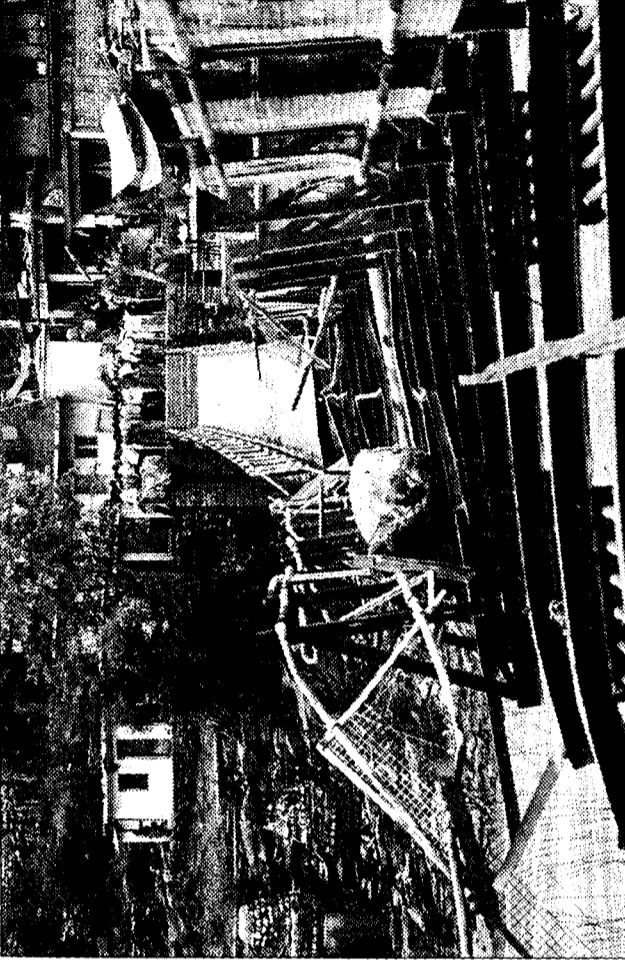
Funds to augment income of panchayats would be allocated to States on the recommendation of the Central Finance Commission based on the consolidated plans of DPCs, Mr. Habibullah said.

The Eleventh Finance Commission has recommended grants of Rs. 8,000 crores for the Panchayati Raj Institutions for 2000-05, he added.

15 JUL 2005

Disaster management policy framed

SF-5 28/6 9 Administration (Disaster management)



Residents crowd near a bridge over the Sutlej river near Rampur in Himachal Pradesh, which was damaged by flood waters on Monday. Thousands were stranded due to sudden flood in the state. — AFP

Statesman News Service and PTI

NEW DELHI, June 28. — A draft national policy on disaster management has been formulated and will be submitted to the Cabinet for approval after inter-ministerial consultation, Union home minister Mr Shivraj Patil said today.

"The draft policy aims at a holistic and pro-active approach. It covers different sectors including technological framework, mitigation and capacity building, preparedness and response, relief and rehabilitation, awareness generation and human resource development," Mr Patil told the 9th meeting of the Inter-State Council here.

The home minister said a National Disaster Response Force consisting of eight battalions (about

8,000 personnel) of Central paramilitary forces is being developed. Pending enactment of the Disaster Management Law — a Bill which has been referred to a Parliamentary Standing Committee — the National Disaster Management Authority was constituted on 30 May this year under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister.

The Bill provides for setting up of Disaster Management Authorities at the national, state and district levels under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, chief ministers and district magistrates respectively.

The government, Mr Patil said, has taken up several mitigation measures including constitution of disaster specific national core groups,

Chinese officials in Tibet

Reports from Beijing have it that China has dispatched officials to the site of the Tibet lake which caused floods in Himachal Pradesh and promised to provide India with the latest information on the situation as soon as it is available.

"We are very much concerned with the impact of the floods on the Indian side," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Mr Liu

capacity building of engineers and architects and implementation of a disaster risk management programme in 169 districts in 17 most hazard-prone states.

Presided over by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, the meeting was attended by several Union ministers, chief ministers and Lt. Governors.

Jianchao said today.

"The local government has sent working groups to the lake that was formed there," Mr Liu said. "We will stay in touch with the Indian side and keep them informed about the matter," he said.

Rs 500-cr grant for coastal security plan

Ranchi, May 30

THE CENTRE has decided to give a total of Rs 500-crore to states a launch a 'Coastal Security Plan' and also suggested establishing disaster managements right down to the district level, Union home minister Shivraj Patil said on Monday.

The coastal security plan envisaged setting up of police stations on coasts, purchase of new boats and training for policemen personnel who provided security on shore, he said.

Besides, the Centre also suggested an establishment of disaster management authorities at the state and district level on the lines of the National Disaster management authority, he said.

Agencies

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Panchayati raj institutionalised but not empowered, says Aiyar

"We can bring about a revolution; it needs to be central point for development"

Staff Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Equipped with a staff of 66 personnel, Panchayati Raj Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar believes he can expedite establishment of rural business hubs. "With a full-fledged Ministry, we can bring in a revolution in rural India, Mr. Aiyar said here on Monday.

Mr. Aiyar was interacting with the media after the Union Cabinet sanctioned a secretary, two additional secretaries and four joint secretaries for the Panchayati Raj Ministry.

The Minister said 300-odd Centrally-sponsored schemes, if implemented through panchayati raj institutions, could help in achieving the concept of "poorna swaraj" or "gram swaraj" as preached by Mahatma Gandhi.

Talking about his experiences at the end of seven round-table conferences on devolution of power to grass roots, Mr. Aiyar said: "We have institutionalised panchayati raj but not empowered it." Karnataka and West Bengal have given

enough powers to these institutions and Pondicherry, Bihar and Jharkhand were yet to begin the process.

List of recommendations

The Minister said he had sent a list of 150 recommendations to all

Chief Ministers on devolution of powers to these institutions about three months ago. He presumed that they have been accepted by States, as there were no objections.

"Panchayati raj impacts crores of people across the country at the grass roots level and it needs to be

the central point for development of rural areas.

Under Schedule 7, panchayati raj is listed as a State subject but I believe that the States and the Centre need to come together to implement the system," Mr. Aiyar said.

Not applicable in J&K

While the Constitutional amendment on implementation of the system is not applicable in Jammu and Kashmir, the State Government has already begun the process of strengthening it there.

The State asked the Centre to study its implementation in accordance with the Central law.

"The Panchayati Raj Secretary, Wajahat Habibullah, will shortly visit Jammu and Kashmir for the purpose," Mr. Aiyar announced.

The Minister is visiting all States to assess the implementation of the system.

Mr. Aiyar has directed State secretaries to meet at least once a month to review the implementation of the recommendations of the seven round tables.

GoM to strengthen panchayati raj

Staff Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Panchayati Raj Ministry has proposed to set up a group of ministers (GoM) for strengthening the panchayati raj institutions. The Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has approved the proposal.

Those likely to be in the GoM are the Ministers for Human Resource Development, Agriculture and Consumer Affairs, Chemicals and Fertilizers, Finance, Tribal Affairs, Rural Development,

Environment and Forests, besides Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission. Union Panchayati Raj Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar will chair the GoM. The terms of reference of the GoM include implementation of recommendations on financial devolution, accountability and performance of panchayats, implementations of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, gender empowerment through panchayats.

State's 'model' panchayati raj earns Iyer pat

HT Correspondent
Kolkata, May 13

CALLING WEST Bengal a "model" panchayati raj system, Union minister for petroleum and natural gas Mani Shankar Iyer on Friday said other Indian states had a great deal to learn from it.

Dubbing Bengal the "home of panchayati raj" and a "major inspiration" behind late Rajiv Gandhi's move towards decentralisation of panchayats through the 73rd amendment to the Constitution, Iyer said the state has "established a reputation in the functioning of panchayati raj in the world". On the way to his tour to what he hoped would be "villages of joy", Iyer dropped in at the Writers' Buildings on Friday to laud the chief minister's efforts in projecting the state as an example worthy of emulation.

However, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee was candid enough to say "all was not well" with the system. He categorically mentioned that the very model is beset with problems and that efforts are on to understand, identify and study the problems, though neither he nor Iyer pointed out what the problems actually were.

Iyer made a perfunctory statement that he had received several complaints over functioning of the district planning committee, but did not mention what they really were.

The Union minister's speech was laced with praise and admiration of how the Left Front government had successfully implemented the panchayati raj system.

Appreciating West Bengal for closely following the decentralisation policy and devolution of powers, as suggested in the 73rd amendment, Iyer said attempts were on to introduce the principle of "subsidiary" in the devolution of the power pattern. The principle of subsidiary, taken from the European model, stresses that anything done at the lower echelon should not be extended to any higher level.

A fresh look at the decentralisation policy through seven roundtable conferences with state ministers of panchayati raj had led to a national consensus on 150 recommendations.

Iyer is expected to implement three of them. First, he will form a committee of secretaries of the panchayati raj under the Union ministry, which will monitor and review progress. Second, there will be a panel of ministers and, third, the Union minister will tour states, once a month, to study the ground realities.

Iyer also praised the way local bodies



Minister on fuel prices

UNION MINISTER for Petroleum and natural gas Mani Shankar Iyer has ruled out the possibility of a hike in fuel prices (petrol or diesel) till the Union Cabinet meets in mid-May.

He said it was a serious political and economic issue, and a decision could not be taken by an individual ministry. Iyer said he had already met several political parties — the CPI(M), CPI, Forward Bloc and the RSP — and national leaders — Laloo Prasad Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan — on the issue. "I will hold further talks, if necessary, for clarification," he added.

Commenting on Haldia Petrochemicals, he said the IOC had made a formal offer and was ready to invest, but the rest was upto the HPL board.

HTC, Kolkata

are run in the state with a standing committee system and the *gram sansads* functioning as checks and balances in the executive operation of elected local bodies.

According to the Union minister, the district councils acting as a legislative body at the local level uphold the most democratic set-up, where though the chairmen of the councils are from the opposition, mostly Congress, the presidents of the zilla parishads are from the CM's party. He has warned MLAs from upsetting the political balance at the local level.

Talking of the need of a Centre-state joint endeavour, Iyer said the Centre has arranged for Rs 500 crore from the panchayat empowerment incentive fund for the overall development of the bodies.

Kerala: revamp of disaster management strategy soon

T. Nandakumar

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: A network of early warning units, emergency control rooms and relief teams operating through a chain of command extending from the Government level to local bodies may soon help Kerala to tackle the fallout of natural and man-made disasters.

An expert committee set up by the Government in January to formulate a disaster management strategy for the State has recommended a radical shift from relief activities to disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness.

In its report submitted to the Chief Minister, Oommen Chandy, last week, the panel has suggested the creation of a Department for Disaster Management under the Government.

The nine-member committee, headed by A.E. Muthunayagam,

executive vice-president of the State Council for Science, Technology and Environment, has proposed preparation of district and panchayat-level calamity management plans for areas vulnerable to a host of disasters such as drought and floods, coastal erosion, cyclone, tsunami, landslips and earthquakes, epidemics, industrial pollution, dam bursts and forest fires.

It has also recommended plans for accident-related disasters such as food poisoning, building collapse, festival-related incidents, road accidents, boat capsizes, liquor tragedy, drug abuse and stampedes.

Mechanism

A decentralised network of core teams involving government departments, district administration, local bodies, scientists and non-governmental organisations forms the crux

of the disaster management strategy mooted by the expert panel, which was constituted in the wake of the tsunami tragedy last December.

The institutional mechanism includes a Disaster Management Authority, chaired by the Chief Minister, and a Crisis Management Committee, headed by the Chief Secretary.

These will be backed up by district-level disaster management committees and village-level disaster management teams.

The Secretary, Department of Disaster Management is to be the Relief Commissioner for the State. Community involvement is a key element in the plan.

The district administration has been identified as the focal point for disaster response and recovery, with the Collector coordinating the activities of all the departments.

13 MAY 2005

THE HINDU

Disaster Management Bill introduced in Rajya Sabha

Proposal to integrate disaster management with development

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Government has decided to enact a law on disaster management to provide for requisite institutional mechanism for drawing up and monitoring the implementation of the National Disaster Management Plan. The Disaster Management Bill, 2005 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha by Home Minister Shivraj Patil on Wednesday.

However, pending enactment of the Central law on Disaster Management, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) would be set up soon through an executive order, Mr. Patil told presspersons here. The NDMA, to be headed by the Prime Minister, would have 10 members.

Elaborating on salient features of the Bill, he said it would facilitate the setting up of a National Disaster Response Force, which would have nearly 8,000 trained personnel of the Central paramilitary forces.

The Bill would ensure measures by various wings of the government for prevention and mitigating the effects of disas-

- National Disaster Management Authority to be set up
- National Disaster Response Force also to be established
- State, district Disaster Authorities planned
- Government measures for holistic, prompt response to disasters
- Policy to cover all spheres of Central Government activity

ters and for undertaking a holistic, coordinated and prompt response to any natural or man-made disasters.

Planning, approving

Mr. Patil said the Bill sought to establish State Disaster Authorities under the Chairmanship of Chief Ministers and District Disaster Management Authorities under the chairmanship of District Magistrates.

He said the responsibilities for the National Authority include laying down plans and policies for disaster management and approving the National Disaster Management Plans.

Mr. Patil said the NDMA would be assisted by an executive committee of secretaries, which would be responsible to draw up the disaster management plan, coordinate and monitor its implementation.

They would also coordinate response to a disaster under the guidelines of the Authority.

Mr. Patil said the Government also proposed to put in place a national policy on disaster management to integrate disaster management with development plans.

"The policy will cover all spheres of Central government activity and shall take precedence over all existing sectoral policies.

The main components of the policy will include objectives, fundamental tenets, institutional framework, techno-legal framework, mitigation measures, capacity building and awareness generation," he said.

PM BACKS POLL PANEL

Notice to Chapra observer

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, May 10. — The Centre today issued a show-cause notice to Mr LV Saptharishi, demanding an explanation for his attack on two election commissioners even as the Prime Minister backed the Election Commission for its "positive" role.

The department of personnel accused Mr Saptharishi of violating the Civil Service (Conduct) Rules, saying his tirade against Mr BB Tandon and Mr N Gopalaswamy, regarding their alleged role in countermanning the Chapra polls was unbecoming of a civil servant.

The rural development minister and RJD leader, Mr Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, said Mr Lalu Prasad should have discussed the issue with him before disclosing the content of Mr Saptharishi's letter. "At least he should have consulted the UPA allies," he said. The officer met the two RJD leaders.

While returning from Moscow, on board his special aircraft, Dr Manmohan Singh said it was "incumbent" on all to ensure that democratic institutions were respected. Tho-

You're right, SC tells Lalu

NEW DELHI, May 10. — Mr Lalu Prasad today stood vindicated as the Supreme Court accepted his plea that it could not have decided the composition of a Patna High Court Bench for hearing his petition in a disproportionate assets case. — PTI

Details on page 4

se within the institution are also vested with the responsibility of maintaining its sanctity and preserving its autonomy, he said.

Mr Prasad stuck to his demand for resignation of the two election commissioners. "I am not making any allegation. I am supporting what Mr Saptharishi said. I am not against the EC," he said. Asked about Dr Singh's remarks, he said: "I am not answerable for what he has said."

'No extension'

Mr Raghuvansh Prasad Singh said there was no move by his ministry to extend the tenure of service of Mr Saptharishi, who is Capart's director general. Mr Saptharishi is to retire on 31 July.

More reports on
page 5.

1 MAY 2005

THE STATESMAN

Distasteful assault

Lalu seeks support from IAS officer

Prior to the assembly election, the UC Banerjee Commission, appointed by the Railway Ministry released an interim report on the Godhra tragedy, which Lalu Prasad promptly used in his election campaign. That didn't help him sail through. Now when the NDA has boycotted Parliament demanding his resignation, following the charge-sheet in the fodder scam, there comes an allegation by an IAS officer, a special observer during the Bihar election, that LK Advani exerted pressure on two election commissioners to countermand polling in Chhapra, Lalu's constituency. Given Lalu's style, the coincidences are not the only cause for concern. What will have a more lasting effect is Lalu casting aspersions on the integrity of the Election Commission without the slightest evidence. This exceeds his own unscrupulous standards. The Congress has sensibly distanced itself from him, while the Left has stopped ahead of endorsing him, despite being against the BJP. There are limits which even politicians of Lalu's class should not cross. This should be recognised by the UPA which has given him the impression that it has no option but to swallow his misdeeds for fear of his upsetting the applecart.

It is also a sad commentary on the way civil servants fall into political traps. It has taken a full year for LV Satharishi's conscience to strike him. In the process he brazenly violates the code of confidentiality and hurls utterly distasteful charges against the person tipped to take over as chief election commissioner. He hopes that by making public proceedings of a closed-door meeting, his word will prevail. We are happy to disabuse him. He protests too much when he says he has no ambitions left after retirement on the 31 July. The BJP may be embarrassed by the U-turn in the evidence. With rare exceptions, the IAS does not distinguish itself with pursuit of principles. The purpose may be to warn the EC not to be so tough on Lalu the next time round. Public expectation is that the EC will ignore these antics with the contempt they deserve.

11 MAY 2005

THE STATESMAN

Disaster bill with Sonia on lips

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, May 9: Sonia Gandhi's name was invoked several times by Shivraj Patil while announcing the setting up of a national disaster management authority to equip the country to deal with devastation such as that triggered by December's tsunami or the Gujarat and Latur earthquakes.

The Union home minister said the bill would be introduced in the Upper House tomorrow. The government wants to have a structure in place to deal with national disasters.

"Great credit must be given to Sonia Gandhi for this bill," Patil told the Rajya Sabha after a short discussion on the tsunami and the relief and rehabilitation of the survivors.

The treasury benches thumped their desks every time the United Progressive Alliance chairperson was mentioned. With the BJP boycott continuing, only 35 members were present in the Rajya Sabha.

"It is not possible to stop national calamities, but we want to be better prepared to mitigate the sufferings of those affected if we have structures in place," Patil explained.

While the bill will take some time to become law, the government is aiming to have the administrative tiers in place without waiting for the legislative formalities to be completed.

As the bill would be discussed in the standing committee, it would take a long time to be formalised. Home ministry officials said executive instructions would be issued to quickly set up the administrative framework.

The Prime Minister will head the 10-member national disaster management authority, Patil said.

Several experts will also be in the team. State disaster management authorities will be headed by chief ministers, while at the district level collectors will head the set-up.

Eight battalions of paramilitary personnel will be trained to save lives and to also teach civic bodies and citizens how to face national calamities and minimise loss of lives.

Patil reassured members that the government was not short of funds for rehabilitation and rebuilding work in the tsunami-affected states.

10 MAY 2005

THE TELEGRAPH

Making the bureaucracy accountable

Officials are chosen for sensitive positions on both political and efficiency considerations. But if they fail to deliver, the axe falls on them before long.

V. Jayanth

LAST WEEK, reports from two State capitals — Bangalore and Hyderabad — spoke of a certain dissatisfaction at the level of the top political leadership over the performance of the bureaucracy. In Karnataka, it was expressed in a clear warning from Chief Minister Dharam Singh and Deputy Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to district-level officials to deliver or “be at home.” In Andhra Pradesh, there appears to be a thorough review — a SWOT analysis — of the performance of officials. The occasion for the evaluation and consequent “unhappiness” is the completion of the first year of the two Governments.

It may be the right time for the Chief Ministers to go in for a complete review of the performance, not only of officials, but also of Ministers. Professional-minded officials will only ask that such an assessment is entirely professional and objective, without any politicisation. If that is done, governance in States will be approaching the corporate culture of a continuing performance evaluation and consequential incentives for performers and disincentives for those who fail the test. The message from the top two leaders in Bangalore at a conference of Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police was blunt. The Chief Minister and his deputy noted that the performance of some of them was “far from satisfactory.” There-

fore, “you must change your mindset and work together to produce the desired results or else please be at home. The Government will make arrangements to deliver your salary packets at your doorsteps.”

The district-level administration is at the cutting edge of the delivery of government services and programmes. However good the Government’s policies and programmes may be, everything depends on delivery by officials at the district and grassroots levels. It is the responsibility of the State administration to monitor the performance of the entire bureaucracy as well as the local bodies administration and report to the Government. Ideally, this can be done once in three months, with an annual evaluation to complete the exercise.

Andhra Pradesh may be witnessing a more political assessment of the administration, with several officials and politicians reportedly unhappy with the functioning of the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO). The problem with CMOs seems to be that they become too close to the centres of power and arrogate to themselves some of the powers of government. In the process, a CMO may become the most influential “power centre” in the administration, distancing senior officials heading key departments from the decision-making process. The problem is not unique to Andhra Pradesh. Consequently, not just senior bureaucrats but even ruling party functionaries and legislators may be

gunning for key persons in the CMO who, they believe, stand between them and the Chief Minister.

Tamil Nadu, during the first three years of the present All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam administration of Jayalithaa, witnessed some of the most frequent and major reshuffles of the administration at all levels. At one stage, the joke was that a majority of the ruling party legislators might be getting an opportunity to serve in the Cabinet, as more than 20 Ministers were axed during that period. But in the past 12 months, the changes have been few and far between.

Annual review

Senior bureaucrats agree that an annual evaluation of the performance of officials is good practice. It is customary for Chief Ministers and senior Ministers to address an annual conference of both Administrative and police officers from around the State. That provides an opportunity for the Government of the day to explain its policies and outline the priorities so that the entire administration understands the framework and works within that. If, even after such an enunciation, some officials fail to get the message and deliver on the ground, they have no right to be where they are. There are enough “punishment postings” to take care of them.

Seasoned officials caution against an “ad-

ministrative-politician nexus,” especially at the district level. If a District Collector or Magistrate or Deputy Commissioner knows how to keep the local Minister and ruling party functionaries “in good humour,” he or she is likely to be protected to an extent. That assumes that the politicians are influential enough. But if the local official gets on the wrong side of the local politicians, there is bound to be a spate of complaints. In that case, unless the official enjoys the confidence of the Chief Minister, there is likely to be a problem.

Thoughtful officials suggest that the solution will be for the government to set up a high-power panel consisting of two senior Ministers and three top officials, with the Chief Secretary as its convenor, to monitor the performance of all officials in an objective and transparent manner. With such a professional assessment, it may be possible to rein in the over-zealous and also pull up the poor performers. Such an approach will ensure that politics does not get in the way of efficiency and officials do not get into the habit of massaging the ego of, or otherwise pleasing, politicians to get coveted posts. This will also obviate the need for wholesale transfer of officials with every change of Government. It is of course desirable for the Chief Minister to choose his or her close-knit team at the top level of administration. Only then will the administration become professional.

PM charts plan to make IAS more efficient Performance Evaluation To Replace Senior's Report

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Appraisals of IAS officers will no longer depend on what their seniors think of them. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has replaced the current system of appraising officers on the basis of Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs), prepared by seniors, with a Performance Appraisal Report (PAR) which will be prepared keeping in mind targets set at the beginning of the year.

Unlike the ACRs, "the PARs will not just be a statement of a senior's opinion of a junior but a tool for career planning and training", the PMO claims.

For senior officers, a system of peer review, to be conducted by an Eminent Persons Group (EPG), is being introduced. This group will ascertain the reputation of a civil servant in terms of integrity, competence, attitudes and personal qualities. It will do so by seeking inputs from peers, juniors, clients and even intelligence agencies.

Each officer will be assessed once in five years. But the EPG report will not be part of an officer's PAR. It will be a confidential report, to be used when posting him for sensitive assignments, at the time of empanelment and to counsel an officer.

Members of the EPG will be selected by a committee comprising the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition. To prevent any bias from creeping in, each group will have a five-year term and so it will appraise an of-

ficer only once.

The PAR will evaluate the performance of an officer against 15-20 indicators of performance like work output, personal attributes and functional competency. The appraisal will be on a scale of one to ten.

At the beginning of the year, the appraisee and the reporting officer will have to prepare a work plan and define targets in quantitative,

qualitative and financial terms. A mid-year update of these targets will be done keeping in view changed circumstances and events. Levels of assessment have been reduced from three at present to two in the PAR system, namely a reporting officer and a



reviewing officer. However, states have been given the option of retaining the three-level system.

For officers in the Super-time scale, the reviewing officer will be the appropriate political superior. Officers on training, study leave or foreign assignment may also be able to secure a PAR. "The government may also specify the need for an annual health check for all officers," the PMO release says.

The PAR will include basic information on an officer, including his tax and property returns, medical reports, self-appraisal, peer appraisal, numerical grading and an integrity certificate. The dossier for each officer will contain his annual CV based on PAR, a five-yearly CV submitted by the appraisee, annual PARs and health reports.

09 MAY 2005

THE TIMES OF INDIA

NOD FOR NEW APPRAISAL

Wake up, IAS: PM

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, May 7. — Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh has given the wake-up call to the country's bureaucracy by approving a new appraisal system for fixing accountability, increasing efficiency as well as giving due recognition to sincere IAS officers.

Replacing the existing assessment system based on the Annual Confidential Report (ACR), Dr Singh today gave the green light to a new mechanism called a Performance Appraisal Report (PAR) which would be a tool for career planning and training, and not just a statement of a senior's opinion of a junior, the PM's media adviser, Mr Sanjaya Baru, said.

A new system of peer review of senior officers by an Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) has been okayed. It would ascertain a civil servant's reputation by seeking inputs from peers, juniors and clients on a confidential basis. The reputation of an officer would be assessed once every five years. The PAR would evaluate the performance of an officer against 15 to 20 indicators like work output, personal attributes, functional competence.

Almost on the lines of a report card, the appraisal would be on a 1-10 scale. At the beginning of each year, the person under review and the reporting officer would have to prepare an annual work plan setting forth the key tasks to be accomplished in order of priority. As part of this, specific deliverables for each task would have to be defined in quantitative, financial or qualitative terms. A mid-year update of the work plan would be considered based on events and changed circumstances. In place of the three levels of assessment, there may be only two levels of assessments — a reporting officer and a reviewing officer — in some states.

States that opt for the present three-level system may be allowed to do so and for officers in the super-time scale, the reviewing officer would be the appropriate political superior. Provisions would be created to enable officers in training, on study leave or foreign assignments to secure a PAR. A dossier would be maintained on each officer with an annual CV based on the PAR, a five-yearly CV, annual PARs and health reports.

08 MAY 2005

THE STATESMAN

SECOND ARC PLANNED

Steel frame rejig on the anvil

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, April 8. — In an effort to ensure “effective” governance by revamping the public administration system, the Union Cabinet today gave its approval for the setting up of the second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC).

The ARC will be a commission of inquiry which would go into the entire gamut of issues relating to public administration and submit its report to the government within one year of its constitution, the information and broadcasting minister, Mr S Jaipal Reddy, said after a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.

The ARC's area of responsibility will include the organisational structure of the government of India, ethics of governance and refurbishing of personnel administration.

It will look into strengthening financial management systems, something much required at the moment. The Commission will also recommend steps to ensure effective administration at the state level and importantly at lower levels. This includes the district administration, local self-government and Panchayati Raj institutions which are expected to be given more responsibilities to ensure that different facilities reach the grassroots level. There will be stress on building social capital, trust and participative public service delivery.

The ARC will be a high-powered body and it will comprise a chairperson, four members and a member-secretary. The member-secretary will be an officer not below the rank of additional secretary to the government of India. The ARC, which has been given a year's time to submit its report to the government, would suggest citizen-centric administration, e-governance, issues of federal polity crisis management and public order.

An amount of Rs 8 crore has been provided towards the expenditure of the ARC. The first ARC was set up in 1966 to examine public administration and make recommendations for reform and reorganisation in government functioning.

The Cabinet also approved modifications to the ADIP Scheme for disabled persons raising income eligibility ceiling for 100 per cent concession by Rs 1,500 and for the 50 per cent category by Rs 3,500.

09 APR 2005

THE STATESMAN

11/11/05
9/1/05

“Need for policy on disaster management”

Dr. Aarti Dhar

By Aarti Dhar

HYDERABAD, APRIL 6. The National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) believes that India needs to have a full-fledged policy and a national institute for disaster management. “We need to identify the disaster-prone areas and think in terms of annual and infrequent disasters,” says B.K. Thapliyal of the Centre for Disaster Management and Rural Reconstruction of NIRD.

The centre addresses critical issues of disaster management in a holistic manner and works towards long-lasting solutions covering prevention, preparedness, vulnerability and risk management, besides relief and rehabilitation.

Welcoming the move to bring in the National Disaster Management Bill, Mr. Thapliyal said the NIRD laid stress on community-based disaster management at the gram panchayat level because it was only the community that could provide help in the crucial initial hours until relief arrived from external agencies. The centre believes that there should be different strategies for common calamities such as cyclones, earthquakes, floods and droughts and the

rare ones such as tsunami. “We require a different strategy to deal with the floods which occur every year in Bihar and Assam,” Mr. Thapliyal said.

The NIRD has been holding discussions and debates on issues such as the panchayati raj institutions and the National Employment Guarantee Bill. It is now training the trainers who will impart skills to one crore men and women in the rural areas.

“The Government spends Rs. 30,000 crores on rural development every year under various heads. This money can do wonders but unfortunately not much change is reflected,” says S. Rajakutty of the Centre for Media Documentation.

There are enough programmes but there is no awareness. Vested interests stall the development works, he adds. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has accommodated several recommendations made by the NIRD such as the food for work programme. The institute will analyse and review the programme in 150 districts before it is extended to all districts and merged with the National Rural Employment Guarantee Bill. It is already evaluating the Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana of the Ministry of Rural Development.

07 APR 2005

THE HINDU

PUBLIC SERVICE-II

Need For A Market-Driven Approach

By DEBAKI NANDAN MANDAL

The IAS seems to be sinking under the weight of its own numbers. Initially, the cadre-size and annual intake were kept under leash. But gradually, cadre and intake began leaping up through unchecked recruitment producing an eventual glut, so much so that the states are now inundated with IAS officers. In many states there are multiple secretaries for the same job, and officers of chief secretary's rank are two a penny.

In the early years, corrupt officers were rare, and communal ones rarer. But today, the reverse is true. The politician-bureaucrat nexus has thrived in state after state to undermine probity in services. Even though politicians are subject to social audit every five years, bureaucrats cannot be thrown out since they wear the chastity belt of the security of tenure, though the only security for a civil servant should be integrity and performance.

Cover-up wizards

The sad fact is that no IAS official in this country has been dismissed from service for inefficiency or lack of performance. Being conversant with the statute and rule-book, and having clout in the corridors of power, such officials have no peer in the art of wriggling out of any corruption charge which is why they have a high demand among corrupt and shady ministers and politicians.

One may have to do a lot of research to find out if any IAS officer has ever been charged, tried, convicted, and served a jail sentence for corruption and financial impropriety under the various provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act and related statutes. Apologists may argue, "why pick on the IAS? Are other services, and indeed society itself not equally infected?" But if the IAS has sunk so low, it has lost its *raison d'être*.

The traditional argument that all-India services promote the unity and integrity of the country by combating parochial attitudes, since the officers of these services are generally posted in

the states other than their own and thus are less susceptible to local and regional influences than the officers from within the state would be, has lost much of its sheen. In fact, in almost all states, most of the officers are

ment of India reflects only on the efficiency and suitability of the officer.

Sadly, the events of the last 58 years have not fulfilled the hope and expectation of Sardar Patel that the IAS would provide the



posted to their own state because they opt for it.

The other requirement that the interchange of officers (sharing of all-India services between the states and the centre) provides the central administration with officers having field experience in the states, and the state also having the advantage of such officers who have held central government posts, is also not very tenable if one takes into consideration the large numbers of IAS officers who have never been to the Centre and for all practical purposes have spent their entire service career in the states even though nominally belonging to the all-India services.

Alternative model

That the service record (confidential annual report) more often than not stands in the way of empanelment of joint secretary, additional secretary, secretary-level posts in the govern-

menting factor and hold together the various parts of India. In spite of the growth in the size and influence of the service, one witnesses increasing fissiparous tendencies in many parts of India, which are posing a real threat to the political and administrative unity of the country. One may, therefore, have to look for an alternative model which will not supplant but at least supplement the civil services, keeping in view the legitimate aspirations of the people in a federal polity.

The cutting edge of the administration in most assignments of the higher civil services, starts from jobs which carry the rank of a joint secretary to the government. Those officers are expected to provide strategic inputs for policy-making and supervise its implementation. Under the present dispensation, no lateral entry is permissible to such a post. Only officers who have worked in the junior posts over

the years are appointed. Places above the rank of joint secretary — additional secretary, secretary, and private secretary — are the monopoly of the IAS. Promotion and appointment to the posts are automatic; efficiency and integrity do not count for much. Consulting the service record is only a technical formality.

A very strong case exists for throwing all these jobs open to the market. A broad-based independent committee with representatives from the government, industry, and civil society under the aegis of the UPSC, may be associated with the recruitment process. All members of various cadres/services fulfilling the eligibility criteria may compete with the candidates from the market.

Hierarchy of incompetence

Appointments should be contractual — initially for three/five years — renewal strictly contingent on performance. For proven incompetence and even a shade of doubt of integrity, services should be terminated, with only one right of appeal to an independent tribunal. The requirement of government permission before proceeding against civil servants in a court of law should be waived.

Critics may argue that the market-driven approach is flawed since district experience will be given the go-by. But this suffers from superficiality if experience is any guide, where everyone rises in a "hierarchy of incompetence" on the basis of the rule of automaticity. But the tremendous merit of the market-friendly mechanism of recruitment to the higher civil service lies in the fact that it will generate a spirit of competition among the bureaucrats, who will not remain smug in their approach to work after entry into the constituted services. Consequently, governance at all levels of administration will improve. Yes, the man on the street will be the ultimate beneficiary from the proposed reorganisation of the civil services.

(Concluded)

PUBLIC SERVICE-I

Bureaucrats Drift Towards Negativism And Mediocrity

By DEBAKI NANDAN MANDAL

India has the largest bureaucracy in the world with an estimated Rs 70,000 crore of the taxpayers' money spent on footing the babudom's pay bill. To make it trim and efficient and improve the standards of governance, there have been various suggestions for reforms in the civil services, including the reduction of age at the entry level for the civil services examination as in the armed forces. The UPA government has reportedly taken steps to set up a new Administrative Reforms Commission which will focus on refurbishing the image and efficiency of the services.

Facing the truth

Nobody has any suspicions about the Prime Minister's initiative and genuine desire to make the bureaucracy more responsive. Yet, the fact remains that in the last 58 years after Independence, all initiatives for transforming our bureaucracy into a genuine public service have remained on paper. Any attempt to implement them has been systematically sabotaged. The man on the street has a very poor opinion of the bureaucracy as a whole. To him, the fine distinctions between all-India services and state services or clerical cadre matter little. In his vision, with few exceptions, bureaucrats are as responsible for his sorry plight and that of the country as the political class.

It would be simplistic to argue that the entire blame lies with politicians as many stout defenders of the services tend to do. They take comfort in the fact that there are still many good people in the services. But the fact that the federal democracy has not been able till now to

The author is a former member of the Indian Civil Service.

evolve a system of governance that would take care of the people and their concerns speaks volumes of the bureaucracy itself which has become a burden for the country. It is an unpleasant truth which has to be

subdivisions. The officials were salaried and transferable. The system held until the empire itself dissolved under the later Moghuls.

In 1765 the East India Company acquired the diwani of



faced squarely rather than avoided ostrich-like.

If we turn to history, there was a time when there were no services. Yet, for the ordinary citizen, the country was governed not much worse than it is at present. Akbar introduced an imperial service which was viewed as "the steel frame of the Moghul edifice".

Origins of IAS

A pool of young noblemen, Umrah or central bureaucracy, under the mansabdari system, appointed and promoted (and even dismissed) by imperial favour administered the subhas, sarkars, and parganas — forbears of our states, districts and

Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa and entered the arena of governance. Step by step, therefore, a civil service evolved until it blossomed into the Indian Civil Service. The ICS set a pattern of how a cadre should be organised to attend to the tasks of governance.

All other all-India services set up later, after independence, used the ICS as the model. The service-cadre system it pioneered was adopted by every central and state service after 1947. Its members were assured complete security of service. Once someone managed to get in, he remained virtually untouched. The Constitution of independent India guarantees similar security

to all existing services, all-India, central or state.

When the Manmohan Singh government seems keen to reform the civil services, the core issue which should engage serious attention of the Commission is whether all-India services — especially the IAS which is the direct descendent of its progenitor, the ICS — should continue or be wound up.

Possibly Nirmal Mukarji, former cabinet secretary, government of India has spoken the last word on the subject: "It seems that we have carried on with the IAS more out of inertia than reason.

Divine caste

Basically, for a service recruited and controlled by the Centre to supply officers for key posts in the states and for the states to be compelled to accept the arrangement because the said posts are reserved for such officers is a position wholly incompatible with our federal democracy, howsoever 'quasi' the federal element may be.

Developments within the IAS have created a situation where bureaucrats drift towards negativism and mediocrity. They uphold the *chalta hai* attitude in our government bodies and have imbibed, over the years, a set of core values namely, self-aggrandisement, turf-protection, non-accountability, and a quasi-divine right to rule over hapless citizens.

And they are viewed as successful, managing prized postings, and foreign jaunts through an ability to adapt and work with ruling dispensations of different ideologies. Obviously, these run contrary to public service or upholding their oath of loyalty to the Constitution.

(To be concluded)

Centre for holistic approach to disaster management

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MARCH 25. As part of new policy orientation in disaster management, the Government favours adoption of a holistic approach rather than being relief-centric. The Union Home Minister, Shivraj Patil, said the new policy also stressed upon mitigation, prevention, preparedness and fast response during natural calamities.

Addressing a two-day, biennial conference of the All-India Civil Defence, Home Guards and Fire Services that concluded yesterday, Mr. Patil said learning from the December 26 tsunami disaster, India took upon itself to develop an early tsunami warning system in the Indian Ocean and the Department of Ocean Development had already started working on it.

Stressing the need to upgrade the training programme for Civil Defence and Fire Service personnel and home guards, Mr. Patil said the three wings would be equipped to deal with any eventuality arising out of the strike of biological, chemical and radiological weapons of mass destruction. "We will have one of the best disaster management systems in the world," he said.

Mr. Patil said the Government had sanctioned Rs. 15 crores for upgrading the National Civil Defence College, Nagpur, and a Rs. 103-crore package for the National Fire Service College, Nagpur, over the next three years to enable the two premier institutes to act as first emergency transponder in case of any disaster striking any part of the country. So far 20 teams had been trained in responding to natural disasters.

'State of neglect'

The Chief of the National Emergen-

cy Response Force (NERF) and Civil Defence, Vijay Shanker, expressed concern over the deterioration and "extremely poor" state of Civil Defence, Home Guards and Fire Services. "The overall state of these three organisations is extremely poor. These organisations have deteriorated over a period of time and remain in a state of neglect today," Mr. Shanker told the delegates.

He said that out of 225 towns categorised as Civil Defence towns in the country, only 119 had been activated and even in these, there were huge deficiencies due to lack of funds. Reimbursement provided by the Home Ministry had gradually come down from 75 to 25 per cent. The total budget for Central reimbursement to the States for Civil Defence was only Rs. 6 crores which came to a meagre Rs 22,000 a month per town.

Lack of facilities

Fire Services, despite being a critical and inescapable service, was plagued with enormous deficiencies pertaining to fire stations, fire fighting, rescue vehicles and manpower. "As per the statistics compiled in 2003, the estimated deficiencies are to the tune of 97.54 per cent in the number of fire stations, 80 per cent in the number of required fire fighting and rescue vehicles and more than 60 per cent in manpower. Training of fire services personnel is at its nadir due to lack of training facilities," he said.

Pointing out that Fire Services had been acting as "Multi-Hazard Response Services" without adequate training, equipment and also legal basis, he said that in the absence of any organised mechanism for intervention of non-fire accidents, Fire Services were often pressed into service to tackle such non-specific emergencies.

পঞ্চায়েতকে কী কী কাজ, স্পষ্ট জানাতে বলল কেন্দ্র

সুপ্রকাশ চক্রবর্তী

রাজ্য সরকারের বিভিন্ন দফতর পঞ্চায়েতকে ঠিক কোন কোন কাজের দায়িত্ব দিতে চায়, তা স্পষ্ট করে জানানোর নির্দেশ দিয়েছে কেন্দ্রীয় পঞ্চায়েতি রাজ মন্ত্রক।

ওই নির্দেশের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে পঞ্চায়েতের তিনটি স্তরকে কোন কোন কাজের দায়িত্ব দেওয়া হয়েছে, সব দফতরকে তা জানাতে বলেছে রাজ্যের পঞ্চায়েত ও গ্রামোন্নয়ন দফতর। এই উদ্দেশ্যে পঞ্চায়েতের হাতে দেওয়া দায়িত্বের তালিকা বা 'অ্যাক্টিভিটি ম্যাপ' তৈরি করতে বলা হয়েছে বিভিন্ন দফতরকে।

সংবিধানের ৭৩তম সংশোধনে পঞ্চায়েতকে যে-ক্ষমতা দেওয়া হয়েছে, সেটাকে পূর্ণাঙ্গ ও কার্যকর রূপ দিতেই কেন্দ্রের এই নির্দেশ। রাজ্যের পঞ্চায়েত ও গ্রামোন্নয়ন দফতরের সচিব মানবেন্দ্রনাথ রায় এ ব্যাপারে সরকারের অন্যান্য দফতরে চিঠি পাঠিয়ে চলতি আর্থিক বছরের মধ্যেই ওই 'অ্যাক্টিভিটি ম্যাপ' তৈরি কাজ শেষ করতে বলেছেন। সে-জন্য প্রথমে বিভিন্ন দফতরকে ইতিমধ্যে ত্রিস্তর পঞ্চায়েতের কোন স্তরকে তারা কী কী কাজের দায়িত্ব দিয়েছে, তা চিহ্নিত করার নির্দেশ দেওয়া হয়েছে।

নির্দেশ ব্যাখ্যা করে পঞ্চায়েতসচিব মঙ্গলবার বলেন, সংবিধান সংশোধনের মাধ্যমে পঞ্চায়েতকে ২৯টি বিষয়ের দায়িত্ব দিতে বলা হয়। পঞ্চায়েত রাজ্যের বিষয়, তাই ওই ২৯টি বিষয়ে যে-রাজ্য পঞ্চায়েতকে যতটুকু দায়িত্ব দিয়েছে, পঞ্চায়েতের ততটাই করার এজিয়ার আছে। যেমন জল সরবরাহ প্রকল্পে সংশ্লিষ্ট সরকারি দফতরকে নানা ধরনের কাজ করতে হয়। কোথাও বসাতে হয় অগভীর নলকূপ, কোথাও বা গভীর নলকূপ।

বিভিন্ন কাজের মধ্যে পানীয় জলের মান পরীক্ষাও আছে। এর মধ্যে কোন কাজটি পঞ্চায়েতের কোন স্তরকে দেওয়া হবে, তা নির্দিষ্ট ভাবে জানাতে হবে দফতরকে।

তা-ই বলে একটি দফতর নিশ্চয়ই তাদের সব কাজ পঞ্চায়েতের হাতে তুলে দেবে না। কোন দফতর কতটুকু কাজের দায়িত্ব পঞ্চায়েতের হাতে রাখবে, সেই সিদ্ধান্ত নেবে সংশ্লিষ্ট দফতরগুলিই।

এত দিন রাজ্য মন্ত্রিসভায় গৃহীত একটি অভিন্ন প্রস্তাবের মাধ্যমে বুনিয়াদি শিক্ষা, পানীয় জল সরবরাহ, প্রাণিসম্পদ বিকাশের মতো ২৯টি বিষয়ে কাজ করার অধিকার দেওয়া ছিল পঞ্চায়েতকে। কিন্তু ওই সব দফতরের ঠিক কতটুকু কাজ পঞ্চায়েত করবে, তা আলাদা করে বলা ছিল না।

পঞ্চায়েতসচিব বলেন, কেন্দ্র সব রাজ্যকেই ওই নির্দেশ দিয়েছে। পশ্চিমবঙ্গ-সহ বিভিন্ন রাজ্যের দাবিতেই দেশ জুড়ে পঞ্চায়েতমন্ত্রীদের সাত-সাতটি বৈঠকের পরে ওই নির্দেশ চূড়ান্ত করা হয়েছে।

12 MAR 2005

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

Will The Hota Committee Report Be Considered Seriously?

By AMIYA K SAMANTA

In post-Independence India, reforms in the central and the state administrations were attempted many times but unfortunately all ended with some cosmetic changes. Governments lacked the political will for a thorough restructuring and re-orientation of the administrative principles and ethics. Starting with the report of the secretariat reorganisation committee headed by Sir GS Vajpayee (1947) to the Surendranath Committee (2002) and BN Yugandhar Committee (2003), reports on various aspects on administration are stored in home ministry's archives. Besides, seasoned administrators, judges and academics have contributed to the sizable corpus of literature on civil service reforms.

Yet the Government of India thought it desirable to appoint a committee headed by PC Hota, a distinguished civil servant, in February 2004 "to examine the whole gamut of civil service reform in India" with elaborate terms of reference.

Intellectual growth

They enjoined upon the committee, among other things, to recommend ways and means to make the civil service responsive, citizen friendly, accountable and ethical, and to protect the members of the services from wrongful pressure exerted by political executive, business and other vested interests. The government also wanted the committee to suggest steps for a corruption-free civil service and for intellectual growth and upgradation of the "domain knowledge" of members. The majority of eleven members of the committee, including the chairman, were from all-India and central services. The time limit of six months was scrupulously adhered to and the report of nearly 150 pages was submitted in July 2004.

After years of deliberations the commissions produce formidable volumes, which few will condescend to read. The Hota Committee, however, has cut out all the frills of legal and academic jargon and has come straight to the core issues. It has recommended changes which are clear, unambiguous and, on the whole, implementable. A few recommendations, however, may appear to be rather one-sided and narrow; but evidently the recommendations are the products of sound practical knowledge, a deep appreciation of public needs and a very lively concern for deteriorating values and vanishing principles of honesty and integrity.

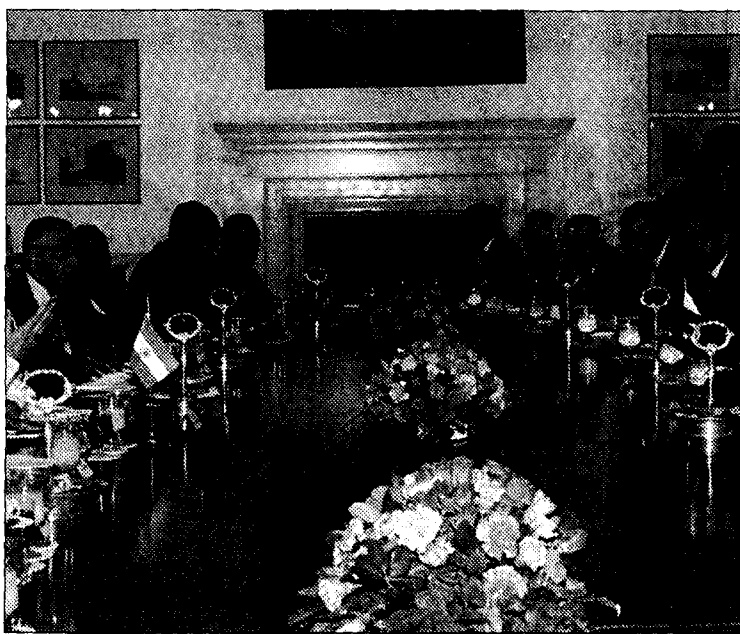
The committee's focus is on the three all-India services and all central services; both these categories jointly make a formidable total of about 82 thousand officers, which is nearly three per cent of the total strength of the central government employees in India. The members

The author is former Director-General of Police and a former member of the West Bengal Police Commission.

of these services hold the highest positions in various branches of administration at the centre and the states.

The committee appears to be deeply concerned with the growing influence on the services of political and other vested interests. The political executive ruthlessly uses the stick of posting and frequent transfer, ignoring the merit and capability of an officer, to break the backbone of the civil servi-

that this will enable the police "to stand up effectively against unhealthy pressure". The state commissions will also continuously monitor the performance of the police forces. The committee has endorsed the recommendations of the National Police Commission on this issue and observes, "even if there is delay in the government's taking a final view on the NPC's recommendations, the above recommendations should be ac-



ces. To remedy the situation the committee has, inter alia, suggested the introduction of the system of tenure posting in all posts from cabinet secretary to district magistrate.

The recommendations of the chief ministers' conference in 1997 for the creation of state civil services boards with the chief secretary as chairman to put a stop to "frequent and arbitrary transfer of public servants" have not been followed by most of the states. Only a few states have created civil service boards, which generally remain non-functional or heavily influenced by the political executive. The committee, therefore, recommends "a statutory barrier to frequent transfers" by the enactment of a Civil Services Act, which will create not only the Civil Services Board but also "a three-member Ombudsman", the chairperson of which will be "a retired official of proven honesty and integrity", and before which the aggrieved officers will be at liberty to agitate their grievances.

The proposed Civil Service Act will incorporate the code of ethics of the civil services giving the code a statutory sanction, and making the ethics of civil service not merely platitudes by an enforceable rule.

Political influence

While the Civil Services Board is expected to insulate the civil services from political influence, the committee recommends that for the police force "independent commissions with suitable composition may be set up in each state" to protect police officers from mala fide transfer/suspension order, and to ensure a statutory tenure. It is expected

after the insertion of this section, corruption on this count has increased. On similar plea of promptitude in implementation of government decision and bona fide intention, the committee recommends the enforcement of the single directive, which necessitates prior permission of the government before launching an inquiry into the allegation of corruption against an officer of the rank of joint secretary and above. It is now common knowledge that, in all big commercial deals, officers of and the rank of joint secretary are involved and since generally all high-ups get big slices of the cake no minister/secretary will ever give the clearance for an inquiry.

The Supreme Court struck down the single directive in 1998; but under pressure of the rich and the corrupt it was restored soon after. In view of these two recommendations, the committee's forceful denunciation of corruption in civil service sounds somewhat hollow.

After retirement

The committee has, however, very rightly suggested that no officer after retirement should be appointed to constitutional posts like Member of Public Service Commissions or Governor of a state. This suggestion is likely to be resented. But the fact remains that quite a few officers, who had an impeccable reputation of honesty, succumbed to temptation and shamelessly scrambled for post-retirement gubernatorial or other appointments. The committee suggests a two-year cooling off period after retirement for those who want to join politics.

To make the civil service citizen-friendly, the report suggests empowerment of citizens as represented by "Non-Government Organisation, Consumers Groups, media" with a view to "building partnership for formulating the programmes and for their proper implementation". Although such partnerships in reality fall far short of empowerment in a democratic setup, it is worth trying, and if it succeeds its ambit and power may be amplified.

As a starting point, this is welcome. To ensure transparency, the committee recommends the implementation of the "Freedom of Information Act 2002" at a very early date, although the committee notes with dismay that the rules under the Act have not been finalised as yet and the date of implementation has not been notified. The committee has also recommended re-examination of the Official Secrets Act so that it is reduced to "essential minimum" for the purpose of "national security, public order and privacy".

The committee has made many other worthwhile recommendations. But will the present dispensation in New Delhi care to consider them seriously? Or will they be sent to the archives because the committee was set up under a different political dispensation?

ফ্রন্টই ২৮, ত্রিপুরায় বিরোধীশূন্য এ ডি সি

ত্রিপুরায় স্বশাসিত জেলা পরিষদ বুদ্ধশঙ্কর গোস্বামী, আগরতলা দেববর্মার কাছে। জিরানিয়া কেন্দ্রে নির্বাচনে বামফ্রন্টের জয়জয়কার। প্রাক্তন এ ডি সি-র চেয়ারম্যান কুপোকাত কংগ্রেস, আই এন পি টি-সহ সমস্ত বিরোধী দল। ১৯৯৫ সালে এ ডি সি-র নির্বাচনে একটি মাত্র আসন পেয়েছিল বিরোধী ত্রিপুরা উপজাতি যুব সমিতি। এবার একেবারেই বিরোধীশূন্য। ২৮টি আসনের সবকটিই বামফ্রন্ট ও তার সহযোগীরা জিতেছে। বিরোধী দলগুলির এমন শোচনীয় পরাজয় নজিরবিহীন। আই এন পি টি, কংগ্রেস, বি জে পি ৯০ শতাংশের বেশি আসনে জামানত খুইয়েছে। দু-তিন দিনের মধ্যেই নতুন এ ডি সি-র সদস্যরা শপথ নিচ্ছেন। মুখ্য



অঘোর দেববর্মা

কার্যনির্বাহী সদস্য হচ্ছেন সি পি এমের অঘোর দেববর্মা। তিনি দলের কেন্দ্রীয় কমিটির সদস্য। মন্ত্রীও ছিলেন। রাজ্য যোজনা পর্ষদের চেয়ারম্যান পদ থেকে ইস্তফা দিয়ে অঘোর এই ভোটে দাঁড়িয়েছিলেন। নির্বাচনের ফলাফল পর্যালোচনায় দেখা যাচ্ছে, খুবই করুণ দশা উপজাতিভিত্তিক আই এন পি টি দলের। তাদের ১০ কার্যনির্বাহী সদস্যের মধ্যে ২ জন ভোটে দাঁড়াননি। বাকি ৮ জন প্রার্থী হেরেছেন। প্রাক্তন মুখ্য কার্যনির্বাহী সদস্য দেবব্রত কলই তাঁর কেন্দ্রে ওম্পিনগরে গতবার পেয়েছিলেন ১০ হাজার ৮৪৭ ভোট। এবার মাত্র ১ হাজার ৯২১ ভোট। হেরেছেন, আরেক প্রাক্তন মুখ্য কার্যনির্বাহী সদস্য অমিয় দেববর্মা। বোখাজংনগর ওয়াকিনগর কেন্দ্রে তিনি হেরেছেন ৫২১১ ভোটে সি পি এমের জহর

রুক ১টি করে এবং ফ্রন্টের সহযোগী এন এস পি টি ৪টি আসন। এ ডি সি-তে এবারের ভোটে একমাত্র মহিলা প্রার্থী জিতেছেন সন্ধ্যারানী চাকমা। উত্তর ত্রিপুরা জেলার করমছড়া আসনে। সি পি এমের প্রাক্তন চেয়ারম্যান মংসাজায় মগ, গজেন্দ্র ত্রিপুরা, ধনঞ্জয় দেববর্মা, রাধাচরণ দেববর্মা, পরীক্ষিত মুড়াসিং, ললিত ত্রিপুরা, চণ্ডীচরণ ত্রিপুরা পুনর্নির্বাচিত হয়েছেন। মাছমারায় জিতেছেন ফরোয়ার্ড ব্লকের পরেশচন্দ্র সরকার। মহারানী চেলাগাউ আসনে জিতেছেন আর এস পি-র খাইপাইয়া রিয়াং। সি পি আই প্রার্থী ধীরেন্দ্র রিয়াং বীরচন্দ্র নগর-কলসি আসনে জিতেছেন। ফ্রন্টের সহযোগী এন এস পি টি-র ৪ প্রার্থীই জয়ের মালা পরেছেন। ফ্রন্টের বিপুল জয়ে স্বভাবতই খুশি

এরপর ৬ পাতায়

ফ্রন্টই ২৮

১ পাতার পর
সি পি এম ও শরিকরা। সি পি এম কেন্দ্রীয় কমিটির সদস্য বিজন ধর বললেন, প্রাপ্ত ভোটের ৭৮ শতাংশ আমরা ও সহযোগীরা পেয়েছি। কংগ্রেস ও আই এন পি টি দ্বিতীয় স্থানের জন্য লড়াই করেছে। বামফ্রন্টের এই জয় উপজাতি এলাকায় শান্তি, সম্প্রীতি ও উন্নয়নের পক্ষে এবং সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের বিরুদ্ধে জয়। বামফ্রন্ট কমিটি সংযতভাবে বিজয়োসব পালন করতে এবং শান্তিশৃঙ্খলা বজায় রাখতে ফ্রন্টের সর্বস্তরের কর্মী ও জনগণের প্রতি আহ্বান জানিয়েছে। কংগ্রেস ও আই এন পি টি শিবিরে হতাশা। কংগ্রেস সভাপতি বীরজিৎ সিংহ বলেছেন, এই ফলাফল অস্বাভাবিক। বিরোধীশূন্য এ ডি সি-তে সি পি এমের একনায়কত্ব চলবে।

KAL

11 MAR 2005

NAC to focus on Panchayati Raj empowerment

By Our Special Correspondent

Foundation (RGF).

HP-12
NEW DELHI, MARCH 8. After having given a decisive thrust towards ensuring greater allocation for social sectors in the Union Budget, the National Advisory Council (NAC) wants to shift its focus to financial and administrative empowerment of Panchayati Raj institutions in the country.

The Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, who heads the NAC, has already discussed the issue at length during the meetings of the advisory body and plans to send a paper to the Government, based on the deliberations and suggestions by the Task Force on Panchayati Raj of the Rajiv Gandhi

Reforms needed

The NAC members were of the opinion that while the 73rd and 74th Amendments empowered Panchayati Raj and Zilla Parishads politically, there was a need to improve governance, put in place an efficient delivery system and carry out the much-needed reforms in the cooperative sector, sources in the council told *The Hindu*.

It was felt that the Constitution left the issue of degree of empowerment and devolution to State legislatures and in most States, local governments continued to be weak. The move was to examine the possibilities of Union intervention

J. Adm. S. Indira (P. Raj) 9/3
through constitutional, fiscal and procedural steps so that local governments could be empowered.

It is understood that the issue could figure in the meeting of the National Development Council the Centre plans to hold during next month. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has also held seven Round Tables on the subject.

The view in the NAC was that administrative decentralisation was yet to take place even though political decentralisation had taken place in India over a decade ago. It was felt that financial decentralisation was necessary to carry it forward, the sources said.

One of the suggestions was

to innovate delivery system by enlisting the support of non-government organisations. However, care would be taken to ensure that the politically-oriented NGOs were kept out of it while effort should be made to encourage and associate work-oriented NGOs.

For instance, the RGF Task Forces had recommended that a nation-wide information technology network be put in place for all panchayats.

Similarly, the need for reforms in the cooperatives was also felt.

The idea was to see how modern structures could be put in place and reduce political interference to the minimum.

JUSTICE FOR THE DISABLED

PRIME MINISTER MANMOHAN Singh has issued orders for opening all non-technical Group 'A' and Group 'B' Civil Services to the disabled. In addition to enforcing existing legal provisions, the move is bound to have a far-reaching impact in terms of breaking stereotypes and negative mindsets on this segment of the population. The Persons With Disabilities (equal opportunities, protection of rights and full participation) Act, 1995 guarantees three per cent reservation at all levels of employment in the Government and in public sector undertakings. However, according to a study done by the National Centre for Promotion of Employment of Disabled People, less than one per cent of the employable disabled population is engaged in any income-generating work. Competition for jobs under the Union Public Service Commission has progressively been made less iniquitous for the physically handicapped following the Supreme Court's directive in the 1980s. Now candidates who are blind or have low vision are permitted to engage writers in examinations and venues have improved access for wheel-chair users. Consequently, the number of aspirants as well as of those who qualify has increased significantly in recent years.

Paradoxically, another arm of the Government, the Department of Personnel and Training, has had little compunction in citing disability as a ground for declaring successful candidates unfit for any of the services. Redress, if any, against this patently discriminatory attitude has come after legal battles or through executive intervention. The Prime Minister's recent initiative to get a candidate with polio in one arm admitted to the Indian Revenue Service tells its own tale. It needed a sequence of measures at the highest level to rectify these anomalies. The Ministries in charge of the Indian Police, Foreign, and Forest Services have been asked to examine the applicability of the reser-

vation provisions in the PWD Act. However, little thought seems to have gone into the decision to exclude the disabled from other highly competitive services in the current year. At the minimum, a disability cannot be a ground for non-qualification when persons can meet the basic prerequisites of a work situation. Inclusion in all such cases will be consistent with the fundamental rights of equality of opportunity and non-discrimination. Where a disability imposes limitations on the performance of employees, justice demands that reasonable modifications be made to the work environment to enable them to discharge their responsibilities. This principle is globally recognised. The United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for People with Disabilities (1993), and the International Labour Organisation's recommendations on the subject should serve as a benchmark for the identification of appropriate employment arenas.

A patronising attitude or seeing the issues in terms of 'charity' rather than entitlement seems to lie at the root of poor enforcement of the relevant laws. This in turn is linked to the overall neglect of citizens' rights in governance. It is time the system corrected both its theory and practice relating to the rights and entitlements of the disabled. The Prime Minister's recent orders should send a strong signal down the administrative hierarchy that implementing progressive social policy is an essential part of the development process. The 2001 census put the total number of the disabled at 2.13 per cent of the Indian population, which meant more than 20 million people. Enhancing the productive potential of such a vast human resource pool is an imperative of socio-economic development. In addition to improving livelihood prospects in a country of mass deprivations, such socially progressive policies will impart a sense of dignity and personal fulfilment to the disabled.

Non-technical Group A, B services opened for physically challenged

By Anita Joshua

NEW DELHI, JAN. 22. The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, has ordered the opening up of all "non-technical" Group 'A' and Group 'B' Civil Services for the physically challenged. The orders, issued last Thursday, will come into effect from the Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2005, which has already been advertised by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

In the case of the Indian Police Service, the Indian Foreign Service and the Indian Forest Service, the Ministries controlling them have been asked to examine the applicability of the Physical Disability Act, 1995, and the reservation of three per cent in them for the "physically handicapped."

They have been given three months to examine the issue and report to the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.

The decision to open the "higher civil services" to persons with disability was taken by the Prime Minister after a physically challenged Scheduled Caste candidate, M. Satish — who had qualified for the Indian Revenue Service (IRS) in CSE 2002 but was not allocated any post/service because of his disability — petitioned him. Mr. Satish approached Dr. Singh on October 13, 2004, and after an enquiry, the Government cleared his appointment to the IRS.

He has been directed to join the training course already in progress and directions have been issued to the Department

of Revenue to identify a suitable post for him.

The IRS is not among the seven Civil Services identified by the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT) for persons with disability for CSE 2005.

As per the advertisement issued by UPSC, only the Indian Administrative Service, the Indian P&T Accounts & Finance Service (Group A), the Armed Forces Headquarters Civil Service (Group B), the Indian Audit & Accounts Service (Group A), the Indian Information Service (Group A), the Indian Defence Accounts Service (Group A) and the Indian Ordnance Factories Service (Group A) are open to persons with disability. And, not all of them are open to all the three main categories of physical disability —

locomotor disability and hearing/visual impairment. Only the IAS is open to all three.

Though "The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995," provides for three per cent reservation on identified posts, the provision, according to the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP), has been observed more in the breach. Protesting against the "arbitrary identification of services for persons with disability by the DoPT," the NCPEDP recently sought the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi's intervention in evolving a "logical and clear-cut policy" for recruitment of physically challenged persons into the bureaucracy.

Disaster control authority soon

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Jan. 9. — In the light of challenges posed by natural calamities like tsunami, the Centre will soon constitute a National Disaster Management Authority and set up an early warning system for precautionary measures.

A Bill will be brought in the Budget session of Parliament, beginning next month, to unveil the proposed authority, home minister Mr Shivraj Patil said after a three-hour-long all-party meeting convened by the Prime Minister at his residence here today. India would be “part and parcel” of all international efforts towards putting in place an early warning system and the Centre has appointed a committee to suggest the best technology for such a system, he added.

At the meeting, attended by UPA chairperson Mrs Sonia Gandhi, former Prime Minister Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and Leader of the Opposition Mr LK Advani, Dr Manmohan Singh gave a brief account of the devastation caused by the tsunami tragedy which killed 10,012 people. The number of those missing was 5,624 — almost all of them from the Andamans.

Defence minister Mr Pranab Mukherjee, who addressed a press conference along with Mr Patil and agriculture min-

ister Mr Sharad Pawar, said leaders of all parties “appreciated the prompt action” taken and assured full cooperation in the government’s relief and rehabilitation efforts. They said the tsunami disaster was being treated as a “national calamity”. However, Mr Mukherjee ruled out scaling down Republic Day celebrations in view of the disaster.

Mr Patil said the government and NGOs will take responsibility of all children orphaned by the tsunami. The option of individual adoptions would come only later.

There were several suggestions from leaders of various parties, which included the need to give top priority to the rehabilitation of fishermen. Steps to ensure ecological balance and counselling for traumatised women and children were also urged.

Mr Pawar said an international conference of scientists has been convened on 21 January. The Centre has already decided to set up a Cabinet Committee on Disaster Management, he said.

On foreign aid, Mr Mukherjee said Dr Singh had made it clear that India did not need such assistance at this juncture. However, he sought to distinguish assistance from the World Bank and IMF saying these two were different entities and India was one of their founding members.

NATURE'S FURY: page 3



Mrs Sonia Gandhi, Dr Manmohan Singh and Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee at the all-party meet. — PTI

Government to set up Disaster Management Authority

Bill to be introduced in Budget session

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JAN. 9. The Government has decided to set up a National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and introduce a Bill in the budget session of Parliament to give it statutory status.

The Government has accepted a demand of all political parties to evolve an early warning mechanism for tsunamis and decided to set up a committee to look into the issue.

These decisions were taken when the country's political leadership converged at the Prime Minister's residence here today for an all-party meeting to discuss the situation following the tsunami havoc.

Convened by the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, to "mobilise the collective will" to meet the challenge, the Government received appreciation and support from across the political spectrum for its "prompt action."

The Prime Minister said the Government would look into the issue of whether the mainland or at least the Andaman and Nicobar Islands could have been forewarned about the tsunami.

'Only for future reference'

When the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, asked about the possibility of a warning, given the time lag between the quake near Sumatra and the tsunami hitting the Andaman and Nicobar Islands first and the mainland an hour later,



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Congress president Sonia Gandhi and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at an all-party meeting on the tsunami disaster, in New Delhi on Sunday. — AFP

Dr. Singh said the enquiry was not aimed at blaming anyone but for only future reference.

Vaiko's charge

While all parties were supportive of the Centre at the meeting — which went on for three-and-a-half hours — the Tamil Nadu Government came in for criticism from Vaiko, leader of the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. He said, "the State machinery was totally paralysed for the first four days." The Tamil Nadu Finance

Minister, C. Ponnaiyan, and the Public Works Minister, O. Pannerselvam, countered the charge.

Brushing aside apprehensions on the competence of Parliament to enact legislation on an issue normally dealt with by States, the Home Minister, Shivraj Patil, said a Cabinet Note on the setting up an NDMA was ready, as was a draft Bill. This was the recommendation of the National Committee on Disaster Management that was formed after the Bhuj earth-

quake in January 2001. At a briefing by the Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, the Agriculture Minister, Sharad Pawar, and Mr. Patil, any change in the adoption laws for easy rehabilitation of children orphaned by the tsunami was ruled out. "We will take care of these children," Mr. Patil said, adding that only childless couples would be allowed to adopt after due verification.

Maintaining that the responsibility of the children rendered destitute by the tidal wave was that of the Government, Mr. Patil said: "Adoption is the last resort." The Government was gathering data on the number of children orphaned. They would be handed over to relatives or established non-government organisations.

The issue of adoption was raised by Mehbooba Mufti of the People's Democratic Party and there was consensus that the orphaned children should be raised within their own communities with State support.

Republic Day Parade

Asked about reports of a possible cancellation/scaling down of the Republic Day Parade, Mr. Mukherjee said no political party had made such a demand. "The Prime Minister convened

a meeting of the Cabinet to ascertain the views of all the constituents of the United Progressive Alliance. And, no one made such a demand today either."

"The Parade is not a festivity but an observance of a national day — a historic one in the nation's freedom struggle," he said. But, without stating whether this year Parade would see a change in schedule, he pointed out that its duration had been changed several times in the past.

States for stringent Coastal Regulation Zone guidelines: Page 11; Strategies to be evolved for coastal eco-security: Page 13

The Government had received support for its decision to refuse foreign aid for tsunami relief. "We do not require foreign aid at this juncture," Mr. Mukherjee said. On the offer of assistance from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB), he said that was different as India was a founding member of both. "We do not want aid for relief, and World Bank and ADB aid is for development assistance."

Nilotpal Basu of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) said the Government, as part of the exercise to evolve an early warning mechanism for tsunamis, had convened an international conference of scientists later this month.

According to the Bharatiya Janata Party leader, Vijay Kumar Malhotra, the Government assured the leaders that it would ease the railway freight norms to facilitate the transportation of relief materials.

"Many of those missing could be dead"

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JAN. 9. Miraculous survival stories have kept hopes alive in India and the Government has till date not called off its search for the thousands missing after the tsunami lashed the country's south-eastern coast a fortnight ago.

But, for the first time today, the Government announced that it apprehends that many of the more than 5,000 missing —

most of them from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands — may not have survived.

Briefing mediapersons after the all-party meeting at the Prime Minister's residence, the Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, said 5,531 of the 5,624 missing as of noon on Saturday were from the Islands.

"We apprehend that a large number of these may be dead."

Should this fear become a reality, the death toll will un-

doubtedly touch the 15,000 mark.

The latest official figure of total deaths in the country stood at 10,022 — up 10 over the last 24 hours.

The additions were all reported from Tamil Nadu, with the State now accounting for 7,951 deaths.

Of the 5,617 missing, 5,531 are from the islands, 75 from Pondicherry and 11 from Andhra Pradesh.

PROBLEMS OF GOVERNANCE

Prime Minister's Concern For The Elusive Goal

By AD MODDIE

9/1/05
Admin
4-8

Dr Manmohan Singh is the first Prime Minister to be concerned with the India's core problem of good governance. The PC Hota Committee suggests catching IAS potentials young. Now Prabir Sen, an ex-secretary to the government of India, puts the emphasis on "a set of core values and purposeful training". Certainly desirable, but in a 50-year ethos neither has had any recognition. And can these be isolated from the total environment in which corruption is ubiquitous, brazen and rampant; where there are no proper performance criteria, no objective performance decisions.

Also, 85 per cent of the people are dissatisfied with all public services. We are attempting to fool young all-India service aspirants and the public, but only fooling ourselves, disregarding the hard facts of the wider environment.

Flawed

The IAS and IPS are contrasted unfavourably with the ICS of Phillip Woodruff's "The Guardians". The unfavourable comparisons are flawed. First, the ICS of the British pre-1947 period was both civil service and government. Not so after 1947. Even the ICS after 1947 was far from "The Guardians". They refused to have a joint ICS/IAS association after 1947. They failed to convey to their new masters the true civil service relationship with the political executive on the Westminster model; a crucial failure. They knew they would die out in the next 25 years. They failed to give the IAS the training and traditions they received from the British ICS.

In the early 1950's — long before Indira Gandhi's compelling "commitment" — the first senior official to "mind-read" political minds in my experience was an ICS officer in the Bihar cadre. When an excellent ICS officer like LP Singh, Chief Secretary, Bihar, was abruptly shunted to Delhi by the then Chief Minister, that short shrift should have at least rung a bell in the ICS cadre. But it didn't. The era of political "commitment" had begun.

When the commitment era came with the Emergency, and I

The author is formerly of the Indian Civil Service.

was at a private party of ICS officers criticising the then Cabinet Secretary, also of the ICS, I shall never forget his telling reply: "Arre bhai, main to Munim hun!" A far cry from "The Guardians"!

Similiary, when one of the last

good, institutional government; (c) there was a mere "transfer of power" from British to Indian hands with virtually the entire laws, traditional and systems of the pre-1947 colonial governments, together with World War II economic



ICS cabinet secretaries failed to stand up for an honest IAS Secretary of Petroleum and Chemicals, when he was demeaned by an unprecedented arrest by a police inspector in his office, in the ephemeral regime of Charan Singh, it was the final confirmation that the ICS was not even "The Guardians" of the civil service, not to speak of the people of India.

May I say I have had great admiration for a few of the best of the Indian ramp of the ICS, e.g. HM Patel, LP Singh and Bhagwan Sahai; but they were too few. The ICS as a whole failed to be anyone's "Guardians".

Swaraj

Neither nationalist politicians crying for Swaraj since the 1920s nor the ICS examined the historical nature of 25 centuries of Indian governance since the Mauryas to realise (a) there were good central governments for only five of 25 centuries, and that too by foreigners, the Mughals and the British for three of five centuries; (b) those 25 centuries showed India was strong in all forms of art and culture and trade, but weak in

controls. Neither politicians, nor the ICS thought of better indigenous forms of Swaraj, especially the centuries-old customary management of local resources of land, water, forests by local communities, destroyed by centralising governments in the last two centuries.

Lastly, if the IAS and other post-1947 services are to function in an Indian environment, what are the characteristics of that Indianness, as admitted and recognised by Indians themselves?

The progressive increase in Indianness cutting across old political parties and all sections of Indian society may be summarised in (a) low public and organisational work ethic from legislature to public office; (b) low civic mindedness; (c) self-hood, caste and community superseding any public or national interest; (d) the continuance of the "jagmani" government; (e) opportunist and criminalised politics to the near total exclusion of public, national and long-term interests. These conditions are sustained because of the lack of active sustained interest of business leadership in good governance, beyond their sectional interests.

In this wide, weak, and historical background, much more than "catch them young" infuse value systems. Better training is India's need. Where are those larger, effective, purposeful answers? Where is there any honest analysis of past government failures, leading to the dissatisfaction of 85 per cent of the people?

Is India a case ungovernable governments with ungovernable people, the problems magnified by size and plurality? In her famous study of violence, Hannah Arendt has pointed out to the disintegration of public's services — "schools, police, garbage, public transport, traffic problems, pollution etc. in mass societies". Large political and administrative bureaucracies can't cope. They become self-interest, not public service groups.

Failures

So representative democracy is no substitute for participative democracy. Prolonged failures of good governance leads to loss of legitimacy, credibility, and then power itself. When power without legitimacy and credibility is exercised, it fails. Such repeated failures lead to mass violence in the form of riots and insurgencies, now terror. So there is no alternative to the widening and deepening of meaningful participatory governance at all levels from village and town, to state and centre.

Citizens must govern local governments. Their representatives must ensure that. Representative government through more functional legislatures is a part of this participatory process of real democracy. Or else there is tyranny of invisible tyrants, masquerading as democratic government behind the political and administrative bureaucracies.

All this requires a belief in constructive democratic opposition, in freedom of information, e-governance, respect for human rights organisations and NGOs, the CAG, and the central and state vigilance bodies by the political and administrative executive. The most effective swaraj and swadeshi will be the restoration of local governance of local resources of land, water, forests and pastures, destroyed by centralised colonial and post-colonial regimes.