

Congress in coma

More than a fortnight has passed since the result of five State assembly elections was out. Except in Punjab, the Congress performance was poor. It was very poor in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. In Manipur and Goa, it emerged as the single largest party but failed to form its government. In Punjab also, the Congress victory was more due to the utterly dismal record of the Akali-BJP government rather than to a sudden revival of faith of the people in the Congress. The Congress has been steadily declining ever since the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Its latest mascot, Rahul Gandhi, has failed to entice his own party workers, not to speak of the people in general. Sonia Gandhi's failing health has made the question of 'who will lead the Congress in the coming days' urgent.

But strangely, the Congress seems to have gone into a political hibernation, if not a coma. No decline in popularity, no defeat in the polls, no political disfigurement can shake it out of its present state of torpor and lassitude. No indication that it is aware of the gravity of the situation developing in the country, the mounting threat to our democratic and secular polity. There is no effort at introspection as to what has gone wrong and where and how to stop this downhill journey, whether it is time now to pass on the baton from the family-centric High Command to a collective leadership of younger people who have their ears to the ground. The way in which the divisive forces are gaining ground and vigorously pursuing their majoritarian agenda, the opposition will be hardly able to face the ruling dispensation when the next general elections come in two years' time. The opposition is divided, ideologically, politically and programmatically. They feel united only when they have to enter the election battle against a strong adversary. Such a negative 'unity' does not inspire confidence in the masses, when they see a strong, charismatic leader with Messiah-like attributes promising to bring them 'better days'.

Today the opposition does not have a strong leader with a charismatic personality like Jawaharlal Nehru or Indira Gandhi who commands the trust and confidence of the people. This lacuna can be filled up to a great extent by an ideologically committed and cohesive collective leadership. The Congress can still play the role of a catalytic agent in bringing about the unity of the secular and democratic opposition parties that can effectively fight the forces of majoritarian politics. But to do that it has first to put its own house in order.

BSI Regional Centre celebrates foundation day

PORT BLAIR, MARCH 31/- The premier research organisation in the field of plant taxonomy and floristic studies in the country the Botanical Survey of India celebrated 45th foundation day on Thursday. The function was inaugurated by Dr. Lal Ji Singh, Deputy Director & H.O. Dr. Singh speaking on the occasion applauded the progress made by Andaman & Nicobar Regional Centre which was established on 30th March 1972 in pursuance to Regional Centre expansion of Botanical Survey of India, established by the British Govt. in 1890 and after its establishment the centre is continuously working towards survey, conservation and propagation of the valuable plants wealth of Islands. Scientists of the centre discovered over 116 species as new to science from these islands including recently described unique species of bananas, living fossil and dinosaur age tree plant, zingibers and others economically important species. Dr. Singh, Deputy Director also emphasized on research activities of this regional centre on plant biodiversity and the intensive botanical explorations and authentic documentation of flora of the islands enriching the herbarium and the museum of the Centre. He told, among all the units of BSI, Andaman & Nicobar Regional Centre holds the credits of covering one of the remote and insular floristic hotspots of the country. Specially invited retired staff of the centre, Smt B. G. S. Lakra, Smt Bilkith Begum, Mr. K. Paparao, Mr. Lawrentus Kiro, Mr. Manjus Tigga and Mr. Telesphor Kipote shared their experience. The program was conducted by Mr. Gautam Anuj Ekka and Dr. Jagadeesh Ram TAM proposed the vote of thanks.

FMD vaccination today

PORT BLAIR, MARCH 31/- The 21st round of Foot and Mouth Disease vaccination programme will be carried out by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services in the South Andaman area from April 01 to 20, 2017. During the vaccination programme, the vaccination teams will be visiting various places of South Andaman area to carry out the FMD vaccination in cattle, buffalo, goats and pigs. The earlier rounds of vaccination have been successful in controlling the diseases and there has been no report of FMD in these islands since 2005. The vaccination of livestock at every six-month is required so that soon these islands can once again be declared free from FMD. The farmers and the PRI members have been requested to extend their cooperation in the vaccination programme.



Models present creations by Tibetan designer AJ Namo during a fashion show at China Fashion Week in Beijing. REUTERS

Overstepping limits of Finance Bill

REFLEX ACTION

G. Srinivasan

The 2017 Finance Bill as passed by the Lower House on March 29 which was subsequently discussed and debated in the Rajya Sabha on March 29 with the Union Finance Minister responding to the concerns of members in both the houses is a unique but unsettling piece of legislation. After its introduction on the budget day on February 1 till its passage in the Lok Sabha, members from the disparate Opposition parties were rightly agitated over the government's move and successful passage of as many as 40 amendments as part and parcel of the Finance Bill. That the upper house is upset over non-tax provisions masquerading as tax provisions to pass the need for their due passage in the Rajya Sabha, is passé. What struck dispassionate observers really is the battle cry from the Opposition benches on the need to revise the legality of the Lok Sabha Speaker's right to resolve whether a Bill is a Money Bill or not.

There is a plausible ground for raising such a plea from the house of elders because the Finance Bill has attempted to alter Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, Airport Authority of India Act, 1994, Income Tax Act 1961, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997, Customs Act 1962, Trade Marks Act 1999, Smugglers & Foreign Exchange Manipulators (Forfeiture of Property) Act, 1976, Companies Act, 2013, Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985, Cinematograph Act, 1952, Railway Claims Tribunal Act, 1987, Consumer Protection Act, 1986, Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992, Electricity Act, 2003, Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993, Armed Forces Act, 2007 and the National Green Tribunals Act, 2010.

It is perspicuous from the aforementioned lists of variegated subjects that all of them do not qualify for being amended under the garb of money bill as the changes sought to be introduced and passed need to be brought in the form of a bill and discussed therebefore in the upper house so that requisite safeguards against potential or putative misuse and abuse are imbued to insulate the denizens of the nation from being subject to undue harassment or unjust

enrichment by the law-enforcing authorities! It is rather unfortunate that with a sledgehammer the government has succeeded in amending forty laws through the money bill tack, by passing any dispassionate discussion about the need and urgency of the proposed reform measures so that the people by and large could be a tad wiser from the crystalline discussions of their elected members in the lower house or the selected members from the upper house. In a multi-party democracy the bicameral legislatures as evolved by Constitutional experts ought not to have been flouted in a fashion that might build resentment and avoidable resistance in the members of the upper house.

A polemical provision that has set alarm bells ringing even among genuine big-ticket taxpayers is the passage of an amendment concerning search and seizures in the Income Tax Act. It has been proposed to insert an Explanation after the fourth proviso to the sub-section (4 of s 132) so as to provide that the reason to believe recorded by the income tax authority specified therein under the said sub-section shall not be disclosed to any person or any authority or the Appellate Tribunal. The amendment would take effect retrospectively from April 1, 1962, the date of the commencement of the Income Tax Act, 1961. Again, it is also proposed to insert an explanation in the subsection (1A) of s 132 so as to declare that reason to suspect recorded by the income tax authority shall also not be disclosed to any person or any authority or the Appellate Tribunal.

In reply to the Finance Bill in the Lok Sabha, the feisty Finance Minister Arun Jaitley referred to this as "a small amendment has been made to the effect that a court can see such a document (reason for

search and seizure by the tax sleuths) but this document will not be given to any other person. He further justified the change that under the extant procedure, the copy of the order detailing the reasons had to be given to the individual against whom search is to be carried out but because of this the source of information were drying up. Tax lawyers and auditors recall that while confidentiality and sensitivity remain the hallmarks of proceedings under Section 132 and section 132A, certain judicial pronouncements have fostered ambiguity in respect of the disclosure of reason to believe or reason to suspect recorded by the income tax authority to conduct a search under section 132 to make requisition under section 132A.

They cited a ruling by the Supreme Court in DGT (Inv) vs. Spacewood Furnishing (P) Ltd (2015) 57 taxman.com 292 (SC) clarified that section 132 would not confer in assessee a right of inspection of document or to a communication of reasons for belief at stage of issuing of authorization. However, at stage of commencement of assessment proceedings after completion of search and seizures, if any, that requisite material may have to be disclosed to assessee. But the latest amendment has annulled the effect of the apex court judgment since no person, authority or even Appellate Tribunal shall be entitled to advert to the reasons to believe or reasons to suspect as the case may be during the course of assessment or appellate proceedings.

While no one faults the zealousness with which the authorities hound out tax evaders, they should also ensure that the new-fangled freedom vested with the income tax authorities is not abused or misused to settle scores or indulge in personal vendettas. As it is, Indian businessmen have of late become tax exiles and fugitives from stragulating fiscal fangs. Every spacious move the government makes should ensure that smart and intelligent taxpayers can keep themselves to onshore, instead of seeking offshore sanctuaries such as Panama and low-tax havens such as Guernsey and Monaco. (IPA)

Revised property tax system of PBMC to come into effect today

PORT BLAIR, MARCH 31/- The revised method of Property Tax will be implemented by the Port Blair Municipal Council (PBMC) from April 1, 2017. The revised taxation method is better than the earlier system as it is transparent, fair, citizen friendly and professional way of assessment, simple to understand and need not to visit PBMC office, self-assessment and ease of payment, no discretion with the Assessing Authorities. There is no scope of dispensing, good data base and information systems to enable better tax planning and policy making and such system is widely implemented in most of the Municipalities of the country. The eligible persons can avail only one of the discounts at a time viz. 25% discount in case of Residential Property recorded exclusively in the name of widow as per the Revenue Records, 25% discount in case of Residential Property recorded exclusively in the name of handicapped persons as per the certificate issued by the Social Welfare

Department and 10% discount in case of the Residential Property recorded exclusively in the name of a female as per the Revenue Records. Till June 30, 2017, a special rebate of 10% is also allowed for early payment. Expecting heavy rush for payment of Property Tax, the AXIS Bank branches at Middle Point and Bathu Bains have also been authorized to collect payment of Property Tax and self-assessment form, said the Secretary, Municipal Council, Mr. Yashpal Garg, in a release.

KKO to participate in World Karate C'ship

PORT BLAIR, MARCH 31/- The Kyokushin Karate Organization (KKO) Andaman & Nicobar islands approved by KAI (Karate Association of India), recognized by Ministry of Sports & Youth Affairs, Govt. of India, Member of W.K.F., recognized by I.O.C, headed by Sensei Anusheel Chakrabarty along with Senpai Apurva Sarkar & Senpai Ashish Abdul, Senpai Sheela Chakrabarty (Advocate) and Shihan Anup Chakrabarty (Advocate) are proceeding to Tokyo, Japan on April 8. Sensei Anusheel Chakrabarty, will appear in International Grading Exams which would be conducted by Kancho Shokei Matsui and Mount Mitsumine International training Camp. Intensive Instructor's training Course, Kata competition and International Training at Iko Honbu Dojo whereas Senpai Apurva Sarkar & Senpai Ashish Abdul will fight in Kumite Event (Full Contact Fighting) in 15-17 yrs old Category in World Youth Elite Karate Championship & in Kata Competition between the age group of 15-34 yrs and Shihan Anup Chakrabarty and Senpai Sheela Chakrabarty will attend the IKFT & 6th WWC.

Utkal Samaj to celebrate Odisha Day

PORT BLAIR, MARCH 31/- Odisha Day, also Odisha Dibas and Utkal Dibas is celebrated on 1 April in Odisha in the memory of the formation of the state as a separate province on 1 April 1936. After losing its complete political identity in 1568 following the defeat and demise of the of the last Hindu King Mukunda Dev efforts resulted in the formation of a politically separate state under British rule on linguistic basis on 1 April 1936. The main revolution for this separate state was continued for three decades from the very day of formation of Utkal Sammilani that lead the foundation of a separate Odisha Province. The movement was more intense with the leadership of Utkal Gouraba Madhusudan Das, Utkala maina, Gopabandhu Das, Maharaja Krishna Chandra Gajapati, Pandita Nilakantha Das, Fakir Mohan Senapati, Gangadhar Meher, Basudeba Sudhaladeda, Radhanath Ray, Bhubanananda Das, A.P. Patro and many others with the support of the public. The newly formed Odisha consists of six districts namely Cuttack, Puri, Baleswar, Sambalpur, Koraput and Ganjam having its capital at Cuttack. Now it has 30 districts within it with capital at Bhubaneswar. Utkal Dibas is celebrated every year on 1 April all over Odisha and also all over India. The celebration is also observed in Andaman & Nicobar Islands in the Utkal Samaj premises. Programmes such as: Odisha dance, Bhajans, other traditional songs etc will be conducted on the occasion. Judicial Member of CAT, Calcutta Bench, Mr A K Patnaik will be the chief guest while Smt Shashmita Patnaik will grace the occasion as the guest of honor. The Samaj will felicitate Mr and Mrs Patnaik on the occasion.

'Swachhta' Ambassador visits PHC Manglutan

PORT BLAIR, MARCH 31/- Ambassador of Swachh Bharat Mission, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Padmasree Nandini Chandler Lal visited PHC Manglutan on Friday and inspected the Wards, toilets and dumping place of the health centre. The Pradhan of Manglutan, Smt Applanarsh Amma and Pradhan of Humfreyguni, Mary were also present on the occasion. Interacting with the staff and others present on the occasion, Padmasree urged them to maintain cleanliness in the PHC premises.

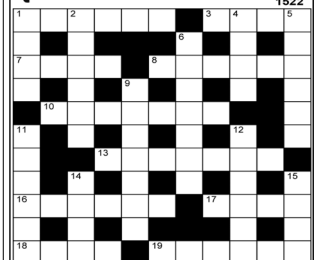
No SOV/2-98/SDC/Proc./2016(Vol 2)/197
SOCIETY OF PROMOTION OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (SOVTECH),
DR. BR AMBEDKAR INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS, PAHARGAON ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS
PORT BLAIR-744103
 Dated 31st March, 2017
Corrigendum to Tender Notice No SOV/2-98/SDC/Proc./2016(Vol 2)/449
Dated 18th Nov, 2016

 The last date for the submission of the bid for supply and support of "SAN SWITCH PORT ACTIVATION License for CISCO MDS 9148 switch along with 4G SW SFP modules" in A&N State Data Center has been extended to 21.04.2017 upto 1400 hrs. The Key events may be corrected as follows.

Sl No.	Event	Date
1	Closing date and time of bid	19.04.2017 up to 1400 hrs
2	EMD amount	Rs 3,00,000/-
3	Opening date and time of the pre-qualification cum technical bid	21.04.2017 at 1600 hrs
4	Opening date and time of the Commercial bid	Will be communicated through www.eproc.andaman.gov.in

All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.
Executive Officer
SOVTECH

QUICK CROSSWORD



- Across**
 1. Atoll lake (6)
 3. Equipment (4)
 7. Small bird (4)
 8. Cold and unfriendly (6)
 10. Slaying power (7)
 13. Red vase (anag) (7)
 16. Be important (6)
 17. Hold firmly (4)
 18. Lids (4)
 19. Musician (6)
- Down**
 1. Sawdly (4)
 2. Slum (6)
 4. Compass point (4)
 5. Beat (6)
 6. Bauble (7)
 9. Tiny amount (7)
 11. Licence (6)
 12. Off track (6)
 14. Halt (4)
 15. Incentive (4)

Previous solution
 Across: 1. Lookalike, 6. Slope, 7. Noise, 9. Item, 10. Reeled, 12. Mishap, 14. Alto, 17. Court, 18. Input, 19. Unfounded.
 Down: 2. Ozone, 3. Keel, 4. Linked, 5. Kri, 6. Seismic, 8. Endmost, 11. Tattoo, 13. Spurn, 15. Lapse, 16. Sign.

SUDOKU: 1809

	3	1	7	9				
5				6	7			
7								1
4		9						
6		8		3				2
			1		9			
7						1		
		9	6					8
		6	5		9	3		

Yesterday's Solution 1808

8	3	9	6	5	1	7	4	2
6	2	7	4	3	8	5	9	1
1	5	4	7	2	9	6	8	3
9	8	6	2	4	3	1	5	7
2	7	3	1	8	5	9	6	4
5	4	1	9	7	6	2	3	8
4	1	8	5	9	2	3	7	6
3	6	5	8	1	7	4	2	9
7	9	2	3	6	4	8	1	5

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