

Organized loot in JAKFED

The three-member Enquiry Committee constituted by the Government in June 2012 to probe into alleged irregularities in Jammu & Kashmir Cooperative Supply & Marketing Federation Ltd. (JAKFED) has submitted its report. We are in possession of a copy of the same. An over view of the report suggests that there has been the general loot of the organization perpetrated with the connivance of all senior officials right up to the rank of its boss. The list of the irregularities, both financial and administrative is too long to be recounted here. Its detailed version has already been brought to the public domain. What is needed to be discussed here is the arbitrary manner in which the administration of the organization has been conducted for many years. The impression one gathers from the report is that the implicated Managing Director, namely Ravinder Gupta, in connivance with his juniors, who in turn also have had their pound of flesh, had been distributing favours to the favourites in the organization be it monetary or rank promotion. He had been a law unto himself. This is a bizarre report and the irregularities brought out smack of a melodrama we see on broad screen. Promotions have been made in pick and chose manner depending on the sweet will of the MD and others concerned. While promotions were ordered, these were given retrospective effect with the result that the incumbents got the title for huge arrears which have been paid. The authority of the Minister and other high ups in the Department had more often been ignored. The 278th meeting of the Board of Directors (BoD) was convened under the chairmanship of the Minister for Cooperative Manohar Lal Sharma. The minutes of the meeting issued by the then Managing Director, Ravinder Gupta were not having the approval of the Chairman although the minutes of meeting were pasted in the minutes book lying in custody of Manager (Personnel), yet the said minutes had not been signed by the Chairman and any other member.

This report is an eye-opener on the functioning of the JAKFED. No wonder, therefore, that enormous sum of money remains looted from the public exchequer without any proper record anywhere. One wonders how this scandal did not come to the notice of responsible Government functionaries at proper time and why an enquiry was ordered so late. With the sordid story of JAKFED before us, how can one believe that we have had good governance? All dealings, which the organization conducted, have been murky and ask for much to explain. Be it the arrears outstanding against the staff members, CPF deposits, cement supplies, bitumen supply etc. there is clear indication of mismanagement, corruption and embezzlement. Report indicates there was nexus among the main functionaries of the organization and as such it is organized loot.

The Minister for Cooperative has received the report of the Enquiry Committee which had been constituted under his orders. He is studying the report and the matter will be pursued with the Government. Obviously, the Minister is answerable because the issue of mismanagement in Cooperative Department had been raised in the Legislative Assembly by a member of the ruling party. We expect the Government to take a firm and final decision on the report without waste of time. Delaying or deferring its decision on the case will give time to the indicted persons to bring about political pressure on the Government which can be disastrous. It is not without interest that the two storey wooden annexe in the Secretariat complex in Srinagar that got gutted only recently contained files and documents pertaining to this scandal. This record has been destroyed. It is just possible that the enquiry set up in connection with this fire may tumble upon surprising links of the fire incident with the JAKFED episode. The sooner the Government announces its verdict on the case the better it will be in the interests of good governance.

Sugar supply to ease

Supply of sugar to the consumers had become ticklish after the Food Corporation of India stopped supply of levy sugar to the State sometimes back. It became difficult for ordinary citizens to have regular sugar supply to which they were used. But now the situation is likely to ease in next one month as the State Government has finally approved one miller/supplier of Maharashtra for supply of sugar which the State will provide for public distribution at a cost of about Rs. 13.50 per kilogram. Three millers had responded to the tender notice of the State Government and one of them has been approved. At present the State Government has sent samples of sugar for chemical test. Once the quality of the sugar is approved, transportation of sugar from Maharashtra to Srinagar will begin. Transportation and storage charges will be borne by the contractor. There are many formalities that have to be completed in this deal. It is believed that this entire process may be underway by the end of this month. This is good news for the consumers in the State.

We appreciate the efficiency of the Government agencies in finding a solution to the issue of supply of sugar for public distribution in the State. There is a set procedure of how such procurements are to be made and we hope that all procedures set forth will be adhered to and that nothing untoward will happen while finalizing the matter. We would also like to caution the Government and especially the Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution Department against black-marketing practice commonly resorted to by small dealers in retail. The Government has to ensure that ordinary citizens are not exploited and fleeced when they have to purchase sugar from open market.

Federal set up under strain

M.L. Kotru

I don't know, and I don't care, whose corns and how many I have tread upon by the time I am through, sharing my anguish with those, who, like me, feel vandalized by men and women who speak in the name of the people and yet end up each day and night, every hour of these in fact trampling, what I believe are my rights and privileges as a citizen of free India.

The day the Constitution was proclaimed I was just out of my teens, a wide-eyed young Indian seeking my place under the sun, the new dawn ushering in an era when we Individual Indians became "We the people....." The founding fathers have painted, a picture of hope for us all Indians and some of the dreams they manfully tried to translate into reality. Not always successfully, to be honest. Some of them, like it or not, subscribed to certain ideologies, dogmas, if you will, that didn't work. Or, by the time the realization dawned on them that what may have worked in some country or countries may not necessarily work for a nation as diverse as ours. By the time that realization dawned India unfortunately had fallen a few steps behind some others, notably China and now even Indonesia.

Indira Gandhi's emergency, some believed, was the kind of strong medication an emerging India needed but sadly it did in the process negate most of the positives she had inherited from the founding fathers. Emergency, one believed, has finally brought it home to us that strong arm tactics did not necessarily work in a democratic environment the country was fed on Mahatma Gandhi onwards.

This is not intended to be a profound analysis of how we have fared in the first 65 years of our nation as an independent republic, its institutional stability applauded by most until recently. What concerns me, as it does every citizen, is the mess our politicians are intent on making of not just the institutions but of the country's economic and political stability.

If our economy appears to be drifting uncertainly for the past three years and more the fault lies entirely with the UPA-led coalition, unusual for a government that on paper at least seems not to be lacking policy-makers, econo-

mists to boot, who should have been forewarned by happenings in more advanced economies. Team Manmohan Singh and its policy-makers, including of course, Sonia Gandhi's personal chief, her Advisory Council, which flaunts some of the best known economists and sociologists and other assorted do-gooder as its members, have all come a cropper. If the Indian rupee has seen its poorest days in recent history all credit to Manmohan Singh. If prices of commodities have hit the roof with no apparent signs of relief, the credit again goes to Manmohan Singh and his team.

Wasn't it the Planning Commission, headed by his blue-eyed boy, Montek Singh Ahluwalia which told us only the other day that an income of Rs. 26 or above a day took one above the poverty line. You can't even buy a half kg or tomatoes or dals for that sum. Shades of Marrie Antoinette! Anyway even this is no part of my present discourse.

What worries me most is the negativity that has overtaken every single Indian political party, no exceptions, please. The Opposition led by the BJP has in the recent past reduced parliament to a non-functioning organ of the State. We were assured though that the ongoing monsoon session would be allowed to transact its business. Not quite true. But an inept UPA has seen to it that the agreement didn't work. Its belated decision to concede the demand for Telengana has divided its own flock from the State, and these are the ones who (pro-and anti-Telengana) have made the well of the House their abode each working day. The result: almost no business is conducted except when it comes to introducing the odd fresh bill. The UPA, I confess appears to be consumed by some kind of a death wish which is taking it down the path to nowhere.

Parliament has barely been able to transact much business for months- or is it a year and a half? -and no one is particularly concerned. The rushed monsoon session summoned to clear the legislative backlog has started off most inauspiciously. It is not the BJP or the Opposition parties that are acting the spoil-sport, it is the Congress Party's own ineptitude (Telengana) which has split the large Andhra contingent into two rival camps, each storming the

well of the House to keep up a noisy chant for or against Telengana. And believe me the Congress may live to rue the day when it belatedly took the decision in favour of a separate Telengana.

BJP may not be the answer to my prayers but the problem really is that the oldest political party, the Congress, is in total disarray. If Rahul Gandhi is considered to be the party's Brahmastra (the ultimate weapon) I am afraid the man just does not inspire confidence, not even when he rolls his sleeves halfway up. If you are looking for scophants and 'jihazooris' the Congress is you party. The tragedy may seem to be that the BJP's choice is the controversial Narendra Modi for the top job. That man simply seems to bristle with arrogance and his vision (Gujarat model). Whatever that may be, does not seem to be the one India needs.

Then you have the concerted attack mounted by regional parties (not that the Congress and the BJP haven't indulged in it) playing ducks and drakes with the services, the IAS and IPS in particular. Things have come to such a pass that Mulayam Singh Yadav and his son, UP Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav have publicly challenged New Delhi to withdraw all the Central Services-civil and police-from the State. "We have the capacity to run the State by ourselves", as if UP is their private "Jagir". BSP's Mayawati, who played havoc with the Services has no intention to let Yadav go unchallenged.

Looks strange, the lady who played favourites to the hilt as CM, is willing to take up the cudgels on behalf of the IAS and IPS. Other Chief Ministers including Narendra Modi, Ashok Gehlot of Rajasthan, Mamta Banerjee in West Bengal have treated the IAS and IPS as vassals. If the federal structure in the process suffered severe body blows you have none but the egotistical CMs, Ministers at the Centre and in the States to blame for it. Similarly no opportunity is lost by the States to question the role of Central para military forces.

Of corruption less said is the better. Even the smallest cog, it is generally accepted, needs regular greasing (of the palm) to keep the wheels of the administration in motion. But it is the top that causes much worry now. The Prime Minister's Office, the Defence

Ministry, Railways, Coal et al and all under a cloud. So much so it is becoming difficult to tell which of the Ministries is more corrupt: Coal, Telecom, Defence so on and so forth? Judiciary, which by and large, compared to the other organs of the State, has done reasonably well is now said to be under Ministerial scrutiny. I will not be surprised if Mr. Kapil Sibal, the Law Minister tells us one day soon that the process of selecting members of the higher judiciary must be revised.

One of the biggest failures of the Manmohan government has been in the realm of foreign affairs. Even traditionally warm relations, say, with countries like Iran, have been allowed to suffer. China and Pakistan, India's two inimical neighbours, whose bilateral relations have been publicly described as an "all weather friendship.....sweeter than honey" have been nibbling at our borders for months.

The Chinese only a few days ago made another serious incursion into our area in Ladakh-and this one in an unprecedented night operation; not to be left out Pakistan has ambushed and gunned down five Indian soldiers in the Indian territory of Poonch in Jammu and Kashmir.

What's our response: Prime Minister will go ahead with his proposed meeting with Nawaz Sharif in New York and our so-called China experts, including the National Security Adviser to the Prime Minister, will continue to be sweet-talked to by the Chinese. One wonders whether our high representatives at the Sino-Indian border talks have ever at all dared to openly challenge the Chinese position. The Indians are always said to be so overwhelmed by the show of concern by their Chinese counterpart that they forget their primary objective; to find a way out of our border dispute. The Pakistanis and Chinese would at the same time appear to be acting in concert.

This brief sordid narration sums up the second UPA, led, as the first, by Manmohan Singh and the Congress boss woman, Sonia Gandhi. Between the two of them they have managed to put a question mark over our future as a democracy. With this UPA twosome around, the federal set-up has been under grave strain and Allah alone knows, if he has the time, whether we are going.

Organ donation and transplantation

Dr. H. R. Keshavamurthy

Organ donation and transplantation provides a second chance at life for thousands of people each year. The growing disparity between the rich and poor, demand for human organs and availability of technology in the country makes the trading of organs a quick means to riches for some and a relief for others. Invariably Organ trade leads to exploitation of the poverty-stricken people by tempting them with financial gains to meet their immediate short-term financial needs.

Making organs a commodity is fraught with erosion of social, moral, and ethical values and is not an alternative that can be acceptable to meet organ requirements in a civilized society. The World Health Organization (WHO) in its statement on the sale of organs clearly states that it violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as its own constitution: "The human body and its parts cannot be the subject of commercial transactions. Accordingly, giving or receiving payment... for organs should be prohibited."

Each year hundreds of Indians die while waiting for an organ transplant. The reason: there is acute imbalance between the number of organs donated and the number of people waiting for a transplant. While 2.1 lakh Indians require kidney transplantation annually, but only 3000 - 4000 kidney transplants are done. The situation is not very different in relation to heart transplants. While annually around 4,000-5,000 patients in India require a heart transplant, so far only 100 heart transplants have been conducted across the country. According to the National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB) 2012-13 report, only 4,417 corneas were available in 2012-13 against a whopping requirement of 80,000-1, 00,000 per year. There are currently over 120 transplant centres in India performing approximately 3,500 to 4,000 kidney transplants annually. Out of these four centres undertake approximately 150 to 200 liver transplants annually while some do an occasional heart transplant.

Finding a donor is the main issue in the country. Lack of awareness and improper infrastructure facilities are the main reasons behind the existing scenario. Administrative hurdles and conservative mindset further affect organ transplantation scenario in India. There are a lot of myths associated with organ donation which needs to be addressed to solve this problem. Most Indians generally believe that it is against the nature and religion that body parts are mutilated. Some are suspicious that the hospital staff may not work hard to save their lives if they want organs. Others believe that there might be a temptation to declare them dead before they are actually dead. Lack of a centralised registry for organ donation, acts as another major hurdle for the people to donate organs or get data about donors. Also, there is a problem of certifying brain deaths; if people are not aware of brain deaths, it becomes difficult to convince the relatives of the patients for organ donation.

Kidney transplants in India first started in the 1970s and since then India has been a leading country in this field on the Asian sub-continent. The evolutionary history of transplants in the last four decades has witnessed commerce in organ donation becoming an integral part of the program. The Government passed the Transplantation of Human Organ Act (THO) in 1994 which made unrelated transplants illegal and deceased donation a legal option with the acceptance of brain death. Overcoming organ shortage by tapping into the pool of brain-dead patients was expected to curb the unrelated transplant activity. But, despite the THO Act, neither has the commerce stopped nor have the number of deceased donors increased to take care of organ shortage. The concept of brain death has never been promoted or widely publicized. Most unrelated transplants currently are being done with the approval from an Authorization committee.

Government of India enacted the 'Transplantation of Human Organs (Amendment) Act in 2011 which made provisions for simplifying the procedure for human organ donation. The provisions included retrieval centres and their registration for retrieval of organs from deceased donors, swap donation and a mandatory inquiry by the registered medical practitioner of a hospital in consultation with transplant coordinator (if available) from the near relative(s) of potential donor admitted in Intensive Care Unit and informing them about the option to donate and if they consent to donate, inform the retrieval centre for retrieval of organs.

In India, the potential for deceased donation is huge due to the high number of fatal road traffic accidents and this pool is yet to be tapped. At any given time, every major city would have 8 - 10 brain deaths in various ICUs. Some 4 - 6% of all hospital deaths are due to brain death. In India, road accidents account for around 1.4 lakh deaths annually. Out of these, almost 65% sustain severe head injuries as per an AIIMS, Delhi, study. This means there are almost 90,000 patients who may be brain dead.

It is not that people don't want to donate, but that there are no mechanisms in hospitals to identify and certify brain deaths. Plus, no one empowers the relatives of a brain-dead person to save lives by donating his organs. Anyone from a child to an elderly person can be a donor. Organ donation from the brain dead - also referred to a cadaveric donation is still very low in India. While Spain has 35 organ donors per million people, Britain has 27 donors, US 26 and Australia 11, India's count stands at a mere 0.16 per million people.

Signing a donor card is the first step in making your wishes about donation known. A donor card is not a legal document but an expression of one's willingness to donate. While signing a donor card demonstrates one's desire to donate organ after death, letting the family or friends know about the decision is very important. That is because family members will be asked to give consent for the donation. The decision will be considered final when they give consent. Vital organs such as heart, liver, lungs, kidneys, pancreas and intestines, and tissues such as corneas, heart valves, skin, bones, ligaments, tendons, veins, etc. can be donated in case of brain death.

The proposed Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Rules, 2013 has many provisions to remove the impediments to organ donation while curbing misuse/misinterpretation of the rules. To mention a few;

When the donor is unrelated and if donor and/or recipient belong to a State/ Union Territory, other than the State/Union Territory where the transplantation is proposed to be undertaken, "No Objection Certificate" from the State/Union Territory of domicile of donor and/or recipient is required. "No Objection Certificate" will not be required for near relatives and Swap donation cases.

The quorum of the Authorisation Committee should be minimum four and is not complete without the participation of the Chairman, Secretary (Health) or nominee and Director of Health Services or nominee.

Every authorised transplantation centre must have its own website. The Authorisation Committee is required to take final decision within twenty four hours of holding the meeting for grant of permission or rejection for transplant and the decision of the Authorisation Committee should be displayed on the notice board of the hospital and the website within twenty four hours of taking the decision. The website of transplantation centre shall be linked to State/Regional/National Networks through online system for organ procurement, sharing and transplantation.

There would be an apex national networking organization at the centre. There would also be regional and State level networking organizations where large number of transplantation of organ(s) or tissue (s) are performed. The State units would be linked to hospitals, Organ/Tissue matching Labs and Tissue Banks within their area and also to regional and national networking organisations. Such networks shall coordinate procurement, storage, transportation, matching, allocation and transplantation of organs/tissues and shall develop norms and standard operating procedures.

A National Registry on Donors and recipients of Human Organ and Tissue accessible on-line through dedicated website having National, Regional and State level specificities will come into force. National/Regional registry shall be compiled based on similar registries at State level. The identity of the people in the database shall not be in public domain.

Accordingly, the Government is going to set up an online network under the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO). The online service will be able to connect people directly to the donor. OTTO, an autonomous body under the Health Ministry, would be the nodal agency coordinating all organ transplants in the country. All hospitals in the country, whether private, public or district-level health centres, will be part of the network. Apart from NOTTO, four regional centres would also be set up across the country.

To conclude, the emerging field of regenerative medicine may allow scientists and engineers to create organs to be re-grown from the patient's own cells (stem cells, or cells extracted from the failing organs). This would not only improve the availability of compatible organs but also would address the socio-ethical issues attached with it.

Cut allowances to counter obstruction

Harihar Swarup

The small step taken by Rajya Sabha Chairman, Hamid Ansari, last week, in his bid to check disruption of the house day after day, should have been welcomed but, unfortunately, it proved counter-productive. He named 20 BJP and two TDP members for disrupting the proceeding and fixed them. When the names of the members were published in next day's bulletin, the BJP kicked up a row, resulting in repeated adjournment of the house. While the Chairman did not withdraw the names, he agreed that the practice of naming will be discontinued till a final call is taken at the next all-party meet.

With precious days of Parliament wasted in shrieking and yelling, rushing to the well of house-not once or twice but session after session-time has come to evolve a system of deterrent measures. Members are supposed to appreciate the weight of the responsibility placed on them by their voters. It is expected of them to present their arguments with passions and, if need be, with force and eloquence, in the debates that form the substance of discussion and dissent within parliament. But what one sees is just the opposite.

When members conduct themselves like ill-behaved, uncontrolled brats and when admonition and rebuke show no result, the serious deterrence is the only possible solution. A system of penalties should be worked out, at its broadest,



embracing, rationally, the very prerequisites that MPs enjoy.

One way to deter improper behaviour in Parliament would be to cancel the daily allowance of MPs if house has been disrupted for a day. The deterrents may grow in proportion to the scale of disruption, that is, repeated disruption would not only mean an equivalent loss of daily allowance, but also a proportional decrease in other prerequisites, such as free tickets for travel, and so on.

If disruption continues beyond certain stated limits, an MP could be barred from contesting any election conducted under the Election Commission for a period of time, say, two years. Beyond and besides this, any political party identified as the chief of disruption for more than one session of Parliament could be treated in the same way, that is, barred from contesting for a fixed period.

These are, of course, suggested solutions to what has, apparently, the infeasible evil in India's political life. Deterrents

can be evolved on any single principle, the aim always being to create real pressure on errant people's representatives to behave.

Recall May 2002 when the Indian Parliament completed its fifty years, the Lok Sabha secretary deemed it fit to commemorate the occasion by bringing out a handsomely produced book, fifty years of Indian Parliament. Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the prime minister at that time and he contributed a very thoughtful chapter for this book. His chapter was aptly entitled, "Making Parliamentary Democracy Deliver on its Promise."

One wonders what AB Vajpayee would make of the BJP's parliamentary tactics. For the Opposition to stall Parliament day after day can only contribute to the collapse of the very institution, which is at the very heart of the Indian democracy.

It will be understandable if as the principal opposition party, the BJP is not willing to help the government pass its legislation.

It is under no obligation to enable its political rivals advance an agenda that may fetch the ruling party electoral dividends.

However, it is totally incomprehensible that the Parliament be not allowed to function at all. For example, the question hour can easily be allowed to take place; and, papers placed on the table of the House. By disrupting even the question hour, the Opposition enables the political executive escape its basic obligation to explain and account its policies and actions.

The fundamental democratic principle is that the rival views are heard and debated. To quote Vajpayee again: "It saddens me to note that the attitude of wanting to hear the opposite point of view is waning. We are a diverse country. Political pluralism is the very heart of our democracy. It is what lends vibrancy and vigour to parliamentary debate. The first principle of parliamentary conduct is to believe that every point of view has a right to express itself, so long as it is expressed within the rules set by the Speaker."

What should be dispiriting to any veteran observer of Indian parliament is the Left's attitude. It is the parliamentary arena that had over the decades allowed the Communist Party (in its various factions and groups) to wield a voice and an influence much larger than its actual numbers. The Left is now so enamored of its subaltern collaboration with the BJP that it has become oblivious of its own role in advancing the communal agenda. (IPA)

Readers Write

Provide relief to affected people

Sir,

Refer news item, "Rain, floods paralyse life" DE Aug 10.

In the wake of recent heavy rains, considerable loss of property has been reported from various parts of the State. Many bridges and roads have been washed away in floods. This in turn has snapped communication links between the affected villages and other parts of the country. Besides, many people have lost their houses in these rains. At places, electricity poles have fallen enveloping people in darkness. The situation therefore demands that the Government agencies be set in motion to provide succour to the victims. The people in remote areas usually go unheard. It takes a lot of time to wake up to their miseries. During this time they encounter many problems.

The Government should set up a committee which supervises the relief work on a war footing basis.

Yours etc...
Naseeb Singh
Hiranagar

Act tough

Sir,

It is not the first incident when Pak troops and terrorists have crossed the LoC and killed five of our men on our own soil, in the Poonch sector on 06 August. They had killed two soldiers, beheading one, in the Mendher sector on 08 January this year, which had enraged the whole nation. Earlier too, many a time, Pak has resorted to such killings. What is worrying is that why do we lose so many soldiers in our own territory? When we launch an operation, and kill the militants, we do lose few of our troops also. But when Pakistan army/militants conducts an ambush or raid, we are caught unaware, and have maximum casualties. Where is our operational preparedness and high level of training? Even if Pakistan takes a provocative action like this one, why do our troops fail to inflict casualties on the enemy, rather than always being sitting/walking ducks? If we lose five, the enemy must lose ten. That should be the level of our preparation, intelligence, and initiative. We also find that the terrorists always come out with innovative plans and tactics, surprising our forces. I feel, we need to face the truth, and be better trained, with a greater offensive spirit. We got to beat the militants, and the soldiers in their game.

Nawaz Sharif must rein in the army and the ISI in case he wishes to improve relations with India. Killings across the LoC and bilateral talks can't go hand in hand. India got to act tough.

Yours etc...
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