The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

Potential of UP arithmetic

A toss-up between mazboot sarkar and social justice

QUARTER of a century is a long time to stay estranged. And any rapprochement without a closure, as is the case with the SP and BSP in UP, speaks of more than a hint of desperation. Till the run-up to the 2017 Assembly polls, Mayawati was in no mood to 'forgive or forget' the 1993 VIP Guest House incident in Lucknow. But the BSP has been locked out of the power centre in UP for six years and its vote share has steadily declined. The political banishment from Lucknow will last another three years. Such a long period on the bench precludes any division of spoils between Mayawati and Akhilesh: a role in Delhi for one and another for Lucknow.

The dumping of the Congress makes for an interesting reading of tea leaves. Past experience has shown, according to Mayawati, that the Congress cannot transfer its votes. Nothing can be said if the alliance will finally be a big tent that will accommodate the entire secular line-up or the non-Congress part. But the outline of the bi-party pact indicates their game plan of preventing the Congress from becoming the ringmaster by aggregating enough seats from various states to be the largest party. The Congress is welcome to contest all seats where it is BJP's principal opponent, but the SP-BSP alliance will aim at maximising its pickings from UP to be in a position for better bargaining if secular parties manage to best the BJP in 2019.

The Congress' exclusion also buries the talk of a nationwide maha-gathbandhan. The electoral canvas may now be dotted by state-level alliances against the BJP with the leftouts in the secular camp providing a rump alternative. On paper, simple arithmetic gives three-fourths of the 80 UP Lok Sabha seats to the SP-BSP. But the postulation sidesteps the likelihood of more cards up the BJP's sleeve: quota within the SC\OBC quota and, of course, the Ram temple case. What remains to be seen is whether the desperation of the vanguished can match the creativity of the saffron corner.

Punjab's pay push

Pre-election cheer for govt employees

OMETH the elections, cometh the revised pay scales. With barely three months to go for the Lok Sabha polls, the cashstrapped Punjab Government has decided to bite the bullet and finally implement the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission. This is a last-ditch attempt to win over lakhs of disgruntled government employees, who have been holding protests in recent months in support of their demands, primarily a salary hike and payment of dearness allowance arrears.

The Commission was set up in February 2016 when the Akali-BJP alliance was in charge, but things moved at a snail's pace, apparently because the government, facing strong anti-incumbency, already knew that it was on its way out. The change of guard in the state further delayed the proceedings. Former Chief Secretary RS Mann, who had been appointed chairman of the pay panel during the SAD rule, quit shortly after the Congress came to power. His successor, Jai Singh Gill, has had his hands full over the past year and a half, receiving hundreds of representations from employees' unions. It has been a tightrope walk for him as the government hardly has any financial elbow room.

Accounting for about half of its total earnings, the state's annual salary and pension bill is a major drain on the exchequer. Punjab's government employees, particularly those who have spent several years in service, are relatively well paid compared to their counterparts in other states, but the picture is far from rosy for the fresh recruits. The latter find themselves in a 'take it or leave it' situation. The ruling party needs to do a lot to make *sarkari naukri* alluring for these young employees. The protracted unrest among government teachers, who are seeking regularisation of services at decent salaries, shows that the powers that be have made a mess of things. Punjab also has plenty of catching up to do with neighbour Haryana, which had taken the lead last year in implementing recommendations of the Seventh Pay Commission.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

to you. — Neil deGrasse Tyson

ON THIS DAY...100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 1919

The Civil Service Opposition.

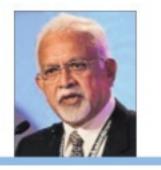
be, and should make it a grievance when that right was denied to them.

Disapproval of the Scheme.

THAT the scheme is not approved by some members of the Service is, of course, neither new nor surprising. No one who has exercised ruling authority can like to be told that his true business is not to rule but to serve. Our objection is to the members of the Service giving organised expression to their disapproval of the scheme and, indeed, to their expressing any opinion with regard to it at all, unless they were officially called upon to do so. This, however, is precisely what the Madras Association does. "We do not intend now," it says "to criticise the proposals regarded merely as a scheme for administering British India, but as a reference to the subject in the British Press suggests that the I.C.S. as a whole approves and welcomes the scheme, we think it desirable to say that it is not so."

The battle for the skies

US snub to Moscow will hit collaboration in exploring the 'last frontier'



MK BHADRAKUMAR

FORMER AMBASSADOR

S space agency NASA has abruptly called off a planned visit to the US in February by the head of the Russian state space corporation, Roscosmos Dmitry Rogozin. NASA made the announcement on January 4 following criticism by the US media and lawmakers who demanded cancellation of the visit. The snub to Moscow presages sudden death of the historic Russian-American collaboration in exploring the 'last frontier' for mankind. It becomes an inflection point.

Rogozin is a close political associate of President Vladimir Putin. He has been subjected to the Western sanctions over Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014. US Senator Jeanne Shaheen, who is a leading critic of Russia's alleged meddling in the 2016 US presidential election, threatened that the Congress will be 'forced to act' unless NASA withdrew the invitation to Rogozin. Shaheen called Rogozin 'one of the leading architects of the Kremlin's campaign of aggression towards its neighbours' and said the invitation 'undercuts our message and undermines the US' core national security objectives'.

The big question is whether the curtain is coming down on the space cooperation between the US and Russia. It is a poignant moment since the two countries have had a long history of working together in space ever since the joint Apollo-Soyuz mission in 1975, and more so, in the past two decades. Within the ambit of cooperation, the two countries have shared training, communications, operational capabilities and expenses in support of the International Space Station (ISS). In



MISSION SPACE: Russia can build a lone lunar station, but funds are a challenge.

The waning of NASA-Roscosmos synergy can be to India's advantage. New Delhi should seize the opportunity.

particular, following the cancellation of the US Space Shuttle Program in 2011, the US began relying on Russia's Soyuz capsules for transport to the ISS. Russia receives an average of \$81 million per seat on the Soyuz. In a joint statement in 2017, the two countries even projected the idea of collaborating on deep space exploration, including the construction of the Lunar Orbital Platform-Gateway, a research-focused space station orbiting the moon. (Rogozin's visit aimed at fleshing out the tantalising idea.) Both countries saw clear benefits, given the high price tag for solo space exploration.

However, times have changed. Russia and the US are flaunting today their capability to destroy each other in a thermonuclear war, something unheard of even at the height of the Cold War. Space has become a new domain of warfare. If the 2018 US National Defense Strategy characterised 'space and cyberspace as warfighting domains', Russia's 2010 military doctrine explicitly stated that ensuring superiority in space would be a 'decisive factor' in achieving its strategic goals. In this tense security environment, the need arises to pro-

tect space assets (satellites, etc.) with space-based weapons. Suffice to say, the scope for sharing sensitive technology or capabilities in space partnerships has dramatically shrunk due to the growing hostility between the US and Russia.

Secondly, a private sector space industry has appeared in the US and it has spawned commercial interests. The development of advanced technologies by private companies means NASA has new options to choose from and to reduce the dependence on Russia. In fact, NASA is already in a position to use Boeing and SpaceX capsules for human spaceflight beginning in 2020 and even has the option to phase out the procurement of Russian RD-180 rocket engines by 2022. With President Trump ordering the establishment of a sixth branch of the military ('Space Force'), the dominant aerospace companies in the US — Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon and BAE Systems — are eyeing the new frontier.

Russia's preference has always been to press on with a space programme entwined with the US's. But in a scenario where NASA turns its

back on Roscosmos, Russia may have to turn to China or India for partnership. Recently, Rogozin openly hinted at this. In his words, 'China is offering many initiatives for cooperation, is asking us to help them develop, though they have already achieved a good level of development. They are suggesting creating a joint station.' Rogozin even floated the idea of a 'BRICS station'. Of course, Russia is technologically capable of building a lone Russian lunar station. But then, as the director of the Institute of Space Policy in Moscow, Ivan M Moiseyev, told the New York Times recently, 'The technical capability exists, but the finances don't.'

Quite obviously, considering that space efforts are inextricably connected to military plans, Russia needs to take a leap of faith to form an alliance with China. On the one hand, the scientific space-related endeavours have immense commercial potentials, while on the other, they signify the ultimate 'eye in the sky' through a combination of satellites and unmanned aerial reconnaissance vehicles that would give unmatched insight into positions of enemies (as well as allies). They will phenomenally improve military logistics, facilitate 'orbital strikes' at enemy targets as well as open up new lucrative trade and travel routes.

India is far better placed than China can ever be to align with Russia's space programme, as there are no contradictions in the relations between the two countries. China is a competitor for Russia — as much as for the US — in space. Commenting on the recent landing of a Chinese scientific probe on the far side of the moon, Mary Dejevsky at the Guardian newspaper, a veteran Russia hand, wrote, 'The response in political and military quarters in Washington, as in Moscow... is likely to reflect trepidation.' It cannot be otherwise in New Delhi also. All factors taken into consideration, therefore, a tapering off in the NASA-Roscosmos cooperation, which is on cards in a near-term scenario, can be to India's advantage. Delhi should seize the opportunity.

Not loose change, it's about change

SATISH ARYA

OW much?' I asked a clerk at the post office. Rupees 41, he replied. I gave him Rs 40 and a Rs-5 coin. He looked at the coin and frowned, 'Give me change,' he said. 'This is change,' I retorted. 'You will have to wait for the change,' he replied.

It was around 3 pm. I had gone to speed-post a letter. Though the queue was not long, the young clerk was taking an inordinate time in disposing of the customers. It had taken me over half an hour to reach the booking window. And now the wait, for Rs 4! I took a stealthy look into the cashbox and sighted a few glistening coins. I understood.

'I will wait,' I said, and stood my ground. The clerk asked me to stand

aside. I did, and waited. Ten minutes passed. He looked at me furtively. Perhaps, he wanted me to vanish, but I was not in a mood to oblige. Another five minutes passed. I asked him for the balance. Again he mumbled, 'Let change come. I will give you your Rs 4. Main kahin bhaga thode ja raha hoon.' His tone was weak this time as I had seen him accept small coins over 15 minutes. I told him that though he was not running away, I was a busy man and had other things to do. 'Please wait,' he insisted.

Another five minutes passed. The wait was becoming painful. I was tired and felt weak-kneed. My temper was rising, but I realised that the young man behind the counter was taking me either to be a fool or a weak man who could be browbeaten simply

because he was a government official — it did not matter how petty he was in the hierarchy — and the elderly man outside the counter an aam aadmi. I did not like this evaluation of myself. It was unacceptable to me. Raising my tone, I said, 'Charrupay

ke liye kitni wait karni chahiye?' 'A few minutes more, maybe,' he said. I told him angrily that he reminded me of bus conductors of the bad old days who would never return change to helpless passengers on one pretext or the other. 'Even conductors have stopped doing this. Check your cashbox. There is enough change there.' The clerk had not expected this. He glared at me. I glared back. The people around backed me. They had been watching the whole drama and knew who was at fault.

Then he cowered. He looked at me tentatively. Finding fire in my eyes, he made a quick decision to douse it with exceptional sweetness, dipping his hand in the cashbox. He fished out a Rs-5 coin and gave it to me. Sheepishly, he said, 'Ok, Sir, you take it and go.' I said the situation had not changed. 'I don't have a rupee coin.' He asked me not to bother.

I came back with my Rs 4 clinking in my pocket. Besides, I had a rupee interest too! I had won a small but righteous battle against an official who had the potential to misappropriate public money at some stage, when he would be in a senior position. It wasn't about Rs 4; it was about the dignity of the common man and the propriety on the part of public servants while discharging their duties.

The Universe is under no obligation to make sense

WE have in our leading article referred to the organised opposition which certain members of the Indian Civil Service in the Madras Presidency are endeavouring to offer to the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme of Reforms. In the interests of that Service itself, on the cause of good government in India, and of that mutual understanding between Englishmen and Indians on which so much depends, we appeal to the Government to nip this movement in the bud, if it has not outgrown that stage. Anybody can see that it can only do harm. That it cannot and ought not to succeed goes without saying. It is intolerable that a body of men, who are paid out of Indian revenue for the single purpose of administering the affairs of India, according to the law and the constitution in vogue for the time being, should claim the right to determine what that law and constitution should

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Better late than never

The verdict in a 1984 riot case, convicting Sajjan Kumar, is a precedent that must be followed in other pending criminal cases for decades. Otherwise, those cases are likely to be thrown away on the ground of delays. The latest example is the second conviction against Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim and his three aides, who have been pronounced guilty by the special CBI court in the Chhatrapati murder case. Now a victim may be hopeful that justice may be delivered, even though there may be delay in its delivery.

SHADI LAL, BY MAIL

Faith in judiciary

Apropos 'Comeuppance for dera chief' (Jan 12), the verdict should bring respite to the family of the victims. The determination with which they pursued the legal battle has borne fruit. The message is clear: no miscreant can go scot-free, despite having enormous wealth and strong political connections. The verdict will go a long way in reinforcing people's faith in the judicial process, despite it being long and cumbersome. Hopefully, more people will be emboldened to fight injustice fearlessly and doggedly.

VIMAL SETHI, KAPURTHALA

An enlightened being

The article 'Vivekananda's practical Vedanta' (Jan 12) precisely explains the great message he conveyed to the nation and the whole humanity. The Swami said, 'There cannot be any antagonism amongst the religions of the world. I wish there were as many religions in the world as people, shedding more light on spirituality.' When he talked of being fearless and strong, he meant only love not hate. Love is strength. He identified every human being as an embodiment of divine presence. I salute him with the same reverence as he felt for Ramakrishna Paramhans when he said, 'Whatever I have said and written belongs to my Master and the mistakes that have occurred in doing so belong to me.'

RUP SINGH, BY MAIL

Task cut out for Chief

The editorial 'Sorting wheat from chaff' (Jan 12) has good advice for the Army Chief. The matters of international relations should be left to politicians and diplomats. Let them chart the way forward for matters in Afghanistan. Our jawans are deputed for peace missions only under the UN flag. The Chief has huge responsibility on two fronts and to deal with internal security. Close coordination must be forged among the Army, Navy and

Air Force to achieve integrated command in sync with modern times. Violence in Kashmir is declining and his message to terrorists to join the national mainstream should have a positive effect. Kashmiri separatists should also stop toeing the line of the ISI and work for the prosperity of the people of Kashmir.

SUBHASH VAID, NEW DELHI

'Poor' taxpayer

Ambedkar had proposed reservation for only 10 years, for the poor of society. After decades, our politicians have failed to end reservation. Now, the issue has become a strong tool to attract voters. The recent quota for upper caste people was passed by both Houses. No political party dared to refuse it, because they know the value of upper caste vote. People who pay taxes will get reservation in government jobs and educational institutions. But this is not a permanent solution. As a patriot and an active citizen of this nation, I want only a single reservation system implemented.

KARAM SINGH THAKUR, MANDI

Surrogacy Bill

Refer to 'Surrogates victims of abuse, exploitation' (Jan 12); commercialisation of motherhood and misuse of the

process by middlemen, clinics and doctors, and the use of women as 'sellers' of babies is certainly acknowledged by the surrogacy Bill. But a complete ban is not what is required. It is not feasible to ban commercial surrogacy altogether, when it is worth \$2.3 billion. The ban would lead to more violations and misuse, and will also lead to the exploitation of surrogates. **DIVYA SINGLA, PATIALA**

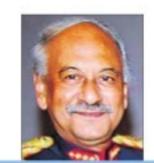
Principals on probe panels Refer to 'PSEB exam centres outside

schools again, in 3-km radius' (Jan 12); I am a retired lecturer from the Punjab education department. It is said that only seniormost principals have been included in probe panels. I contest this claim. In most districts principals promoted in 2014 and 2016 have been adjusted on the panels whereas those promoted in 2009 and 2010 have been ignored. This puts a question mark on the functioning of the panels. Also, another report says that there will be no self-exam centre, but in many parts of the state, students of school 'A' go for exam to school 'B' and vice versa, and in this process, they help one another and flout the bar of 3-km distance. To curb copying, there should be no vice-versa centres.

GURBACHAN SINGH, BY MAIL

Letters to the Editor, typed in double space, should not exceed the 200-word limit. These should be cogently written and can be sent by e-mail to: Letters@tribunemail.com

Protocol and politics of state funerals



LT GEN SR GHOSH (RETD) FORMER GOC-IN-C, WESTERN COMMAND

AMAKANT Achrekar, a cricket coach known for having nurtured Sachin Tendulkar and ■Vinod Kambli, passed away recently. However, even before the embers had cooled, a controversy flared up about a 'state funeral' not being accorded to him. The Maharashtra Government had to go into overdrive and apologise for the 'omission'.

Such controversies have erupted several times. In 2017, the Karnataka Government was slammed for according a state funeral with a 21-gun salute to Gauri Lankesh, a journalist known for her support to Naxals and views on right-wing Hindu extremism. The administration claimed that the gun salute was given as "a mark of respect for her selfless service and not for ideological reasons". Another recent case was that of Sridevi, who was given full state honours at her funeral under the Chief Minister's discretionary powers for being an "eminent personality who has done public service". A third case is that of Sarabjit Singh, convicted of spying and subsequently killed in a Pakistani jail in 2013, for whom the Punjab Government ordered threeday mourning and a state funeral.

It is these powers of discretion that give rise to controversies and hype among the public. Over the past several years, state funerals under the discretionary powers have been given to several other personal-

ities, including Rajesh Khanna, ex-cricketer Ajit Wadekar, journalist Muzaffar Hussain, Mother Teresa, Sathya Sai Baba, singer Gangubai Hangal, BJP leader Pramod Mahajan, who held no ministerial position when he lost his life, and Dada JP Vaswani. It is strange that Bollywood star Shashi Kapoor was also given a state funeral, complete with a three-gun salute by the police, while legendary thespian Raj Kapoor had been accorded none of these honours.

However, nothing can be as glaring as the difference in the treatment meted out to two giants of the Armed Forces. In September 2017, Marshal of the Indian Air Force Arjan Singh was cremated in Delhi with full state honours. The Tricolour was flown at half mast and both the President and the Prime Minister paid tributes at his residence, where the body lay in state. The funeral was attended by top political leaders, including Manmohan Singh and LK Advani, the Raksha Mantri (Defence Minister) and the three Service Chiefs. A 17-gun salute, a fly-past by three Sukhoi fighters and helicopters carrying the IAF colours were part of the honours accorded to the 'Air Warrior'. Compare this with the shocking treatment meted out to India's most iconic soldier, Field Marshal SHFJ Manekshaw, the Chief of the Indian

Army which liberated Bangladesh in 1971 and captured over 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war. Sam passed away in June 2008 at Wellington, Tamil Nadu. However, for reasons unknown, the Indian Government appeared to deliberately downplay the state honours that this great soldier so richly deserved. In any other country, such a funeral would have been attended by the highest officials of the nation. However, here no national mourning

was declared and not one among our



HOMAGE: State funerals with full military honours, including the 17-gun salute, should be accorded to Field Marshals/Marshals of the Air Force/Admirals of the Seas and all Param Vir Chakra/Ashok Chakra awardees.

Whims and fancies of people in power, vote-bank pressures and a loose 'discretionary' clause can imbalance protocol-based events, resulting in controversies and debates. While honours accorded to well-known personalities have generally not been objected to, what has vexed people is the draping of Tricolour over bodies of some of the departed.

constitutional and central political leadership, including the Defence Minister, found time to attend his cremation. Nor did the Governor or Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. The sole representative of the government was the Minister of State for Defence. Even the Air Force and Navy Chiefs did not attend the funeral and instead chose to send two-star-ranked officers.

All these cases exemplify how politics, whims and fancies of people in power, vote-bank pressures and a loose 'discretionary' clause can imbalance such protocol-based events, resulting in avoidable controversies and debates. While honours accorded to well-known personalities have generally not been objected to, the two main issues that have, however, vexed the people are the draping of the Tricolour over the bodies of some of the departed and the rendering of gun salutes to them.

A 'state mourning' was initially

reserved only for the President, Prime Minister and former Presidents, while Governors were added to the list for 'state funerals'. However, this came with a clause that in the case of other dignitaries, the Centre could issue special instructions or order a state funeral. Thus, over the years, rules have been relaxed or overlooked on several occasions to accommodate some personalities. There is, therefore, a need to review existing instructions and streamline and standardise these to ensure uniformity

and transparency across the country. Some recommendations 'National mourning' and a 'national funeral' should be authorised only for the President, Vice President, Prime Minister and former Presidents. These dignitaries would be entitled to most of the existing protocols, including a 21-gun salute by the military and a recommended four-day period of mourning during which the Tricolour would fly at half mast. Based on a

Fifth Pay Commission recommendation in 1997, the government had notified that a public holiday would be declared only in the event of the death of the incumbent President and Prime Minister. It is now recommended that this practice be abolished in totality.

'State funerals' should be reserved for former Vice Presidents and Prime Ministers, sitting Cabinet ministers, Governors, Lieutenant Governors, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Chief Ministers and Bharat Ratna awardees. The Honour Guard at such funerals should be drawn from the state police or the Central Armed Police Forces, which would fire three volleys by seven riflemen. Bodies would be draped in the Tricolour, but there would be no lowering of the National Flag.

State funerals with full military honours, including the 17-gun salute, should be accorded to Field Marshals/Marshals of the Air Force/Admirals of the Seas and all Param Vir Chakra/Ashok Chakra awardees.

All other prominent citizens of great stature could be accorded a 'ceremonial funeral' at the discretion of the Central or state governments. A ceremonial funeral should also be authorised for former Union Cabinet ministers or equivalent former government dignitaries.

Such a funeral would basically entail logistical and security arrangements by the government, provision of a police escort and attendance by appropriate elected/government dignitaries. Bodies of such departed citizens would neither be draped in the Tricolour nor would rifle volleys be fired.

National mourning with flags lowered to half mast throughout the country should be proclaimed if the nation goes through any major calamity or natural disaster resulting in large-scale loss of lives.

World Bank upbeat about India's economy



SUSHMA RAMACHANDRAN SENIOR FINANCIAL JOURNALIST

A possible deceleration of growth in many economies is on the cards, says the World Bank report, despite the fact that the world economy was literally firing on all cylinders at the beginning of 2018. It does mention exceptions to the bleak prospects, which include India. The region of fast growth now seems to have shifted to South Asia.

HE latest World Bank report on global economic prospects for 2019 makes ominous predictions for the short- and medium-term future. Speaking of storm clouds on the horizon, it describes growing international trade tensions that could impact investments in both developed and emerging economies. A possible deceleration of growth in many economies is on the cards, says the report, despite the fact that the world economy was literally firing on all cylinders at the beginning of 2018. Now, it predicts a growth of 2.9 per cent for the entire world in 2019 as against 3 per cent in the previous year. It does mention exceptions to the bleak prospects, which include India. But it warns that economies relying on commodities may face a setback and even the current spell of low inflation could alter in case central bank independence is eroded in the face of pressure to finance governments.

The Bank's report resonates in this country, rocked as it has been recently by controversies over the central bank's independence and the achievement of low inflation being marred by farmers' distress due to low agricultural prices. At the same time, the bank is upbeat as far as India is concerned. It expects growth to rise to 7.3 per cent during 2018-19, making it the fastest growing economy on the planet. It goes on to add that the pace will pick up to 7.5 per cent in the following two years. China, on the other hand, is projected to slow down to 6.3 per cent. The region of fast growth



DRASTIC STEP: The World Bank has pointed out that demonetisation led to slower growth in 2017, but encouraged a shift from the informal to the formal economy.

now seems to have shifted to South Asia. Only Pakistan lags with an expected slowing to 3.7 per cent.

On India, the Bank makes some interesting observations about demonetisation and the launch of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime. It notes that both developments led to slower growth in 2017. It also contends that these encouraged a shift from the informal to the formal economy. In this context, the Bank highlights the need to reduce the element of the informal sector in emerging economies. It maintains that a large

4

V EASY

informal sector is often associated with lower productivity, reduced tax revenues and greater poverty and inequality. In other words, while both demonetisation and GST had led to lower growth, these also had a positive impact by way of reducing the informal economy.

Demonetisation, which caused extreme hardships to the weaker sections of society, especially in rural areas, has also been decried due to the fact that most of the currency was returned to the central bank. The Bank, on the other hand, has only

viewed the measure from the aspect of helping the shift from the informal to the formal economy, as it points out that workers in the latter sector earn 19 per cent more than those in the former. The introduction of GST is viewed through the same prism, though this too has been criticised for being launched without adequate preparation, leading to considerable hardship for small businesses. One must point out, however, that GST was a reform whose time had come and no amount of preparation would have enabled a smooth rollout. First, states were holding on jealously to their individual revenue flows without taking a macroeconomic view; second, small traders and businesses would not have shifted to much-needed digitisation before it was actually launched. The initial glitches are being ironed out.

The Bank has commended the containment of inflation in emerging economies to 3.5 per cent, saying that it is linked to greater output, higher growth and better development. Its comments on low inflation are significant as one of the big achievements of this government has been curtailing price rise. This is despite hardening of world crude oil prices in the past two years that led to enhanced retail prices of petroleum products. Even so, it was possible to keep inflation within the parameters laid down by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). One of the reasons for attaining these goals, however, was the stagnation in agricultural product prices

which occurred paradoxically owing to successive bountiful harvests. The presence of huge food surpluses, in turn, led to agrarian distress in many states. Hence, containing inflation needs to be accompanied by reformative policies in key sectors of the economy.

Similarly, the issue of the central bank independence, highlighted in the World Bank's report, has become a key issue of discourse in recent months. The abrupt resignation of Urjit Patel as RBI Governor following disagreements with the Central Government appeared to show that all was not well on this front. As far as independence is concerned, it is clear this cannot be stretched beyond a point, though tensions between the RBI and the government have been of a healthy nature in the past. Even a former RBI Governor is now saying the central bank is accountable to the government and needs to work within the framework laid down by it.

The World Bank's latest report is thus not only timely, but also highlights many issues that have come to the fore here in recent months. The aspect of higher growth remains paramount, however, as the Bank notes that higher consumption and investment have been the drivers for acceleration this year. It can only be hoped that the brighter skies on the horizon translate into a consistently high growth path for the economy over the next few years.

OUICK CROSSWORD

SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

Across: 1 Adult, 8 Put on ice, 9 Haunt, 10 Cold feet, 11 Phase, 12 Pen, 16 Pagoda, 17 Eclair, 18 Wit, 23 Swede, 24 Alarmist, 25 Avoid, 26 Restrain, 27 Grief, Down: 2 Dead heat, 3 Long shot, 4 Furore, 5 Moody, 6 Vixen, 7 Petty, 12 Paw, 13 Net, 14 Blow over, 15 Windpipe, 19 Instil, 20 Carry, 21 Balsa, 22 Smart.

ACROSS

- 1 A published review (5-2)
- 5 Deserve (5) Outmoded (13)
- 9 Very stupid (5) 10 Brilliant red (7)
- 11 Excessively affectionate (6) 12 Ferocious (6)
- 15 Caller (7)
- 17 Escape grasp of (5) 19 Result in failure (4,2,7)
- 20 Correspond (5) 21 Arrogant self-confidence (7)

DOWN

- 1 Injury (5)
- 2 Immeasurably small (13) 3 Oriental (7)
- Ordained minister (6)
- 5 Madness (5)
- 6 Stirring up discontent (6-7) 7 Playhouse (7)
- 11 Pigeonhouse (7)
- 13 Sluggishness (7) 14 A distant planet (6)
- 16 Of poor quality (5) 18 Keen (5)

4 5 6 9 6 5 5 2 8 4

6

SU DO KU **CALENDAR**

	JANUARY 14, 2019 MONDAY									
6	■ Vikrami Samvat							2075		
	■ Shaka Samvat							1940		
9	■ Posh Shaka							24		
	■ Magh Parvishte							1		
	■ Hij	ari						144	-0	
	■ Shukla Paksh Tithi 8, up to 12.38 am									
	■ Sic	lh Yo	ga up	to 6.	.52 a	ım				
2	■ Revti Nakshatra 12.53 am									
_	■ Moon enters Aries sign 12.53 pm									
	■ Pa	ncha	k end	12.5	3 pr	n				
		S	ATUI	RDA	r's	SOLI	JTIO	N		
8	3	5	1	4	6	9	2	8	7	
	8	2	7	1	5	3	4	6	9	
	9	6	4	8	7	2	1	5	3	

2

7 3 6

9 2 8 1

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

5

FORECAST MONDAY 17:42 HRS **TUESDAY** 07:21 HRS **Partly Cloudy** Rainy Foggy CITY MAX | MIN Chandigarh 19 06 80 New Delhi 21 PUNJAB 17 05 Amritsar 07 O 18 Bathinda 05 18 0 Jalandhar 19 06 0 Ludhiana HARYANA 19 07 Bhiwani 0 18 05 Hisar 0 07 19 Sirsa HIMACHAL PRADESH Dharamsala 13 02 -05 08 Manali -01 0 11 Shimla JAMMU & KA 05 19 Jammu -15 04 Leh 06 Srinagar -03 3 UTTARAKHAND Dehradun 23 06 0 01 Mussoorie 14 0 TEMPERATURE IN ^OC