

## Short Edit

*Dear Reader,*

*If you are even remotely concerned with an eighteen year old person in India you must have just heaved a sigh of relief that the whole board exams, results, application and sky-high cut off's discussion is over. Except that the government is getting ready to burst your bubble with what is being termed as "the Commoditization of Higher Education"!*

*The Cover Story this week unravels the issues at stake to give you an overview of the changes that the government is proposing, and the impact it will have on our tertiary educational system. For instance, while the Ministry of HRD tells us that the Choice Based system encourages democratization and you dear reader would be forgiven for saying 'who can have a problem with choice', the reality is that "democratization" is almost a non sequitur as far as the CBCS is concerned. The way that 'Choice' is being envisaged in the current system it will mean a standardization of syllabi (and lowering of standards some fear), implementation issues that include language of instruction and virtual destruction of institutes of higher learning that focus on regional/cultural syllabi. As the eminent historian Romilla Thapar puts it, "there has to be intellectual excitement and challenge in what is being taught". Instead what is being proposed is that a matter as fundamental as syllabus, will be decided, and standardized by bureaucrats who are far removed from our temples of learning.*

*As we go to press the Human Resource Development Minister is meeting with central university administrators to take up at least 18 issues as the Ministry seeks to prepare a blueprint for improving their performance. Unfortunately members of the Teachers Union have been kept out of the meeting. And the batch of 2015-16 at our Universities is at a loss to understand what they've signed up for – the existing course or a revised syllabus. The fact is that there has been a lack of open debate on all these issues and the government seems to be throwing in words like 'choice', 'MOOCS' and 'technology' to obfuscate the core issue- are we creating a framework that encourages original thinking and independence or not? It is this and the inordinate rush to push the policy through that should concern us as stakeholders of this system.*

*Rrrrrrrrrrrring is not just the familiar sound of class getting over. It is an alarm bell that we need to pay heed to!*

*Ms. Barkha Deva  
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### Commodification of Higher Education

#### INTRODUCTION

Over the past year or so the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has indicated that it is in the process of introducing changes in the structure and functioning of the around 40 Central Universities functioning in the country. Notifications for the implementation of the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS), and a common grading system were sent out to universities across the board last year. The University Grants Commission has also stipulated a common structure and uploaded syllabi for various courses, allowing universities, a deviation of 30 percent (20 at the time of the original notification) in syllabi. The UGC has also sought to introduce teacher mobility within Central Universities, where faculty members can be exchanged between different educational institutes.

What has really alarmed academicians across the board is the implementation of the clauses covered under the Central Universities of India (Teaching, Research and Administration) Bill 2013 through executive orders through the University Grants Commission. The fact the UGC has gone ahead and uploaded the draft Bill on their website and asked for feedback to reintroduce it has further confirmed these fears. Some of the executive orders, like in the case of CBCS, the common syllabi and the expected teacher mobility originate from the preliminary draft of the Central Universities of India (Teaching, Research and Administration) Bill 2013, also known as the Pathan Committee Report (PCR) itself. These executive orders bypass the Parliament to enforce diktats in complete violation of democratic procedure.

The aforesaid Bill that was aimed at transforming central universities was circulated in September 2013. However, a year after its circulation the Bill was revived in a 2 day retreat of the Vice Chancellors of Central Universities at Chandigarh, 12-13 September 2014. The Bill contains categorical provisions, which if implemented, may change the idea of a university. The Student and Teaching community has been wary and hostile to the pending bill ever since it was first brought up.

According to the principals laid by Jawhar Lal Nehru publicly funded central universities should be grounded in decentralisation, de-co modification and heterogeneity to democratise society<sup>1</sup>. A quick analysis of the proposed changes indicates that they are all about centralisation, commodification and homogenisation. At a time when teachers have taken to the streets to protest against the push to enforce a common syllabus, the CBCS and teacher mobility on all universities, it becomes imperative to analyze the Central Universities Bill and understand the dangers it presents to the democratic higher education system envisioned by the founders of India.

#### CENTRALISATION

Thirty-nine central universities are regulated by 24 Acts passed by Parliament. Ideal decentralisation in the realm of higher education would aim at protecting sui generis aspects of all central universities and serve as a counter current to centralisation tendencies. As opposed to this, the Bill proposes to repeal all 24 Parliament Acts.

- This process of centralisation is further reinforced through centralisation of administrative decision. As of now, the tripartite division of power between the Vice Chancellor, Executive Council and Academic Council represents massive centralisation for Indian universities. Furthermore, the PCR suggests the establishment of Vice Chancellor's Council. The Human Resource Development (HRD) minister is the chairperson of this council. The council is mandated to coordinate all activities of central universities, advise on policy related to academic matters, synchronise academic calendars, recruit and exchange faculty members, exchange faculty members particularly to North-eastern region or backward areas, maintain transparency in appointments and achieve higher academic standard. These are clear indications of imposition of 'mega system' by way of 'top-down' approach.

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<sup>1</sup> Rai , Dhananjay. (2015). *Pathan Committee Report: Undermining the Idea of a University*. *Social Change*, 45(2), June 2015

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- The centralisation phenomenon becomes acutely serious as far as appointment of faculty is concerned. In the prevalent practice, the vice chancellor remains the chairperson of the selection committee along with subject experts and a visitor nominee. The problem starts with the screening committee. The present recruitment model seems to give unaccountable power to the screening committee. The arbitrariness of the screening committee is further combined with arbitrariness of the selection committee to declare a seat as none found suitable (NFS). Application of NFS takes place mostly in cases of reserved seats which indicate the caste bias of the Indian university system. In place of checking arbitrariness, the PCR proposes the appointment of assistant professors through the Central Universities Teachers' Recruitment Board which is a five-member board. This is a further centralising imposition, highly ambiguous, mechanical and without accountability.

### COMMODIFICATION

**Choice Based Credit System:** November 2014 onwards letters were sent out to all universities from the UGC and the MHRD to implement CBCS from the 2015 session. The credit system, a major initiative in the Central Universities of India (Teaching, Research and Administration) Bill 2013, is being introduced under the guise of providing choice and employability for students. Semester system, cafeteria approach and credit transfer are the three basic components of the CBCS. It proposes that students will be free to move between universities and earn their credits for a degree from any institution. It is being sold with a promise of choice, seamless mobility and employability. However, the MHRD and the UGC under the BJP government is choosing to ignore the ground realities in universities that undermine the viability and sustainability of the CBCS. It's very basis – the Semester System – has been subjected to severe criticism from stakeholders who include the state education commissions of Kerala and Madhya Pradesh, teachers associations of universities in Delhi, Mumbai, Gujarat and Chennai, and many students' unions/organisations across India. The Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA) has demanded its withdrawal while arguing that it undermines Equity and Quality in undergraduate education. The areas of concern around CBCS are:

- The CBCS proposes a system of credit-values for multiple courses and a common curricular structure for all universities in order to allow students greater choice between subjects and institutions. However, there is no parity in the infrastructure, number and quality of faculty across universities and institutions of higher learning. While a premier central university like DU is suffering from an acute shortage of physical infrastructure (not enough classrooms, labs and technological assistance) and faculty (close to 4000 regular teaching positions are vacant), the other universities are faring even worse. Thus, the choices get limited and students cannot be absorbed across already over-crowded classrooms.
- The Semester System (on which the CBCS is based) has been a failure in the universities where it has been implemented. The student-teacher ratio in colleges across most universities is 1:50-70. In the remaining cases, it is even higher. The common non-Elective courses attract 80-100 plus students per class. The only exceptions are the IITS, JNU and private universities wherein the fee structure is so high that students from modest income-families do not have access. Further, the 90 days teaching schedule per semester is only nominal as numerous calendar holidays and events disrupt the continuity and decrease the real number of teaching days. In such a scenario, teachers and students are caught up in a hurry to complete dense and burdensome syllabi with practically no time for in-depth learning or the specific learning needs of individual students.
- The number and diversity of students per teacher, overcrowded classrooms and labs, understaffing and contractual employment of non-teaching/support staff, decrease in the teaching-learning duration and the lack of ample time for holistic development of students have also been cited as reasons by the Madhya Pradesh State Education Commission, the Bhavnagar University in Gujarat, the Mumbai University Teachers' Association, the Madras University teachers' Association, DUTA and several students' organisations as reasons for the failure of the Semester System. MP and Bhavnagar University, Gujarat are trying to revert back to an Annual System.

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- The CBCS blueprint (UGC Guidelines) makes no mention of how the Reservation Policy is to be maintained in the intake of students in different classes while allowing mobility. Invariably, as the FYUP has shown us, the social composition of choice-based courses tends to become homogeneous and select. Thus, Equity and Social Diversity are among the blind-spots of CBCS.
- Under CBCS, the students will be allowed to study electives of their choice from other institutions or take some on-line courses. But this choice comes at a cost as it is based on the PPP model. For a long time now, governments have been forcing public funded universities to sign MoUs with private universities, so much so that it was added as a clause in Central Universities Act 2009, is part of the Central universities Bill, 2013 and is a key feature of CBCS. The UGC maintains a deliberate silence on issues of fees and reservation in case MoUs are signed with private universities.

**Common Syllabi:** The other major concern alongside the introduction of the CBCS is the common syllabi. The UGC has prepared a common rigid framework for the entire country, taking away from the universities and their teachers the ability to frame syllabi in accordance with the needs of the diverse student population to which they cater. This takes away from universities the chance to create something new, to innovate, and to attract students by showcasing areas they have developed. In the context of our country, common syllabi will not only demoralise the good universities, while failing to rescue the ailing universities, but also boost the culture of coaching centres which have already downgraded the quality of school education.

- In creating the common structure and syllabi, the UGC has not conducted any countrywide consultation. The syllabus has been put on the internet for reviews, but the feedback is not binding on the UGC. The sham is further exposed by the fact that though the UGC lists disadvantages like lack of infrastructure and fluctuating workload for teachers in bullet form in the proposal, it refuses to present a study of the implications.
- The UGC also makes no attempt to review the semester system despite the fact that teachers and students of universities and colleges of Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Assam, Haryana, and Delhi University have shared their experiences of semester system and their opposition is in the public domain.

This time the magnitude of damage will be much more as the restructuring is for all public funded universities across India. In November 2014 at the time of the first notification, there was no mention of a common framework and in a short span of time a rigid structure and syllabi of over 60 courses were dumped on the Universities. What is shocking is that the document on structure and syllabi come without any authorship. A study of the syllabi shows that they are a cut and paste of the syllabi of the much discredited FYUP courses. Are syllabi of Delhi University the correct medicine for all ailing universities?

For these very reasons the much hyped “Choice” shall only remain on paper. Since 2005, Delhi University curriculum has been revised to offer optional papers in the main discipline and in the interdisciplinary subjects. However, as colleges have limited infrastructure and teachers, there is not much choice which can be offered to students. Similarly, student mobility from one university to another became difficult because of the tight schedule of semester system and because of shortage of space.

### Performance Evaluation:

The introduction of the Academic Performance Index (API) (first introduced under the UPA 2 government) score to evaluate faculty's performance has led to a situation where the amount of academic production is prioritised and recognized. This has resulted in the preference of quantity over quality according to teacher organisations. There are different scores for national and international journals. The journals must have International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). There is no clarity how knowledge production becomes less important in peer-reviewed national journals than publication in peer-reviewed international journals. Moreover, relation between quality of knowledge and ISSN number is not explicated. Likewise, presentation in international seminars fetches more scores than in national seminars. The

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farcical division between ‘national’ and ‘international’, on the one hand, and valuing ‘mere’ publication and participation, on the other hand, may ultimately prove detrimental to the academic pursuit. In place of reversing this irrational process, the proposed Bill adds one more irrational dimension.

- The committee proposes the evaluation of performance of teachers by External Peer Review. Thereafter, there is a provision for recognition of outstanding performance of teacher in terms of granting incentives. There is also a provision for ‘Internal Quality Assurance Cell’ for the aforesaid purpose. This is not only empiricisation but also particularisation of knowledge production and recognition and may lead to a narrowing down of research areas in our academic institutions to fall in line with more rewarding choices.

Instead of reversing the prevalent problems, the Bill multiplies the problem of quantification with commodification. As of now, despite numerous constraints, a university retains ability to introduce academic courses which may be antithetical to dominant discourses and market suzerainty. The present Bill proposal poses a grave danger to the status of the Central University. There is a provision of conversion of an existing specified Central University to self-financing and self-regulation, subject to certain conditions. The deletion from Central University list is to be done on recommendation of UGC by the Government of India. The deemed university status is granted under section 3 of the UGC Act 1956. Under this Bill, no financial resources or grants are to be given by the Central Government or Commission or any authority owned or controlled by the central government or state governments or both or by public to deemed universities.

- Consequence of such a conversion would be that the government/legislature has no control on the deemed university whatsoever. This gives deemed universities free hand to enhance the fees.

The fee is directly linked with consumption of courses in the realm of market. Here, education becomes commodity to be bought and sold in the market. Any non-consumptive commodity will have no buyers in the market. The need is to create a condition wherein freedom from fears in terms of generating ideas and discourse for egalitarian purposes is nurtured. There has to be public-funded education for advocating education as ‘social value’. Instead, the much-needed reform is to improve teacher–student ratio, interaction and engagement. There has to be emphasis over qualitative knowledge. For this, the university needs to be upheld as a site

### TOWARDS HOMOGENEITY

**Teacher Mobility:** The present university system is quasi-heterogeneous in terms of faculty recruitment and subject matter of the disciplines. The faculty remains not only permanent but also an integral part of the system in terms of longevity. The proposed bill suggests inter-university mobility of faculty. The consequence is more severe than it appears. This again leads to a limited knowledge system negating the idea of a university by way of making teaching a transferrable vocation. In fact, teacher transferability is bound to affect the uniqueness of a university which develops over years.

The university simply can be defined as a universe which encompasses immense diversity not only in terms of people per se but also of nature of academic expertise. This becomes immensely significant in the context of social sciences and humanities. Discourse on social sciences/humanities takes cognisance of two set of values: first, synthesis of global and local domains of knowledge and second, contribution in local language in terms of understanding and changing the local vocabularies. Hence, teaching cannot be understood as a mere job where fulfilment of certain hours is emphasised rather it is an idea where complex set of interaction takes place. Converting teaching into a transferrable job is the negation of that organic process which is nurtured through global–local synthesis contributing to the growth of the discipline where the teacher becomes a crucial component in this synthesis. This process may take decades. Therefore, a university is an idea, not a transferrable ‘space’. Since the present university system is quasi heterogeneous, therefore the challenge is to make it more ‘heterogeneous’ at recruitment level. A teacher takes many years to acquaint her/him with local knowledge systems to take it to further levels of global–local synthesis and critical engagement with local vocabulary.

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Transfers entirely invalidate these organic linkages and purposes.

### CHALLENGES

Major overhauls are currently needed in the higher education sector. In place of the existing university system and the proposed Bill, large sections of the teaching community and academic's believe that the following changes need to be implemented immediately:

- The Executive Council in Universities should be made more representative. Since it is the apex body primarily responsible for policy matters, making it more representative shall make it more accountable. Being more representative entails not only presence of critical numbers of diverse groups but also effective representation of issues. In other words, issues should shape the outcome, not the institutes Vice Chancellor's political affiliations. Critical reasoning must be prioritised over power.
- By and large, the entire university community should shape the agenda of the Executive Council.
- As the Academic Council is primarily responsible for academic matters it must be more democratic and transparent in terms of seeking opinion from all quarters.
- The Government, MHRD and the UGC should withdraw the pending the Common Central Universities Bill 2013 from Parliament and reconsider the need to bring all central universities under a common, overarching legislation.

### CHALLENGES

The current BJP government in its support of the aforesaid Bill is coming from a position which views a university as a limited sphere having a circumscribed purpose. In their understanding no external functions may be accorded to a university and centralisation, commodification and homogeneity thus become intrinsic components of this understanding. However, an alternate proposition with regard to a university may stress upon the purpose of a university as beyond a set definition. For Nehru a university stood for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and for the search for truth<sup>2</sup>. In a nutshell, a university has external value. Therefore it is necessary for the teaching/student community, the government and the citizens at large, all the key stakeholders to debate the future direction of the higher education system in India. Various committees and commissions constituted by the Government of India, included the Radhakrishnan Commission (Government of India, 1949), Kothari Commission (Government of India, 1966) and Yashpal Committee Report (Government of India, 2009) have recognised the role of universities in democratising society – and these recommendations must be our guiding force while deciding on a matter that will such a significant impact on the future of the country.

The provisions of the Central Universities Bill 2013, including CBCS, common syllabus and teacher mobility attack the fundamentals of higher education and the Bill's severely constraining provisions virtually envisage the university as a closed space, cut-off from the society around it. The issue is to reclaim a university from such a limited market-oriented perspective, envisioning the role of a university as a place with infinite possibilities, which contribute towards the democratisation of society.

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### **Sources:**

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2. <http://www.millenniumpost.in/NewsContent.aspx?NID=139563>

<sup>2</sup> Rai , Dhananjay. (2015). *Pathan Committee Report: Undermining the Idea of a University*. *Social Change*, 45(2), June 2015

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3. [http://www.epw.in/system/files/pdf/2015\\_50/24/What\\_Is\\_To\\_Be\\_Done\\_About\\_Indian\\_Universities.pdf](http://www.epw.in/system/files/pdf/2015_50/24/What_Is_To_Be_Done_About_Indian_Universities.pdf)
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6. <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-delhi-university-teachers-association-demands-rollback-of-choice-based-credit-system-2100522>

## Headlines

### **More Efforts Needed to Recover Economy, says Rajan**

*(Indian Express, July 03, 2015)*

Reserve Bank of India governor Raghuram Rajan on Thursday said there were signs of capital investments picking up and the economy was recovering but work is needed in “areas of bottlenecks and areas where we need reforms to ensure that growth is strong and sustainable.”

Read more: <http://indianexpress.com/article/business/business-others/economy-recovering-more-efforts-needed-says-rajan/#sthash.NWWKk1sp.dpuf>

Date Accessed: 03.07.2015

### **MLALAD Scheme Suffers 'Many Deficiencies': CAG**

*(Outlook, June 30, 2015)*

Comptroller and Auditor General have pointed out loopholes in the Delhi government' MLALAD scheme. It said that the scheme suffered from "many deficiencies" and several revisions over the years had resulted in the gradual "dilution" of its guidelines.

Read more: <http://www.outlookindia.com/news/article/mlalad-scheme-suffers-many-deficiencies-cag/904719>

Date Accessed: 02.07.2015

## Economy

**Table 1: General Inflation Rates in Indian States: May 2015 (%)**

States	Rural	Urban	General
<b>All India</b>	<b>5.68</b>	<b>4.88</b>	<b>5.17</b>
<b>Northern Region</b>			
Jammu & Kashmir	9.88	4.77	7.78
Himachal Pradesh	11.26	4.31	9.44
Punjab	9.45	6.70	8.07
Chandigarh	13.46	0.55	0.98
Uttarakhand	4.41	4.76	5.65
Haryana	7.14	6.91	9.17
Delhi	8.51	6.46	8.57
Uttar Pradesh	3.80	3.76	5.39
<b>Western Region</b>			
Rajasthan	7.60	7.42	4.98
Gujarat	3.68	6.75	4.27
Maharashtra	7.73	4.78	9.14
Goa	8.75	7.92	3.15
Lakshadweep	15.06	3.89	16.25
Daman & Die	13.95	11.40	5.05
Dadra Nagar & Haveli	19.79	7.34	17.09
<b>Central Region</b>			
Madhya Pradesh	5.21	6.75	4.27
Chattishgarh	11.47	5.15	4.99
<b>Southern Region</b>			
Andhra Pradesh	5.02	-	-
Karnakata	7.35	4.73	3.21
Kerala	6.60	3.23	3.36
Tamil Nadu	4.82	4.60	10.34
Puducherry	15.09	8.77	0.52
Andaman & Nicobar Island	11.65	2.44	6.96
<b>Northeastern Region</b>			
Arunachal Pradesh	9.14	5.50	9.75
Assam	6.29	3.68	3.84
Manipur	20.64	6.46	21.20
<b>Meghalaya</b>	<b>-2.13</b>	<b>7.47</b>	<b>-4.57</b>
Mizoram	8.52	12.81	10.36
<b>Nagaland</b>	<b>15.05</b>	<b>4.49</b>	<b>2.77</b>
Tripura	9.66	-1.92	6.37
Sikkim	9.93	2.79	8.81
<b>Eastern Region</b>			
Bihar	3.90	3.59	-0.19
Jharkhand	5.25	2.76	5.94
West Bengal	-0.81	1.94	1.79
Odisha	9.01	2.72	9.01

- Source: State-wise monthly inflation rates are estimated from year on year Consumer Price Index (CPI) data of MOSPI.
- There is one month time lag in CPI data (From the month February 2015 onwards the New Series is introduced with base 2012=100) provided by MOSPI, Government of India.
- The 2014 May data at state-level with base 2010 is here converted to new base 2012 with linking factors of MOSPI 1.22, 1.20 and 1.21 for rural, urban and combined respectively

## Economy

### **Investors Unhappy Over Pace of Reform: Moody's**

(TCA Sharad Raghavan, *The Hindu*, July 1, 2015)

Results of polls global ratings agency Moody's carried out in Mumbai in May reflect some "disappointment amongst investor audiences with regard to the pace of reform" under the Modi government, and "increasing concerns about the risk of policy stagnation." Almost half of the poll respondents identified "sluggish reform momentum as the greatest risk to India's macroeconomic story. Project approval delays, were seen to be the biggest challenge for the infrastructure sector, according to the Moody's survey, followed by the lack of available funding.

Read more: <http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/investors-unhappy-over-pace-of-reform-moodys/article7375501.ece>

Date Accessed: 02.07.2015

### **Job Squeeze to get Tighter as PMI Manufacturing Shrinks**

(Indivjal Dhasmana, *Business Standard*, July 2, 2015)

Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) showed how the slowdown in the growth of the country's manufacturing activities in June, as compared to May as new business orders were not as forthcoming. The index was down at 51.3 points in June from 52.6 points in May.

The employment in the manufacturing industry remained broadly unchanged in June. Significant changes in payroll numbers have not been recorded since the opening month of 2014, and firms reportedly maintained a cost-cautious approach to hiring in the latest survey period.

Read more: [http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/job-squeeze-to-get-tighter-as-pmi-manufacturing-shrinks-115070100199\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/job-squeeze-to-get-tighter-as-pmi-manufacturing-shrinks-115070100199_1.html)

Date Accessed: 2.7.2015

### **Road Map for Cutting Corporate Tax in 45 Days**

(*Business Standard*, July 2, 2015)

The Finance Ministry is planning to bring down corporate tax to 25 per cent in next four years from the existing 30 per cent. The Finance Ministry, on Wednesday, July 1, 2015 said that in next 45days it would bring the road map to eliminate all tax exemptions and incentives for corporate in public domain.

Read more: [http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/road-map-for-cutting-corporate-tax-in-45-days-115070200057\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/road-map-for-cutting-corporate-tax-in-45-days-115070200057_1.html)

Date Accessed: 2.7.2015

## Governance and Development

### ***POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE***

#### **Why it is Senseless to Celebrate the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War**

(Bharat Bhushan, *Catch news.com*, 1, July, 2015)

The government plans to celebrate 50 years since the 1965 War with Pakistan with a parade on Rajpath. But by most accounts the war wasn't a decisive victory for either side. Individuals like Major General Ashok Mehta, who fought in the war feel that a carnival is no way to honour martyrs.

Read more: <http://www.catchnews.com/india-news/why-it-is-senseless-to-celebrate-the-1965-indo-pakistan-war-1435692155.html>

Date Accessed: 02.07.2015

#### **25 Per Cent Increase in Street Crimes in First Five Months**

(Shiv Sunny, *The Hindu*, June 30, 2015)

The first five months this year has seen a nearly 25 per cent jump in street crimes in the city in comparison to the corresponding period last year. The highest increase has been seen in crimes like robberies, burglaries and motor vehicle thefts — almost a 40 per cent increase. However, the police were able to make fewer arrests of those indulging in these crimes between January and May this year compared to last year. By May end last year, 22,254 arrests had been made. The number this year for the same period stands at 21,034.

Read more: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/25-per-cent-increase-in-street-crimes-in-first-five-months/article7368787.ece?ref=tpnews>

Date Accessed: 02.07.2015

### ***GOVERNMENT***

#### **Gujarat Govt Plans to Make Yoga Mandatory Subject from Class IX**

(Ritu Sharma, *The Indian Express*, June 29, 2015)

The Gujarat government is planning to introduce yoga in the curriculum of all 15,000 secondary and higher secondary schools across the state from 2016. For this, during the Diwali vacations, this year, all teachers will be trained in yoga.

Read more: <http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/gujarat-govt-plans-to-make-yoga-mandatory-subject-from-class-ix/>

Date Accessed: 02.07.2015

#### **Code of Conduct for Indian Envoys**

(*Free Press Journal*, July 03, 2015)

Reacting on recent case of assault of domestic help by wife of India's High Commission to New Zealand, the Ministry of External Affairs has asked its diplomats to ensure welfare of domestic help taken abroad from India and follow the law of the country of posting.

Read more: <http://www.freepressjournal.in/code-of-conduct-for-indian-envoys/>

Date Accessed: 03.07.2015

## Governance and Development

### **Rajasthan Government Outsources Schools and Primary Health Facilities to Private Entities**

(Anumeha Yadav, *Scroll*, 28 June, 2015)

The Government of Rajasthan has proposed outsourcing the management of public schools and health centres to private players to fix problems in delivering these basic services. In May, the Vasundhara Raje-led government released a new education policy. The government will allow private entities to set up new schools with public funds. In a section of upcoming schools, the government will bear only 40% of students' fees. Private players will hire all teaching and non-teaching staff in these schools.

Read more: <http://scroll.in/article/736864/vasundhara-raje-outsources-schools-and-primary-health-facilities-to-private-entities>

Date Accessed: 02.07.2015

### **SECURITY**

#### **AFSPA Functioning Without Subordinate Rules: Amnesty**

(Iftikhar Gilani, *Daily News and Analysis*, July 2, 2015)

Amnesty International in its report titled "Denied: Failures in accountability for human rights violations by security force personnel in Jammu and Kashmir" has noted that after 56 years of enactment of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), there has been no attempt to frame rules for its operationalization. Moreover, it also found out that the Disturbed Area Act (DAA), which enables operationalization of the AFSPA has to undergo a mandatory review after every six months. However, governments have hardly adhered to this legal directive.

Read more: <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-afspa-functioning-without-subordinate-rules-amnesty-2100941>

Date Accessed: 02.07.2015

### **HEALTH**

#### **FSSAI Proposes Inclusion of More Products in New Draft**

(Ananya Tewari, *Down to Earth*, 29, June, 2015)

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) acknowledges that heavy metal contamination in food is associated with human health hazards. Towards this end, the Indian food regulation agency recently released the new draft of Food Safety and Standard (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Amendment Regulation, 2015. An improvement on the 2011 regulation, the new one proposes the inclusion of more food products with maximum level (in parts per million by weight) of lead, arsenic, tin, cadmium, mercury and chromium to the list.

Read more: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/food-contamination-fssai-proposes-inclusion-more-products-new-draft>

Date Accessed: 02.07.2015

#### **People Are Turning to Private Hospitals Despite High Costs, Shows NSSO Data**

(Kundan Pandey, *Down to Earth*, July 2, 2015)

Latest National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) data shows a steady decline in people availing health services at government-run centers and a corresponding increase in the use of private healthcare. As per the report, 70% of the ailments were treated at private hospitals even though people have to pay several times more for treatment. On an average, one pays Rs 25,850 per case where hospitalization is required in the private sector while the same treatment costs Rs 6,120 in public hospitals. Data indicates that the health crisis is deepening and people are forced to shift to private healthcare despite high costs.

Read more: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/people-are-turning-private-hospitals-despite-high-costs-shows-nssso-data>

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## Governance and Development

### Facts Belie Minister's Immunization Prediction

(Chaitanya Mallapur, *India Spend*, July 2, 2015)

Less than four months ago Health Minister, J P Nadda, told the Parliament that it would take five years to immunize 90% of India's children. On June 30 he declared that India would reach the universal immunization target, or 95% of all children, by the end of 2016.

Only 65% of children are now immunized in the country, the best rate achieved in 38 years since the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) was initiated in 1978. The current rate of immunization has risen to 65.2% (2013-14) from 35.5% in 1992-93.

Read more: [http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/facts-belie-ministers-immunisation-prediction-91971?utm\\_content=buffer77f18&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/facts-belie-ministers-immunisation-prediction-91971?utm_content=buffer77f18&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

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## ENVIRONMENT

### Flood Fury: Why Uttarakhand, Assam, J&K & Mumbai will be Hit Again and What can be Done

(Devika Bakshi, *Catch news.com*, 29 June, 2015)

Every monsoon, like clockwork, reports of floods around the country fill the news. We get death-tolls, property damage assessments, aerial photographs of inundation, and relief allocation announcements from state and centre. The tendency in media and government has been to explain these flood-disasters as due solely to extreme rainfall events, but this is an incomplete understanding. The actual reason is the way in which landscapes are being developed, severely impairing the ability of the natural drainage systems to function.

Read more: <http://www.catchnews.com/environment-news/flood-fury-why-uttarakhand-assam-j-k-mumbai-will-be-hit-again-and-what-can-be-done-1435546858.html>

Date Accessed: 02.07.2015

### Almost All India's Water is Contaminated by Sewage

(Nayantara Narayan, *Scroll*, 1, July, 2015)

Government agencies estimate that as much of 80% of India's surface water is contaminated and most of it comes from sewage. A soon-to-be-released report by WaterAid India on fecal sludge management documents the chinks in India's sewage system. Seventeen million, or roughly 20%, of urban households, lack sanitation facilities, the report says.

Read more: <http://scroll.in/article/737981/horrifying-fact-almost-all-indias-water-is-contaminated-by-sewage>

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### National Board for Wildlife Clears 18 Projects in Some Crucial Wildlife Zones

(Akash Vashishtha, *India Today*, June 26, 2015)

The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) has cleared 18 out of 25 projects in some of the most crucial wildlife zones of the country, including five key tiger reserves. None of the proposals brought before it at its 34th meeting on June 2, chaired by Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar, was rejected. Only four proposals were deferred; site visit was asked in one case; and one was referred back to the state wildlife board.

Read more: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/nbwl-prakash-javadekar-clear-projects-wildlife-tiger/1/447134.html>

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## India and World

### *INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS*

#### **Fleeing Conflicts, Record Numbers of Migrants and Refugees Crossed Mediterranean So Far in 2015 – UN**

*(United Nations News Centre, July 1, 2015)*

As per the new United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee report, over 137,000 refugees have crossed the Mediterranean, in the first six months of 2015, to seek protection in Europe. One third of those who arrived by sea in Italy or Greece were from Syria, which almost universally qualifies for refugee status or other forms of protection. The second and third most common countries of origin are Afghanistan and Eritrea, whose nationals are also mostly considered to qualify for refugee status.

Read more: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51315#.VZTiS-2qqko>

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